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Action:	For Decision

MP155 DCC Preliminary Assessment

1. Purpose

[MP155 'Communications Hub Re-Flash'](#) is currently undergoing the Refinement Process. The Data Communications Company (DCC) has provided its Preliminary Assessment. We seek the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee's (TABASC) input on the Proposed Solution before carrying out the Refinement Consultation.

This paper provides a high-level summary of the key points. The business requirements can be found in Appendix A and the Preliminary Assessment in Appendix B.

2. Summary of MP155

This section summarises the key points of this Modification Proposal. More information is available in the Modification Report in Appendix C.

2.1 What is the issue?

Suppliers are holding stocks of Communications Hubs in warehouses on old firmware versions that they are not installing. For them to install these and carry out Over The Air (OTA) updates at installation to provide the latest firmware can take a significant amount of time and increases the length of installation, disrupting consumers.

Not resolving this issue could mean Smart Metering installations could take significantly longer than they should. Also, it could increase the chance of consumers being left with out-dated Communications Hubs which do not allow consumers to reap the full benefits of smart metering.

At the time of the Preliminary Assessment there were approximately 300,000 Communications Hubs with a Firmware Version of N-4 or older held in stock by SEC Parties. This number has since reduced to approximately 258,000.

2.2 What is the Proposed Solution?

The solution seeks to facilitate re-flashing of Communications Hubs by the Communications Service Provider (CSP). The DCC User would be able to request this service via email to the DCC Logistics team who would arrange collection and delivery to the relevant CSP. The costs would be recovered by the Explicit Charge.

The business requirements for this solution can be found in Appendix A.

3. DCC Preliminary Assessment

The DCC has completed a Preliminary Assessment against the business requirements, and its response can be found in Appendix B. In its response, the DCC has set out two options for how this solution may be delivered.

Both options have the following features in common:

- The DCC will implement a process to manage requests from SEC Parties to re-flash Communications Hubs;
- Requests to re-flash batches of Communications Hubs will be recorded as Work Orders in the DCC Service Management System and assigned to the relevant CSP;
- The relevant CSP will update each Communications Hub that is returned to it for re-flashing to the latest production Firmware Version for that Device Model and redeliver it to the SEC Party that requested the service;
- The CSPs will both need to procure additional secure storage facilities to house Communications Hubs that are going through this process.
- The CSPs will both need to develop and implement processes to re-flash Communications Hubs at scale. CSP C&S has noted this will include development of a 'multi-jig' solution that could handle up to eight Communications Hubs in parallel.

In both options, it is expected that the cost of providing the Communications Hub re-flashing service be passed on to the SEC Parties that make use of the service by means of an Explicit Charge.

3.1 Option A

Under Option A, after the Communications Hub has been uplifted to the latest available firmware via a re-flash, CSPs will update their asset records with the new Firmware Versions and then notify the Data Service Provider (DSP) using the existing Communications Hub Pre-Notification (CSPM-N3) interface within the CSP Management Gateway.

On receipt of the notification from the CSP, the DSP will update the Smart Metering Inventory (SMI) with the new information received on the CSPM-N3 interface, including any updates to the Firmware Version. Note that all parameters are mandatory on the CSPM-N3 interface and, therefore, all of them must be provided. This is existing functionality within the DSP solution and, therefore, no additional development effort is required.

This is the preferred option by the DCC as it would not require any changes to the existing DSP architecture.

3.2 Option B

Under Option B, the CSPs will not notify DSP following re-flashing of Communications Hubs. Instead, after a Communications Hub has been uplifted to the latest Firmware Version available via a re-flash, DCC Logistics will share the details of the Firmware Version with DSP.

A new file upload interface will be provided within the Self-Service Management Interface (SSMI) for the purpose of re-flashing a list of identified Communications Hubs. This interface and the subsequent processing will be built in accordance with the existing processing patterns for file upload. The file will contain the list of Communications Hub IDs and the new Firmware Versions.

The DSP will update the SMI with the new Firmware Version(s) for the list of Communications Hubs. Only Communications Hubs with an SMI status of 'Pending' will be eligible for re-flashing and this will be enforced by way of validation checks within SSMI.

3.3 DCC implementation

The DCC has provided the following cost estimates in the Preliminary Assessment:

Solution option	Design, Build and PIT cost	Impact Assessment cost
Option 1	£3,730,000	£225,159
Option 2	£3,880,000	£237,970

The DCC has advised that both options will require 90 Working Days for an Impact Assessment to be completed, and approximately a 12-month lead time from decision to the end of PIT, not including System Integration Testing (SIT) or User integration Testing (UIT)). Therefore, the solution would be targeted for the November 2024 SEC Release.

4. Questions for the TABASC

We seek the TABASC's view on the following questions to feed into the Modification Report before we proceed with the Refinement Consultation:

- Does the DCC's response and solution(s) deliver the business requirements?
- Is the DCC's solution(s) cost-effective?
- Would the DCC's solution option(s) have a negative impact on the technical and/or business architecture of either the DCC Systems or Users' systems?
- Do TABASC members have any concerns with proceeding with a solution to this issue?

5. Next steps

We will also be seeking comments from the Working Group and the Operations Group in early July 2022. Following this, we will issue a Refinement Consultation to gather wider industry feedback. Following industry feedback SECAS will work with the Proposer to determine whether there is sufficient business case to proceed to an Impact Assessment.

6. Recommendations

The TABASC is asked to:

- **CONFIRM** that the DCC's response and solution option 1 delivers the business requirements.
- **CONFIRM** that DCC's solution option 1 is most cost-effective.
- **PROVIDE** views on whether the DCC's solution option 1 has a negative impact on the technical and/or business architecture of either the DCC Systems or Users' systems.
- **PROVIDE** views on whether members would have any concerns with this issue should the modification not proceed.

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30 June 2022

Attachments:

- **Appendix A:** MP155 Business requirements
- **Appendix B:** MP155 DCC Preliminary Assessment
- **Appendix C:** MP155 Modification Report