

This document is classified as **White**. Information can be shared with other SEC Parties and SMIP stakeholders at large, but not published (including publication online).

Operations Group Meeting

OPSG_01_1810, 18th October 2017

10:00 – 14:30, ETC Venues, 8 Fenchurch Place, London EC3M 4PB

Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Category	SEC Panel Members
Chair	Dave Warner
DCC	Bushra Ali
DCC	Gordon Riddle
Electricity Networks	Liam Cowe
Electricity Networks	Frank Welsh
Gas Networks	Sara Neal
Large Supplier	Claire Doherty
Large Supplier	George Macgregor
Large Supplier	Rochelle Harrison
Large Supplier	David Penny
Large Supplier	Graham Ovenden
Large Supplier	Jon Hawkins
Large Supplier	Mark Field
Other SEC Party	Elias Hanna
Small Supplier	Kate Barnes

Representing	Other Participants
TABASC	Julian Hughes
BEIS	Felicity Richardson
SECAS	Huw Exley
SECAS	Courtney O'Connor
SECAS	Tim Hall
SECAS	Tim Newton
Ofgem	Michael Walls

Apologies:

Category	SEC Panel Members
Large Supplier	Steve Briggs

1. Introduction to SEC Operations Group

The Chair welcomed attendees to the inaugural meeting of the Operations Group (Ops Group) and introduced its intended purpose and role. The Group read and discussed the Terms of Reference (ToR) set by the Panel focussing on the Purpose and Duties of the Ops Group with regard to initial tasks and enduring duties and scope.

The Group noted that the scope resulting from the ToRs defined by the Panel would be explored and progressively defined in early meetings. Further, it was noted that SECAS would develop a proposed Activity Plan for the Group, showing how and when the items identified in the ToRs would be addressed by the Group.

The Group noted that the Ops Group is intended to be a forum for direct discussion and interaction between the DCC and its Users, with a priority to be placed on high impact cross-industry operational risks. The Ops Group would also consider operational risks from an End to End (E2E) perspective. The Group is to be used to provide early comment on DCC planning, and matters including operational impacts of outage scheduling

The Ops Group discussed its role in relation to the roles of other SEC Sub-Committees. It was also noted that the Smart Meter Device Assurance Scheme (SMDA) although sitting outside the SEC, may be worth engaging in future discussions. It was noted that, with the transition to live operations and the establishment of the Ops Group, it would be important to ensure that the scope and ToRs of all Panel subcommittees and industry forums are understood. It was **AGREED** that SECAS would seek Member's comments on the Ops Group's scope and duties prior to the November 2017 meeting, and seek amendment to the ToR via SEC Panel processes as appropriate.

The DCC noted that they would seek the Ops Group feedback as a mechanism to engage with Users in as transparent and open fashion as possible.

The Group discussed the proposed annual DCC Customer Satisfaction Survey. The DCC noted that a Customer Satisfaction Survey had been conducted previously but that it was now appropriate to design a new one, and the DCC are looking to have something more complete, possibly by the end of 2017. The DCC noted the intention is that the survey provides a broad perspective from the Users of their services, as opposed to that of a single representative from an organisation. It was **AGREED** that DCC would present their ideas on the survey for comment by the Ops Group.

The Group moved on to discuss the distribution of regular performance reports from the DCC. It was noted the report will of necessity document performance some weeks in arrears, but that Ops Group will seek to consider lessons learned for the future.. The DCC noted that certain of the performance measures in the SEC have been included in the Ofgem Operational Regime, and DCC are obliged by Licence to report these measures strictly as currently defined. It was recognised, however, that there may be the opportunity for the Ops Group to identify measures reflecting User needs as operational experience is gained. The need for End to End measures of service performance was mentioned as an example. It was **AGREED** that the Ops Group would consider their approach to this topic, and meanwhile, Ops Group members were **INVITED** to suggest ideas on suitable indicators

The Group moved on to discuss the DCC Problem Reports and the Group's Role in advising the DCC on prioritising which problems should be addressed. The DCC noted that this is something they already do and questioned where this duty sits in relation to the Ops Group's overall Role. It was noted that Users need a perspective of the bigger picture in order to discuss potential upcoming Operational issues and how the impact of Problems might be ameliorated. Regarding this, the DCC highlighted that in principle a Problem with a particular Service might disproportionately impact a particular SEC Party or category of end customers, for example Pre-Payment customers, and that the Ops Group would be a useful forum for exploring the potential implications of this.

