



A3 - NGN RIIIO-2

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

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Stakeholder Engagement Strategy & Approach

This appendix sets out the methodology used to build and deliver an extensive, inclusive and high-quality engagement programme, designed to give stakeholders a stronger voice and to put them at the heart of our RIIIO-2 Business Plan and decision-making process.

This appendix does not cover in detail the role and activities of the CEG. For further information on the CEG and its work, please see Section 3.2 of the Business Plan (Collaboration & Challenge) and the CEG's Independent report.

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1 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

1.1 Summary

NGN has taken a rigorous approach to developing and implementing a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that is meaningful, inclusive and iterative and centred on a business objective to ensure that insight into our stakeholders' values, preferences and ideas drives business planning and change.

The impact of this has been an effective stakeholder engagement programme underpinned by a clear strategy, comprehensive planning and robust project management throughout.

Highlights of the impact gained and input achieved include:

- Over 189,000 voices heard and shaping our plan
- Over 26,000 customers and wider stakeholders engaged through core business plan engagement
- Over 6,400 vulnerable customers engaged
- Over 10,000 interactions via our online engagement hub website
- Over 380 organisations engaged
- Over 80 business plan stakeholder engagement workshops and meetings
- The first energy distribution company to launch a Citizens' Jury

This section sets out our strategic approach, including:

- Our strategy for engagement and the guiding principles of our approach
- Our approach to detailed engagement planning
- Our approach to programme and risk management

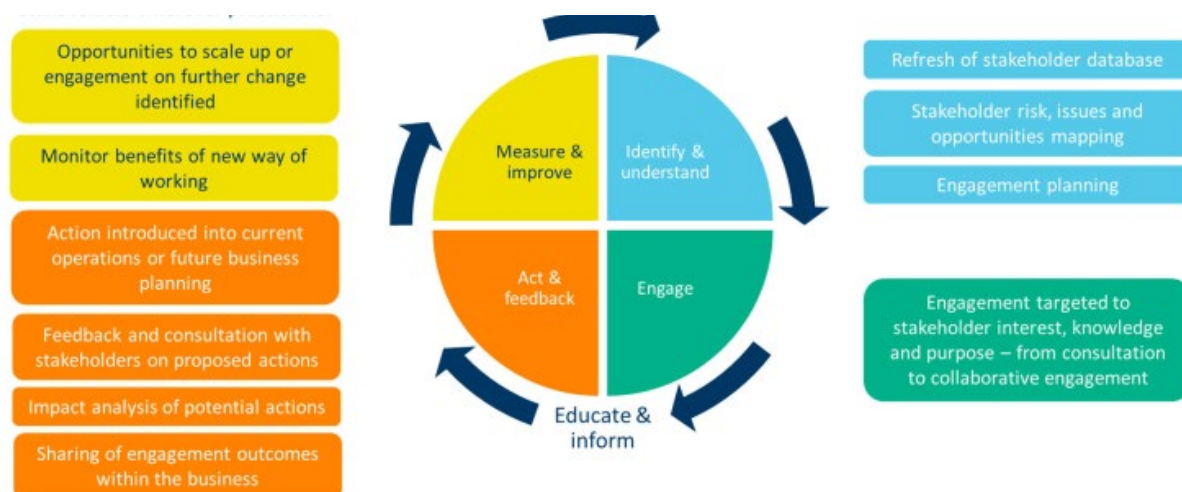
1.2 Engagement strategy and guiding principles

Throughout RIIO-1 we have had in place a proven Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, benchmarked and tested against the AA1000 standard. Our Strategy was refreshed in 2018, in consultation with our Customer Engagement Group (CEG), to ensure it met the standards for enhanced engagement for RIIO-2 business planning.

Building on consumer research undertaken to inform its, the Strategy reflected our stakeholder's preference for a single, integrated conversation that gave them an opportunity to influence both our current operations and our future strategy. The objective at the heart of our Engagement Strategy is that ***"insight into our customer and stakeholders' values, preferences and ideas drives business planning and change"***.

Our overall approach is outlined in figure 1 below. Note that whilst this is visualised as a sequential process, the reality is that there have been overlaps and interdependencies across the different stages of the methodology, reflecting the live and evolving nature of the process over an extended timeframe.

Figure 1: NGN’s strategic framework for engagement



Our strategic approach has been guided by three core principles:

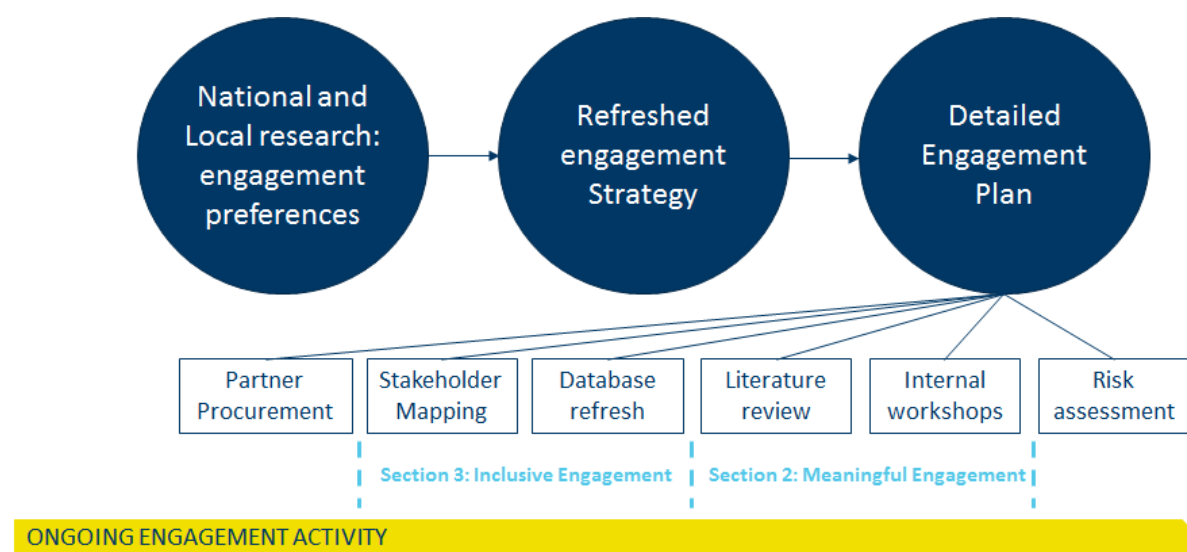
1. **Meaningful:** rather than us defining the agenda, we asked stakeholders to tell us what they wanted to talk about and how they would like to engage with us. This allowed us to focus on the material issues most important to them, where there is real opportunity to influence our priorities and how we deliver them.
2. **Inclusive:** our engagement has reached all groups of stakeholders and customers, through 10 core mechanisms and a range of bespoke and ongoing channels. Through a targeted and sensitive approach, we have reached traditionally hard to reach and seldom heard voices – ensuring our findings are representative of our whole community.
3. **Iterative:** our integrated approach has ensured that every contact counts, making the most of insight gathered throughout RIIO-1 and triangulating day to day feedback, third party insight and specialist engagement. We have supported a flexible engagement process that has continually evolved in response to insights gained, allowing us to iteratively test our proposals and calibrate across different groups.

1.3 Detailed engagement planning

A detailed engagement was developed in the Autumn of 2018, itself informed by stakeholder views and designed in consultation with our Customer Engagement Group and Citizen’s Advice. The purpose of the detailed plan was to provide a comprehensive view of what we would engage on, who we would engage with, the mechanisms we would use and how the insights gained would be used to inform our Plan and activity within RIIO-1.

Figure 2, below, shows the steps undertaken to develop our detailed plan and where you can find further information on the process within this Appendix.

Figure 2: Detailed engagement planning process



Detailed Planning included identification of a set of strategic risk to delivering the programme in line with our guiding principles. Risks were drawn from a variety of sources, including the feedback we had from our stakeholders during engagement preferences research, lessons learnt from previous RIIO-1 and other industries and risks highlighted during our internal workshops and with our CEG Stakeholder Engagement Deep Dive Group. This risk assessment provided the starting point for monitoring of risk throughout the programme.

1.4 Programme and risk management

A strategy for managing delivery, reporting and analysis across the full engagement programme was agreed at the outset, including how to track and analyse feedback from customers in vulnerable circumstances. A robust governance system was put in place around this including:

- **Programme Management Reporting:** a weekly operational project management telephone call to plan activity, record lessons learnt and review the risk register.
- **Tactical Reporting:** a monthly tactical telephone call to review progress and effectiveness against strategy and to identify any gaps in representation or any specific feedback received, and ways to address these. A monthly highlight tactical report supported this discussion, comprising a scorecard and narrative of activities, audiences and key messages, plus triangulation of results with secondary data, modifications required and risk management.
- **RIIO-2 Leadership Reporting:** Progress against the plan and stakeholder insights were reported and discussed on a monthly basis by NGN's Internal Steering Group for RIIO-2 Business Planning, made up of members of the senior management team. Furthermore, regular reporting to our Executive Steering Group, with membership drawn from the business' Executive Board and leadership team, provided ongoing opportunities for shareholders to understand how stakeholders' views were informing future plans.
- **Customer Engagement Group (CEG) Deep Dive Reporting:** As well as regular updates through its monthly meetings, the CEG established additional governance in the form of a specialist Deep Dive group, to consider closely our approach to engaging with our stakeholder community. Meeting four times and attending engagement events to monitor progress and quality, this

group played an important role as a critical friend throughout management and delivery of the programme.

2 Meaningful Engagement

2.1 Summary

We consider engagement with stakeholders as a two-way process. Rather than structuring our conversation with them as passive receivers of services, we have resolutely sought for our engagement to be meaningful, enabling people to talk to us in a way that works best for them about the material things that matter most to them.

This section sets out our approach to:

- Understanding the engagement needs to our stakeholder community
- Identifying material issues for engagement
- Feeding back and closing the loop

The impact of this has been opportunity from the outset for stakeholders to co-create investment options; challenge rather than validate our own thinking; and ensure business plan outputs reflect their expectations and priorities; and for this to have real influence on RIIO-2 planning.

2.2 Understanding the engagement needs of our stakeholder community

The starting point of our engagement framework was to identify and understand stakeholders' engagement preferences. As shown in figure 2 above, we initiated early engagement with stakeholders by surveying 78 national policy shapers during August 2018 in collaboration with other GDNs, facilitated by the Energy Networks Association (ENA). This research gave stakeholders the opportunity to tell us what they wanted to talk about and how they would like to engage with us. The impact of this was that we enabled stakeholders - rather than ourselves - to set the agenda and pre-define the topics and the communication methods.

