

This document is classified as **White** in accordance with the Panel Information Policy. Information can be shared with the public, and any members may publish the information, subject to copyright.

Operations Group Meeting 67

8 March 2022, 09:20 – 16:30

Teleconference

OPSG_67_0803 - Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group Chair	Dave Warner
DCC	Lisa Moran
Network Parties	Gemma Slaney
	Matthew Alexander
Large Suppliers	Rochelle Harrison
	Martin Christie
	Nick Coombs
	Kevin Donnelly
	George Macgregor (<i>Alternate for Eleanor Judson</i>)
	Ralph Baxter
Small Suppliers	Cassie Bowerman (<i>Alternate for Kate Barnes</i>)
Other SEC Parties	Michael Snowden
	Elias Hanna
	Geoff Huckerby

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Easton Brown
	Wendy Liddell
	Marlene Gibson-Skinner
	Darren Robbins (Part) (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)
	Claire Aspin (Part) (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)
	Graeme Liggett (Part) (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)
	Paul Weatherly (Part) (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)
	Gary Stuart (Part) (<i>Agenda Item 6 & 7</i>)

Managed by

	Dominic Butt (Part) (Agenda Item 13)
	Viviane Da Silva (Part) (Agenda Item 13)
	Andrew Rabey (Part) (Agenda Item 13)
	Gav Parrott (Part) (Agenda Item 10)
	Leigh Hill (Part) (Agenda Item 10)
	Keith Foster (Part) (Agenda Item 11)
	Ian Marshall (Part) (Agenda Item 11)
	Stacey Kirton (Part) (Agenda Item 12)
	Ian Brown (Part) (Agenda Item 9)
	Tom Rothery (Part) (Agenda Item 14)
	Janine Hughes (Part) (Agenda Item 14)
	Louise Dickinson (Part) (Agenda Item 18)
	Veronica Asantewaa (Meeting Secretary)
SECAS	Joey Manners
	Eugene Asante
	Kev Duddy (Part) (Agenda Item 17)
TABASC	Julian Hughes
BEIS	Natasha Free
	Raymond Elliot
	Eleanor Taylor

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Large Suppliers	Emslie Law

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG_65.

The OPSG **AGREED** the redlined comments and **APPROVED** the minutes from OPSG 65 as final.

2. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the OPSG Actions Outstanding. Actions were noted as completed where appropriate.

Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 63/07	SECAS to ensure that the Project Brief for the monitoring and assurance of DCC Services includes the work to address DCC non-compliances.	04/01/2022	08/03/2022	N/A	SECAS
SECAS noted that the Project Brief draft was shared with OPSG members. The Project will monitor the DCC Non-Compliances work as part of refining and developing the definitions, processes and key considerations for monitoring and assurance of DCC Services. Status: Closed.					

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

3. DCC Operational Update

The DCC presented its regular update on its service operations.

The DCC reported that it has achieved 16.6k daily installations, noting that the rate continues to increase towards pre Covid levels.

The DCC noted that the previously identified trend in Service Request (SR) ratio for devices was due to Users attempting retries, with an average of six retry attempts being made each time. The OPSG noted that this may not fully explain all the observed behaviour of this ratio.

The DCC noted that it has seen small, but noticeable, improvement in success rates of SMETS1 and SMETS2 prepayment top ups in February 2022. The OPSG noted that failed prepayment top ups are not reported following an outage. The OPSG suggested that the DCC indicate the level of service availability against the performance of prepayment Devices.

SMETS1 Final Operating Capability (FOC) remains an outlier, with overall success at 34% for the low transaction volumes involved. One specific defect has been identified: excluding these installations, the FOC success rate was 88%, still materially lower than other cohorts and SMETS2.

The DCC has identified a correlation between success rates and Devices which are not compliant with Radio Frequency (RF) requirements ("noisy meters"). The DCC are proposing remediation actions for such installations. The OPSG noted that previously the DCC had not identified any correlation between 'noisy meters' and performance issues (previously raised under the RF Noise agenda item), and requested that the DCC return to the OPSG with an overview of the identified impacts on Business Process by RF Noise. The OPSG also asked the DCC to consider how these impacts and the identified impacts on 'Non-contactable CHs' can be presented in a 'Failure Delta' on Business Process Performance indicators.