The Ops Group discussed what their role could be regarding the Operational aspect of testing services. The DCC noted that it is necessary to define what testing services are being considered moving forward, enduring only or something more wide ranging. It was noted that enduring testing services comprise only one aspect of operational services.

The Chair introduced the topic of Major Incidents. It was noted that Major Security Incidents fall within the scope of the Security Sub Committee. Nonetheless, such Major Security Incidents may also have more general operational implications that the Ops Group may be required to advise on. Working practices between the sub-committees will be considered for further development, and if felt necessary, clarified with the SEC Panel.

The Chair explained that he sees the Ops Group as a useful forum to aid the DCC in the development of a Statement of Operating Principles detailing how the DCC would operate its infrastructure and services. He stressed this would not replace either the legal framework or the licences but rather would explain how they are going to be applied in practice. It would assist DCC in, for example, setting out the principles they would follow in operating in unanticipated circumstances, and hence would assist in setting User expectations. The Chair referenced the National Grid's Statement of Operating Principles as an example of a document with a somewhat similar general purpose. A Large Supplier asked whether this document could be made available to the members of the Ops Group before the November 2017 meeting. SECAS AGREED to circulate a link to National Grid document.

The Ops Group membership was discussed, and SECAS informed the Group that there was one Small Supplier vacancy and a number of Large Supplier vacancies. It was noted that this information will be distributed to members via the Member's Packs before the November 2017 meeting.

With regards to proceedings the Chair stressed the importance that the Ops Group is able to have input to Operational issues as and when they arise, in a prompt fashion. This means the Ops Group members are asked to be available if possible to discuss Operational issues as they arise, and this may require flexibility, including with regards to form of discussion (teleconference or email communication as appropriate), and in the distribution of Papers. The DCC noted that waiting for feedback from the Ops Group might potentially lead to delays in addressing issues, and that DCC would in some cases have to proceed before feedback was received. It was discussed that, however, there was an opportunity for DCC to engage Users during the formulation of responses to operational issues. It was suggested that the Ops Group could possibly define this role further in the ToR in the future.

ACTION OPSG01/01: SECAS to request Members' comments on the Ops Group's scope and duties and input to an Activity Plan for the Group, highlighting when the items identified in the ToR would be addressed by the group.

ACTION OPSG01/02: The DCC agreed to circulate their thoughts on the Customer Satisfaction Survey before the November 2017 meeting.

ACTION OPSG01/03: SECAS to circulate link to the National Grid Statement of Operating Principles.

ACTION OPS01/04: SECAS to provide the Ops Group Members with Member's Packs which includes the full member list, and note currently unoccupied seats.

ACTION OPSG01/04: SECAS to produce a list of Reports that may be reviewed or otherwise noted by the Ops Group.

2. Operations Group Meeting Dates

The Ops Group were presented with a paper that proposed meeting dates. After a brief discussion with emphasis on the need for flexibility and the schedule of other Committee meetings they **AGREED** that the Ops Group would meet on the Tuesday of the fourth week of every month, and the next meeting will be scheduled for 21st November 2017.

ACTION OPSG01/06: SECAS to distribute **the next full year of** meeting invitations to all Ops Group members.

3. Risk and Issues Register

The Ops Group discussed the function of a risk register and SECAS presented the Panel risk register as an example. The Chair asked if the Group would have ownership of Risks added to the register and SECAS confirmed this would be the case.

The chair noted that there may be Risks identified that are not the business of the Ops Group and that the Group will forward them to the relevant Committee in such a case.

A member noted that the Ops Group should concentrate on operational risks within the live environment. While delivery risks are the responsibility of other Committees it was noted that the Ops Group could have a role in, for example, providing views on release management and readiness for live service. This would be considered as the scope of the work of the Ops Group is progressively described.

In discussion, it was noted that it was likely to be the case that the severity rating associated with operational risks would tend to increase as the volume of operational meters increased. More generally it was noted that the impacts of increased number of operational meters and scaling to accommodate them would be an important underlying factor for much of the Ops Group work.