National policy shapers said	How we reflected feedback into our plans
Key topics of interest are innovation, the role of gas in heat, power generation and transport, decarbonisation and the environment	Our engagement plan made provision for joint GDN thematic workshops covering primary national focus topics
Co-ordination will be required between national and local level with the majority of stakeholders seeking input at both levels	We have coordinated national and local plans to avoid duplication and fatigue
The desired outcome of engagement is as much about the relationship between stakeholders and the gas networks as it is about the shape of the business plans	The quality of the relationship we have with our stakeholders is an important measure of success that we are measuring before, during and after engagement

Our understanding of national policy shapers' engagement preferences was enhanced by exploratory independent research conducted with 161 local place makers, customers (excluding domestic) and the wider workforce and supply chain in September 2018. Again, this was resolutely focused on giving people an early opportunity to tell us how they wanted to engage and on what, with the impact being NGN giving them ability to directly shape our approach.

Our stakeholders said	How we reflected feedback into our plans
A lack of knowledge is a barrier to engaging - some stakeholders (particularly where energy is not a core focus) require greater support in	All of our engagement has been preceded and accompanied by appropriately informative education materials, developed for each

understanding how our business plan may affect them	stakeholder group to improve perceptions of relevance
They want us to cover and engage with them on a wide range of topics when developing business plans	Our engagement plan allows stakeholders to inform the topics we engage with them on, for both Business as Usual and RIIO-2 planning
Engagement fatigue may be a barrier to engagement, potentially missing the voice of stakeholders significantly impacted by the business plan	We introduced 10 core engagement mechanisms plus bespoke and ongoing engagement targeted to stakeholders' interest and time preferences
People will look for evidence that their views have been listened to, and greater collaboration overall	We developed a dynamic, engaging website to give stakeholders a transparent and interactive view of our plans, engagement opportunities and outcomes. We have also measured how effective we are in communicating our plans.

In addition to the early engagement with external stakeholders, we held 10 internal workshops with colleagues, moderated by an independent consultant and lasting two to three hours. These helped us to leverage the knowledge and relationships already held about stakeholders, to understand what they hoped to achieve during RIIO-2 planning, and what they needed to understand from stakeholders to shape and inform their business plan deliberations. Participants were informed that the collective output of the workshops would be a detailed delivery plan, which clearly stated the questions that need to be posed to stakeholders, how and when over the next 12 months.

The impact of this was an identified need to gather evidence around the following themes:

- Value for money
- Innovation
- Energy futures
- Safety
- Reliability, replacement, planned and unplanned works
- Capital assets and investment
- Reinstatement and roadworks
- Environment
- Social
- Industry services
- Connections

2.3 Identifying material issues

The above early engagement allowed us to develop a detailed engagement delivery programme covering a wide range of potentially material topics. This list was refined by clustering topics into 14 thematic categories around which a materiality assessment was used to rank the priority of topics and the engagement required, as shown in the diagram below. The highest priority was given to engagement where anticipated outcomes were likely to have a material impact on the RIIO-2 Business Plan and a material impact on the customer experience. Impact on customer experience was based on the potential bill impact of the investment option, the importance of the issue (where known) to customers, and how stakeholders prioritise the issue, if possible relative to other important areas.

Figure 3: Our materiality process

	Limited or no impact on customer experience	Material impact on customer experience
Material impact on RIIO-2 Business Plan	Medium priority	High priority
Limited or no direct impact on RIIO-2 Business Plan	Low priority	Medium priority

The final stage of our materiality process was to review the outputs of our extensive engagement and feed this into the drafting of the RIIO-2 Business Plan by trading-off material topics based on their strategic importance to the business, their importance to stakeholders and their social, economic and environmental impact.

The outcome and impact of the activities described in this section was to give stakeholders greater opportunity to co-create investment options; challenge rather than validate our own thinking; and ensure business plan outputs reflect their expectations and priorities. It also allowed us to better understand the needs of our diverse customer and stakeholder base by exploring the role they think we should play in the future as shown in figure 4 below. Most importantly it demonstrates the scale of pre-planning work that went into the engagement programme, and the value placed on understanding what was material to our stakeholders and where there could be most scope to influence planning.

Figure 4: Collaboration and co-creation in RIIO-2 business planning



3 Inclusive engagement

3.1 Summary

We have proactively and at every opportunity sought to ensure that our engagement reaches and is accessible to all of our diverse stakeholder and customer groups, including through a targeted and sensitive approach to traditionally hard to reach and seldom heard voices. We have used a series of best practice methods to drive this inclusive approach.

This section sets out our approach to:

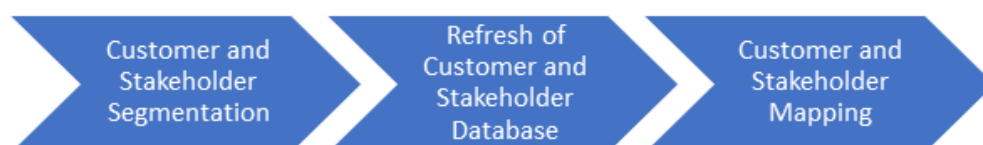
- Identifying and understanding stakeholders
- Ensuring balanced representation in customer research
- Managing risks associated with hard to reach customers and seldom heard stakeholders
- Providing engagement opportunities for future customers

The impact of this has been an engagement programme that has reached over 26,000 people from across our whole community of customers and broader stakeholders, and in so doing, a RIIO-2 Business Plan that represents a broader spread of insights than ever before.

3.2 Identifying and understanding our stakeholder community

We serve a large population of customers and wider stakeholders, each with varying interests and power to influence our services. The rapidly expanding and changing nature of some of these groups means that we must routinely review and refresh our understanding of the landscape if our interactions are to remain relevant and representative. As a direct response to this, we undertook three core steps to identify and understand our stakeholders, as shown in figure 5 below and described in the sections that follow.

Figure 5: Identifying and understanding stakeholders



3.2.1 Customer and stakeholder segmentation

Through RIIO-2 business planning, we committed to ensuring that a more divergent range of voices than ever before were heard. We recognised however that in order to do this properly, we needed to better understand who we were already engaging with and who was under-represented such that any rectifying steps could be taken.

A detailed segmentation exercise was undertaken on this basis. Using four categories – national policy shapers, local place makers, customers, wider workforce and supply chain – we were able to identify 45 customer and stakeholder segments, an increase from 36 segments previously.

The impact of this increase in number of segments was for us to have a far deeper understanding of our audience than ever before and as such the knowledge from which we could take proactive steps to develop engagement mechanisms, bespoke where necessary, that enabled greater diversity of representation.

Figure 6: Customer and stakeholder segmentation analysis results

N National Policy Shapers	N1 Government Departments	N3 Peers	N5 Pressure Groups*	N7 Industry Bodies*	N9 Other Utilities/ Infrastructure
	N2 Ministers	N4 Select Committees	N6 Consumer Groups*	N8 Think Tanks & Research Groups*	N10 Media/ Trade press
L Local Place Makers	L1 Sub-Regional & Local Government	L4 Highways Authorities	L7 Charity/3 rd sector agencies	L10 Skills, Research & Accreditation Institutions	
	L2 MPs and MEPs	L5 Health & Emergency Services Providers	L8 Community, Faith and local interest groups	L11 Business, Trade & Manufacturing Groups	
	L3 Mayors	L6 Resilience Forums	L9 Media/ Trade press	L12 LEPs	
C Customers	C1 Domestic customers	C4 SMEs	C7 Investors Builders & Developers	C10 Independent Gas Transporters	C13 Utility infrastructure Providers (UIPS)
	C2 Vulnerable customers	C5 Large load customers	C8 Housing & landlord	C11 Gas Suppliers	C14 Gas Producers
	C3 Transient customers	C6 Next generation of bill payers	C9 Landowners	C12 Gas Shippers	C15 Appliance manufacturers
W Wider workforce and supply chain	W1 Supply Chain	W3 Gas safe engineers	W5 Futures supply chain	W7 Shareholders	
	W2 Construction Services Contractors (CSCs)	W4 Next generation of workforce	W6 Investors	W8 Trade Unions	

3.2.2 Refreshing the customer and stakeholder database

Prior to its refresh, our customer and stakeholder database consisted of 13,672 individuals. In order to deliver our inclusive approach, we felt it was important to challenge the robustness and representativeness of this data, especially so that we could extrapolate findings across our customer and stakeholder population.

We found that the size of certain groups could be quickly quantified, such as the number of customers (2.7 million), the workforce (1,300) and the supply chain (800). Steps were taken to quantify the population of national policy shapers; and, while there was a reasonable understanding of local place maker groups, their composition and numbers continue to evolve, meaning many more gaps were identified in this sphere. This included intelligence gathered by an independent consultant, a desktop review, and a social listening exercise to identify individual organisations among emerging stakeholders that are likely to have a vested interest in NGN's activities.

The cumulative impact of this activity was a refreshed database, and an evidence based identification of under or not at all represented audiences as set out in the table below that could support the shift from 36 to 45 segments described in 4.2.1.

Underrepresented in database	Not represented in database
<i>Segments existed but required a refresh</i>	<i>Segments created to enable better targeting</i>
Consumer groups MPs and MEPs Local Authority Charity/third sector agencies Health and emergency services providers Business and trade groups Large load customers Transient vulnerable customers	Resilience Forums LEPs Media/trade press Housing and landlord Investors Shareholders

3.2.3 Customer and stakeholder mapping

Understanding that not all customer and stakeholder needs are equal sits at the heart of our engagement strategy. We recognise that there are variances in interests, knowledge, engagement preferences, relative importance and legitimacy. In order for us to fully understand the implications of this, a specific mapping exercise was undertaken to help us to better identify the relative power and interest of different groups.

The impact of this was four-fold:

- **Identifying relevant groups, organisations, and people:** as a result we better understood the objectives of previous/ongoing engagement; which stakeholders we communicate regularly with; and where there were opportunities to engage with lesser-known stakeholders including through social media and social listening.
- **Analysing and understanding stakeholder perspectives and interests:** as a result we better understood the relevance of specific customer and stakeholder groups to RIIO-2 engagement themes based on the perspective and value they could offer, their level of interest and influence and the legitimacy of their claim.
- **Mapping to visualise relationships to objectives and other stakeholders:** as a result we were able to position each of the 45 customer and stakeholder segments in an influence/interest quadrant as shown in figure 7, allowing us to visualise the complex interplay of issues and relationships.
- Ultimately the impact of all this work was our ability to **prioritise and rank customer and stakeholder engagement, to link this to a prioritised set of engagement themes and to design tailored communications** to ensure an appropriate approach to each group, to thereby obtain outputs that would have the greatest benefit to customers and wider society.

Figure 7: Customer and stakeholder power/interest mapping



3.3 Hard to reach and seldom heard stakeholders

Whilst the risks to an inclusive engagement programme are well understood, there is no agreed definition of hard to reach and seldom heard stakeholders. For consistency we have used the following definitions within our plan.

Hard to reach: Customers who have not engaged before or who are unlikely to engage, and who experience a range of engagement barriers

Seldom heard: Broader stakeholders who have not been engaged before, or whose voices have been under-represented in our engagement prior to 2018

3.3.1 Supporting hard to reach customers to engage

We have recognised that for many traditionally hard to reach customers, engagement exclusion has a range of drivers that needs a range of solutions.