The DCC noted that there are approx. 578 prepayment Devices that are unresponsive across all SMETS1 cohorts and will continue to investigate the root cause.

The DCC reported that there had been one Category 1 Major Incident in February 2022. The DCC noted that the overall volume of incidents had decreased by 10% in February 2022.

The DCC reported that it is currently tracking 72 open Problems, 65 of these have a confirmed root cause and remediation plans established.

The DCC reported that there have been 296 changes, achieving a 96.62% success rate with no adverse impact. The DCC highlighted that there had been an unplanned maintenance change on 17 February 2022 to fix a DB Lock issue for DXC Trilliant devices. A Large Supplier (LS) member noted that they had experienced an adverse impact from this maintenance change. The DCC noted that it will investigate. A LS member commented that adverse impacts from maintenance changes are occurring more frequently.

The DCC reported that the adverse weather process trial is still ongoing; the process had not been triggered by the recent storms.

The OPSG noted the forward view of outages for 2022. The OPSG suggested that the DCC include a forecast view of planned and unplanned maintenance. The OPSG also requested that the DCC include a view of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BCDR) maintenance windows.

3.1. SMETS1

The DCC reported that it has now migrated 7.7 million meters, with 7.5 million meters being operated by Suppliers.

The DCC noted that it has seen an increase in failure rates for SRV1.1.1 'Update Import Tariff' and SRV1.6 'Update Payment Mode' (approx. 5k received per month), which could have a negative impact on consumers. The DCC noted that it will continue to investigate.

ACTION OPSG 67/01: The DCC to investigate the adverse impact to Users of the unplanned maintenance change to fix a DB Lock issue on 17 February 2022.

ACTION OPSG 67/02: The DCC to include a forecast of planned and unplanned maintenance to the 'View of Outages for 2022'.

ACTION OPSG 67/03: The DCC to include BCDR maintenance windows in the 'View of Outages for 2022'.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

4. Tariff Update - 1 April 2022 Price Change Communication

The DCC outlined the content of the communication that will be sent to SEC Parties regarding the price cap increase on 1 April 2022.

The DCC had assessed the likely increase in traffic on 1st April 2022 and have confirmed that the DCC infrastructure will be able to handle this additional traffic, with DCC Services operating as normal alongside the orchestration of the price update.

Nonetheless, recognising the importance of this event to DCC Users and end consumers, DCC are recommending some precautionary actions.

One such precaution is the suspension (at the request of Users) of scheduled reads on 1 April. SECAS queried whether the DCC felt confident with the regulatory position on this approach and if they are removing/deleting schedules on behalf of DCC Users or just suspending them, as the SEC does not allow for the deletion of DSP schedules without the appropriate Service Requests from a User (e.g. SR5.3 'Delete Schedule', SR6.23 'Update Security Credentials (CoS)', SR8.3 'Decommission Device'). The DCC noted they had discussed this with their regulatory team and felt confident they would be acting within the legal framework, and not undertaking any such activity without permission from Users. [Post Meeting Note: The DCC have confirmed that the approach will be for DSP schedules to be 'suspended' but remain active until 2 April 2022.]

The OPSG were concerned that, regarding 'Suspend 4.6.1 daily schedule reads for 1 April', there is a risk that the DSP may be manually removing scheduled reads in error, which has not been approved by the Suppliers. The DCC noted that it has additional checks in place to stop this from occurring and will only be removed this with User's approval. The DCC also emphasised that the operational process at the DSP will be rigorously controlled to ensure that no errors occurred.

The OPSG highlighted that there will need to be an enduring process for price changes in the future, which may include raising a SEC Modification.

The DCC noted the Other Users will not be impacted by the price cap increase as they have minimal traffic. The OPSG noted that this should be included in the communications.

