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Action:	**For Information**

Dual Band Communication Hub Configuration Tables standing list of experts

1. Purpose

Following the introduction of Dual Band Communications Hub (DBCH) Configuration Tables into the SEC, we are intending to establish a standing list of experts to call upon at short notice for any Modification Proposal that might affect these. This paper is intended to inform the Panel of the background to this and our intended way forward.

2. Dual Band Communications Hub Configuration Tables

DBCHs are designed to have a greater propagation range (within typical premises) than Single Band Communications Hubs (SBCHs), and are designed to establish a Home Area Network (HAN) in premises where the gas meter or In-Home Display (IHD) is situated at distances from the Communications Hub beyond those reliably served by SBCHs. It is expected that a DBCH will be required for technical reasons in around one quarter of all premises.

However, the Sub GHz (gigahertz) bandwidth, used by these HANs, is limited, and there is a risk around the functionality of the Sub GHz HAN frequency in dense urban deployments. Should the bandwidth become overloaded due to a local density of Sub GHz devices, consumers and DCC Users could experience delayed or failed updates. This could lead to the gas meter undertaking an increased number of rescans to find the quietest channel, which would lead to increased battery drainage. Inconsistency in configuration settings at, or following, installation could also lead to more complex diagnostics as the settings for affected devices would need to be remotely read as a first step.

To counter these risks, configuration settings have been introduced into the SEC for Communication Hubs which use (or are capable of using) the Sub GHz HAN frequency. These were designated into SEC Section F 'Smart Metering System Requirements' by BEIS on 31st May 2018 as part of SEC Version 5.16.

Any changes to these Configuration Tables required, e.g. in response to an identified issue, would require a Modification Proposal to be raised and progressed. However, such changes may need to be progressed quickly, either as an Urgent Modification or as a normal modification progressed to expedited timescales.

3. Establishment of a standing list of experts

To facilitate any changes required at short notice, we have engaged with BEIS and Energy UK, and we propose to set up a standing list of experts. Should a Modification Proposal be raised that would amend these Configuration Tables, we would call upon these experts to act as Working Group members. We expect that any member of this list of experts would agree to attend any such meetings at very short notice (potentially less than a week), and to make these meetings a priority. This would allow the Modification Proposal to proceed much quicker than standard.

Depending on the timings of the modification being raised in relation to Panel meetings, we could either utilise these experts as a Working Group during the Refinement Process or we could call upon them to assess the proposal prior to the Initial Modification Report being presented, which could then allow the modification to proceed directly to the Report Phase.

We intend to work with Energy UK and issue a wider request to the industry to compile a list of experts. An initial meeting would be held with these volunteers to establish the purpose and expectations of the group. After this, the group would only ever meet if a relevant Modification Proposal was raised. To be clear, we do not intend for this to be a formal group (e.g. as a Sub-Committee), but to be a list of experts we can rely upon to form a Modification Working Group at very short notice.

4. Recommendations

The Panel is requested to:

- **NOTE** the contents of this paper.

David Kemp

SECAS Team

6th July 2018