Operations Group Meeting 32

5 May 2020, 10:00 – 16:00

Teleconference

OPSG_32_0505 - Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group Chair	Dave Warner
DCC	Mo Asif
	Alex Henighan
Network Parties	Gemma Slaney
	Matthew Alexander
Large Suppliers	Tony Shanahan
	John Noad
	Rochelle Harrison
	Martin Christie *(Alternate for Zoe Marklew)*
	Yvonne Mackenzie *(Alternate for Endika Enes)*
	Paul Clark
	Ed Webber
	Rob Short
	Ralph Baxter
Small Suppliers	Kate Barnes
	Kate Frazer
Other SEC Parties	Elias Hanna
	Geoff Huckerby
	Tom Woolley

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Courtney O'Connor
	Wendy Liddell
	Penny Brown (Part)
	Ian Brown (Part)

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Page 1 of 11

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	Sharon Bradley (Part)
	Graeme Liggett (Part)
	Nicholas Ives (Part)
	Mannu Rawat (Part)
	Darren Robbins (Part)
	Richard Cooper (Part)
	Bill Crichton (Part)
	Natasha Sinnett (Part)
	Paul Weatherly (Part)
Telefonica	John Elliot (Part)
Arqiva	Dave Morris (Part)
	Rob Puryer (Part)
SECAS	Huw Exley
	Joey Manners
	Veronica Asantewaa (Meeting Secretary)
TABASC	Julian Hughes
BEIS	Natasha Free
	Eleanor Taylor

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Small Supplier	Simon Dowse

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG_31.

The OPSG **AGREED** that the minutes from OPSG_31 would be published as final.

2. Panel Feedback Report

SECAS provided the OPSG with the following updates from the April SEC Panel meeting:

- The Panel has requested that the Traffic Management Mechanism Document (TMMD) be reviewed by the OPSG (this will be covered under agenda item 12).

- The Panel accepted the DCC statement of readiness for the June 2020 SEC Release, with the SSI changes in SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection' being reviewed retrospectively, following SSI governance so far as possible.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

OPSG_32_0505 – Draft Minutes

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Page 2 of 11

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3. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the OPSG Actions Outstanding. Actions were noted as completed where appropriate. It was noted that a number of actions had not been completed by the target date, and new deadlines for these actions were set.

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 29/04	The DCC to provide assurance that protocols have been implemented to prevent changes being made to the Production and Disaster Recovery environments concurrently by the next meeting (OPSG_30).	04/02/2020	05/05/2020	N/A	DCC
The DCC presented slides for this action. The DCC confirmed that it captures Business Continuity Disaster Recovery (BCDR) changes and implements this into risk assessments. **Action Status: Closed**					
OPSG 29/16	The DCC to confirm that Users are receiving the FAR following triage of returned CHs.	04/02/2020	05/05/2020	02/06/2020	DCC
The DCC explained that all Fault Analysis Report (FAR) reports are available via Remedy and Users that do not have access can request this from the DCC's Service Centre, Logistics or Service Management teams. A Large Supplier (LS) noted that this update was not helpful as not all Users have access to Remedy. *[Post Meeting Note: The DCC Reverse Logistics Manager generates the reports, they are then emailed directly to the Service User under a Service Management Request (The REQ will be visible/searchable in SSI).* *This has highlighted a single point of failure. The DCC will ensure from today that we change the process so all FAR's are uploaded to SEC Parties library in SharePoint - (https://capitaitservices.sharepoint.com/sites/LIVEDCC/PARTIES/XXXXXX/Comms Hubs/Returns/LiveCHs/FAR) Service Users will get an email notification when upload completes.* *If Service Users need copies of historical FAR's then please contact the Service Centre.]* **Action Status: Open**					
OPSG 31/02	The DCC to produce a revised plan for DR testing as soon as practically possible	07/04/2020	05/05/2020	02/06/2020	DCC
The DCC provided a revised BCDR plan for OPSG review. A LS member requested that the dates also be displayed in a table format, to easily cross reference them with User's schedules. Another LS member also queried why migrations from the MPLS links to S1SP will be limited in the first three months, the DCC					

OPSG_32_0505 – Draft Minutes

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Page 3 of 11

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Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner

explained that the MPLS testing will take some time to implement, however will check the migrations plan with its SMETS1 team and BEIS.

