MP223 'WAN Coverage Reporting'

April 2023 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Kev Duddy (KD)	SECAS
Rachel Black (RB)	SECAS
Elizabeth Woods (EW)	SECAS
Mike Fenn (MF)	SECAS
Rainer Lischetzki (RL)	SECAS
Mohammedanwar Sumro (MS)	SECAS
Ben Giblin (BG)	SECAS
David Walsh (DW)	DCC
Robin Seaby (RS)	DCC
Patricia Massey (PM)	BEAMA
Julie Brown (JB)	British Gas
Beth Davey (BD)	Calvin Capital
Amy Cox (AC)	EDF
Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG
Martin Bell (MB)	EUA
Kelly Kinsman (KK)	National Grid Electricity Distribution
Stuart Blair (SB)	Northern Powergrid Metering
Ralph Baxter (RBa)	Octopus Energy
Jamie Flaherty (JF)	Ofgem
Audrey Smith-Keary (ASK)	OVO Energy
Stephen Mclaughlin (SM)	Scottish Power
Gordon Hextall (GH)	Security Sub-Committee
Jeff Studholme (JS)	Smart Meter Assets
Shuba Khatun (SK)	SSE Networks
Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue identified, the business requirements and the Proposed Solution.

Issue

Knowledge of the Wide Area Network (WAN) level at an address is critical to determining whether a smart metering installation should take place. There is currently no obligation in the Smart Energy Code (SEC) for the Data Communications Company (DCC) to report on WAN Coverage.

Business Requirements

Business Requirements	
Ref.	**Requirement**
1	The DCC to produce a figure of the Wide Area Network (WAN) coverage level for each Communication Services Provider (CSP) region, every three months.
2	The DCC to produce reporting on addresses where there is no WAN or the WAN status has changed, every three months.
3	The DCC to produce monthly reporting on sites where Suppliers raise WAN-related incidents in each CSP region.
4	The DCC to ensure the WAN coverage checker is updated accordingly when Suppliers raise WAN-related incidents to the DCC Service Desk.
5	The DCC to produce monthly reporting on work which is ongoing to improve WAN coverage in each CSP region at sites which are currently declared to be no WAN.
6	All planned WAN outages which are passed between CSPs and the DCC Service Desk to be passed to Smart Energy Code (SEC) Parties.

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (BG) provided an overview of the issue and presented the business requirements.

A Working Group member (JS) noted that they are experiencing an increase in the number of installs where there is no WAN upon arrival at site for installation. They also questioned whether CSP's are being held accountable for current WAN levels. SECAS (BG) explained that CSPs were required to provide reporting on WAN levels until the Bmax targets were reached. Now that Bmax levels have been achieved there is no longer any reporting.

The DCC (DW) noted Requirement two and explained that in the Communications Service Provider (CSP) North region the reporting will only be broken down to postcode level, rather than selected addresses in each postcode. They added that any alteration to existing reporting methods by the CSPs would have high costs. SECAS (BG) clarified that the full business requirements note that in CSP North only postcode level data will be required. The DCC (DW) also highlighted how Requirement five may be problematic because the DCC does not currently place any obligations upon CSPs to report ongoing work to improve WAN Coverage. They noted that the requirement does not need to be altered however this may be a prohibitive element when the solution is being assessed.

A Working Group member (AH) asked if it was possible for each business requirement to be costed separately in the Preliminary Assessment. The DCC (DW) noted that due to the Preliminary Assessment having to be returned in 15 working days, the DCC is unable to give pricing on each requirement. However, they will be able to verify if one requirement has a 'significant' impact on the costing for the modification.

A Working Group member (AH) noted that 4G Communications Hubs are becoming widely used and asked what the process would be for reporting on 2G and 3G Communications Hubs. The DCC (DW) advised that they have approached Communications Hub Manufacturers and Service Providers to clarify what changes will take place. Another Working Group member (RBa) asked for this modification to be discussed at the Communications Transition Group to consider.

The Working Group member (RBa) also noted that much discussion had focused on areas where there is or isn't WAN, but not to areas where WAN is intermittent. They asked whether an 'intermediate' category could be considered. They noted that the failure to complete business processes is frequently blamed on intermittent WAN and considered that it would be good to determine how often this is the case. If intermittent WAN is found to be a major issue, then this data could be used to determine what can be done about unreliable WAN areas. (ASK) supported the idea of separate reporting in areas where there is intermittent WAN.

SECAS (BG) highlighted that adding an intermediate category may be difficult as the existing reporting in CSP Central and South provides ratings of LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH. The reporting in CSP North only shows whether WAN coverage is TRUE or FALSE. The DCC (DW) concurred and explained that analysis shows that a very tiny percentage of addresses are classed as LOW or MEDIUM and that adding a new classification would be extremely expensive. A Working Group member (MR) highlighted that the DCC System carries over 1.4 billion messages per month and suggested that statistical analysis of where Communications Hubs are located and the extent to which they respond to requests could provide a view about the WAN environment. They added that the DCC already tracks this information so it may be easier than CSPs changing their processes. A member from the DCC (DW) noted this comment but suggested this reporting may require changes that are high in cost.

A Working Group member (AH) asked how the installation of Mesh Communications Hubs will be reflected in the WAN reporting. SECAS (BG) noted there is an existing column in CSP South and Central for this reporting which will be used as part of this modification.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to present the business requirements to the TABASC and Operations Group for comment.

- SECAS to request the Preliminary Assessment from the DCC.

- SECAS to confirm if there are changes in reporting between 2G/3G Communications Hubs and 4G Communications Hubs.