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MP293 ‘Deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance during Adverse Weather’

December 2025 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

SEC Party Category	Working Group Members	Representing
Large Suppliers	Julie Brown (JB)	British Gas
	Sharon Armitage (SA)	E.ON
	Francesca Scott (FS)	EDF
	Jack Marling (JMa)	Octopus Energy
	Joey Manners (JM)	Octopus Energy
	Ralph Baxter (RB)	Octopus Energy
	Emslie Law (EL)	OVO
	Mahfuzar Rahman (MR)	Scottish Power
	Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita
Small Suppliers	Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG Global
	Steve Blackler (SB)	E Gas and Electricity
Other SEC Parties	Patricia Massey (PM)	BEAMA
	Swetta Coopamah (SCo)	BEAMA
	Beth Tatton (BT)	Calisen Metering
	Martin Bell (MB)	EUA
	Michael Snowden (MSn)	Secure Meters
Network Parties	Catherine Duggan (CD)	SP Electricity North West
	Kirsty Maddock (KM)	National Grid Electricity Distribution
	James Shippey (JSh)	Northern Powergrid
Ofgem	Ian Chalfon (IC)	Ofgem

Other Participants		
DCC		
Bradley Baker (BB)	David Walsh (DW)	
SECAS		
Simon Grimwood (SG) <i>WG Chair</i>	Abi Obadan (AO) <i>Meeting Secretary</i>	Lydia Bentley (LB) <i>Lead Analyst</i>
Marc Rhodes (MRh)	Ali Beard (AB)	Georgiana Severin (GSe)

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator & Secretariat (SECAS) provided a summary of the Modification and its background.

Modification Overview

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 (SMS) to map out which Supply Meter Points are on-supply, and which are not.

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

This Modification Proposal has been raised by a Network Party, asking SECAS to explore options for how a DCC Planned Maintenance might be deferred should it coincide with an adverse weather event.

Proposed Solution

[MP293 'Deferment of DCC Planned Maintenance during Adverse Weather'](#) has two Solution options in scope:

1. Requiring the DCC to defer a Planned Maintenance when it will overlap with an adverse weather event. This will require DCC Service Provider contract changes.
2. The DCC will make a limited number of Service Reference Variants (SRV)/Alerts available to Network Parties during a Planned Maintenance, i.e., SRVs/Alerts with an "Enhanced Availability"

The Proposer has asked SECAS to explore these two options in parallel; however this paper will focus on the "Enhanced Availability" Solution.

"Enhanced Availability" Solution

During discussions on the deferral Solution option, the DCC raised the prospect of a potential Solution in which a small number of SRV and/or Alerts could be kept on during a Planned Maintenance. 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" SRVs. 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 Proposer has asked SECAS to explore the "Enhanced Availability" Solution alongside the deferral Solution option, with a preference for the "Enhanced Availability" Solution as the primary means of resolving this Modification's problem statement. Following discussion between Network Parties and the Energy Network Association (ENA), the trade association for Network Parties, the Proposer has identified two SRVs/Alerts that they believe would enable sufficient communication with SMS' during an adverse weather event. These are SRV 7.4 'Read Supply Status', and Alert AD1 'Power Outage Event'.

Working Group

Working Group Discussion

LB (SECAS) gave an overview of the Modification, and the Proposed Solution. The Proposer (CD) then provided an overview of the anticipated benefits of the Proposed Solution and outlined why the Modification should be implemented into both the DCCs Data Service Provider (DSP)¹ and 2.

LB told WG Members (and the Proposer then elaborated on this) how an overlap between an adverse weather event and a DCC Planned or Unplanned Maintenance may be damaging to Network Party operations. The Proposer clarified the scope of the problem covers any DCC outages or downtime, not just DCC Planned or Unplanned Maintenance. LB told WG Members that when an outage overlaps with adverse weather, a Network Party may be required to send operatives into the field where they might otherwise not have had to, which may, for those operatives, present a threat or risk to their personal safety.

A WG Member (EL) challenged the assertion that the benefits case for the Proposed Solution is predicated upon the mitigation of risk or threat to personal safety of Network Party operatives. The Proposer responded to this assertion and re-iterated that in their view that this would be the case. EL also challenged the core assertion of the Modification, namely, that DCC services should always be available to Users, in this case, Network Parties. EL asserted that the original business case for the Smart Metering Implementation programme (SMIP) was that the DCC systems will be unavailable for certain periods of time, and that expending resource to address this perceived issue (as is being proposed in MP293) may not be appropriate. The Proposer did not agree with this assertion, however.

LB told WG Members how the DCC initially proposed to include other SRVs within the scope of the “Enhanced Availability” solution that may be beneficial to Suppliers, for example, those relating to Prepayment Meter functionality. This, in the DCCs view, would have broadened the benefits case of the Modification and therefore made the associated costs more proportionate. LB told WG Members how the Proposer preferred instead to ensure that the Proposed Solution, within the confines of the Modification, only included the Network Party-benefitting SRVs, however. The Proposer is not opposed to the DCC developing a solution that does include Supplier-benefitting SRVs, but only if the DCC may develop them in a way that would neither impede the delivery of the Network Party-centric solution, or increase costs within the Modification.

AB (SECAS) reminded WG Members that it is within the remit of the WG to identify and propose an alternative solution to a Modification, which SECAS are then obligated to explore in parallel with the solution option presented by the Proposer. The DCC (DW) proposed an alternative solution using this mechanism, whereby the scope of the “Enhanced Availability” solution will also include two SRVs that would be beneficial to Suppliers as well as the original Network Party SRVs, for a total of four. The WG Chair then asked Suppliers if they would support this alternative solution. EL agreed in principle, advising that the Technical Architecture & Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) would need to take a view on this. LB answered that the Modification will be discussed at TABASC on Tuesday 9 December 2025. RB, JB, SA & KC all supported the proposal for the alternative solution. Another Working Group member (DD) advised SECAS they the Supplier-benefitting SRVs would need to be carefully considered as part of the development of the alternative Proposed Solution.

Next Steps

SECAS will engage with the Proposer to address the points raised by WG Members. Following this SECAS will look to initiate a Preliminary Impact Assessment with the DCC.

In parallel, SECAS will work with WG Members to develop the alternative Proposed Solution.