The DCC confirmed that it now has a current BCDR plan and the run books for DR testing will be completed in the next few weeks. The OPSG requested that the DCC present the amended dates in table format and circulate this to members for comment.

Action Status: Closed (action will be replaced by Action OPSG 32/01)

| **OPSG 31/07** | The DCC to investigate duplicate DSP34 and N13 Alerts in the system | 07/04/2020 | 05/05/2020 | 02/06/2020 | DCC |

The DCC presented slides to OPSG detailing its investigation into the issue. A Distribution Network Operator (DNO) member expressed disappointment in the DCC's findings from its investigation. The DNO believed that a more proactive approach needs to be taken since each Alert requires a manual intervention. The DNO member also raised concerns that the fix implementation date is too late (in July or August) and needs to be expedited because the duplicate Alerts are time consuming and limiting resources. The DCC noted that it will continue to investigate the issues raised.

Action Status: Open

| **OPSG 30/14** | The DCC to confirm CSP N's OTA Performance for February, and whether there is a correlation between the gradient of the RAG statuses on CSP N's "Go to Green" plan and its service levels. | 03/03/2020 | 05/05/2020 | N/A | DCC |

Communications Service Provider North (CSP N) noted that it is still achieving a Red status. CSP N noted a fix had been deployed in April, however, it had experienced further issues. CSP N explained that it will update its network management plan, and this will be rolled out in four to five weeks' time. CSP N are confident that this will fix its current issues and expects to achieve Green status for June, to be reported in July's PMR.

CSP Central and South (C&S) also provided an update on it's Over the Air (OTA) upgrades confirming that it did not achieve a Green status in March due to an Incident. The South region may also not achieve the target for April, but it is waiting on final validations.

Action Status: Closed

ACTION OPSG 32/01: The DCC to provide a revised BCDR plan including dates in table format and circulate this to OPSG for comment.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

4. Covid-19 Update

The DCC provided an update on its current operational status during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The DCC reported that it and the Service Providers continue to operate without problems. The DCC noted that it had sent communications to Users on challenges with Communication Hubs (CH) supply chain ordering. The DCC noted that it will have a more comprehensive update at its next Customer Forum scheduled for 6 May. (see also Item 9, below)

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

5. OPSG Issues Log

SECAS presented an update on the actively monitored Issues on the OPSG Issues Log.

SECAS raised the issue of Home Area Network (HAN) Stability, which was identified as a concern following the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) Effectiveness Review.

SECAS explained that managing the stability of the HAN is not defined in the SEC, therefore it is unclear on how this should best be monitored. A LS member noted that this issue has been mentioned at the Top Issues forum, and that the general feedback was that 5-10% of HANs display some form of instability and 30% of Device Model Combinations (DMC) seem to have erratic performance, which in turn affects the HAN.

SECAS noted that the 8F84 Alert can be used to monitor the HAN issue but this is not fully reliable as it is a partial proxy not, a monitoring tool.

The OPSG suggested that this issue should be investigated at the Transitional Business Design Group (TBDG), or suitable subgroup, and that SECAS should report any feedback at the next OPSG meeting.

ACTION OPSG 32/02: SECAS to report feedback from TBDG on the HAN stability issue at the next OPSG meeting (OPSG_33).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

6. CSP Audits – CSP C&S

CSP C&S presented an overview of the findings to date from its recent audit, and summarising the resultant improvements which are underway.

A LS member noted that the majority of 8f3e Alerts are from CHs and CSP C&S will need to clearly state the root cause and who is responsible for remedial action. A LS member also commented that CSP C&S claim that majority of network demand from Users was not forecast which is incorrect and in fact came from alerts which cannot be forecasted by Users. The OPSG noted that the language used in the overview should be clear on responsibilities of both causes and remediation of all issues.

The OPSG Chair questioned whether the audit reviewed management and operational processes as there have been a number of Incidents caused by human error. The DCC noted that this was reviewed in addition to capacity and technical issues. CSP C&S agreed to reissue the findings of the audit with this information.