We set out to learn lessons from recent political polls and capture the views of ‘initial non-responders’ and customers who historically may have been unable to engage in research. We responded to this challenge by adapting research to reduce cognitive challenges and to gain views from hard to reach customers. A detailed literature review of our region identified the accessibility requirements of harder-to-reach customer groups such as ethnic minorities, non-English speaking, religious minorities, those of pensionable-age and disabled.

This intelligence, coupled with postcode targeting, and the deployment of Urdu and Polish native speaking interviewers in relevant communities, had a clear impact in that it enabled us to identify exactly where we needed to tailor our research to break down barriers wherever possible and in so doing support significantly more hard to reach customers and customers in vulnerable circumstances to be contacted and included in our RIIO-2 business planning process.

Exclusion Driver	How we’ve responded	Our results
Low knowledge	Cognitive testing of engagement materials and provision of tailored educational materials, giving people the information they need to form their own opinions	79% of people engaging on our plan did so for the first time
Vulnerability	Offering in home or telephone interviews, translation services and transport to engagement events	33% of our customers engaging on our plan identified as currently living in vulnerable circumstances
Emotional	Creating extended, safe space engagement opportunities, that give people time to listen and engage as they build confidence.	90% of our Citizens’ Jury wished to continue to engage through similar mechanisms

3.3.2 Reaching future customers

It is important to understand the needs and preferences of future customers as well as existing ones - both young people, as well as adults who are not currently bill payers (e.g. because of housing tenure) but may become so in the future. To do this, we have designed and delivered core engagement mechanisms in ways that will secure future customer samples (and monitored and refined them if needed to ensure success in this respect), and delivered bespoke engagement specifically targeted at future customers. Through these approaches, we engaged with 786 future customers in total.

One specifically targeted foundational mechanism was joint research undertaken through the Infrastructure North partnership to understand the relative priorities of future customers. This used five focus groups and an online survey¹ to test levels of awareness and interest and the relative importance of existing and future utility strategic priorities including affordability, innovation and environment. It also explored preferences for future engagement mechanisms.

Examples of core engagement mechanisms which integrated future customers into their methodologies were the Centrepiece Survey (which included 98 future customers), the six pioneer surveys (which were completed by 197 future customers in total) and the Willingness to Pay research (43 future customers). Additionally, Acceptability Testing research engaged future customers from the outset using an online discussion board. This platform provided future customers with the opportunity to respond to material relating to NGN's Business Plan and specific actions contained within its Environmental Action Plan. Additionally, 18 participants aged 18-25 undertook a series of tasks across a one-week period allowing them to indicate preferences for NGN's future activity and responses to planned activities set out in the Business Plan. This enabled us to understand future customers' priorities and test materials for the development of a quantitative survey stage. Then, as part of quantitative Acceptability Testing, a specialist youth online panel (Youthsight) was used to gain a sample of 110 future customers. All participants lived in the NGN area and did not currently have responsibility for paying the gas bill but expected to do so in the RIIO-2 period.

3.3.3 Supporting seldom heard and time poor stakeholders

As we did for hard to reach groups, we also recognised that if we were to effectively engage with seldom heard and time poor stakeholders, we would need to proactively design and deliver a series of bespoke engagement mechanisms. Drawing on the findings of our stakeholder mapping exercise, we highlighted the additional engagement needs of 12 seldom heard and 15 time poor stakeholder groups as shown in the table below and around which bespoke engagement plans were built.

The impact of this has been an engagement programme that represents a broader spread of insights than ever before. To illustrate this – via a series of targeted roadshows and events including with LEPs and business representative organisations, we reached over 35 partner representatives; and, through a series of one-to-one meetings and bilaterals including with MPs and local authorities, we reached 62 people across 41 organisations.

Seldom heard stakeholder groups	Time poor stakeholder groups
<i>Under represented in RIIO-1 data refresh</i>	<i>Bespoke engagement plans created</i>
L3 Elected Mayors L5 Health and emergency services Providers L8 Community, faith and local interest L11 Business, trade and manufacturing L12 LEPs C3 Transient customers C5 Large load customers C6 Next generation of bill payers C8 Housing and landlord C11 Gas suppliers C12 Gas shippers W6 Investors	N1 Government departments N2 Ministers N3 Peers N4 Select Committees L1 Sub-Regional and local government L2 MPs and MEPs L5 Health and emergency services providers L7 Charity/third sector agencies C5 Large load customers C10 Independent gas transporters C11 Gas suppliers C12 Gas shippers

¹ Future Customer Priorities Research, Gusto Research for Infrastructure North, March 2018

	C13 Utility Infrastructure Providers (UIPS) W6 Investors W7 Shareholders
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3.4 Ensuring comprehensive and balanced representation

Through the principle of being inclusive, the engagement programme has had a clear focus on understanding how customers' priorities differ depending on age, gender, social economic grade and whether they live in an urban, suburban or rural region. To ensure that we fully reflected this, where appropriate across distinct elements of the engagement programme, we defined quotas which reflect our customer base, using data from the Office of National Statistics and, if necessary, weighted the results accordingly. This approach was taken on all pieces of significant customer research including:

- Centrepiece Survey
- Pioneer Surveys
- Willingness to Pay
- Business Plan Acceptability Testing

For example, the sample in the Centrepiece and Pioneer survey methodologies included weighting for factors such as age, gender and ethnicity as well as securing suitably high quotas of customers with one or more vulnerabilities and/or in fuel poverty. The demographic make-up of the sample having completed the survey was monitored on an ongoing basis during the months it was open to assess any emerging gaps, with targeting then used to address these. As a direct result of targeting segments in this way, we have been able to reach a far more diverse spread of individuals than we otherwise would have.

4 Iterative engagement

4.1 Summary

Our integrated and iterative engagement approach has ensured that every contact counts, triangulating day to day feedback, third party insight and specialist engagement.

This section sets out our approach to:

- Using gap analysis to ensure we built on, rather than, duplicated existing insight
- Ensuring every contact counts, through triangulation of a variety of customer and stakeholder insight data
- Delivering a target engagement programme that offered multiple opportunities for engagement and allowed us to test, and retest, proposals as they developed

The impact of this has been a flexible engagement process that has continually evolved in response to insights gained, allowing us to iteratively test and calibrate proposals and in so doing build a RIIO-2 Business Plan that reflects the expectations of our customer and stakeholder community.

4.2 Gap analysis

The objective here was to build on what we already know and have learnt throughout the RIIO-1 period, and then focus engagement and activity to fill gaps or build further upon our knowledge and understanding.

A review was undertaken to ensure learning was transferred from a range of primary research projects carried out by NGN in the run up to RIIO-2, mostly in 2017-18, deemed to be recent and therefore reflective of current customer and stakeholder views. This gave a view of what engagement and/or research had already been undertaken, where it may need supplementing to adequately reflect the whole customer and stakeholder portfolio, and how engagement should be conducted in future with specific groups. This directly informed our mapping and work to develop the best ways to engage across the programme.

As a result of undertaking this work, we have avoided the need to ask stakeholders to repeat what they have previously told us, meaning that we have built an incremental bank of knowledge that can return greater value by avoiding spending engagement time on things we already know.

4.3 Triangulation – ensuring every contact counts

We have brought together an extensive body of evidence to build a robust and meaningful platform upon which we can base strategic decisions. To do this, we have made sure that all contact we have with our stakeholders counts by triangulating all the sources of feedback available to us.

Figure 8: Combining operational feedback, targeted engagement and third party insight



- **Operational Feedback:** utilising the wealth of information from our business as usual operations – close to 115,000 enquiries, 36,000 customer satisfaction surveys and nearly 9,000 complaints every year. *Analysis of this data has allowed to identify hotspots or key points of interest for our customers – allowing us to effectively target our deeper engagement.*
- **Third-Party Insight:** reviewing and taking into account the strategies, plans and priorities of stakeholders right across NGN's geography, together with best practice guidance from national stakeholders. This work included an extensive analysis of place-based economic and energy priorities by reviewing the plans and strategies of local and sub-regional bodies such as Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities.
- **Targeted Engagement:** Building on what we already know through our gap analysis and triangulation of other sources, our targeted engagement with over 26,000 people through has used a a tailored mix of qualitative and quantitative channels designed to ensure that everyone can have a voice through the mechanisms that work for them.

4.4 Targeted, multi-channel engagement

Engaging with stakeholders and customers about energy isn't straightforward. It involves issues that they are often not aware of or have not experienced, or decisions whose impact runs across decades and affects future generations. It also risks being one-way, rather than a genuine discussion or an opportunity to solve challenges and create new plans together. Throughout the RIIO-2 planning process, we have been clear that good engagement requires a dynamic, multifaceted approach which seeks continual feedback across different pathways and levels which we can assimilate and act upon quickly.

Our engagement strategy was informed by best practise principles set out by Citizens Advice in March 2018 in their report '*Strengthening Consumer Voice in Energy Network Company Price Controls*'. These principles emphasise the importance of being clear about the level at which a specific engagement activity lies. This is considered to be an important component of ensuring that consumers, alongside other stakeholders with an interest in the outcomes delivered by our company, have accurate expectations about how their input will be used and responded to.

As such, we have applied four levels of engagement as the foundation of our suite of engagement mechanisms:

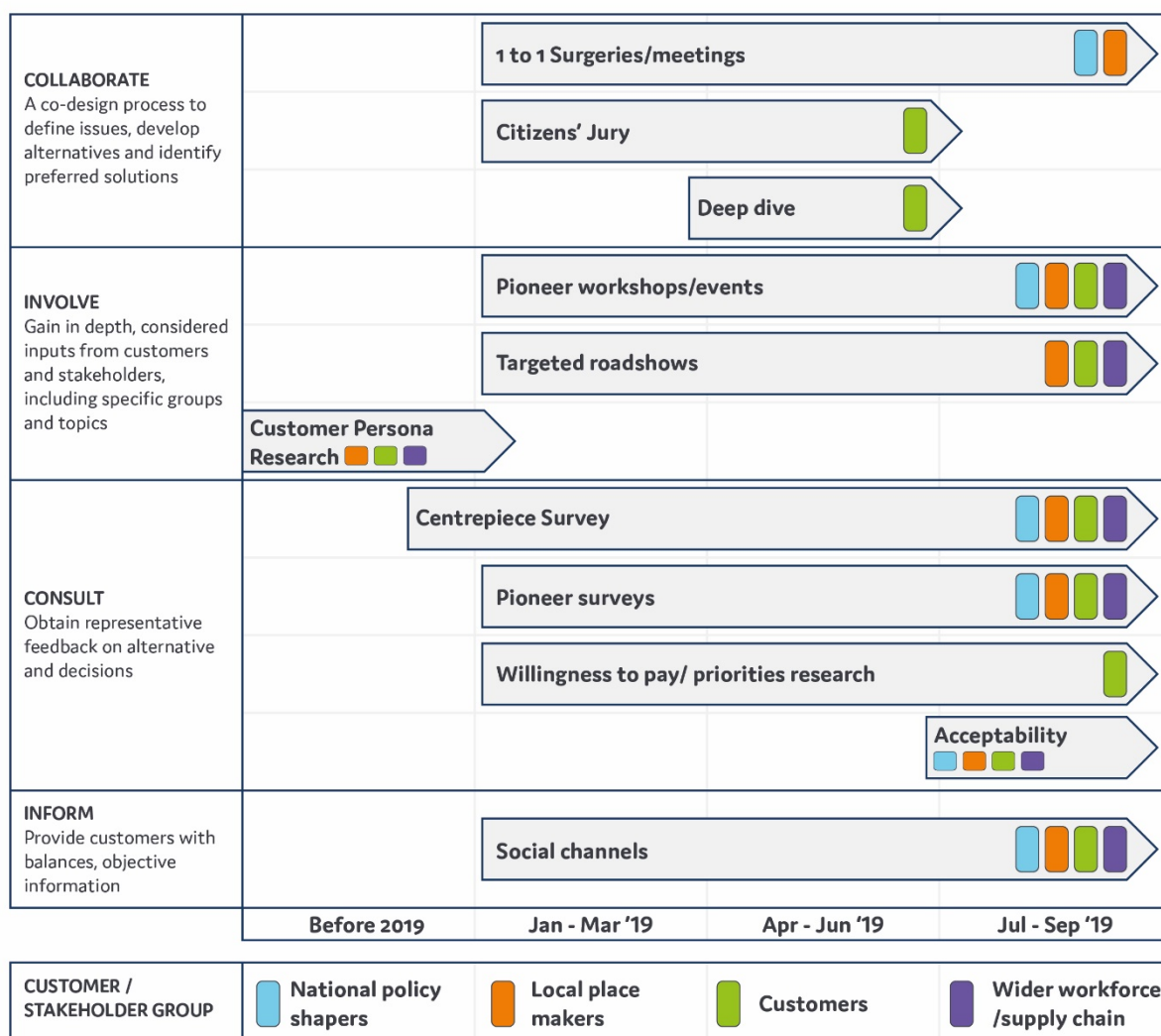
- **Inform:** Informing stakeholders of our intentions and updating them along the journey
- **Consult:** Providing an understanding of customer and stakeholders' high level priorities
- **Involve:** Linked to priorities, clarifying preferences relating to our outputs
- **Collaborate:** Co-creating and refining the most material options in our plan

From this, we have:

- Developed 10 core engagement mechanisms giving people iterative opportunities to engage, plus a suite of bespoke and ongoing engagement mechanisms;
- Used these mechanisms to make the programme accessible and inclusive; and
- Used clear sequencing and timing for maximum impact and to ensure we build iteratively.

Figure 9 below summarises the components of our approach, how they combine to reach all engagement needs and audiences, and how they have been sequenced to build iterative knowledge and impart maximum influence on the Business Plan from its conception to completion.

Figure 9: Overview of Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Processes



4.4.1 Colleague engagement

Engagement with colleagues (our internal workforce) has been a valuable part of our engagement and business planning process, as it ensures we capture and build upon the insights, ideas and experience of colleagues right across our workforce. This has been delivered both through bespoke mechanisms, and through core processes that have included 'wider workforce' (colleagues and supply chain).

One bespoke programme to gain colleague input during Spring 2019 was a series of 'Depot Days' where our CEO visited NGN depots to discuss and gain colleague feedback on potential future directions in RIIO-2 and their implications, including focus on operational roles. These were complemented by 'Two Together' colleague workshops which were run on a range of topics.

In addition, a series of NGN colleague 'Pulse Surveys' were undertaken between late 2018 and summer 2019 to assess how colleagues feel about the business and how informed they are about it. This was initially a text message-based survey of all colleagues (since widened to include emails too)

and repeated every few months. The first survey focused on the experience of working for NGN, with latter surveys probing the degree to which colleagues are informed about the Business Plan. In total, the surveys gained 419 colleague inputs.

Extensive colleague input was also gained via core engagement mechanisms (except those targeted purely at customers and/or local and national stakeholders) - specifically the Centrepiece Survey, Pioneer Surveys and UKCSI Business Benchmarking. The analysis of those surveys allowed for segmentation of a colleagues/workforce sample which could be analysed to gain specific insights and to compare to other groups and results overall.

5 Detailed methodology for each engagement mechanism

This section takes each mechanism in turn and provides headline detail including on its purpose, its target audience, and its core methodology. More detailed methodologies are available for core engagement mechanisms (e.g. surveys) conducted by independent companies that describe the proposed approaches and results.

Centrepiece Survey	
What is it?	A simple online survey that allows anyone with a minimum time investment to give their views.
Target audience	All stakeholder groups and subgroups – aiming at large numbers of domestic customers in particular, and meaningful samples of other customer and stakeholder groups. Provides a representative sample.
Purpose and role in the process	This is the central tool for gaining high volume engagement with thousands of stakeholders across the full spread of relevant issues, at a broad (rather than detailed) level.
Timing	Design from November 2018, Survey open January 2019 to July 2019 (report, August 2019).
Duration	5 to 20 minutes to complete
Delivery/management	Designed and delivered by independent market research consultant Impact, with input from NGN.
Stakeholders engaged	<p>6,229 respondents in total, made up of 5,145 domestic customers (83% of the total) and 1,084 stakeholders from the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy Shapers (2%) • Local Place Makers (8%) • NGN Workforce and Supply Chain (7%) <p>24% of the domestic customers sampled had one or more vulnerability factor and 35% were considered to be fuel poor. The customer sample included 98 future customers, 233 SMEs and 74 large load customers.</p>
Connections to the wider programme	Pathways from the survey into the Pioneer Surveys, Pioneer Workshops, Priorities research and Targeted Roadshows for relevant stakeholders.
Method	<p>The online survey was designed by Impact and NGN, taking into account initial feedback from stakeholders in 2018 on the key issues and best routes for engagement, which indicated a strong preference for online methods of engagement.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the Centrepiece survey were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a better understanding of stakeholders' relative priorities across and within NGN's services that will be used to inform the RIIIO-2 Business Plan and prioritise ongoing change; • Identify where priorities differ between different stakeholder groups, geographically and demographically, to inform where different approaches may be required; • Identify where there is a need to undertake more bespoke engagement with stakeholders regarding specific themes;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine and monitor stakeholders' willingness to engage with NGN now and in the future (this was a route to further engagement, e.g. participation in the Pioneer surveys); and • Develop an understanding of how familiar stakeholders are with the services NGN provides and whether they perceive those services to be good value for money. <p>The Centrepiece Survey was based on around 10 core questions covering all themes, tested through piloting, hosted on an NGN platform and promoted via social media and partner communication channels. The core sample, achieved via website and online panel survey completions (with stakeholders steered to it through existing communication channels), was supplemented by both random and targeted telephone interviews and social media to expand the sample and to target any gaps.</p> <p>It was recognised that whilst a significant number of Centerpiece surveys would be completed online, this would not be truly representative of the demographic profile of NGN customers. For example, those who are not digitally engaged will not be included. Hence, Impact reviewed the profile of stakeholders completing the survey online and identified any segments which were underrepresented. These segments were then targeted via telephone surveys. For example, additional interviews targeted future customers once it appeared that this group may be underrepresented.</p> <p>The sample was checked and weighted where required to be representative of the customer base, including in terms of gender, age, social class, locality and ethnicity, and was designed to be representative of vulnerable customers (with reference to Ofgem's definition of vulnerability). Checks were also built into the process to ensure that respondents were current or future NGN customers or stakeholders with an interest in NGN's area of operation.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by IMPACT.</p>
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Pioneer Surveys	
What is it?	A series of online theme-led surveys designed to gather feedback on specific business plan proposals/options.
Target audience	Open to all customer and stakeholder groups.
Purpose and role in the process	Provides quantitative and qualitative feedback segmented by stakeholder group to help shape proposals in specific topic areas, and to generate content for pioneer workshops. This complements and is an extension of the Centrepiece survey which asked more top-level questions.

Timing	Design from December 2018, Surveys open March 2019 to July 2019 (reports, September 2019)
Duration	5-20 minutes
Delivery/management	Managed by Impact with input from NGN.
Stakeholders engaged	<p>In total, 12,841 pioneer surveys, and an average of 2,140 completions for each of the 6 surveys. Numbers for each individual survey were:</p> <p>Customer and Reinstatement Pioneer Survey = 1,915 Futures and Environment Pioneer Survey = 2,716 Planned Interruptions Pioneer Survey = 2,976 Safety Pioneer Survey = 2,940 Social Pioneer Survey = 1,016 Unplanned Interruptions Pioneer Survey = 1,278</p> <p>The majority of surveys were completed by domestic customers – 75.3%, while 1.4% were national stakeholders, 4.5% were wider workforce and supply chain, and 5.2% were local stakeholders. The segment of the remaining 13.6% was not identifiable due to participants opting out of answering this question. In all cases the samples were sizeable enough to be confident of statistically robust findings and to allow analysis of results for different subgroups.</p>
Connections to the wider programme	Centrepiece Survey as a route in, plus follow on connections to Pioneer Workshop Series, Priorities Research and Targeted Roadshows.
Method	<p>The primary objective was to gain clarity on stakeholders' preferences on specific business priority areas. These followed on from and extended issues explored in the Centrepiece survey – which had more top-level questions and determined the areas in which stakeholders wanted to engage. The specific objectives of the Pioneer surveys were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allow stakeholders to help shape the agendas and generate content for Pioneer workshops about the preference areas that interest them. 2. Facilitate dynamic content based on emerging preference topics to feed into the wider engagement programme 3. Incorporate the 'voice' of the stakeholders (e.g. video/voice capture) into feedback mechanisms <p>The majority of surveys were completed online by respondents who had already completed the Centrepiece survey. These were supplemented by some fresh respondents and by interviews conducted via telephone to target specific stakeholders and enhance the overall reach of the engagement.</p> <p>In total, there were six separate Pioneer surveys:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer and Reinstatement Pioneer Survey 2. Futures and Environment Pioneer Survey 3. Planned Interruptions Pioneer Survey 4. Safety Pioneer Survey

