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MP293 ‘Deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance during Adverse Weather’

March 2026 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

SEC Party Category	Working Group Members	Representing
Large Suppliers	Julie Brown (JB)	British Gas
	Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
	Francesca Scott (FS)	EDF
	Joey Manners (JM)	Octopus Energy
	Ralph Baxter (RB)	Octopus Energy
	Emslie Law (EL)	OVO
	Harry Palmer (HP)	Utilita
Small Suppliers	Diane Simner (DS)	E Gas & Electricity
	Steve Blackler (SB)	E Gas & Electricity
	Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG Global
Other SEC Parties	Patricia Massey (PM)	BEAMA
	Patrick Caiger-Smith (PC)	Geo-Together
	Michael Snowden (MS)	Secure Meters
Network Parties	Craig Donohue (CDo)	National Grid
	James Shippey (JS)	Northern Power Grid
	Catherine Duggan (CDu)	SP ENWL
Ofgem	Shaun McRaith (SM)	Ofgem

Other Participants		
DCC		
Bradley Baker (BB)	Edward Russel (ER)	Tim Troy (TT)
David Walsh (DW)	Graeme Milligan (GM)	
SECAS		
Simon Grimwood (SG) <i>WG Chair</i>	Abi Obidan (AB) <i>Meeting Secretary</i>	Lydia Bentley (LB) <i>Lead Analyst</i>
Georgie Severin (GSe)	James Boraston (JBo)	Vanita Patel (VP)

Overview

Modification Overview

Adverse weather events can be highly disruptive to Electricity Network Parties and their customers. It is the responsibility of the Network Party to respond to damage to energy infrastructure caused by an adverse weather event, such as a storm, and aim to restore power to off-supply customers as soon as possible. Network Parties rely on the ability to interact with Communication Hubs for Smart Meters to determine any damage to their network caused by an adverse weather event and to check if - customers' power has been restored following restoration activity. By ascertaining if a Device is responsive, and repeating this across a given geographic area, the Network Party may more accurately map which areas of their network are most affected (and if they have successfully restored power) in order to determine how to manage their response.

Where a DCC Planned Maintenance event overlaps with an adverse weather event (both during and following the event), a Network Party might lose the ability to communicate with a SMS, therefore losing critical functionality of the DCC network that Network Parties utilise during adverse weather events. When MP166 was considered, it was deemed that such an overlap would be unlikely, having never occurred before, and therefore, a cost-benefit test could not be met and the Modification was withdrawn. Since this time, Storm Daragh¹, a Met Office "named storm" occurred during the days immediately prior to a Planned Maintenance window on 10 December 24. On the 7 December 260,000 customers were without power, with 23,000 still remaining off power by the 10 December² Network Parties have reported that this overlap was disruptive to their response approach.

The overlap of Storm Daragh and a DCC Planned Maintenance event has provided real-life data on the impacts of this issue, data which was unavailable at the time of MP166. As such, the Proposer raised this Modification with a view to codifying a defined set of criteria which would need to be met to trigger the deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance event. During the development of the Modification, a second solution option has been brought into scope. The DCC have proposed a novel mechanism by which a subset of Service Reference Variants (SRV) and/or Alerts may be kept available during a Planned Maintenance, allowing Network Parties to remain in communication with SMSs during an Adverse Weather event, even if the DCC were to be engaged in a concurrent Maintenance activity.

Proposed Solution

The Proposed Solution is the introduction of the Enhanced Availability (EA) Service; this would establish a parallel, slimmed-down version of the DCC Total System that remains operational during Planned Maintenance, Unplanned Maintenance and Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery (BCDR) testing, allowing essential Service Reference Variants (SRVs) and Alerts to continue to be processed even when the core Data Service Provider (DSP) is offline. The EA Service would provide continuous access to a defined subset of Messages to ensure Network Operators can verify supply status remotely and Suppliers can maintain key functionality during outages.

¹ [Met Office: Storm Daragh](#)

² [Storm Darragh updates – Energy Networks Association \(ENA\)](#)

The EA Service would run on a dedicated deployment of the DSP motorway, activated via configuration changes on the F5 Load Balancer, and sized to ensure performance under adverse weather conditions.

This EA Service would be delivered within the SEC by changes to SEC Section H 'DCC Services'. Consequential changes to SEC Section A 'Definitions and Interpretations' would also be delivered to define the EA service, and the outages that it would be deployed in respect of.

Solution Option 1

This is the Proposer's original option, and includes the following SRV and Alert:

- SRV 7.4 – 'Read Supply Status', and
- Alert AD1 – 'Power Outage Event'.