ACTION OPSG 32/03: CSP C&S to reissue the findings of the report outlining the review of its management and operational processes.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

7. CSP N Audits, Capacity & Network Modelling

CSP N presented an overview of the findings from its recent audit. CSP N explained that this was an independent audit split into four categories with the main focus on the stability of the network. CSP N confirmed that the audit is still ongoing and plans for resolution will be completed by the end of June with a draft version available by the end of May.

The OPSG asked if the audit addressed CSP N's capacity management and network modelling capability. CSP N confirmed that this is being addressed within the scope of the audit and it is working with the Technical Operations Centre (TOC) team in terms of capacity and network planning. When asked, CSP N reconfirmed that this would include a network modelling capability. The overall outcome would be the ability to predict the behaviour of the network under different circumstances.

A LS member noted that while CSP N noted that the network is as designed, in some areas it is not adequate to meet business requirements and on demand capacity appears low. The LS member added that some of the business requirements set out in the SEC have been missed and Users should not pay for any amendments to meet these requirements. CSP N explained that the on-demand requests and overnight scheduled read are not happening as foreseen. Suppliers and the DCC agreed that to date perception is that the CSP N is working reactively which is having a negative effect on end consumers. The CSP N agreed noting it is working to become more proactive and address issues prior to them having serious consequence. The audit will be reviewing throughput capacity and make changes accordingly, and there will be resulting discussions with the DCC on any solutions and costs.

The OPSG Chair noted the audit seemed primarily technically focused and requested whether management and operational processes were considered. The CSP stated that the audit has not completed yet and will confirm if there are planned activities that will address this, and if not the scope will be reviewed and adjusted to include this aspect.

ACTION OPSG 32/04: CSP N to reissue the findings of the report outlining the review of its management and operational processes.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

8. DCC Operational Update

The DCC presented an update on its Operations.

The DCC noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a reduction in CH installations in March and April, with only 300-400 installations in a day. The OPSG noted the reduction in prepayment service requests. Members noted that they would have expected an increase in top ups under current circumstances. It was suggested it could be that people are topping up larger quantities less often. The DCC explained it was surprised by the drop and were unclear why it had occurred but would continue to investigate.

A LS questioned what the two different shades of green represented on the emergency credit graph and the DCC agreed to confirm.

A LS member was concerned that the average age of Problems had exceeded 200 days. The DCC noted that this was caused by a small number of exceptionally old problems skewing the average and that it is working through closing these Problems. The DCC informed the OPSG that there are

currently 159 open Problems. The OPSG Chair requested that the trend of cumulative outstanding problems is added to the Problem Management' graph or added as an additional graph.

A DNO member highlighted that an email had been circulated suggesting there would be delays to the reporting to accompany the deployment of SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection'. The DCC advised that all reporting should be available within 48 hours of deployment but were unaware of the email. It was agreed that the DNO member would forward the email to the DCC and the DCC would confirm all reporting will be delivered on time.

It was confirmed later in the meeting that the email in question was simply setting out a contingency arrangement. It was noted that a clearer communication would have been desirable. The OPSG requested the DCC to confirm that regular reporting to the OPSG about the operation of SECMP0062 will commence promptly after go-live.

A LS questioned the figure of 240 scheduled changes in a month and the DCC agreed to verify this number.

SMETS1

The DCC reported the achievement of 50,000 installations migrated in a single day. A DNO member requested the migration forecast for dormant meters noting they hadn't been, prepared for a large migration day and had therefore performed inventory activities at the time, which could have led to issues.

A DNO member noted that it had not received a week's worth of migration reports. The DCC was unaware of this issue for this User. A LS member mentioned that the DCC issued notification of dormant migrations at short notice: however, this should be at least 15 days before the migrations are due to take place. The DCC noted that it will investigate this further.

ACTION OPSG 32/05: The DCC to confirm what the two different shades of green represented on the emergency credit graph refer to.

ACTION OPSG 32/06: The DCC to confirm that regular reporting to the OPSG about the operation of SECMP0062 will commence promptly after go-live.

ACTION OPSG 32/07: The DCC to verify the 240 scheduled problem changes per month.