	<p>5. Social Pioneer Survey</p> <p>6. Unplanned Interruptions Pioneer Survey</p> <p>Each survey focused on one of the preference topics that had been arrived at with stakeholder input. Respondents only took part in surveys which related to preference topics that they were interested in, but were able to take part in as many Pioneer surveys as they wished.</p> <p>The questions asked were designed and refined through an extensive exercise on stakeholder opportunities, issues and risk mapping with senior NGN management team and departments.</p> <p>As with the Centrepiece survey, a range of methods were available through which stakeholders could complete the survey, allowing for a wide range of stakeholders to be engaged through their preferred method. The mix of methods also allowed for targeting of under-represented stakeholder groups, and the approach was piloted in advance. Targeted interviewing through the telephone surveys sought to mitigate any under/over representation presented through the online channel.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by IMPACT.</p>
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Customer Persona Research	
What is it?	In depth, multi-topic conversations with target customer and stakeholder groups ('personas').
Target audience	<p>Two rounds of research were conducted.</p> <p>The first exercise in 2017 focused on two domestic customer persona groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'stay at home parents' • 'night workers' <p>The second round in 2018 focused on specific commercial customer and public sector stakeholder groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords & letting agents • Builders & developers • Schools & councils • Emergency services • Gas safe engineers
Purpose and role in the process	The customer persona research was designed to lead to a better understanding of the impact of our work and operations on specific stakeholder groups, the touchpoints they have with NGN, their levels of satisfaction and what we can do to improve our services during RIIO-1 and beyond. This engagement was also valuable in informing the

	subsequent RII0-2 Business Plan stakeholder engagement programme, the needs of different groups, and key issues of concern or interest.
Timing	November 2017 to August 2018
Duration	Up to 2 hours
Delivery/management	Managed by Impact with input from NGN
Stakeholders engaged	<p>In total, the Persona Research engaged with 69 customers across the two rounds via focus groups. The numbers engaged with for each 'persona' target group were:</p> <p>Domestic customers (night workers and stay at home parents) - 30</p> <p>Landlords and housing stakeholders – 11</p> <p>Investors, builders and developers – 10</p> <p>Gas safe engineers – 8</p> <p>Schools/local government – 7</p> <p>Resilience, emergency services and health – 3</p>
Connections to the wider programme	The Persona Customer Research fed into the Pioneer Survey Series, Pioneer workshops series and Targeted Roadshows, as well as 'Depot Days'.
Method	<p>The core of the method was to hold two in-depth focus groups per customer group, comprising 5-8 participants in each covering customer, safety and reliability thematic areas. Participants were sourced via direct agency recruitment.</p> <p>The first round of Persona research focused on two groups of domestic customers with specific challenges or potentially heightened impacts from any disruption - stay at home parents and night workers. Two focus groups were conducted with each of these personas in November 2017. All participants were located within the NGN region, and representative of one of the two specific personas. Two groups were conducted in an urban area (Leeds) and two were in a more rural area (York) to ensure that any rural and urban differences were accounted for.</p> <p>Participants were provided with cash incentives and were asked to complete a pre-task – to fill in a diary to track their gas usage, times of use, what they would do if the supply was turned off at particular times. This also meant that all participants were engaged with the topic from the start. The findings from the focus groups were reviewed against existing customer satisfaction research findings.</p> <p>The second round of stakeholder and commercial customer persona research was held in August 2018, with focus groups held in locations in York and Newcastle. Focus groups lasted 90 minutes and the discussion guide for these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A general discussion of interactions with NGN •The potential impact of emergency and planned gas works on their profession

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Understanding the ideal contact timeline in the event of profession-specific scenarios •Exploring best practice relationships <p>The findings brought out unique needs for each persona group that have informed operational arrangements and future business planning</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by IMPACT.</p>
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Willingness to Pay/Priorities Research	
What is it?	<p>Willingness to Pay research was a large-scale quantitative survey conducted among current and future bill payers which asked customers how much they value / would be willing to pay for different service packages. The survey was principally conducted online and supplemented with telephone and face to face interviews.</p> <p>Priorities Research was a precursor to Willingness to Pay, which investigated which issues/priorities were of greatest importance to stakeholders and provided a start point for discussion, planning and the main engagement programme which followed.</p>
Target audience	All subgroups within the main groupings of National Policy Shapers, Local Place Makers and Customers.
Purpose and role in the process	To provide deeper understanding of priority areas and investment priorities and specifically to focus on customer willingness to pay for business plan components. The research also provided willingness to pay valuations for improvements for differing customer groups/segmentations and perspectives.
Timing	Priorities Research was conducted in 2017 (survey work in spring/summer). Willingness to Pay survey piloted in February 2019, with launch in March 2019 and reporting in July 2019.
Duration	Up to 1 hour
Delivery/management	Managed by Impact with input from NGN
Stakeholders engaged	<p>Willingness to Pay research engaged a total of 2,275 customers whom were split between the following groups:</p> <p>Domestic customers - 871 Vulnerable customers - 914 Transient customers - 69 Future customers - 43 SMEs - 378</p>

	<p>The sampling ensured that vulnerable customers whose voice could easily be missed were fully represented in the sample.</p> <p>Priorities Research engaged 771 stakeholders in total (chiefly domestic customers), including a sizeable sample of vulnerable customers, and comprised the following groups:</p> <p>Customers - 669 National - 16 Local – 87</p> <p>Local stakeholders were predominantly from local government.</p>
Connections to the wider programme	<p>Priorities Research in 2017 informed the engagement process that followed. Routes into the Willingness to Pay engagement were via direct contact and Centrepiece and Pioneer Surveys. Follow on links were into Pioneer Workshops and Targeted Roadshows.</p>
Method	<p><u>Priorities Research</u></p> <p>Priorities Research in 2017 encompassed five stages of work and multiple stages of engagement. It began with literature review scoping 56 specific option examples, and then a qualitative research phase to whittle down the 56 options to approximately 30 within 23 priority areas and grouped around five core themes of Service, Customer experience, Community, Costs and Futures.</p> <p>Two quantitative research exercises followed, the first of which engaged with stakeholders to measure the importance of the 30 options using a 'Max Diff' methodological approach, and then combined this with factor analysis to prioritise the outcome options.</p> <p>The second element of quantitative research used a conjoint approach to quantify real life investment scenarios and provide initial quantified analysis on customer willingness to pay.</p> <p>Consultation with an Engaged Customer Panel (ECP), a group of customers specially recruited to represent the profile of customers in the region, was integral to the research. This was split into a focus group of 8 customers in Hexham, and one of 9 customers in Leeds. ECP customers were sent reading material in advance of a first panel meeting, which informed them further about NGN (including through a video) and explored their initial reaction to the five core themes. The Panel was then reconvened to assess the 56 individual options with analysis of focus group deliberations used to design and prioritise outcomes to be tested in the next phase of research.</p> <p><u>Willingness to Pay</u></p> <p>The quantitative survey used stated preference techniques to derive measurements of customers' willingness and ability to pay for business plan components. Stated preference techniques are well established research methods to assess the valuation of non-market resources and</p>

	<p>typically ask how much money people would be willing to pay to maintain the existence of or improve a service (or be compensated for its loss). This provides an indication of customer priorities derived from the choices they make between competing service investments</p> <p>Feedback was obtained for different levels of service/output levels for the different areas of the business plan, with customers asked to ‘trade off’ or make decisions between different service attributes (for example duration of planned interruption) and associated service levels which represent improvements and detriment to current performance levels.</p> <p>The primary survey approach was a large-scale quantitative survey which gained responses from 2,275 current and future bill payers, carried out primarily online with supplementary face to face and telephone interviewing to capture harder to reach customers. The survey utilised a stated preference methodology and gathered feedback across broad categories within the Business Plan, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety 2. Supply interruptions 3. Customer service 4. Environment 5. Vulnerable customers <p>In each of the five categories, customers were asked to choose between improvements to specific service attributes that fall within the Business Plan area, with testing of between 3-4 levels of service/cost for each. This facilitated exploration of alternative and preferred investment options within and across themes and was a crucial element in informing Business Plan decisions.</p> <p>It was anticipated that the customers recruited to take part in the WTP engagement activities would have only limited understanding of NGN’s role and responsibilities. As such, educational materials containing background information on the gas industry were produced (in leaflet/infographic format) and distributed to participants ahead of the engagement to ensure participants could provide an informed opinion.</p> <p>Qualitative engagement was used with a group of customers in advance to inform the (co)design of a thorough and comprehensive survey instrument. This was through a series of Engaged Customer Panels which educated and informed panellists and explored their priorities, and gained input into the design, content and wording of the survey instrument, specifically the wording of the attributes and service levels to be tested. Impact took responsibility for sourcing and recruiting customers to all phases of the WTP research. A recruitment screening questionnaire was used to capture relevant demographic, lifestyle and attitudinal information in order to achieve the required profile of</p>
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	<p>participants, with questions developed following best practice Market Research Society guidelines and with consideration to GDPR regulations.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by IMPACT.</p>
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Targeted Roadshows and events	
What is it?	Targeted sessions that bring together multiple related partners in an area on a relevant topic and enable in depth discussion and collaboration. These were mostly with Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) forums, but a similar session was used with business representative organisations. The sessions combined briefing of participants on NGN's role and draft RIIIO-2 proposals, and comment and discussion on these and any other areas of interest, concern or potential collaboration.
Target audience	The core audience for Roadshows was LEPs and their constituent partners, especially local authorities (e.g. from a planning and infrastructure perspective) and in some instances wider partners. In addition, a business roadshow event held in Leeds targeted business representative organisations.
Purpose and role in the process	<p>The LEP roadshows were designed to gain strategic input at a sub-regional level focused on the issues, opportunities and priorities of specific geographic areas, for example around planning and expectations for future built development and the implications of these for gas supply. As LEPs bring together public, private and wider partners and lead economic strategy in their areas, they are a key body to engage with. This process was designed to inform them of proposals, to gain meaningful input from them, and to enable collaboration and co-production. It was supplemented by a review of LEP strategies, and by bilateral meetings with LEPs (see the relevant 1 to 1s section).</p> <p>The business representative organisations roadshow event supplemented the LEP events by facilitating input from the perspective of businesses across the region, both SMEs and larger businesses. It covered issues for business (e.g. minimising disruption from traffic works or any supply issues) and opportunities, such as in the supply chain and again adopted a collaborative approach which would enable future joint working and relationships on an ongoing basis.</p>
Timing	Planning from April 2019, held May 2019 to August 2019
Duration	Up to 2 hours
Delivery/management	Roadshows were arranged for and with NGN either by Impact, or by Les Newby Associates/Wordfern Ltd.
Stakeholders engaged	Over 35 partner representatives were reached in total, mostly in senior and influential positions. The participants in each roadshow were:

	<p>Tees Valley Combined Authority Humber LEP Leeds City Region LEP West Yorkshire Combined Authority Hull LEP North East LEP Sheffield City Region Combined Authority York & North Yorkshire LEP Business Intermediaries</p>
Connections to the wider programme	<p>Participants were sourced chiefly by direct contact / request, sometimes building on existing knowledge of and relationships with LEPs and businesses. Participants in earlier Roadshows were also connected to the Pioneer surveys and workshops. In most cases, the Roadshows created or reinforced a desire to create an ongoing relationship.</p>
Method	<p>The Roadshows varied in form to suit whatever would work best for the partners in questions, and could either be a specially created session to bring NGN and relevant partners together (as with the Tees Valley LEP/CA and the Business Event) or a tailored briefing and discussion sessions held within an existing third-party meeting or event.</p> <p>The Roadshows typically involved one or more senior managers from NGN, as well as the NGN stakeholder engagement team and sometimes operational lead support from the relevant NGN patch. The common factor across all the roadshows was a format which involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation from NGN about its role (to provide context to partners) and its RIIO-2 Business Plan proposals • Opportunity for partners to brief NGN on any key developments or policies to be aware of and which it could support or plan around • Discussion of opportunities for future collaboration where LEPs, local authorities, businesses and NGN can forge mutually beneficial relationships, approaches and initiatives. <p>The specific details of each individual session are:</p> <p>Tees Valley LEP Management Group – 15/5/19 - a bespoke discussion event at senior level</p> <p>Humber LEP Infrastructure Review Group – 10/5/19 - a specific session held within an already planned meeting bringing together the LEP and local authorities in its area</p> <p>Leeds City Region LEP Heads of Planning – 26/4/19 - a specific session held within an already planned meeting bringing together the LEP and local authority planners in its area</p> <p>Leeds City Region Green Economy Panel – 9/7/19 - a specific session held within an already planned meeting bringing together the LEP and</p>

