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# **Operations Group Meeting 103**

## 25 September 2023, 12:30-16:10

## Teleconference

# **OPSG\_103\_2509 – Final Minutes**

#### Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group (OPSG) Chair	Dave Warner
	Rochelle Harrison
	Laurence Cross
Large Suppliers	George MacGregor
	Ralph Baxter
	Kevin Donnelly
Small Suppliers	Cassie Bowerman
Network Parties	Shuba Khatun
Other SEC Parties	Michael Snowden
Data Communications Company (DCC)	Ian Drummond

Representing	Other Participants
	Rachel Black (Secretary)
Creart Engravy Code Administrator and	Conroy Saunders
Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS)	Eugene Asante
, , , , ,	Tim Newton
	Cherrelle Mclean
	Danielle Jackson
	Val Cumberland
	Ben Breen
DCC	Luis Ogando
	Daniel Heathcote
	Jason Hynes (part) (Agenda Item 7)
	Gary Stuart



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Representing	Other Participants
	Claire Garlant
	Gary Fairclough
	Adam Rawling (part) (Agenda Item 5)
	Helen Metcalfe (part) (Agenda Item 8)
	Rachel Allen
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)	Danny Holt
	Boris Rogatchevski

## **Apologies:**

Representing	Name
	Emslie Law
Large Suppliers	Tim Larcher
	Nick Coombs
Other SEC Parties	Geoff Huckerby
	Elias Hanna

## 1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited members to comment on the draft minutes from the last OPSG reporting meeting.

The OPSG **APPROVED** the minutes from OPSG meeting 101 as final.

## 2. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the outstanding actions. Actions were noted as completed where appropriate.

Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 72/02	The DCC to provide an update on the investigations into the contractual definition PM3 DSP Performance measures in the PMR	24/05/2022	01/12/2022	N/A	DCC

The slides presented provided information related to this action. The OPSG enquired as to whether the 2.6m cost presented in the slides was net and DCC agreed to return with this information in the next OPSG meeting to close the action.

The OPSG agreed for this action to remain open. Status: Open







Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 84/01	The DCC to clarify the definition of Change and Release as stated in the CSP contracts.	28/11/2022	30/09/2023	N/A	DCC

The slides presented provided information related to this action. The OPSG enquired as to whether Service Credits were due from the DSP as there were changes made to the PMR following review and update on this action by the DCC. DCC advised that they would need to review the months affected within the PMR and confirm whether Service Credits should be paid. SECAS asked whether there was a process that DCC should be carrying out proactively around the review of Service Credits due following historic changes to the PMR and DCC confirmed that there was.

The OPSG agreed for this action to remain open. Status: Open

OPSG 97/04	The DCC to confirm the principles that guide the approach to managing Major Incidents that are caused by 3rd Party Service Providers that are out of the DCC's control, and therefore causing exclusion from the PMR.	26/06/2023	30/09/2023	N/A	DCC
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The DCC explained that the resolution definition as per the published Exclusion List is "Resolved by a Service User or Party outside DCC control (i.e., not a Service Provider)". With regards to the incident raised at OPSG 97 (INC000001001905), the third-party service provider at fault was the supplier of DSP's WAN service, so they had no direct relationship with the DCC. As a result of this contractual arrangement, there has not been any specific principles of engagement implemented, which means that each incident is assessed on a case-by-case basis by The DCC's Incident Management Team. Any exclusions are only applied where specific evidence to support this is provided.

The OPSG agreed to close this action. **Status: Closed** 

DCC Major Incident Management (MIM) have reviewed the last 2 quarters and it was observed that there are no trends on the Incidents raised outside of the norm. The DCC confirmed all Incidents have been CAT5 severity rating and related to single premise Registration Data corrections. If there was to be anything more significant, the DCC stated that it will bring that to the OPSG reporting meeting with more detail.