ACTION OPSG 32/08: The DCC to confirm that Dormant migration forecasts are being issued to all Users.

ACTION OPSG 32/09: The DCC to investigate whether the automated notice for dormant migrations are being issued to Users 15 days prior to migrations.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

9. CH Logistics Update

The DCC presented an update on the on-going discussions regarding the Communication Hubs (CH) logistics during the Pandemic. A working group is meeting on a weekly basis to discuss approach and options to manage the manufacturing, ordering, deliveries, storage, and the associated costs of CHs during the current lockdown. A further update will be provided to the OPSG once the approach has been agreed.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update on CH Logistics.

10. Aged Incidents

The DCC provided an update on Aged Incidents.

The OPSG noted that although the DCC still has 31,000 open aged Incidents recorded, there has been a substantial reduction due to the efforts of DCC and Users.

The DCC mentioned that CSP C&S had raised for discussion the possibility of creating a quarantine list of non-compliant or inactive CHs, with the purpose of reducing failures in the ecosystem and assisting automation of the management of failures. CHs on this list would be excluded from Performance measures, and CH and Meter Firmware distribution. The OPSG expressed serious concerns about the desirability of this proposal, its possible impact on the end Energy Customer, and the implications for SEC compliance**.** A LS member highlighted that CSP C&S would need to provide a list of all CHs that would be proposed for inclusion on this quarantine list.

The OPSG Chair was concerned that idea appeared to amount to a removal of service, possibly without going through the necessary governance process. Therefore, more details and justification would be needed before the idea could be considered.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update on Aged Incidents.

11. SECMP0062 Governance Process - Traffic Management Mechanism Document

The DCC presented the current governance process, and proposals for future enduring governance processes.

The TABASC Chair questioned whether it was intended that changes to the Traffic Management Mechanism Document (TMMD) would need to go through a formal full industry wide consultation. A DNO member stated that in their opinion, the intent in the legal text, had been for full industry consultation. SECAS confirmed that the legal text didn't formally require an industry wide consultation. The DNO member voiced concern that the DCC could implement changes without making the implications clear to Users.

The TABASC Chair proposed that as a minimum, all Sub-Committee Chairs could be consulted to determine urgency and subsequent actions.

It was agreed that SECAS would review the working group discussions on SECMP0062 to identify whether there was a clear intention for changes to this document to be subject to a full industry consultation. SECAS would also review similar operational procedures to identify whether they include full consultations.

ACTION OPSG 32/10: SECAS to propose whether the SECMP0062 TMMD governance processes should include full industry consultation, based on the legal text, working group proceedings, and any precedents from other operational procedures.

The OPSG **NOTED** the proposed SECMP0062 TMMD governance processes.

12. Planned Maintenance Trial - Q1 review

The DCC provided an update on the Planned Maintenance Trial for the first quarter.

The change process has achieved the best month on record with 99% success rate for April. However, the OPSG noted that determination of "success" should take account of any adverse impacts on Users, not simply whether execution had been completed.

A DNO member raised concerns that what are scheduled as, 'small' changes have turned out to be large changes without any notification from the DCC. A LS member echoed this and noted that noting in one such instance the Smart Metering Key Infrastructure (SMKI) depository was down for eight hours. The OPSG queried how the DCC will improve their communication on changes to planned maintenance. The DCC noted that it will explore ways of how changes to the plan can be communicated more effectively.

> **ACTION OPSG 32/11:** The DCC to explore how changes in scheduled planned maintenance can be communicated to members more effectively.

The OPSG **NOTED** the review of the Planned Maintenance Trial for Q1.

13. Spurious Alerts

The DCC provided an update on spurious Alerts.

The DCC highlighted that due to continued collaboration with Users, alerts that can be fixed by an available firmware upgrade or through service requests now represent a small proportion of the overall alerts.

The DCC noted that it has seen a reduction in the amount of 8F12 Alerts due to the impact of Covid-19, and a reduction in installations. Since the start of the Release 2.0 CSP N Pilot the DCC has seen 500,000 8F12 Alerts being removed from the network. A LS asked the DCC whether the success of the pilot in reducing the 8F12s indicates that the root cause lies within the CH. The DCC noted that the root cause for 8F12 Alerts and the resolution process is still under review and will be discussed at the next Technical Specifications Issue Resolution Sub-group (TSIRS) forum.