	<p>representatives from a spread of businesses, local authorities and university partners in its area, focused on clean energy and green infrastructure</p> <p>North East Heads of Planning – 2/8/19 - a specific session at held within an already planned meeting bringing together the LEP and local authority planners in its area</p> <p>Business Representative Organisations workshop – a bespoke discussion event at senior level, held in Leeds and with invites sent out to the range of business representative organisations and to business groups representing women and BAME businesses. Attendees on the day came from two Chambers of Commerce representing different areas and from the regional CBI.</p> <p>Some of the meetings included an exhibition stand with delegate access to the online survey, but this was not appropriate at those which were ‘piggybacking’ on an existing meeting or forum.</p> <p>The Roadshows for LEPs were supplemented by a review of LEP area Local Industrial Strategies, Strategic Economic Plans and Local Energy Strategies, undertaken to identify and enable response to local priorities, and by bilateral meetings with LEP officers (see the One to One surgeries section).</p>
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One to One surgeries/bilateral meetings	
What is it?	Face to face or telephone engagement on an individual basis by NGN senior manager(s) with a range of stakeholders.
Target audience	Individual target stakeholders or organisations with high political or local influence (e.g. MPs and senior officers in individual local authorities or LEPs). Also, those with sensitive commercial arrangements (individual shippers, suppliers, large load customers/major energy users, etc).
Purpose and role in the process	<p>The one to one, bilateral meetings with targeted influential individuals or individual organisations were important for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing full, frank and detailed discussion covering core business plan elements, but with flexibility to focus on any other issues the stakeholder would like to focus on • Securing locally specific inputs, e.g. from MPs, LEPs and local councils • Responding to key but often time poor stakeholder preferences, where meetings need to be diaried around limited availability • The value of one to one, and where possible face to face, contact in building trust, rapport and ongoing relationships • Identifying key strategic priorities and managing risk of political challenge and scrutiny

Timing	April 2019 to September 2019 (and ongoing)
Duration	Usually up to 1 hour, occasionally up to 2 hours
Delivery/management	Led and undertaken directly by NGN senior managers
Stakeholders engaged	<p>In total, 67 people were engaged via bilateral meetings, across over 40 organisations (with MPs/Peers each counted as an 'organisation'). The number of bilateral meetings by group by the end of September was as follows:</p> <p>Local MPs - 16</p> <p>Local authorities – 17 people across 7 councils (Leeds, Newcastle, Hull, Cumbria, Kirklees, Harrogate, Sunderland)</p> <p>Mayors/Mayoral Team/Peers - 2</p> <p>LEPs – 11 people across 4 LEPs (covering the Humber; York, North Yorkshire and East Riding; the North East; and Sheffield City Region)</p> <p>Resilience Forums/Partners - 3</p> <p>Think Tanks/Research Groups/3rd sector – 4 organisations</p> <p>Independent Gas Transporters (IGTs) – 5 people across 3 businesses</p> <p>Utility Infrastructure Providers (UIPs) – 5 people across 3 businesses</p> <p>Other businesses - 4</p> <p>The figures above exclude investors and shareholders with whom there are ongoing discussions as part of routine business planning</p>
Connections to the wider programme	Participant meetings were secured by proactive, direct contact. They were often also a start point for beginning or strengthening ongoing relationships. Invites to participate in subsequent Pioneer Workshops and Targeted Roadshows were offered where relevant.
Method	<p>Stakeholder mapping identified categories of target stakeholders where a senior level one to one meeting between NGN and an influential individual or organisation would be important.</p> <p>The method for setting up and undertaking the bilateral meetings was bespoke to each type of organisation/individual, and involved proactively offering face to face meetings at times and locations convenient for the stakeholder(s) or a telephone meeting if preferred.</p> <p>Variations and detail of who was approached for specific stakeholder groups included:</p> <p>MPs and Peers – all MPs across the NGN area with constituencies with significant NGN supply coverage received letters inviting them to meet. Follow up letters were sent in cases where there was no initial reply from key MPs, such as those on relevant committees and All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)). Other MPs and Peers outside the NGN area with key positions on relevant committees, APPGs or in Government Departments were also invited to have meetings.</p>

	<p>LEPs and Combined Authorities/Mayors– invites for a meeting were sent to all LEPs, CAs and Mayors in the NGN area, with follow ups sent as required. Positive responses were gained from all LEPs/CAs and from one mayor to have a bilateral and/or a Roadshow Event.</p> <p>Local Authorities – Invite letters for a meeting were sent to the seven largest unitary local authorities in the NGN area, and meetings were also arranged with others where there was a need to ensure balanced geographic coverage or to include more rural areas (e.g. in Cumbria, and in Harrogate district as an area within North Yorkshire).</p> <p>Resilience partners – were identified including the Chair of the key Category 2 Responders Forum, and the Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum. NGN participates in both of these Forums.</p> <p>UIPs and IGTs – the larger companies within these groupings were targeted with invites to meetings.</p> <p>A briefing/presentation pack was prepared for face to face meetings to enable the senior NGN manager present to talk through the company's role and RIIO-2 Business Plan proposals and gain feedback on them. Time and flexibility was also allowed for discussion to be tailored to stakeholders' areas of interest/concerns. In all cases a note was taken of the meeting and circulated to the relevant stakeholder to confirm it as an accurate record.</p>
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Pioneer Workshops	
What is it?	Workshops designed to get deeper insight into the views of key decision and policy makers at local, regional and national levels, with a focus on developing collaborative solutions in areas that cut across different policy agendas.
Target audience	All groups and subgroups excluding domestic customers.
Purpose and role in the process	To provide detailed feedback on key proposals and options and ideas for new ways of working with partners. The events provided the ability to develop plans that complement / integrate with local, regional and national policy, and which are increasingly informed by stakeholders and engagement with them as part of sustainable relationships.
Timing	Main series of Pioneer workshops held in February/March 2019, with an additional Innovation workshop in August 2019 and a further workshop on Whole Systems Strategy and Environmental Action plan in October 2019.

Duration	Up to 4 hours
Delivery/management	Managed by Impact with input from NGN (with the exception of the second Innovation workshop and the Whole Systems and EAP workshop, managed by NGN)
Stakeholders engaged	<p>The initial core series of Pioneer Workshops engaged with 95 stakeholders, with the numbers for each individual workshop being:</p> <p>Environment Pioneer Workshop - 8 Social Pioneer Workshop – 20 Innovation Pioneer Workshop – 28 Safety & reliability Pioneer Workshop – 14 Futures Pioneer Workshop – 25 Innovation (2nd) Workshop – 12 Whole Systems Strategy & Environmental Action Plan Workshop - 12</p> <p>The overall split across these workshops by stakeholder groups was:</p> <p>National stakeholders – 22% Local stakeholders – 36% Customers – 8% Wider workforce & supply chain – 34%</p>
Connections to the wider programme	There were connections and invites into the workshops via ongoing communications channels as well through the Centrepiece survey, the Pioneer surveys and Targeted Roadshows. Follow on connections included one to one/bilateral discussions and the establishment of ongoing relationships (e.g. between innovation bodies and NGN).
Method	<p>The Pioneer Workshops were designed to be a series of in-depth, round-table, qualitative discussions with stakeholders to develop and refine emerging business plan proposals that reflect stakeholder preferences.</p> <p>A core series of five workshops were conducted face to face with stakeholders grouped according to their areas of expertise and in line with business plan priorities. This approach allowed for rich exploration into areas which are also being researched through other mechanisms – notably the quantitative Pioneer Surveys – which provide wider and more representative but less in depth and deliberative engagement on the same topics. The complementarity between these mechanisms was intended and important.</p> <p>The workshops were hosted at a time and place to maximise attendance from the relevant stakeholders; and typically ran from 11am to 3pm. Ahead of the events, delegates who had agreed to attend were sent a short pre-event survey (up to 5 questions) to understand what they were expecting from the event so that stakeholders could inform the agenda on the day.</p>

	<p>The format of the workshops involved a short introduction to the topic from NGN's relevant business lead before stakeholders were divided into smaller groups to discuss specific issues. The events and breakout sessions were facilitated by an external moderator from Impact and supported by assistant facilitators as required. They were stakeholder driven as much as possible and included voting sessions and interactive tasks to maintain stakeholder engagement and interest. After the event, NGN and Impact produced reports on each event, including the results and feedback provided and how this will influence business planning.</p> <p>This approach successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided further information to participants on the topic, NGN's Business Plan and opportunity for influence • Collected a range of opinions from relevant stakeholders with expertise in the targeted areas • Fostered critique around the discussion areas to develop business plan content based on the feedback provided • Informed the design and content of engagement mechanisms that would follow, e.g. 'Willingness to Pay'. <p>The five core Pioneer Workshops were:</p> <p>Environment – 7/2/2019 (in Leeds) Social - 13/2/2019 (in Leeds) Innovation – 27/2/2019 (in Leeds) Safety & Reliability – 6/3/2019 (in York) Futures – 14/3/2019 - (in Newcastle)</p> <p>An additional, follow on workshop was also held on Innovation on 1/8/2019 in Sunderland. This sought to involve additional partners (e.g. in LEPs and universities) that had been suggested as part of a wider innovation agenda through the first Pioneer Workshop and the wider stakeholder engagement process.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by NGN for each workshop.</p>
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Citizens' Jury	
What is it?	An independently chaired focus group of domestic customers brought together for face to face discussions on three occasions, with the aim of facilitating a detailed and constructive conversation about the services they value from a gas network, aided by presentations from key NGN colleagues and a range of interactive activities for participants.
Target audience	50 domestic customers broadly representative of the population within the NGN network area.