Solution Option 2

This is the alternative Solution option, and was proposed during the December 2025 meeting of the SEC Working Group (please see relevant section of the Modification Report for more details). It adds the following SRVs and Alerts:

- SRV 7.4 – 'Read Supply Status';
- Alert AD1 – 'Power Outage Event';
- SRV 2.2 – 'Top Up Device';
- SRV 4.3 - Read Instantaneous Prepay Values; and
- Alert N56 – 'SMETS1 Service Provider Provision of prepayment top-up UTRN'

Working Group

Working Group Discussion

The SEC Change team provided an overview of the Modification, and the Preliminary Impact Assessment, supported by both the DCC and the Proposer. A member (EL) queried if outages in the DCC's Communication Service Provider (CSP) would disrupt the provision of the Enhanced Availability service; the DCC (DW) confirmed that this would be the case, though this might be mitigated by expanding the service into the CSP, as described in the Preliminary Impact Assessment.

A member (SB) asked about whether the scope of the Proposed Solution encompassed Unplanned Maintenances; the DCC (DW) confirmed that these would be covered where possible, however, Unplanned Maintenance events with very little notice, scheduled as an emergency, for example, are unlikely to be covered.

A member (DD) queried the lack of Anomaly Detection Threshold (ADT) quarantine functionality within the EA service. They asked whether this will open up the EA service to Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, and asked the SEC Change team to explore this with the Security Sub-Committee (SSC). SB responds by indicating that the EA service will only be operational during periods where the DCC Total System is unavailable, i.e., during periods where there is no service, and that the effects of a DDoS attack would therefore be minimal. Another member (JB) asks if SRVs or

Alerts other than those in scope of the EA service are attempted during operation of the service; the DCC (DW) indicated that they would not be accepted. As a result, only those SRVs and Alerts within scope of the EA service could be used to execute a DDoS attack, further mitigating the risk of such an event. The SEC Change team (LB) and the Proposer (CD) agreed to explore the relative risks of a DDoS attack via the EA service offline, and to raise with the SSC if it is determined that the EA service allows for material security risks.

The DCC (DW) and the SEC Change team (LB) provided detail on the cost of the Proposed Solution, as reported in the Preliminary Impact Assessment (PIA). A member (EL) asks if a November 2026 implementation for the Proposed Solution is viable. The DCC (DW) affirm it is from a technical perspective, and the SEC Change team (LB) indicate that steps are being taken to streamline the governance processes to enable this.

The SEC Change team (LB) and the DCC (DW) provided an update on the different optional “add ons” to the core As Is DSP solution. These include expanding the functionality of the solution into the CSP, onto SMETS1 Devices, and into SMETS2 4G Communication Hubs. The Proposer (CD) asks about explanatory table previously provided by the SEC Change team to the Operations Sub-Group, used for the purposes of simplifying the breakdown of costs in the PIA in respect of the different optional “add on” services. The Proposer asks how that table relates to the cost breakdown of the “add on” services elaborated on by the DCC (DW). The SEC Change team (LB) says that this table represents one interpretation of the PIA figures, and will defer to the DCC’s explanation for future documentation. LB confirms that future documentation provided as part of MP293 will endeavour to explain the PIA cost options for the “add on” services in as plain English as possible.

A member (EL) said that conversations taking place within the Technical Architecture & Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) indicate that Planned Maintenances of the DCC System are likely to increase over the remaining lifetime of DSP1, and asks how this may impact the Proposed Solution. The SEC Change Team (LB) responded by indicating that an increase in DCC System downtime would likely make the cost-benefit case for MP293 more attractive, as the Proposed Solution will by its nature more benefit proportional to the amount of DCC System downtime that it covers.

The SEC Change team (LB) and the DCC (DW) provided an overview of the potential to implement the Proposed Solution into Future DSP (i.e., DSP2). As the DCC expect DSP2 to have 99.95% uptime, and the costs to implement the EA service into DSP2 are likely to fall between £2M and £3M, there is a question about the perceived cost-benefit. The Proposer (CD) queried the 99.95% uptime figure, as this, in the DCC’s own words, is “expected”. As a result, CD asked whether there is a material risk that DSP2 uptime may, once implemented, be lower than 99.95%, which would make the decision to implement the Proposed Solution into DSP2 more attractive. These concerns over the perceived DSP2 uptime are mirrored by another WG member (EL). The DCC (DW) explained that as DSP2 will be cloud-based, the uptime will be substantially higher, and affirms the anticipated uptime. The SEC Change team (LB) asked for members to indicate in the Refinement Consultation if they expect the DSP2 implementation costs to meet a cost-benefit assessment, based on their own view on DSP2 uptime.

The SEC Change team (LB) finished the presentation by providing an overview of the anticipated benefits to SEC Parties that the EA service would yield. LB encouraged members to submit fully costed and highly detailed submissions to the planned Refinement Consultation, in order to substantiate the benefits case as robustly as possible, in order for the SEC Change team and the Proposer to make an informed assessment of the Proposed Solution, and its associated “add on” options.

Next Steps

The next steps are as follows:

- Review of the Preliminary IA by the TABASC on 5 March 2026;
- Refinement Consultation: 6 March 2026 to 27 March 2026;
- Review of the Refinement Consultations the SEC Working Group on 1 April 2026; and