The DCC explained that the pilot for the CSP N Release 2 firmware upgrade is currently on hold whilst investigations are ongoing into the 66 CHs that have become uncontactable following upgrade.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update on Spurious Alerts.

14. On Demand Read Requests

The DCC provided an overview of the state of capacity during the incident (related to OPSG Action 29/10), the changes and improvements made and how they have affected the network's capability to manage On Demand Read Requests.

The OPSG were concerned that the infrastructure design in CSP N does not meet User business requirements. A LS member queried whether, if the threshold of 400 requests is breached, further requests are removed from the network as Users are having issues sending requests and this could explain why. The DCC explained that Users will receive a "too busy" notification and the system will

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Page 9 of 11

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592

retry the request two hours later, however the DCC said it would confirm exactly what that would look like from the User's perspective.

A Small Supplier (SS) echoed this concern. They noted that, although there is no obligation on Users to limit the number of on-demand requests, the industry-wide endeavour was to avoid not compromising the system. However, they noted that some such requests are out of their control such top up request sent by end consumers. They noted concern that a flurry of these sent in parallel with peaks in traffic could cause an issue. They asked the DCC to provide assurance that the system would be able to cope. The DCC confirmed that the system could cover current demand for on-demand read requests without impacting service performance for scheduled reads. The OPSG noted that it would be preferable that any existing limitations regarding on demand reads should be made explicit. This should take account of future traffic levels.

> **ACTION OPSG 32/12:** The DCC to confirm what would happen to on demand read request when the threshold of 400 requests was breached.
>
> **ACTION OPSG 32/13:** The DCC to identify and brief the OPSG on any other limitations regarding on-demand submissions.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

15.   CH Exceptions

The OPSG noted the reduction in Exceptions in most categories and recognised that this is due to the efforts of the DCC and Users.

Regarding the incomplete or no address issue, a LS member noted that this is not specified by the SEC. The LS member highlighted that the current outstanding issue is with new connections as they do not know the new address specifically and the MPAN is not set up as it does not have a supply point. The LS member noted that this may lead to other CH exceptions in the future. The DCC noted that this is still under investigation.

The OPSG **NOTED** the CH Exceptions.

16.   Network Evolution

The DCC presented the Network Evolution Programme proposals to the OPSG for the first time.

The OPSG were not convinced that the multi supplier route proposed by the DCC was beneficial and this will be discussed further at TABASC. The TABASC Chair mentioned that there will be challenges with roaming as the 2G network is still operational, and there would be major costs associated with all device roaming if the network was down. A LS member noted that the proposals will essentially create a second version of the DCC infrastructure, however the industry is still facing issues with the current DCC processes. It is a major step to change the infrastructure all at once and the DCC should be implementing small changes in a step by step fashion. The DCC noted that it is not implementing any changes to the HAN aspects, and will remain engaged with customers on progress in the right way.

The OPSG Chair noted that the proposal will need to consider the User business requirements and priorities, as currently it only shows the benefits from a technological perspective. The DCC confirmed that these will be included in the second phase due by August.

The OPSG emphasised the far reaching scope of the proposals. This meant that a systematic engagement process is required to allow the OPSG to contribute feedback effectively.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation and requested that SECAS and the DCC develop a process for OPSG engagement with the DCC's network evolution proposal.

17. Work Package - Q4 Lookback Report (January-March)

SECAS presented the Lookback report against the 2019/20 Q4 Work Package. No further comments were raised by the OPSG.

The OPSG **NOTED** the Work Package Lookback Report for Q4.

18. Customer Perspective

None proposed.

19. Any Other Business (AOB)

The OPSG noted input from BEIS regarding SEC processes related to Change of Supplier. This will be investigated under the OPSG Issues Log.

Next Reporting Meeting: 22 May 2020
Next Main Meeting: 2 June 2020

OPSG_32_0505 – Draft Minutes

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Page 11 of 11

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