

Annual Stakeholder Workshops Summary Report May 2017





Wales & West Utilities Annual Stakeholder Workshops: Summary Report May 2017

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1. Introduction

Wales & West Utilities submitted its Business Plan, the first under the RIIO model, in 2012. The Business Plan period commenced in April 2013 and runs until 2021.

Wales & West Utilities is committed to ongoing engagement with its stakeholders on both its Business Plan delivery and the company's future activities more generally.

This approach is supported by two external stakeholder steering groups: the Critical Friends Panel and the Vulnerable Customer Forum. These enable Wales & West Utilities to take feedback from key stakeholders in order to help refine the company's business decisions.

In April 2016, Wales & West Utilities held a series of workshops with wider stakeholders across its network area in order to get feedback on the delivery of the Business Plan to date and on its proposed activities for 2016/17.

In May 2017, a year later, Wales & West Utilities hosted two workshops in locations in its network area. The format was similar to the previous year, where stakeholders provided feedback on progress over the previous year and proposed activities for 2017/18.

This summary report details the outcomes from the workshop that took place in Llandudno and Exeter.

Westbourne was appointed, as a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate and scribe the stakeholder workshops on behalf of Wales & West Utilities and neutrally report back on the outputs.



2. Overview Of The Workshop

There were four discussion sessions within the workshop that worked through Wales & West Utilities' business priorities.

- Workshop 1: Social Obligations. This included an overview of what Wales & West Utilities had done in relation to three business priorities over the last year: 'carbon monoxide'; 'fuel poverty'; and 'vulnerable customers'. It also set out what Wales & West Utilities is proposing to do for each of the three priorities for the year ahead.
- Workshop 2: Major Incident Planning. This workshop discussed the programme of activities that Wales & West
 Utilities had developed in relation to Major Incident Planning following feedback at last year's workshops, as well
 as the forward plan for the next year.
- Workshop 3: Designing Our Future. This covered Wales & West Utilities' activities in relation to two business priorities: 'lower carbon future' and 'meeting future demand'.
- Workshop 4: Priorities For Next Year. This included a short introduction to two 'new' priorities that Wales & West Utilities is considering adding to its business priorities: 'connections' and 'customer service'. It also ran through any outstanding priorities that had not been covered during the workshop so far. The discussion session focused on ranking the business priorities to help allocate resource for next year.

Each workshop began with presentations by senior Wales & West Utilities representatives followed by roundtable discussions. The roundtable discussions were facilitated by trained Westbourne facilitators and stakeholders' comments were captured by Westbourne scribes.

A copy of the presentation given by Wales & West Utilities in Exeter can be found here: http://www.wwutilities.co.uk/ media/2424/stakeholder-workshop-final-exeter.pptx.

The presentation given in Llandudno can be found in English here: http://www.wwutilities.co.uk/media/2425/ stakeholder-workshop-final-llandudno-english.pptx, and in Welsh here: http://www.wwutilities.co.uk/media/2426/ stakeholder-workshop-final-llandudno-welsh.pptx.

After lunch, there were Q&A sessions that provided stakeholders with an opportunity to get more detail on two specific topics: 'Future of Energy' and 'Social Obligations'.

Attendees

A total of 50 stakeholders attended the workshops in total: 22 in Llandudno and 28 in Exeter. There was a range of representatives from different backgrounds, including representatives from business, local authorities (officers and members), NGOs and charities, the energy/utility industry, housing/development sector, emergency/resilience groups as well as supply chain partners. The organisations represented were:

- ADBA
- Age Connects North Wales Central
- ALH Systems Ltd
- Aughton
- Burdens
- Carct
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Citizens Advice
- Compton Group
- Control Point
- Conwy Council
- Cornwall College
- Cornwall Housing
- Devon & Cornwall Housing Association
- Devon Branch of FSB
- Exeter City Council
- Fulcrum Pipelines Ltd
- Gas Safe Register
- Gwynedd Council

- Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Linden Homes
- MCL Utility
- Murphy
- National Energy Action
- National Grid
- North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent
- North Wales Housing
- NWC-KEPS
- Ocean Housing
- Paravail
- Plymouth Community Homes
- South Gloucestershire Council
- South Tawton Parish Council
- Synthotech
- University of Exeter
- Warm Wales
- Wrexham County Council