The OPSG agreed to close the action on the assumption that the DCC will continue to monitor for emerging trends in lower category incidents. **Status: Closed** 

OPSG 99/03	The DCC to review the 2G/3G sunsetting reporting and update this to	24/07/2023	31/10/2023	N/A	DCC	
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Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner		
	show more detailed indicators of performance post switch-off						
Summary.	An update on this action was provided in agenda item 5. Business Process Indicators Performance Summary. The OPSG agreed to close the action. <b>Status: Closed</b>						
OPSG 100x/03	The DCC and OPSG Chair to review potential approaches to prioritising the focus on specific Business Processes at future OPSG meetings. The DCC to then bring this back to OPSG for further discussion and agreement on next steps.	16/08/2023	01/10/2023	N/A	DCC		
An update on this action was provided in agenda item 5. Business Process Indicators Performance Summary. The OPSG agreed to close the action. <b>Status: Closed</b>							

The OPSG:

- NOTED the update.
- AGREED to close all actions marked as Propose to Close.

## 3. SEC Panel Reports – August 2023

SECAS provided a summary of the regular DCC reports to the Smart Energy Code (SEC) Panel that have been delegated to the OPSG to review.

#### 3.1. Registration Data Provider (RDP) Incidents

Six Registration Data Incidents were opened in August. Four incidents from July have now been resolved following Registration Data corrections, with one outstanding. Four Incidents were reported as resolved within the month.

The OPSG:

- NOTED the DCC SEC Panel Reports.
- **AGREED** the commentary in Annex 1.

## 4. Performance Measures Report – July 2023

SECAS presented its review of the Performance Measurement Report (PMR) for July 2023, and noted the associated responses to queries provided by the DCC.



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SECAS advised the OPSG that three Category 2 Incidents were reported in PMR in July. SECAS queried why Incident INC000001062191had not been categorised as a Category 1 Incident due to impacts to PrePayment services and multiple Users. SECAS advised that the response from the DCC was that 50% of Service Request Variants (SRVs) sent in that time was reflective of Category 2 and solved within the Category 1 Service Level Agreement (SLA) of three hours. During the day, 88% of all prepayment transactions were successful. The OPSG noted this and advised that it is important that they know what the prepayment success is for the time of the incident, and not the entire day. [Post meeting note DCC has advised that Impact between 16:50 and 20:00 there was 62% failure for Prepayment only, but other SRV's were impacted throughout which will have levelled the success to 50% for the duration. Category 2 status remains.]

SECAS advised that the Code Performance Measures (CPM) were mostly tracked as above Target Service Level. It was noted that CPM1 has tracked overall as being above Target Service Level, but SECAS noted that Performance Measures for (PM) PM1.1 S1SP DXC was below Target Service Level. SECAS reminded members that DCC had committed to consistently achieving least Minimum Service Level performance for this measure (and PM1.5 S1SP DXC) by the year end. DESNZ noted that it was encouraging to hear that there is progression on this, but asked if more information could be provided before the end of the year. The DCC advised that a detailed list of activities, such as release windows which are scheduled a year in advance are planned to address performance. The OPSG noted that the DCC had confirmed at OPSG 102 that this Performance Measure will track above Minimum Service Level until the end of 2023.

SECAS advised that PM2 Communications Service Provider (CSP) North had achieved Target Service Level for the first time. The DCC advised they are confident they can keep CSP North tracking above Target Service Level moving forward. SECAS noted that PM2 for Central and South had been tracking below Target Service Level for two months (June and July). The DCC highlighted that CSP Central and South (C&S) were still affected by Packet Data Protocol (PDP) issues, however the DCC advised that CSP South will be above Target for August. The OPSG acknowledged the good work that has been carried out in relation to PM2 for CSP North. However, the OPSG queried what should be done if the DCC are unable to consistently stay above Target Service Level in future.