Purpose and role in the process	<p>Deliberative engagement focused on the question ‘how does NGN find the right balance between price and service which is fair for everyone and which meets customers’ aspirations for the company?’ to gain clarity on domestic customers’ investment preferences; measure the importance placed upon different performance areas; measure support for different business plan options; understand where consensus exists; and also capture dissenting views.</p> <p>This was done with the objective of reaching a view deemed legitimate by the group that can be extrapolated to reflect the likely views of the wider customer base.</p>
Timing	Design from January 2019, with Panels held in March, April and November 2019.
Duration	Over 1 hour
Delivery/management	Facilitated by Involve with input from NGN
Stakeholders engaged	<p>Recruitment was determined by stratified random selection to as closely as possible match the demographic characteristics of NGN’s geography. An initial tranche of 5,000 invitations were sent to households randomly selected from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File. From the pool of interested respondents, a second, stratified random selection was performed, matching the latest UK census data on six dimensions: age, location, gender, ethnicity, disability and occupational status. Where the level of interested respondents did not meet the number required, additional targeted recruitment was undertaken.</p> <p>From this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 participants attended the 1st session (from a recruited sample of 53) • Over the first 3 sessions this dropped to 43 participants completing all 3 engagement events due to a combination of illness, lack of engagement (i.e. deciding the process wasn’t for them) and changes in circumstances (e.g. family demands) • When contacted regarding the plans for this 4th meeting, 35 of the 43 invited from the previous Panel meetings indicated that they were interested and available to participate – a willingness to return rate of 81%. • Supplementary recruitment was carried out to bring the Panel membership back up to 50.
Connections to the wider programme	Designed to be cumulative and iterative, such that findings from other Business Plan engagement mechanisms were utilised to identify content and objectives for the Citizens’ Jury, and that insight derived from the Citizens’ Jury could form part of options presented to customers as part of the Willingness to Pay engagement mechanism.
Method	The deliberative engagement process was underpinned by three phases:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated learning for participants to develop an understanding of the issue based on unbiased information and/or clear presentation of arguments from different perspectives. • Discussion focused on developing dialogue using small facilitated group discussions to develop and test opinions. • Deliberation where participants come to conclusions based on what they have learnt, through a process of public reasoning. <p>The process used a variety of exercises and techniques to support all participants to engage with complex information and feel able to put their opinion forward, and so included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitated table discussions; • written exercises including questionnaires; • plenary discussions; • group ranking/negotiation activities; • time for individual reflection and note taking; • opportunities to question the speakers; • live interactive polling to instantly gauge the sentiment; • tasks in groups of 2-3; and • individual ballot papers. <p>Three phased workshops around business plan development:</p> <p>Workshop 1: Focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing purpose of the panel and NGN's role • Introducing NGN's five performance areas and evaluating the relative importance of each – with safety emerging as the primary concern • Given the above, the workshop centred on safety and improvements to safety performance • Allowing panel members to co-create the focus for future discussions based on the performance areas most important to them and where they felt customers should have the most impact on – notably: sustainability, the environmental impacts of gas, support for vulnerable customers, and customer service <p>Workshop 2: Based on the second core area of performance priority identified in workshop 1, this session centred on sustainability and how NGN should approach mitigation of its environmental impact, including examining its environment strategy, looking at initiatives and questioning if they go far enough (or too far), and exploring how far above and beyond requirement customers want NGN to go to minimise the environmental impact of the business.</p> <p>Workshop 3: Focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements needed in different parts of the customer journey, including planned and unplanned supply interruptions, and the process for arranging a new connection;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social initiatives in place for supporting customers in vulnerable situations, including what support there is for new initiatives that could add value to NGN's work in this area; and • Asking participants to use all they had learned and considered to identify priority areas for performance improvement for NGN <p>Workshop 4: Focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the loop - replaying the feedback from previous session and ensuring that how these had been used to refine proposals met expectations; • Every contact counts – testing appetite for a scale up of a current BAU programme to train front line engineers in spotting the signs of vulnerability; • Hardship fund – deliberating on how the fund should be used and ringfenced against different priorities; • RIIIO-2 Engagement Strategy, including the future role of the Jury, the CEG and investment levels.
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Acceptability Testing	
What is it?	A combination of online survey and discussion to assess the acceptability and affordability of Business Plan proposal to stakeholders.
Target audience	Principally domestic and non-domestic customers, but also wider stakeholders
Purpose and role in the process	The Acceptability research ² was commissioned to test and confirm how far NGN's draft Business Plan is in line with stakeholder priorities and expectations, including those who have been involved in the development of the draft plan through NGN's engagement process. The work also needed to explore whether stakeholders found the bill impact(s) of the proposed plan affordable.
Timing	Design from May 2019, with delivery in July/August 2019 and final reporting in early September 2019
Duration	Surveys typically 20-25 minutes, plus qualitative workshop sessions of up to 2 hours at the design stage
Delivery/management	Managed by Accent with input from NGN
Stakeholders engaged	A total of 1,353 stakeholders took part including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,068 Domestic customers (112 via an approach designed to suit non online customers and those in vulnerable positions) • 108 Non-domestic customers • 133 future customers • 34 wider stakeholders

² NGN Business Plan Acceptability, Accent for NGN, September 2019

Connections to the wider programme	<p>The Acceptability research followed on from earlier stakeholder engagement that had focused on gaining views to inform the development of (rather than test and refine) the Business Plan.</p>
Method	<p>The research was designed to test acceptability of an outline business plan among a range and representative spread of NGN's stakeholders, and that proposals (including proposed RIIO-RIIO-2 outputs and outcomes) are supported by, and meet the requirements of, key stakeholders.</p> <p>Specific objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the overall acceptability of NGN's business plan, and where not acceptable, to explore why • Test acceptability of key elements of the plan, specifically the proposed five performance areas and the performance commitments within these • Understand perceptions of NGN in terms of trust and value for money, having seen the plan and the bill impact <p>Accent were commissioned to design and deliver a programme split into qualitative and quantitative phases.</p> <p>The qualitative element involved a total of 55 customers in helping to refine the plan and the presentation of survey materials. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops in Hull (10 domestic customers and 9 non-domestic) and Carlisle (16 domestic customers), with a 1-hour session to introduce the plan, and a 2-hour session for customer exploration of the business plan to refine presentation and understand drivers of acceptability • 10 in-depth interviews (1 hour) with customers experiencing a vulnerability; 5 in Stockton and 5 in Bradford • in-home in-depth interviews (1 hour) with non-English speakers (Urdu and Hindi) • Bespoke activity with future customers using an online discussion board and preference-based tasks to gain input into our Business Plan, Environmental Action Plan and future priorities • 1 day of cognitive testing in Leeds to test comprehension of the resulting questionnaire and supporting business plan materials <p>The quantitative element involved a multi-strand phase of testing, based on a survey of domestic customers, non-domestic customers and wider stakeholders. Sourcing of these was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The domestic customers sample used an online panel sample supplemented by an in-home survey conducted by Computer Assisted Personal Interview to include sufficient coverage of offline customers and those who would be less likely to be on a panel, e.g. customers in a vulnerable position

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-domestic customers were sourced via a telephone survey – via Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) - alongside an online survey • Wider Stakeholders were reached through two online surveys; a full version issued via NGN’s stakeholder bulletin, and a shorter version developed for social media. <p>For the online domestic survey, quotas were set on age, gender, social grade and urban/rural status. Sampling ensured that customers were drawn from across the NGN area and data was weighted by age and social grade to the profile of the population.</p> <p>Questionnaire design followed guidance based on experience in the water sector and ‘uninformed’ as well as ‘informed’ questions were asked. Respondents were asked to indicate how acceptable they found the business plan/bill impact put to them on a scale from ‘very unacceptable’ to ‘very acceptable’. Taking best practice from the water sector the questionnaire used a six-point scale, to which a ‘Don’t mind’ option was added. However, all analysis in the report excluded the ‘<i>don’t mind</i>’ response. The options were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very acceptable • Acceptable • Neither acceptable nor unacceptable • Unacceptable • Very unacceptable • Don’t mind (this means your response will be recorded that you find the business plan acceptable) • Don’t know (would not be counted as either acceptable or unacceptable) <p>Three different levels of proposed bill were tested across the sample; 5% reduction, 7% reduction and 9% reduction. The bill level shown was randomised across each strand of the survey, ensuring that a broadly equal number of participants saw each bill.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by Accent.</p>
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Social Channels	
What is it?	Use of online social channels to drive and support communication of RIIO-2 business planning messaging
Target audience	Across all customer and stakeholder groups
Purpose and role in the process	Strategic use of social channels to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help educate and inform customers about who NGN are and the role the organisation plays; • promote opportunities for stakeholders to engage and get involved in shaping the future Business Plan; and • to share outcomes from engagement with stakeholders and explain how it will inform the Business Plan.
Timing	January to September 2019
Duration	Up to 20 minutes
Delivery/management	Managed by BECG with input from NGN
Stakeholders engaged	<p>Cut across all customer and stakeholder audiences. Across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, a total of 4,102,327 interactions or opportunities to view (e.g. impressions on timelines) were achieved broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 4,062,908 • Engagements: 12,554 • Link clicks: 23,865 <p>This is defined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: the number of times that a post has been viewed/ appeared on a person's timeline • Engagements: the amount of times an account engaged with a post, through retweeting, liking, replying, commenting, reacting or sharing • Link clicks: the amount of clicks on any link, media or CTA in a post
Connections to the wider programme	Cutting across all elements of the engagement programme as an underpinning support and communication mechanism.
Method	<p>In order to drive engagement through social media, an initial content strategy was developed to ensure that audiences could rapidly understand who NGN are, and why they should engage.</p> <p>A set of key messages were developed to support promotion across social media of the various engagement opportunities with the objective of reaching a diverse audience and driving traffic to maximise engagement. A test and learn approach was used across all social campaigns to ensure that the approached continually evolved across the engagement period.</p> <p>Upon agreement of the initial set of key messages, promotional social content assets were developed that included content for social media posts (including polls), static social media graphics, GIFs and video content for social shorts.</p> <p>To enable the social campaign to effectively engage with the communities that NGN serves, an audit was undertaken with specific reach out to community groups on Facebook – these community groups have thousands of engaged members, so this can be an effective method of easily reaching large numbers of people in the</p>

	<p>correct area. In addition, in order to maximise the opportunity to reach a large audience across the North East, Northern Cumbria and Yorkshire, a series of targeted paid social media campaigns across Facebook and Twitter were run to increase clicks and traffic to the surveys.</p> <p>Further detail on method and results is contained within supporting reports produced by BECG for NGN.</p>
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In addition, a range of other ad hoc mechanisms, including a 'Deep Dive' and targeted partner input surveys and colleague engagement processes have been used to garner meaningful and inclusive engagement to close any gaps and provide full and rounded insights. The table below summarises the details of these and who was reached by each.