3. Summary Of Feedback

Workshop 1: Social Obligations

- At both workshops, stakeholders wanted to see Wales & West Utilities go further on 'CO poisoning prevention and awareness' both in terms of raising awareness and in terms of installing more CO alarms.
- There was a strong feeling that Wales & West Utilities should develop 'CO poisoning prevention and awareness' materials in both physical and online formats to ensure that they are suitable for different audiences.
- A number of specific ideas and recommendations were made at both workshops for additional activities Wales & West Utilities could be doing on 'CO poisoning prevention and awareness'.
- In both locations, stakeholders were generally supportive of the work that Wales & West Utilities had done with
 vulnerable customers to date. However, in Llandudno surprise was expressed at what was seen to be quite a low
 number of vulnerable customers identified on the register.
- The main theme with regards to 'vulnerable customers' across both workshops was the importance of PSR data sharing to identify and reach those in need and it was frequently repeated that better sharing is needed across organisations.
- With regards to 'fuel poverty' each workshop broadly discussed different things, with stakeholders in Exeter raising tariffs and the importance of financial education and in Llandudno the difficulties of data sharing and the need to increase provision for rural households.
- The most common theme raised repeatedly by stakeholders was the need for Wales & West Utilities to collaborate more effectively and more broadly with partners across all of the social obligations issues.
- Stakeholder also provided a range of practical suggestions for how the 'safe and warm' section of the website could be improved.

Workshop 2: Major Incident Planning

- There was broad support for Wales & West Utilities' proposal to take the first day in an emergency to plan, as long as this did not compromise safety. However, this support was very much reliant on the existence of robust communications and in Exeter stakeholders were more sceptical about this approach.
- At both workshops, it was argued that there needs to be more communication between Wales & West Utilities and external stakeholders on major incident planning.
- Stakeholders at both workshops broadly agreed that Wales & West Utilities should rely on partnerships to support vulnerable customers during a major incident, particularly housing associations and social services.
- In terms of self-isolation, most stakeholders liked the information packs although there was some constructive feedback on how they could be improved.



Workshop 3: Designing Our Future

- Overall, stakeholders spoke positively about Wales & West Utilities' work in this area, although one stakeholder in Llandudno did want to see an increase in the numbers of connections enquiries being received.
- Stakeholders in Exeter broadly supported funding research and innovation but in Llandudno they wanted to see the development of the business case for different technologies.
- The availability of incentives or grant funding was raised by stakeholders at both workshops, who felt that they would be an important driver in developing the green gas sector. It was felt that if these are available that they should be properly communicated to encourage take-up, particularly amongst small businesses.
- It was felt that there was a need for more engagement with stakeholders on this issue, particularly targeted engagement to identify new opportunities.
- Beyond engagement, stakeholders at both workshops felt that more could be done to educate customers who are not familiar with the subject.
- A range of other innovative suggestions on new activities were raised across both workshops.

Workshop 4: Our Priorities For Next Year

- In terms of proposed changes to the connections process, stakeholders felt what was planned was reasonable although in Exeter in particular it was felt that the changes weren't really necessary given customer satisfaction is already high.
- At both workshops, stakeholders agreed that Wales & West Utilities' levels of customer service were good and therefore more investment was not necessarily required in this area, if satisfaction scores remained high.
- At both workshops, stakeholders ranked 'CO poisoning prevention and awareness' as their first priority because of the risk to life, followed by 'vulnerable customer support' as their second priority.
- Stakeholders across both workshops were inclined to connect some of the priorities as they regarded them as fundamentally linked, for example 'smart metering' with 'supporting the fuel poor'.
- Across both workshops, stakeholders thought 'innovation' was an important priority, particularly as stakeholders felt it can have a positive impact on other priorities such as 'meeting future demand' and 'low carbon future'.
- Many of the discussions at both workshops revolved around whether a specific priority was Wales & West Utilities responsibility, particularly with 'smart metering'.
- · Stakeholders across both workshops proposed several additional priorities.