It was **AGREED** that members would submit any Risks they think should be on the register to SECAS. TABASC noted that they may have one coming to the Ops Group already. A Large Supplier asked if there were Risks to be expected from the Implementation Managers Forum (IMF), and the BEIS representative undertook to report back to the Ops Group on this.

ACTION OPSG01/07: SECAS to seek Ops Groups Members to forward SECAS any potential Risks for addition to the Ops Group Risk register by the November meeting paper day.

ACTION OPSG01/08: BEIS to advise on risks that may be passed from the IMF to the Ops Group.

4. Operational Update

It was noted that this regular Agenda item would include an update on current operational matters and a forward look at forthcoming events.

The DCC presented an Operational Update in the form of a slideshow to illustrate the types of matters this regular update may cover.

The Ops Group focussed on a specific current problem of where Home Area Network (HAN) noise was disrupting Service Request transmission, and whether its origin was from Communication Hubs (CHs) or Meters. The DCC noted that with such a small number of meters currently installed it is impossible to know whether this has occurred due to environment, equipment or installation. The DCC noted that independent testing currently underway will bring more clarity to the situation. It was also noted that neither the Communications Hub Technical Specification (CHTS) or Smart Meter Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS) contain limits on emitting noise, which may mean that both devices could be compliant with the Technical Specifications and still cause the issue.

The DCC noted that going forward this is a good example of what it sees as the type of issue the Ops Group should discuss, as it may identify gaps in operational impacts of SEC documents. It was noted that it would be useful to know how many meters are connected to the DCC and it was **AGREED** that the DCC will add additional context in the future.

As a further example, the DCC went on to discuss their working above and beyond the pre-decided timescales by leaving Communication Hub orders as late as possible in order to ensure CHs are supplied with the most up to date firmware possible. The DCC noted that there are currently no remote WNC CHs available to testing until January, and that no WNC CHs will be available to order until after testing has occurred.

The DCC presented a high-level Release plan to the Ops Group, showing the latest views on upcoming Release dates. The Chair questioned the provisionality to these dates and asked whether there is a specified pre-Release date at which they become fixed. The DCC explained that the exact date is dependent on a wide array of factors some of which are outside the DCC's control. The TABASC representative pointed out that the concern for the Ops Group should be the effect of the Release coming in with regards to operations. The Chair expressed the need for the Ops Group to clarify what Operational Impacts a new Release may have upon going live, for example, has sufficient pre-production proving been undertaken to mitigate such operational Risks. A question was also posed regarding whether Users would, as a rule, prefer to have some uncertainty regarding Release dates, on the premises that a Release would occur on the earliest possible date; or have greater certainty regarding the date, even of that means a later date is selected.

5. Operational Matters

The DCC presented Operational Matters to the Ops Group to illustrate the form this agenda item might take in the future.

DCC initiated a discussion on the concept of post-production proving, as the DCC is reliant upon DCC Users to start using Service Requests after a Release to provide further assurance that the Release is operating successfully. The DCC shared the idea of acting as a User in order to give a greater level of operational assurance. The DCC noted it was in discussions with BEIS about how this could occur, as the SEC currently prevents this. This would also have to be discussed with the Security Sub Committee. A Member noted that anything that gives greater confidence and assurance in relation to a Release would be welcomed. The DCC see their current inability to directly exercise live systems as a Risk and would like it to be added to the Ops Group Risk Register. A Member noted that gaining assurance through trialling and/or operation had been requested throughout the establishment phase of the Programme and activities of the Testing Advisory Group (TAG) but it had not come to fruition. It

was noted that DCC would provide the Ops Group with a further briefing when the concept was further developed.

The DCC also raised the matter of Demand Management and, in particular, Modification Proposal 30: Demand Management of DCC Systems. The DCC wish to have the ability to manage or cap the number of Services Requests being put through the DCC Systems for certain periods of time based on the performance of the environment. A Member noted that the Working Group established to refine the Modification Proposal was at an early stage of discussion and still establishing the need for developing this capability. It was noted that the concept of Demand Management, if endorsed, might be relevant for inclusion in Operating Principles that the DCC are to develop.

