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Action:	For Discussion

MP293 – Deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance during Adverse Weather

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to gather the Operations Sub-Group (OPSG) views on DCC's Preliminary Impact Assessment for [MP293 – 'Deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance during Adverse Weather'](#).

2. Summary of MP293

This section summarises the key points of this Modification Proposal. More information is available in the Modification Report provided alongside this paper.

2.1 What is the issue?

Network Parties are responsible for ensuring that consumers have their power restored following damage caused by an adverse weather event such as a storm. In order to determine the size and scale of damage, a Network Party may 'ping' Smart Metering Systems (SMSs) to map out which Supply Meter Points are on-supply, and which are not.

The DCC periodically conduct Planned Maintenance, during which SMSs become non-responsive. Should a Planned Maintenance event coincide with an adverse weather event, Network Parties will lose the ability to 'ping' SMSs, impairing their ability to assess damage incurred as a result of adverse weather.

This Modification Proposal has been raised by a Network Party, asking the SEC Change Team to explore options for how Network Parties might remain in communication with their portfolio of SMSs during a DCC Planned Maintenance.

2.2 What is the impact?

Where a Network Party is not able to communicate with an SMS during or after an adverse weather event, they may be forced to deploy resources that they otherwise may not have in order to determine which of their Supply Meter Points are on-supply. This results in both an operational, logistical and financial impact.

An adverse weather event has occurred at the same time as a DCC Planned Maintenance in the past – This took place during Storm Daragh in December 2024. As a result, Network Parties have access to data to show the real-world impact on their operations as a result of an overlap. We will work with Network Parties to quantify this impact in order to build a cost-benefit assessment.

2.3 What are the Business Requirements?

Business Requirements					
Ref.	Requirement	Responsible for delivery	MoSCoW	Option 1	Option 2
1	Using the Enhanced Availability service, Users shall be able to send the following on demand SRV and receive appropriate responses: 7.4, Read Supply Status	DCC	M	X	X
2	Using the Enhanced Availability service, Users shall be able to receive this alert: AD1, Power Outage Alerts	DCC	M	X	X
3	The Enhanced Availability service must be available for SMETS2 and SMETS1 Devices.	DCC	M	X	X
4	To use the Enhanced Availability service, there shall be no changes to User-required actions or configurations. Users should not be able to distinguish between the services.	DCC	M	X	X
5	The Enhanced Availability system shall be as secure as the corresponding DCC Total System components, and use the same DUIS schema.	DCC	M	X	X
6	When a Major incident, planned maintenance, or BCDR impacts the Enhanced Availability service specifically it will not be available.	DCC	M	X	X
7	Both the DCC Total System and Enhanced Availability service will not be taken down at the same time for Maintenance or BCDR Tests.	DCC	M	X	X
8	The Enhanced Availability system shall have at least 99.5% availability.	DCC	M	X	X
9	The Enhanced Availability service must: - Have the capacity to handle at least 1,400,000 SRV7.4 plus corresponding Responses; - Alternatively, this may be expressed as an average maximum hourly volume. - Have the capacity to handle at least 1,400,000 AD1 Alerts per day; - Alternatively, this may be expressed as an average maximum hourly volume. - Ensure processing as close as possible to the existing standard DCC Total System functionality in terms of logging and messages; and - Target Response Times will be maintained	DCC	M	X	X

Business Requirements					
Ref.	Requirement	Responsible for delivery	MoSCoW	Option 1	Option 2
10	Using the Enhanced Availability service, Users shall be able to send the following on demand SRVs and receive appropriate responses: 2.2, Prepay Top-up device 4.3, Read Instantaneous Prepay Values	DCC	S		X
11	Using the Enhanced Availability service, Users should be able to receive appropriate responses: N56, Prepay Top-up device	DCC	S		X
12	When in use as part of the “Should scenarios” identified, the Enhanced Availability service should: - Have the capacity to handle at least 9 million SRVs per day plus corresponding Responses; and - Have the capacity to handle at least 500,000 N56 Alerts per day	DCC	S		X

2.4 What is the Proposed Solution?

The Proposer has asked the SEC Change Team & the DCC to explore a means by which a limited number of Service Reference Variants (SRVs)/Alerts remain available to Network Parties during a Planned Maintenance, i.e., SRVs/Alerts with an “Enhanced Availability”. The DCC and its associated Data Service Providers (DSPs) and Communication Service Providers (CSPs), would look to make changes that would enable a set of SRVs/Alerts to be usable by SEC Parties even when all other SRVs/Alerts are unavailable due to a DCC service outage. The Proposer has asked that the scope of this Proposed Solution should cover DCC Planned Maintenance, Unplanned Maintenance, and Business Continuity Disaster Recovery (BCDR) activities. The Proposer has asked that the SEC Change Team and the DCC explore this solution in respect of both the As Is DSP (DSP1) and Future DSP (DSP2).

Proposer’s core “Must” Solution (Solution Option 1)

The Proposer has asked for an SRV and an Alert to be included in the scope of their solution. In this way, even when an adverse weather event happens concurrent with a Planned Maintenance, a Network Party could still be in communication with an SMS via one of the “Enhanced Availability” SRV. These are:

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

As a result, both the DCC and Network Parties could achieve their operational goals during a Maintenance and an adverse weather event respectively, without detriment to the other. The Business Requirements for this solution can be found in the above section, designated by the “Must” requirements, and also marked as Solution Option 1.