4. Workshop 1: Social Obligations

The workshop on social obligations was split into three business priorities: 'carbon monoxide'; 'fuel poverty'; and 'vulnerable customers'. The final discussion topic covered all three: the 'safe and warm' section of Wales & West Utilities' website.

CARBON MONOXIDE

The presentation covered previous suggestions made by stakeholders as to how 'carbon monoxide poisoning prevention and awareness' could be improved and how Wales & West Utilities has acted upon these (including a revised CO strategy, school safety competition, events and partnerships). It also detailed future plans for further work in this area.

Stakeholder Feedback:

At both workshops. the consensus was that the work done to date was a good start, but stakeholders wanted to see Wales & West Utilities go further both in terms of raising awareness and in terms of installing more CO alarms.

In Llandudno, stakeholders felt that Wales & West Utilities need to find more effective ways of measuring the impact of 'CO poisoning and awareness' activities. This was with specific reference to awareness raising as it was seen as more important than distributing alarms but is harder to measure.

While the decision to move from large events to a presence at more local events was praised, in Exeter it was suggested that Wales & West Utilities could consider stalls in places like local high streets at weekends to reach a wider audience.

At both workshops, stakeholders felt that Wales & West Utilities should develop a range of different outreach tools – both physical and online. The idea of a shareable digital toolkit to help raise awareness was proposed. However, it was also flagged that many customers, especially the elderly, don't have access to the internet or the necessary digital skills to use 'Crack the Code' and would need to be reached in a different way. A common theme across both workshops was that Wales & West Utilities should engage in more partnership work on this issue, particularly housing associations, citizens' advice, schools and community groups. It was felt that this should include sharing materials and messages on partners' websites and newsletters to expand the reach. There were also some innovative suggestions on new partnerships, such as the suppliers of gas canisters.

In Llandudno, it was suggested that Wales & West Utilities should directly target fuel poor households or vulnerable customers to provide them with CO detectors. In Exeter, the comment was made that Wales & West Utilities should also consider those properties that are off-grid.

Concern was voiced in Llandudno as to whether householders are aware that they need to service CO alarms and so there was also support for the introduction of smart alarms.

The suggestion was also made by stakeholders in Llandudno as to whether Wales & West Utilities could work with manufacturers so that CO alarms could be fitted on all new equipment, e.g. boilers. In Exeter, the suggestion was made that CO detectors should be distributed as part of the smart meter roll out.

In Exeter, support was expressed for the continued lobbying of Government to widen building regulations to include CO monitors as well as smoke alarms.

VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS

The presentation covered feedback from stakeholders on how more support can be given to vulnerable customers, and what WWU has done to implement new ideas and initiatives, as well as what it plans to do in the future. It detailed partnership working, the outcomes of the Stronger Together conference, customer training and Wales & West Utilities procedures under the BS18477 inclusive service provision.

Stakeholder Feedback:

In both Exeter and Llandudno, stakeholders were generally supportive of the work that Wales & West Utilities had done with vulnerable customers to date. However, in Llandudno surprise was expressed at what was seen to be quite a low number of vulnerable customers identified on the register.

The main theme across both workshops was the importance of PSR data sharing to identify and reach vulnerable customers and it was frequently repeated that better sharing is needed across organisations.

In Llandudno, stakeholders were very interested in how FRESH mapping could be used by Wales & West Utilities, local councils, and other organisations to help identify vulnerable and fuel poor customers. Another common theme was the need to increase the levels of partnership working in order to increase access to vulnerable customers, for example with Age UK, housing associations, rural parish councils, churches and hospitals.

In Exeter, it was also suggested that Wales & West Utilities could consider working with the post office, whose regular customers include elderly people and those on low incomes.



FUEL POVERTY

The presentation gave an overview of fuel poverty strategy in the UK and looked at how WWU has responded to stakeholders' feedback on how to support the fuel poor. It detailed current initiatives including partnership working and fuel poor hubs, and provided details on plans for continued work to support the fuel poor.

Stakeholder Feedback:

The discussions in Llandudno and Exeter focused on different areas when it came to fuel poverty.

Going forward, in Exeter it was felt that financial education of customers was important.