SECAS reported that CMP3A was below Minimum Service Level in the CSP C&S regions. SECAS noted that the June reported performance had been changed due to application of exclusions by DCC (resulting in the reported performance being restated to 92.97% from 90.89%). The DCC advised that they will reissue the reports from April to June 2023, and will confirm a date for when this will be completed. The OPSG noted that the DCC expect that the performance for August will be improved by 1.5-2% when we restated but this would still be below the minimum service level.

SECAS advised that CPM4 was below Minimum Service Level. SECAS explained that this occurred as one of the Incidents in July was a Category 3, which was upgraded to a Category 2 and missed the SLA.

SECAS advised that CPM1.7 TSP performance is consistently tracking at below Target Service Level. This has been raised with the Security Sub-Committee (SSC), and they are aware of this.

SECAS noted that the Performance Indicator 1 measure for all SMETS2 areas had missed Target Service level. As with CPM3A, DCC advised that the reports for April to June 2023 would be re issued once exclusions had been applied. The DCC stated that some exceptions will improve the results, and a service improvement plan is underway.



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The OPSG asked how the DCC prioritises remediation work on Performance Measures that are not achieving Target or Minimum Service Levels. The DCC explained the various ways it prioritises this work including feedback from the Performance Measures Review Group (PMRG) and time needed to resolve and the highest impactors. The OPSG expressed a wish to be included on any prioritisation of remediation work moving forward so that their input can be considered. It was noted that the question of successful Performance Measures is being considered under <u>MP242</u> 'Change to Operational Metrics to Measure on Success', which will be coming to OPSG 104 on 10 October 2023.

SECAS advised that Service Provider measures for Percentage of Communications Hubs determined not to be faulty following attempted installation, in CSP C&S did not achieve Minimum Service Levels. SECAS noted that the issue was due to delays in triaging returned Communication Hubs. The DCC advised that they have put a more robust triaging process in place, and they do not expect the issues to occur again.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

**ACTION 103/01:** DCC to map the Performance Measures that are below Minimum and Target Service Levels onto the appropriate waterfall charts within the Business Process Indicator Report Summary.

## 5. Business Process Indicator Report Summary

#### **5.1 Business Process Indicators**

The DCC provided a summary of Business Process performance, using the agreed Business Process indicators for August 2023.

The DCC advised that Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS) 2 Firmware performance has improved in all regions. The DCC noted that there was a Change of Supplier (CoS) performance recovery in August after the incident that impacted the July 2023 performance.

The DCC advised that there was an improvement in SMETS1 Firmware Activation performance in Final Operating Capability (FOC). The DCC noted that there has been an improvement in Install and Commission management due to the work carried out with Users, there is now a reduction on internal migrations which was impacting this Performance Measure.

#### 5.2 2G/3G Sunsetting performance

The DCC provided an update on performance following the Vodafone 3G withdrawal in Oxford, Hull and Glasgow. The DCC noted a decrease in Round-Trip Times (RTTs); however, the Service Request Variant (SRV) success rate decreased. )

The OPSG Chair noted that the SRV performance has decreased from 94.9% to 94.4%, and asked the OPSG to consider when such a fall in performance should become a concern. The OPSG noted this and highlighted that while the decrease in SRV performance may look relatively small, the impact across a Business Process which includes a number of SRVs could be larger and that this should be considered when monitoring performance.



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The OPSG queried whether these early observations had implications for the future transition to and use of 4G and will continue to monitor the performance over the coming months. DCC agreed to include the historic performance within the slide(s) to enable this

#### 5.3 Detailed Business Process review

While discussing the Pre-Payment trend Analysis, the DCC noted there had been a reduction in vends per gas meter, due to being summer. The DCC advised this will increase again as we move towards winter.

While discussing the Pre-Payment waterfall chart, the DCC advised they have introduced a new bucket called non-communicating devices. The DCC advised that this bucket includes failed SRV vend attempts to device which either haven't communicated within 60 days or are on CSP non-communication reports: these are currently responsible for 0.2% of failed prepayment processes. The OPSG asked for the DCC to return with further clarification on the reasons for the failed SRVs. The OPSG noted the ongoing work carried out by the DCC and the addition of the new categories.