The DCC noted that it will send out a draft of the communication to be sent to all DCC Users for OPSG review. The DCC requested that OPSG members provide any further comments by 11 March 2022.

ACTION OPSG 67/04: The DCC to include the impact to Other Users in the 1 April 2022 price change Communication.

ACTION OPSG 67/05: The DCC to propose an enduring process for price cap changes in the future.

ACTION OPSG 67/06: The OPSG to provide any further comments on the 1 April 2022 price change communication by 11 March.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

5. Annual Outage & BCDR 2022 Plan

The DCC reported that the planned maintenance change on 1 March 2022 for the Technical Refresh was successful with no outages experienced.

The OPSG endorsed the Annual Outages and BCDR plan for 2022, which includes additional windows to execute the DSP Technical Refresh (this had been reviewed in detail at a workshop on 23 February 2022 (OPSG 65x)).

The OPSG repeated its unhappiness at the level of outages required, this being significantly beyond the 6 hours per month anticipated in the SEC.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

6. FOC/DXC Heightened Service Management Plan

The DCC presented the remediation plan now in place for FOC/DXC. This sets out an extensive programme of work, scheduled to complete in June 2022. The DCC noted that it has currently achieved 34 days of stable service (no Category 1 or 2 Incidents) and implemented 26 fixes in February 2022.

The OPSG noted the extensive nature of the remediation work that was having to be carried out.

The OPSG requested that expectations for the progressive improvement in performance measures during the execution of the remediation work be added to the plan, and also sought assurance that at the end of this work FOC/DXC will be in its "enduring configuration".

ACTION OPSG 67/07: The DCC to include expectations for improving performance measures in the FOC/DXC remediation plan.

ACTION OPSG 67/08: The DCC to provide assurance that the enduring configuration for FOC/DXC will have been established at the end of the remediation plan.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

7. CSP N Performance

The DCC provided an update on CSP N Performance, and the progress made against the Performance Measurement (PM) 2 Service Improvement Plans (SIPs).

The DCC reported that CSP N had achieved 96.33% performance for PM2 'Percentage of Category 1 firmware payloads completed within the relevant TRT' in January 2022, against the upper target set out in the remediation plan of 99%. The DCC noted that it is on target to achieve approximately 97% in February 2022. The OPSG were pleased with the improvement in performance since the commencement of the remediation plan and thanked the DCC for its efforts.

The DCC will present the March Performance and discuss the review of the CSP N Remediation Plan at the 25 April 2022 meeting (OPSG_70).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

8. OPSG Issues Log - ACB Certificates

The OPSG noted the summary of issues identified with the ACB Certificate replacement process. The DCC noted that it continues to work the Users on the remediation plans on these issues. A LS questioned DCC's statement that failure to replace Manufacturer ACB Certificates in newly commissioned devices had no impact on end consumers, the DCC noted the comment and agreed to remove the statement from future presentations. The OPSG highlighted that some ACB Certificates may be near their expiry date there may have an impact on customers if they are not updated. The DCC noted that it is in the DSP contract to renew these certificates every 10 years. The OPSG noted that this may clash with upcoming industry programmes.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

9. OPSG Issues Log – SMI Inaccuracies

The DCC noted that from its investigation with four SEC Parties, it has discovered that there are more Devices in the Smart Meter Inventory (SMI) than in the Suppliers' own inventories. The DCC noted that it will continue with its investigation to assess the overall volumes and impact of the misalignments.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

10. CH Supply Chain Update

The DCC provide an update on the CH supply chain issues.

The DCC confirmed that there will be temporary £3.50 price increase on 2.6 million Single Band Communication Hubs (SBCH) between March 22 – March 2023.

A LS noted that the various costs for CHs were unclear, highlighting that it seemed like Suppliers were overpaying for CHs. The DCC noted CH costs are discussed at its Quarterly Finance Forum (QFF), however it will investigate this with its commercial team.