In Llandudno, stakeholders expressed support for the work Wales & West Utilities had done with fuel poor hubs to date and wanted to see them continue.

At both workshops, however, there were further calls to see more collaboration. Stakeholders in both locations mentioned the need to collaborate more closely with other GDNs and energy companies; in Exeter, specifically, stakeholders broadened the collaboration required to also include local authorities, housing associations and schools. Stakeholders in Exeter felt that Wales & West Utilities should lobby energy providers and Government for a means-tested approach to tariffs and support such as winter fuel payments, and that this should be graded based on income.

A number of stakeholders in Exeter also raised the point that adequate insulation has a role to play and that Wales & West Utilities should consider their role in insulation measures.

Stakeholders also suggested ways to compensate for the difficulties of sharing sensitive data, such as partnership work, clustering and targeting specific venues.

Stakeholders in Llandudno also urged Wales & West Utilities to increase the provision for rural areas as there was consensus that rural residents are probably the most at risk and the most difficult to help.



THE 'SAFE AND WARM' WEBPAGE

During the workshop discussion, the facilitators displayed images of the 'safe and warm' section of Wales & West Utilities' website in order to get feedback from stakeholders as to how it could be improved.

Stakeholder Feedback:

Whilst the webpage was praised, the point was made that not everyone will have internet access and there were requests at both workshops for fuel poverty and PSR information to be available in formats other than online. It was suggested that Wales & West Utilities should look to gain insight as to how people engage with the website when searching for social obligations information in order to inform how to update the webpage.

Practical suggestions were made across both workshops as to how the 'safe and warm' website could be improved:

- Introduce a live chat feature;
- Review colours to ensure it is accessible to the colour blind;
- Provide information in other languages;
- Take a 'softer' approach, offering help and advice and including case studies;
- Use more images and icons, and less text;
- Review the contact numbers on the website to make sure they are clear;
- Review some of the language and imagery as some was deemed inappropriate or unclear.



5. Workshop 2: Major Incident Planning

The presentation gave some background on how major incidents are dealt with and an overview of stakeholders' feedback on how planning can be improved. Details were given on what actions have been put in place by Wales & West Utilities in response, including improved communications, a revised strategy and sharing best practice.

Stakeholder Feedback:

There was broad support for Wales & West Utilities' proposal to take the first day in an emergency to plan, if this didn't compromise safety. However, this support was very much reliant on the existence of robust communications to support this approach. That said, views were more mixed in Exeter with some disagreeing on the basis that engineers need to be on the ground as soon as possible.

At both workshops, it was argued that there needs to be more communication between Wales & West Utilities and external stakeholders on major incident planning. In Llandudno, the point was made that these plans need to be worked up with local resilience teams.

Stakeholders at both workshops commented on how major incident exercises should be run: in Llandudno, the comment was made that to be effective these exercises need to include external stakeholders; in Exeter, it was felt that exercises should not just take place during the week, but also at weekends.

Other ideas in Exeter also included having more merchandise or practical content that could be used at events to promote self-isolation. Whilst social media was felt to be a way of communicating quickly, in Exeter it was felt that in a major incident Wales & West Utilities should also go out into the community and use partnerships to communicate on the ground.

Stakeholders at both workshops broadly agreed that Wales & West Utilities should rely on partnerships to support vulnerable customers during a major incident, particularly housing associations and social services.

In terms of self-isolation, most stakeholders liked the information packs although there was some constructive feedback on how they could be improved, including having video versions and copies in Welsh. In both locations, stakeholders were wary that, despite the packs, some customers would still not feel confident in being able to self-isolate. In Exeter, the point was made that Wales & West Utilities also need to educate the business community on how to selfisolate.



6. Workshop 3: Designing Our Future

The presentation looked at the move towards a lower carbon future and how the UK can meet future demand. Considerations included the energy network, alternative gas, 'future of energy' events and Wales & West Utilities Energy Simulator. It detailed how WWU is working qiht partners and what initiatives are in place to 'design our future'.

Stakeholder Feedback:

Overall, stakeholders spoke positively about Wales & West Utilities' work in this area. However, one stakeholder in Llandudno did comment that the numbers of enquiries received was a lot lower than some of the other networks.