The DCC highlighted that the Pre-Payment Business Process performance glidepath has tracked below the forecasted improvement in August, SECAS asked if this will impact the remainder of the glidepath targets and the DCC advised that it would not, and they expect to see continued improvement in performance in line with the forecasted figures.

While discussing the Install and Commission SRV waterfall chart, the DCC highlighted that there was a doubling in size of the incorrect device status bucket since July. The DCC advised that there are workshops taking place on the Install and Commission process, to discuss and review when SRs are sent. The OPSG advised that the workshops so far have been beneficial. The OPSG Chair asked how lessons learnt from this engagement will be provided as DCC Guidance notes for all Service Users. The DCC noted that work is ongoing and that there is a document on Install and Commission best practice being created but were not able to provide a timeframe for completion or details of the review process. The OPSG agreed with the OPSG Chair and noted that it would be beneficial for the DCC to facilitate this, so that suppliers can learn from each other in these engagements.

[Post meeting note: This action has already been recorded under **OPSG 87/03**: The DCC and SECAS to work together to determine the most appropriate mechanism to share the best practice and lessons learnt i.e., for prepayment and install and commission.]

The OPSG highlighted the WNC PDP issue, and asked if there is any work underway to prioritise which Communications Hubs are upgraded first. The DCC advised they will investigate what level of prioritisation is being applied. The OPSG also asked the DCC for further information on if devices used for PrePayment devices are prioritised, and the DCC agreed to provide this.

[Post meeting note: The DCC advised that the WNC 4.1.0.4 targeted firmware roll-out is currently progressing well, and the follow on WNC 5.0.0.7 (GBCS 4.1) when available late 2023, will provide (Wide Area Network (WAN) self-heal to the ~1.2m devices that 4.1.0.4 cannot upgrade. Once production approvals have completed these Communication Hubs (CHs) will be prioritised for upgrade from early January 2024. With regards to prioritising PrePayment customers, we do currently have a process in place that allows us to prioritise fixes for them. Post upgrade CHs supporting PrePayment have additional support such that WAN self-heal will recover WAN connectivity after a no PDP within 48 hours.]



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The OPSG **noted** the update and **agreed** to close action OPSG 99/03: *The DCC to review the 2G/3G* sunsetting reporting and update this to show more detailed indicators of performance post switch-off.

## 6. Major Incident Review

#### 6.1 Formal Report for Major Incident INC000001066146

SECAS presented the OPSG with a summary of the DCC Major Incident INC000001066146, which occurred on the 27 July 2023.

The OPSG queried the root cause, and advised they had an initial review of this. The OPSG advised that the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) Chair was interested to know more detail of the root cause of this incident. The OPSG requested that the report be brought before TABASC to ensure they are consulted on this matter as per action OPSG 102/01: *The DCC to provide TABASC with the formal report relating to Incident 1076111* (SSI/SSMI/Remedy/SMKI Repo and all DUIS traffic) for more detailed review.

The DCC advised that the incident will be included in the August 2023 PMR, and the root cause is currently still under investigation. The OPSG asked for clarification on the rule that determines which month the incident is included in, as they assumed it was the start date of the incident. The DCC confirmed that the Incident is reported in the month of the date that it is closed, which is five days post resolution. The OPSG did not highlight any issues with the management or communication of this Incident.

The OPSG:

- **CONSIDERED** the contents of the presentation.
- **AGREED** the Review Report for Incident INC000001066146 may be published, after any comments from TABASC are addressed.

#### 6.2 Category 1 Incident INC000001086671 update (20 September 2023)

The OPSG Chair raised questions around the nature of the incident, the incident management process and the User experience, and User communication forums.