The DCC provided a CH supply risk profile for the coming quarter, following the adoption of the Temporary CH Ordering and Delivery Rules (TCHODR) for 2022. The DCC noted that the RAG status for CH supply will be Amber, as there is still a partial supply risk for Q1 2022. The OPSG asked DCC to provide a forecast for CH supply for the rest of 2022.

The DCC reported that it has issued a consultation ([here](#)) on two options for TCHODR for 2023, which will close on 21 March 2022. The DCC noted that it recommended option 2, which will enhance and extend the TCHODR. The OPSG noted that the TCHODR can no longer be defined as temporary rules as this has been in place for over a year, the OPSG queried whether there will be an enduring process going forward. The DCC noted that this will be considered in the future.

ACTION OPSG 67/09: The DCC to provide a forecast of the CH supply risk profile for 2022.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

11. Faster Switching Go Live

The DCC briefed the OPSG on the Faster Switching Programme.

The OPSG noted that it will consider the readiness of the SEC-related aspects of DCC services and infrastructures for Transition Stage 2 and Transition Stage 3 for its role in faster switching, and a readiness report will be forwarded to the SEC Panel.

The OPSG noted that the DCC will return in April 2022 to present the readiness statement for Stage 2 for Faster Switching.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

12. Non-contactable CHs

The OPSG noted the progress of the pilot which involved 4 Suppliers. The DCC noted that the volume of non-contactable CHs had reduced as the CHs were upgraded to the latest firmware version. The OPSG questioned how this links to the reported performance of business processes, as shown in the Business Process Indicators. The DCC noted that it will investigate.

ACTION OPSG 67/10: The DCC to assess how the work on non-contactable CHs will impact the performance of business processes, as reported in the Business Process Indicators.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

13. Network Evolution Programme

13.1. DSP Programme Update

The DCC reported that the Strategic Outline Business Case was submitted to BEIS in January 2022. The DCC is currently reviewing the responses to the Request For Information (RFI). The DCC commented that early analysis of the RFI responses had indicated a need for cloud technology, however these are still being reviewed and investigated. The DCC noted that it will look to develop options for incremental changes to the DSP. The DCC will share outputs from the RFI process with the Sub-Committees in April 2022.

The DCC reported that the current contract for the DSP DCC Service Management System (DSMS) is due to expire in October 2024, and requirements for the successor service are currently being considered. The DCC confirmed that the expiry date for DSMS had been extended from October 2022 to October 2024 in line with the DSP Programme. The DCC noted it will provide a further update

in April 2022. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide an engagement plan for SEC Sub-Committees.

13.2. 4G CH Programme Update

The DCC reported that it will provide a business case for implementing SBCH and Dual Band CHs (DBCHs) concurrently. The DCC will present this for BEIS endorsement in May 2022. The OPSG questioned the criteria used to assess the business cases for SBCH and DBCH, and requested that (with the agreement of BEIS) more details be provided.

The OPSG noted that SEC Parties are often excluded from the decisions on business cases, although these might need to take account of User priorities, and might also have implications for Users. BEIS noted that it will investigate further.

ACTION OPSG 67/11: The DCC to provide an engagement plan for Sub-Committees to review the new proposed service for DSMS.

ACTION OPSG 67/12: The DCC (with the agreement of BEIS) to provide the criteria used to assess the business case for SBCHs and DBCHs in the 4G Network Evolution Program.

ACTION OPSG 67/13: The DCC (with the agreement of BEIS) to provide an industry engagement plan to assess the User implications of SBCHs and DBCHs options in the 4G Network Evolution Program.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

14. June 2022 SEC Release

The DCC presented an update on the June 2022 SEC Release which will be implemented on 30 June 2022. The DCC reported that the scope of the SEC Release will include the following Modifications:

- [SECMP0024 'Enduring Approach to Communication Hub Firmware Management'](#)
- [MP104 'Security Improvements'](#)
- [SECMP0015 'GPF timestamp for reading instantaneous Gas values'](#)
- [SECMP0007 'Firmware updates to IHDs and PPMIDs'](#)

The OPSG noted that the CH firmware updates required to enable the SECMP0007 functionality will become available after the Release has been implemented. The OPSG asked the DCC to confirm planned dates for when the firmware will be available for rollout.