The DCC then presented on their latest Business Continuity Disaster Recovery (BCDR) test, explaining what was involved in the testing: a Data Service Provider (DSP) Failover along with a Communications Service Provider (CSP) failover. The DCC noted that the BCDR test identified many 'learning opportunities', with some services not 'failing over' and others not 'failing back' in time. Questions were raised regarding the resilience of secondary data centres, as they have not been designed to have the same levels of resilience as the primary data centres. As such, further consultation will likely be necessary to capture industry's views regarding whether the secondary data centre needs to fully mirror the primary. It was noted that as the BCDR test had not been completed successfully, it would be appropriate to include this in the risk register.

The DCC informed the Members that the draft report on the test will be with the Panel by the end of October 2017. It was **AGREED** that the final BCDR report should be provided to the Ops Group ahead of the next meeting for discussion at the November 2017 meeting.

ACTION OPSG01/10: The DCC are to make available the final BCDR report to all members of the Ops Group before the November 2017 meeting.
--

6. DCC Cost Drivers

It was discussed that the Ops Group provided an opportunity for information on the costs (and their drivers), as well as the benefits of DCC proposed developments, to be shared with Users at an early stage.

The Chair noted the Ops Group provides a forum for the DCC to share proposed changes at an early stage with Users. The DCC would benefit from obtaining an early indication of Users' views on the magnitude of those changes; and, the benefit the DCC anticipates from the change. Users would be able to indicate their initial views on whether such a change would be high or low priority for them. The Chair noted that this activity would not duplicate or replace the detailed consideration and assessment of costs carried out in the modification process, or the regulatory consideration of costs carried by Ofgem.

The Chair noted this is not currently a specific Duty of the Ops Group under its ToR, although is consistent with the Group's general role in providing User input to DCC. Members noted that any process that improves transparency of magnitude of costs and perceived benefits would be welcome.

The DCC Ready to Scale (R2S) work stream was discussed. DCC noted options papers on projects identified under R2S are being developed, and Users will be consulted. The DCC intend to identify operational benefits alongside the costs as early as possible, and welcomed the Ops Group guidance on progressing this. Members noted that some of the items in the workstream have already had costs

allocated, and asked whether the DCC could identify which of these costs are already included in the DCC Charging Statement, and which are still to be accounted for.

The DCC noted that they are interested in discussing how User operational behaviour impacts cost. The DCC representative gave the example of different types of use of the DCC Service Desk, and suggested it could be beneficial to highlight the implications of particular styles of use, and if the Ops Group would be the right forum to do so. The Chair agreed the Ops Group could be a relevant place to do so. It would be possible for DCC to explain to the Group the implications of particular styles of service usage. It was noted that in utilising services, Users would be expected to remain compliant with the SEC.

ACTION OPSG01/11: The DCC to provide a view of which items from the R2S workstream have been costed and what still remains to be.

7. Performance Reporting

The Chair noted that it was intended that SECAS will provide a summary report of the Performance Measurement Report (PMR) each month, summarising the key points for discussion for the Ops Group. SECAS will review the DCC PMRs and collaborate with the DCC prior to the meeting to provide any additional analysis that may be identified for discussion.

Members noted that the current PMR may not be effective for reporting in a future operational world. It was noted that DCC must report according to the current SEC requirements, some of which have now been adopted by Ofgem as part of the OPR and consequently feed directly into regulatory price control.

The group noted that the current set of metrics do not provide a view of the User experience of DCC Services. As such, this might need to be enhanced as operational experience was gained. For example, indicators of the end to end performance of services/processes would be expected to be valuable. The Ops Group will consider possible enhancements to the set of metrics as operational experience is gained.

ACTION OPSG01/12: The DCC are to make available the final BCDR report to all Members of the Ops Group for discussion at the November 2017 meeting.

8. Incident Management Review

In brief discussions, it was noted that this item would consider the management of Major Incidents individually. It was noted that the ToR specifically exclude reviewing Major Security Incidents from the Ops Group remit, as this responsibility lies with the SSC. However, it was also noted that where these Incidents might also have more general operational implications, the Ops Group would need to consider working with the SSC.

It was noted that it was not the intention to consider in detail individual lower category incidents. The operational implications of Problems and root causes would however be considered.

9. Any Other Business

There was no further business discussed.