Working Group's alternative "Must & Should" Solution (Solution Option 2)

During a meeting of the December Working Group, members proposed an alternative solution option for the SEC Change Team to consider. This option involved including a number of other SRVs/Alerts that would be beneficial for Suppliers and their Prepayment operations. It was suggested that as the Enhanced Availability would allow for continued usage of certain SRVs/Alerts during an outage, that this would have broader applications beyond adverse weather, such as allowing Prepayment consumers to continue to top-up during an outage.

Whilst this does not specifically relate to the scope of adverse weather as given by the Proposer, it was argued that broadening the scope of the solution in this way might broaden the appeal of the Proposed Solution by introducing benefits for classes of SEC Party other than Network Parties. In addition the addition of these SRVs will increase the efficiency of change as it will deliver increased benefits for a relatively minimal price increase.

The proposed SRVs/Alerts for the "Should" solution are as follows:

- 2.2, Prepay Top-up device;
- 4.3, Read Instantaneous Prepay Values; and
- N56, Prepay Top-up device

As such, Solution Option 2 (the "Should" option, as referenced in the Business Requirements") will cover **both** the three SRVs/Alerts above, as well as the two in Solution Option 1.

3. Preliminary Impact Assessment

The DCC provided a breakdown of the costs associated with the two Proposed Solution options ("Must" & "Should") against their service providers, including DSP & CSP.

As Is DSP (DSP1):

Costs:

The DCC have given a "base" cost for delivery of the "Must" and "Must & Should", which would reduce period where the selected SRVs and Alerts are unavailable during a DCC service outage from six hours to between zero¹ and two hours.

For the "Must" solution, as the AD1 Alert is not present on SMETS1 SMSs, these costs cover an increase in the availability of the 7.4 SRV on SMETS1 SMS, and an increase in both the 7.4 SRV and AD1 Alert in SMETS2 SMSs.

The DCC have also provided a series of "optional" costs that would allow for a reduction in downtime from zero to two hours down to zero hours by implementing the solution into the CSPs as well as into As Is DSP. Several combinations of costs have been provided that would allow for:

- SMETS2 CSPs - Reduction in downtime for SRVs on SMETS2 SMSs (for SRVs in both "Must" and "Must & Should" options).
- SMETS2 (4G Comms Hubs), AD1 Alert Only – Reduction in downtime for AD1 only
- SMETS1 Service Providers (IOC, MOC, FOC, DCO) – Reduction in downtime for SRVs on SMETS1 SMS (i.e., the 7.4 only for the "Must" solution).

¹ The DCC cannot guarantee zero downtime entirely, as there may be periods where the system is unavailable for seconds or minutes. This applies to all instances of the use of "zero".

These costs have been summarised in the below table:

Action	Downtime (Hours)				Cost	
	SMETS1		SMETS2			
	SRVs	Alerts	SRVs	Alerts	Min	Max
Current Arrangements	<6	n/A	<6	<6	£0.00	£0.00
As Is DSP, delivery of:	0-2	n/A	0-2	0-2		
“Must” Requirements					£610,000	£820,000
“Must & Should” Requirements					£680,000	£900,000
SMETS2 CSPs	0-2	n/A	0*	0-2	£400,000	£450,000
SMETS 2 (4G Comms Hubs), AD1						
Alert Only	0-2	n/A	0*	0*	£900,000	£1,100,000
SMETS1 Service Providers (IOC, MOC, FOC, DCO)	0*	n/A	0*	0*	£2,500,000	£4,000,000
As Is DSP Running Costs (2 Years)					£600,000	£600,000

*including a negligible amount of non-zero downtime

Lead Times:

The DCC have indicated that there will be a three-to-six-month lead time for changes to the As Is DSP. This would mean that the “core” solution whereby downtime is reduced from six hours to zero to two hours could be delivered within that time frame. However, the lead time for changes to the CSPs are different. Delivery of the “SMETS2 (4G Comms Hubs), AD1 Alert Only” changes are expected to take up to 18 months, and the CSP Central & South has not been determined at this stage. Therefore, should the Proposer wish to explore development of the entire package of solution options to deliver zero downtime, they may expect a phased implementation where the “core” solution is delivered up to a year before the entire solution.

Future DSP (DSP2)

Future DSP is expected to have a service measure of 99.99% uptime. However, should the Proposer wish to explore an increase in Future DSP uptime up to a higher value of 99.999%, they have been provided a Rough Order of Magnitude cost of £2-£3 million pounds to do so.

4. Questions for the OPSG

We seek the OPSG’s input on the following questions to feed into the Modification Report & Working Group:

- Is the solution operationally appropriate?
- Any further feedback or considerations on this proposal?

5. Next steps

The SEC Change Team will discuss this Modification at the SEC Working Group meeting on 4 March 2026 and then look to publish a Refinement Consultation immediately after.

6. Recommendations

The OPSG is asked to:

- **PROVIDE** feedback on the Preliminary Impact Assessment for MP293.

Lydia Bentley

SEC Change Team

16 February 2026

Attachments:

- MP293 Modification Report v0.3
- **Annex A:** Business Requirements V0.4
- **Annex B:** DCC Preliminary Impact Assessment