Engagement Mechanism	Purpose	Description	Target Audience	Timing	Sample Gained
Deep Dive – Multiple Occupancy Buildings (MOBs)	To gain a detailed understanding of the issues facing and priorities of customers living in MOBs and what perception they have of NGN	Deliberative and detailed engagement to develop a greater understanding of the needs and priorities of customers living in MOBs. This has been progressed through bespoke sessions with local councils and customers, as well as incorporation into discussions at the safety pioneer workshop. In Kirklees, we are collaborating with the council in visits to individual MOBs to discuss perceptions and any issues with residents.	Seldom heard domestic customers living in MOBs, plus councils that represent or own the MOBs	June 2019 start - ongoing	15 stakeholders engaged in the Pioneer Safety Workshop. 5 engaged in a bilateral with Kirklees Council 2 engaged via a bilateral with Bradford Council. 4 residents engaged at a Kirklees based MOB.
Colleague Depot Visits/ Two Together	Gain input from NGN workforce including insights from and implications for operational roles	Chief Executive visits to all NGN depots which discussed and gained feedback from colleagues on potential future directions in RIIO-2 and their implications. Complemented by 'Two Together' colleague workshops run on different topics.	Internal colleagues across NGN, with focus on operational roles and depots	April-June 2019	182 – all of whom were NGN colleagues

NGN Pulse Survey	To assess how colleagues feel about the business and how informed they are about the Business Plan	Initially a text message based survey of all colleagues, repeated every few months and since widened to include emails. The first survey focused on the experience of working for NGN, with latter surveys probing the degree to which colleagues are informed about the Business Plan.	Internal – all colleagues across NGN invited to participate	Late 2018, early 2019 and summer 2019.	419 – all of whom were NGN colleagues
GDN Guaranteed Standard of Performance (GSOP) Pilots Research	To test the appetite nationally for new or revised GSOPs on planned work appointment standards and for vulnerable customers	Two surveys carried out in collaboration with other GDNs. The first was based on 2,095 customer surveys nationally, using existing customer survey mechanisms. A second used telephone interviews with stakeholders concerned with vulnerable customers.	Domestic customers regarding GSOPs on planned works (plus a subset of vulnerable customers) + Stakeholder organisations regarding GSOPs on vulnerability	Feb - April 2019 + May 19	271 domestic NGN customers (on planned works), plus 16 national stakeholders across GDNs regarding vulnerable customers
Energy Network Association (ENA) Future of Gas Joint GDN event	To understand stakeholder expectations of the gas networks in helping deliver a decarbonised energy system, and how the networks can work collectively	A 3-hour event held in London at which participants were invited to discuss issues about future of gas – with focus on the whole energy system and decarbonisation. It enabled input into the RIIO-2 Business Plans of all the GDNs through one event.	Participants included energy sector companies, business organisations, universities, regulators, government and bodies such as NEA and Citizens Advice	Feb 2019	37 comprising: 23 National 9 Local 4 customers 1 wider workforce
Large load survey	To understand the current and future needs and plans of large	A customer satisfaction survey sent out to large load customers, with online and	Large Load customers	Dec 2018 /Jan 2019	7 large load customers

	load customers and their experience of NGN and its services	paper options for completion and follow on calls			
Whole System Strategy Engagement	Workshop held in London to foster discussion around whole system strategy and approaches	Workshop held at OFGEM in London which fostered discussion on integrated energy utility approaches, including in relation to the scope of whole system planning, incentivisation, innovation and investment planning	Stakeholders from gas and electricity transmission and distribution, plus wider industry operators and experts	July 2019	8 comprising: 7 National 1 Local
Infra-structure North Future Customer Priorities	To understand the relative priorities of future customers (i.e. those who will imminently be future bill payers)	Joint research with Infrastructure North partners regarding future customers. It used 5 focus groups and an online survey ³ to test levels of awareness and interest and the relative importance of existing and future utility strategic priorities including affordability, innovation and environment. It also explored future engagement mechanisms.	Future customers, specifically young people (age 16 to 21), across the North East, North West and Yorkshire	Feb - March 2018	320 - all future customers
UKCSI Business Bench-marking	To gain benchmarking information within and beyond the sector on customer satisfaction	Survey carried out as part of UK Customer Service Institute accreditation which enabled assessment of performance (in relation to customer satisfaction, net promoter scores	Customers and colleagues (wider workforce)	Jan 2018	643 wider workforce + approx. 110 customers

³ Future Customer Priorities Research, Gusto Research for Infrastructure North, March 2018

		and customer effort) and focused on planned works customers most likely to be less satisfied			
Shipper and Supplier Engagement	Provides qualitative information from shippers and suppliers regarding their satisfaction with NGN and identifying key challenges or changes in practices	A specialist satisfaction survey of shippers and suppliers carried out via telephone interview	Shippers and suppliers	March 2017	8 customers comprising: 4 shippers 4 suppliers
NGN Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey	Provides data on how well stakeholders are informed and involved, and insights about engagement preferences and performance	A monthly online and telephone stakeholder survey, that asks the same questions each month to gain results from approx. 50 different stakeholders each month	Approx. 50 different stakeholders per month	Monthly surveys from Nov 2018 to Sep 2019	513 in total comprising: 359 Local 44 National 53 Customers (non-domestic) 1 Wider workforce
Rapid partner input survey – Resilience	To gain partner engagement on a specific issue where partner capacity and timetable constraints had restricted input	An online survey combining closed and open-ended questions asking about NGN participation in resilience forums and planning and how it could be improved. Supplemented by interviews with key partners.	Resilience / emergency response stakeholders	July 2019	9 resilience partners (6 online, 3 via interviews)
Rapid partner input survey - Vulnerable customers	To engage on a specific issue (Vulnerability Strategy) from groups where capacity and timetable constraints restricted	An online survey combining closed and open-ended questions asking about whether the strategy was adopting the right approaches and if	Groups representing or focused on customers in vulnerable circumstance	August 2019	12 partners with an interest in vulnerable groups: 1 National 11 Local (9 of whom were 3 rd sector/ charity/ community)

	other input routes	and how it could be improved			
Rapid partner input survey - Biomethane	To gain partner engagement on a specific issue where capacity and timetable constraints had restricted input	An online survey combining closed and open-ended questions to test views on specific areas of NGN's interactions on biomethane, including the connections process and possible improvements; plus testing ideas on how NGN can be more responsive to the needs of biomethane producers in the future	Biomethane companies / stakeholders	August 2019	4 responses received from 17 companies invited to participate

The engagement mechanisms above exclude ongoing operational contacts which have been utilised in the business planning process, including:

- 114,592 operational contacts
- 10,207 complaints
- 38,313 customer satisfaction surveys

6 Overall summary of input gained

Through our RIIO-2 engagement programme we have utilised a wide spectrum of core engagement mechanisms, ranging from in depth workshops and discussion to quick and easy inputs through surveys and have reached stakeholders from all four of our stakeholder types: national, customer, local and wider workforce and supply chain. **Through these various mechanisms we have had a total of over 26,000 engagement inputs from stakeholders**, although the total number of people engaged is likely to be lower as some people will have engaged through more than one mechanism.

The table shows the number of engagement inputs across the main mechanisms for input, including the total number of people engaged and the split between the four groups – customers, national stakeholders, local stakeholders, and wider workforce. ‘Ad Hoc and ongoing’ mechanisms includes Deep Dives, while social media is not included in the table because of the risk of double counting and operational based input is covered separately due to its different nature.

Table 1: Number of stakeholders engaged by mechanism and group

Engagement Mechanism	Customers	National	Local	Wider Workforce	Total Engaged
Centrepiece Survey	5,145	120	467	401	6,229
Pioneer Surveys	9,666	180	666	582	12,841
Customer Persona Research	51	0	10	8	69
Willingness to Pay/Priorities Research	2,944	16	87	0	3,046
Targeted Roadshows and Events	0	8	18	0	60
One to One Surgeries/ Bilateral Meetings	10	3	54	0	65
Pioneer Workshops/ Events	9	26	43	41	119
Citizen’s Jury	58	0	0	0	58
Acceptability Testing	1,603	0	26	3	1,632
Ongoing & Ad Hoc engagement	848	75	394	1,246	2,563

In addition to the figures in the table, the following inputs were gained:

Operational

- 114,592 operational contacts
- 10,207 complaints
- 38,313 customer satisfaction surveys
- TOTAL = 163,112

Social Media and Website

- 41,714 Social Media Interactions
- 10,386 via Online Engagement Hub (website)

Throughout the engagement process many of the people that responded to our surveys or we met with in bilateral meetings or workshops were representing stakeholder organisations or businesses. In total, across all of the engagement mechanisms **we engaged with over 380 different organisations**, ranging from businesses and charities to local authorities. These organisations engaged were spread across our four stakeholder types. We also engaged with sizeable numbers of organisations that operate at a national level, particularly industry bodies, while at a local level, the most engaged included charities and 3rd sector agencies.

The mix of engagement mechanisms was specifically designed to combine quality and quantity of input, with the surveys being the prime method of reaching large and representative samples of customers. This was reflected in a high percentage of people engaged making their input through surveys, particularly the Centrepiece survey which received 6,229 responses and the six different Pioneer surveys which received an average of 2,140 responses each. In the case of both the Centrepiece survey and the Pioneer surveys a large majority of respondents were categorised as customers, with lower proportion of those engaged being from the wider workforce and local and national stakeholders. Other engagement mechanisms were more targeted at these groups and succeeded in reaching a good cross section across these groups, including through more deliberative, collaborative and in-depth mechanisms such as bilateral meetings and workshops.

The Centrepiece and Pioneer surveys, alongside the Willingness to Pay survey were effective mechanisms for reaching and engaging customers who are suffering from vulnerability. Of over 20,500 customers who were engaged throughout our programme, 6,442 or 31% self-reported to be suffering from vulnerability. The most common vulnerabilities recorded from those surveyed were 'pensionable age', 'mental health' and 'chronic/serious illness' and a sizeable proportion of those reached were also classified as in fuel poverty. Of the 26,300 people or organisations engaged during the process 1,676 are regarded as seldom heard stakeholders and were reached through an array of mechanisms such as surveys, workshops and bilateral meetings.

7 Application of the main messages and lessons for the future

Application of results from stakeholder engagement

Appendix A4 - NGN RIIO-2 Stakeholder Engagement Insights, gives a detailed assessment of how the evidence we have gathered through the engagement process has been used to shape the RIIO-2 Business Plan overall, drawing out key insights for specific thematic areas and output commitments. There is as such clear line of sight in how we have applied customer and stakeholder insight to our long-term plans.

In general, the findings of our engagement activities show a consistent set of priorities, but there were some results that, on the face of it, indicate contrasting opinions. Reasons for these differences include the range of research methodologies used, sampling approaches, and the contextual information available to participants. These are also discussed further in Appendix A4 - NGN RIIO-2 Stakeholder Engagement Insights.

Lesson learned and wider benefits from the process

While the prime and immediate value of the stakeholder engagement process has been providing insights that will inform our business planning and delivery in the RIIO-2 period, the customer and stakeholder engagement has also had wider and lasting value beyond that which will inform the way we engage and collaborate in the future.

Our approaches to future engagement are set out in Section 3.4 of our Business Plan and there are also a number of wider lessons which inform these. Notably, we have learned that there is enthusiasm from many stakeholders to have a deeper and stronger continuing relationship with NGN in the future, for example with LEPs/Combined Authorities and Local Authorities, business representative organisations and universities and that this will foster excellent opportunity for collaboration and integrated approaches. We also built upon existing RIIO-1 engagement practices and gained a wider understanding and knowledge of the full spectrum of our stakeholders, the ways they prefer to be engaged, and how to make these work as part of how we do business.