The DCC advised that during a high impact window there were a cluster of databases transferred to new storage. However, one of the nodes failed to join the cluster: this was deemed non-service impacting. The node that failed was put back into the cluster later that morning, and another node was inadvertently restarted which caused all of the SMETS1 Service Provider (S1SP) Initial Operating Capability (IOC) services and traffic to that cohort to fail. The DCC advised there was a knock-on effect to all other On-Demand traffic across SMETS1 and 2, which was investigated by the DSP and S1SP. The DCC advised that several actions were completed during the night including restarting the database nodes, pausing the scheduled reads which saw an improvement in On-Demand traffic but not to BAU (Business as Usual) levels. At 07:06 the database node was completely rebuilt and restarted with a command that restored the S1SP. However, the failure rates were still higher than expected. Further work was required by the DSP to clear traffic queues and the DSP restarted applications at 09:50 which restored the service. The DCC advised that it took 40 minutes for the backlog of SRVs to be cleared and for traffic to normalise. The restoration was complete at 10:30. The DCC advised they will investigate how the change failed and how the impact was so severe to the rest of SMETS1 and 2 after a failure within one of the S1SPs; this will be taken away and reviewed as part of a problem record.



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An OPSG member noted that it sounds like there are two strands of argument here. The first is an architectural question, and TABASC comment would be needed. The second is a possible process issue, and the OPSG member queried if it was a runbook error or more to the point a human error that may have caused this, as well as noting a need to understand whether both strands are isolated from each other. The DCC advised that there are many issues in the post Incident review that it will need to investigate. A DESNZ representative asked how long it would usually take to investigate the root cause of a Category 1 as opposed to a Category 2, and where is the category decided. The DCC advised that it was assessed at the time and since the Incident saw almost 100% failure of on-demand traffic it was declared a Category 1 incident immediately once identified. The DCC advised that a comprehensive investigation will take place to get to the root cause and could not confirm when this would be completed.

The OPSG Chair asked the DCC to comment on the Incident Management process, as there appeared to be dissatisfaction from Users. The DCC explained that the standard Incident management process begins when the impact is first identified, and they issue communications hourly until a solution is reached. However, the SLA for resolution was missed in this instance, and the DCC further added that the incident was resolved as quickly as it could have been. The DCC advised that they received good feedback overnight from Service Users and advised that it liaised with Service Users from 08:00 to see what the impact was on their side. The DCC advised that they will investigate how they can improve their communications during such incidents. The OPSG noted that they had found the Incident Management process satisfactory in this instance. The OPSG thanked the DCC for their work and noted that escalation of the issue helped to resolve it.

The OPSG discussed the possible ways they could make communication easier during such Incidents. SECAS noted that in a previous meeting (OPSG 63), SECAS took an action to investigate options to set up an online User Forum that SEC Parties could subscribe to and use to communicate with one another. However, SECAS further explained that there were barriers identified during evaluation of the initial idea, such as budget, cost, and the current website being unable to support push notifications. Of the options tabled by SECAS, it was agreed in OPSG 75 that SECAS create a bulletin board and a trial subsequently took place with volunteers from OPSG invited to operate the solution over a defined 10 Working Day period. Post trial feedback received from participating OPSG members confirmed it would be more efficient if there were push notifications enabled and the trial ended with all associated actions closed. SECAS further noted the idea of having a User Forum was also considered as part of requirements gathering for the new SEC website and requirements discussed across a number of workshops. SECAS confirmed that the SECAS Customer Engagement Team had advised that there was not much support from SEC Parties for this User Forum initiative. SECAS highlighted one of the challenges was around responsibilities for adjudicating such a forum, and whether it would be more appropriate for DCC to manage rather than SECAS.