There was broad support for funding research and innovation amongst stakeholders in Exeter, although a number comment that it was ambitious and that Wales & West Utilities should not rush into it.

In Llandudno, however, it was suggested that there is more need to develop the business case for different technologies, rather than funding further academic research.

The availability of incentives or grant funding was raised by stakeholders at both workshops, who felt that they would be an important driver in developing green gas. It was felt that if these are available they should be properly communicated to encourage takeup, particularly amongst small businesses.

In Llandudno, stakeholders also suggested that Wales & West Utilities look at ideas including: establishing villages or energy hubs to encourage renewable energy usage; and looking at what competitors and companies abroad are doing.

In Llandudno, there was also agreement that all energy sources would require the development of individual strategies to drive them forward. It was felt that there is a need for more engagement with stakeholders on this issue and that much of this should be very targeted. Stakeholders at both workshops suggested engaging more with farmers in order to identify new opportunities.

In Exeter, they also suggested engaging with local authorities to develop digesters for food and garden waste. In Llandudno, stakeholders suggested engaging with NHS Trusts and schools to develop biomethane projects using food waste, as well as water companies to develop biomethane projects using wastewater.

Beyond engagement, stakeholders at both workshops felt that more could be done to educate customers who are not familiar with the subject.

In Exeter, a range of innovative suggestions were also made including: looking at the hydrogenation of carbon dioxide and the production of hydrogen through hydrolysis; promoting Wales & West Utilities' work on biogas; and smart modelling on a micro-scale to understand gas usage.



7. Workshop 4: Priorities For Next Year

The presentation showed the order stakeholders placed Wales & West Utilities business priorities in last year, with 'carbon monoxide poisoning prevention and awareness' top, and 'smart metering' bottom. It then discussed three new priorities and how Wales & West Utilities has responded to feedback on existing priorities. Finally, stakeholders were asked to rate Wales & West Utilities 2017/18 priorities in order.

Summary of Feedback:

In Exeter, it was felt that changes to the connections process weren't necessarily required given customer satisfaction is already high, but that if Wales & West Utilities wanted to change them their proposals were appropriate – both for domestic and for large commercial.

At both workshops, stakeholders agreed that Wales & West Utilities' levels of customer service were good and therefore more investment was not necessarily required in this area, if satisfaction scores remained high. In Llandudno, stakeholders did want Wales & West Utilities to start looking at international standards as a next step.

At both workshops, the bottom four priorities were, in varying order, 'smart metering', 'protecting the environment', 'theft of gas' and 'major incident planning. However, some stakeholders in Llandudno thought 'theft of gas' was important because of the safety implications.

Many of the discussions at both workshops revolved around whether a specific priority was Wales & West Utilities' responsibility. Stakeholders at both workshops questioned whether 'smart metering' was Wales & West Utilities' responsibility. Stakeholders in Llandudno also asked whether Wales & West Utilities was best place to take the lead on 'fuel poverty', 'vulnerable customer support' and 'protecting the environment'. In Llandudno, stakeholders broadly supported the proposed changes to the connection process timescales, although some were of the view that they were ambitious and it was felt the financial penalty was not high enough.

At both workshops, stakeholders ranked 'CO poisoning prevention and awareness' as their first priority because of the risk to life, followed by 'vulnerable customer support' as their second priority.

Stakeholders at both workshops thought 'innovation' was an important priority, particularly as stakeholders felt it can have a positive impact on other priorities such as 'meeting future demand' and 'low carbon future'.

In Llandudno, it was suggested that 'protecting the environment' should also consider contractors' and suppliers' contributions to Wales & West Utilities' carbon footprint.

Stakeholders across both workshops were inclined to connect some of the priorities as they regarded them as fundamentally linked. This included:

Linking 'connections' and 'smart meters' with 'supporting the fuel poor' and 'vulnerable customer support', especially in rural areas customers may be off-grid altogether.

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Putting 'smart metering' under 'innovation', as well as linking them both with 'protecting the environment'. Linking 'protecting the environment' with 'low carbon future'.

