SECMP0067 'Service Request Traffic Management'
August 2019 Working Group Meeting summary

A summary of the issue and the proposed solution was provided. In addition to this SECAS explained how SECMP0067 looks to incorporate the proposed solution to SECMP0028 'Prioritising Service Requests'. It was also agreed that the basis of this Working Group meeting was to address comments and questions raised in the last meeting in July 2019.

Business Case for SECMP0067

The start of the discussions centred on a recap of the Proposed Solution and the Alternative Solution. At the previous meeting, the Working Group had a preference of the Proposed Solution. The Working Group had no further comment on the solutions being offered. This led to discussion of the business case for the Proposal's solution, where a cost benefit analysis was presented by the DCC.

DCC presented a business case as part of this giving their estimates which concluded as just short of £1,000,000 over a one-hour outage if all factors were included. These potential costs were a combination of lost productivity during an outage, the administrative costs through using call centres and any additional reputational damage.

One Working Group member enquired into the frequency of previous outages and if there were any previous cases that could be used rather than predictions. DCC stated that these were based around the "Beast of the East" storm in 2018, which led to a question of whether that is an accurate example to use given it was an extreme circumstance compared to other situations. There was some dissatisfaction in the Working Group that no contextualised examples had been used for covering outages and that the examples felt generic.

The members wanted an answer of if this was considered outside of standard business operations. DCC confirmed that the Proposal's solution was to deal with events that occur outside usual business processes – namely freak weather events, rogue Service User and Denial of Service Attacks. As for frequency, DCC stated that they would investigate this further and, the frequency would be hard to forecast and that they expect the frequency of outages would likely increase over time as more smart meters and devices are installed and commissioned as part of the roll out.

Another Working Group member questioned whether the modification should be looking at prioritisation throughout the entire end to end process through the DCC System, not just through the Service Requests. They explained that if a Service Request was prioritised, but the respective Alert wasn't then it could lead to issues for affected consumers, for instance someone topping up their Pre-Payment account and not knowing whether their request had been accepted. The DCC explained that by prioritising the Service Requests the number of responses is also restricted which reduces the need for prioritisation of responses; Alerts are covered by SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection'.

Next Steps

Following the discussions at the Working Group meeting, the Working Group members agreed that an Impact Assessment ought to be requested at the next available Change Board meeting. SECAS stated that a Refinement Consultation would commence shortly, and that this would be the best way of gauging opinion from industry as to whether the business case was sufficient for progressing with the modification. DCC requested that any additional information that is added to the business case as a result of their investigations be added to the Proposal's Modification Report.

One Working Group member suggested that due to the additions to the business case, mostly around the point of the Denial of Service Attack scenario mentioned by DCC that the Modification Proposal be brought to the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) again. SECAS and the Working Group agreed with this. It was agreed that the Refinement Consultation would be issued in parallel with the Impact Assessment and discussion with the SSC.

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