The DCC noted that all SEC Parties will need to be compliant with MP104 by the June 2022 Release. This requires all DCC Users to comply with specified requirements for signing service requests: non-compliant requests will fail. The OPSG reiterated the need for the DCC to provide guidance on how User's system can become compliant. The OPSG requested that progress towards readiness reports for this Release include a summary of how many Users were ready to meet the requirement. The OPSG also requested that, for a period after implementation, a report be produced to identify how many SRs had been rejected as result of not been signed with XML signed Certificates.

The DCC noted that the components for the Release are on track, noting the components have been built and are now in the testing phrase.

ACTION OPSG 67/14: The DCC to confirm when firmware detailed in SECMP0007 'Firmware updates to IHDs and PPMIDs' will be available to Users.

ACTION OPSG 67/15: The DCC provide a summary of how many Users were ready to meet the requirement of MP104 'Security Improvements', as part of the June 2022 SEC Release.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

15. OPSG Project: Performance Assurance Framework

This item was deferred due to more time needed to produce the PID.

16. OPSG Project: Monitoring and Assurance of DCC Services

SECAS noted that there had been no further comments raised by members on the Project Brief. The OPSG noted that members can still provide comments on the Project Brief until 11 March 2022.

The OPSG:

- **NOTED** the presentation; and
- **ENDORSED** the progression of the Project Brief for SEC Panel review and decision on 18 March 2022.

17. MP155 'Communications Hub Re-Flash'

SECAS provided an overview of [MP155 'Communications Hub Re-Flash'](#).

The OPSG noted that the modification will need to ensure that Advanced Shipment Notification (ASN) file will not be duplicated as this may be rejected by Users' internal systems. SECAS noted that it will investigate.

The OPSG questioned whether SoLR (Supplier of Last Resort) CHs can be re-flashed. The DCC noted that these devices were unable to be re-flashed as they were returned to a different Supplier, however they may reconsider this in the future.

The OPSG commented that some Users may not want to reflash 2G/3G devices as these will soon be superseded by 4G devices.

OPSG Members noted that at present it is difficult to forecast whether they will use the reflash capability: this would depend on the nature of the solution to be provided and the costs involved.

The OPSG noted that a timeline is needed of when the reflashing capability would become available, and a statement of the costs quoted by the Communication Service Providers (CSPs).

SECAS advised both these items would be included within the Preliminary Impact Assessment by the DCC as a matter of course.

ACTION OPSG 67/16: SECAS to ensure that the Advanced Shipment Notification (ASN) is captured in MP155 business requirements to ensure that the ASN files are not duplicated.

The OPSG noted the presentation.

18. Any Other Business (AOB)

18.1. Business and Development Plan Workshop

The OPSG provided comments and feedback on the Business and Development Plan Workshop.

OPSG Members noted that for some topics the workshop presenters did not demonstrate familiarity with extensive work already done (for example, work scheduling at the DSP).

The OPSG members noted that they were unaware of some of the programmes that were being discussed, and that some of the discussions in the breakout sessions were not accurately recorded, (especially some negative comments). The OPSG were concerned that some of these programmes that were discussed will be taken forward without full support from the industry.

The OPSG expressed concerns about the discussions of data sharing, noting that privacy considerations appeared to have been given little weight. The OPSG noted that, if this topic is pursued, the DCC will need to provide much more information on how customer data will be used.

The DCC noted that the OPSG can provide any further comments to customerengagement@smartdcc.co.uk.

18.2. 1 April Price Increase

The OPSG Chair noted that it appeared that the topic of customer manual reads related to the 1 April 2022 price increase is being discussed broadly in the media.

18.3. Contingency Arrangements for Emergency Firmware Rollout

The OPSG Chair noted that work was underway to design and propose suitable contingency processes to manage the emergency rollout of firmware updates.

There was no further business, and the Chair closed the meeting.

Next Reporting Meeting: 28 March 2022; Next Main Meeting: 12 April 2022