As an aggregate across all tables at both workshops, the priorities were ranked as follows (high to low):



2017/18 priorities

- Carbon monoxide poisoning prevention and awareness ↔
- Vulnerable customer support ↑ 5
- =Lower carbon future $\sqrt{1}$
- =Supporting the fuel poor \leftrightarrow
- Meeting future demand <->
- Innovation 1 2
- Customer service NEW
- Connections NEW
- Theft of gas $\sqrt{6}$
- =Major incident planning ↓4
- =Protecting the environment $\sqrt{2}$
- Smart metering

2016/17 priorities

- Carbon monoxide poisoning
 prevention and awareness
- Lower carbon future
- Theft of gas

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- Supporting the fuel poor
- Meeting future demand
- Major incident planning
- Vulnerable customer support
- Innovation
- Protecting the environment
- Smart metering

Stakeholders across both workshops proposed additional priorities. These included:

- Support for businesses that are potentially fuel poor or vulnerable;
- Improving communications;
- Better collaboration with other companies responsible for the network;
- Safety;
- Working with local authorities to support them with their strategic planning; and
- Restoring customers



8. Q&A Sessions

After lunch, Wales & West Utilities held two Q&A sessions which were informal roundtable discussions to provide stakeholders with an opportunity for more in-depth conversations on specific topics. The sessions were 'Social Obligations' and 'Future of Energy'. A summary of the conversations across both workshops can be found below.

Social Obligations

In Exeter, it was felt that the industry, including Wales & West Utilities, could still do more to improve awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning. In Llandudno, it was also felt that the industry should work together to agree a consistent definition of vulnerability.	Wales & West Utilities was encouraged to promote awareness of gas isolation valves, although in Llandudno one stakeholder questioned whether Wales & West Utilities was concerned about customers self- isolating because they are on a pre-paid meter and are worried about paying their bills.		
At both workshops, the PSR was a common theme for discussion. In Exeter, it was felt that there was a lot more utility companies could do to share PSR data and that Wales & West Utilities should lobby Ofgem and others to make this happen. In Llandudno, it was questioned how closely Wales & West Utilities work with social services on the PSR, and what the process was for a getting a CO monitor once a customer had signed up to the register.	In terms of fuel poverty, it was felt in Exeter that Wales & West Utilities should do more to help crack down on fraud. In Llandudno stakeholders wanted the company to look into partnerships with food banks that offer fuel vouchers.		
	In Llandudno, it was noted that low level CO poisoning is on the rise and it was suggested that Wales & West Utilities should look to do something with heart / blood charities or other health charities.		
Future of Energy			
Across both workshops, it was felt that storage of green gas is key and that the technology needs to be more advanced in this area.	In Llandudno, it was noted that Wales & West Utilities need to work better in collaboration with water companies.		
There was a lot of support across both workshops for extracting energy from waste products, for example energy biomethane from hospital waste.	There was praise for the way that Wales & West Utilities is looking at transport applications, for example Adnams (the brewers) have an ambition to have their whole fleet powered by alternative gas and it was falt that parts and Wales & West Utilities should		
In Exeter, stakeholders were keen to discuss heat networks. It was felt that, if properly planned for new developments, they would work well. It was also felt that, once created, a heat network should be transferred into a community interest company, with the original investor getting significant tax breaks and incentives.	it was felt that perhaps Wales & West Utilities should reach out to brewers.		
	Whilst hydrogen is seen to be the future, in Llandudno it was commented that there is a real (perceived) problem with safety.		
Also in Exeter, concern was expressed about the impact on biodiversity of farmers growing one crop.	Stakeholders in Llandudno also felt Wales & West Utilities need to be more proactive in sales and that they should have someone on the team who goes out		
impact on biodiversity of larmers growing one crop.	to meet new potential customers.		

9. Written Feedback

After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to fill out written feedback forms. A summary of the written feedback received is as follows:



Did you feel that you had the opportunity to make your points and ask questions?





What did you think of the way the workshop had been facilitated?





Would you be interested in attending future workshops on this subject?



Do you have any other comments?

Comments on this question in Exeter included

"I found this a very interesting insight into other aspects of Wales & West Utilities."

"A balanced meeting, with excellent content, well presented. Broad range of topics discussed." "Often felt we were just taking part in a Wales & West Utilities' customer survey".





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