SECAS then advised that it could publish another survey to SEC Parties to see if there is renewed support for this. The OPSG asked whether a WhatsApp group could be used to facilitate quick and efficient communication and noted it would need to be monitored closely. The OPSG also noted that during the 10 Working Day trial, no incident arose, which meant it was still unclear if it would be effective during an actual Incident. SECAS noted this, and suggested a Teams Channel could be used, similar to the OPSG Teams Channel. The OPSG advised that this had been ruled out in the past as the current Teams channels set up by SECAS only caters for members of specific SEC bodies (such as the Panel and Sub Committees), and it was agreed that availability should be to all DCC Service Users.

The OPSG also noted the DCC's SSI (Self Service Interface) would be more effective if it could facilitate push notifications, rather than Users needing to log in to the site to view notifications.

The DCC advised that it is also investigating including a live updates section on its website that could enable subscribed Users to monitor live updates of DCC services that are being impacted. The OPSG



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agreed this would be a useful addition. The OPSG agreed that SECAS should re-investigate a User forum platform for frontline user staff and OPSG members. The OPSG Chair advised that this can be progressed ex committee, to enable as fast progress as practicable.

**ACTION 103/02:** The DCC to review the feasibility of options that could allow Service Users to subscribe to live status and push notifications. This could be via the website or an alternative tool.

**ACTION 103/03:** SECAS to assess and propose potential options for implementing a User Forum platform that supports proactive participation from all subscribed users, potentially via Teams or WhatsApp or similar. This is to be progressed as fast as practicable ex committee.

## 8. 1 October Price Change Event update

The DCC provided the OPSG with an update on the arrangements for the 1 October Price Change event.

Following the User guidance document issued by the DCC on 6 September 2023, the DCC presented the following responses from ten Service users (SUs):

- Two SUs will broadly follow the guidance.
- Two SUs will partially follow the guidance.
- Six SUs have confirmed that they will not be following the guidance.

Following review of the SRVs in light of the responses noted, the DCC advised there was a risk that FOC schedules will fail and overrun by one hour with the potential that this backlog could continue until 16:00 on 2 October 2023. The DCC stated that the schedules should be completed within the SLA for the other cohorts.

DESNZ asked if the responses had come from only Suppliers, or Other Users. The DCC advised that the responses had mainly come from Suppliers, but they have also engaged with Other Users. The DCC advised that they expect schedule delays for the week but will review this on a daily basis.

The DCC plan to suspend scheduled read requests up to 08:00am on the day of the event and will continue to review scheduled reads on a daily basis. Time per Second (TPS) adjustments have been reviewed and alternative processes agreed to protect the service, and these are expected to be in place from midnight to 08:00am on the day of the event and will gradually return to Business as Usual (BAU) service from 08:00am onwards.

The OPSG **noted** the update and advised that some organisations will not be able to follow the DCC Guidance for the upcoming Price Change Event due to system and process constraints, but in time hope to follow at least some of the guidance notes.

The OPSG **agreed** to close action OPSG 100x/03: *DCC* to take the Service User potential actions discussed during the Price Change Event workshop and feed into peak demand calculations in order to confirm potential outcomes at the 1 October event.





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## 9. Northbound Prioritisation update

The DCC advised that implementation will be as scheduled in October; a small additional configuration change is scheduled for November 2023. The projected overall residual failure rate after this change is 0.2%.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

## **10. Customer Satisfaction Survey**

SECAS provided the OPSG with a summary of the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey. The respondents were satisfied overall, but the main issues highlighted were that the OPSG meetings tend to overrun, the prioritisation of agenda items, the amount of meeting material to read ahead of meetings, and the engagement of OPSG members.

The OPSG agreed that it is frustrating when meetings overrun. The OPSG commented that a main cause is the number of items on the agenda and suggested that the agenda be tightened, and discussions be briefer. However, it was noted that different members value different items of discussion, which will be a challenge when looking into this. SECAS highlighted that there are also SEC Governance processes that must continue to be followed. The OPSG agreed that though some meetings overrun, a lot of value is gained from the more spontaneous discussions. SECAS advised that they will work with the DCC on the feedback received. The OPSG noted that fewer meetings have been overrunning recently. The DCC highlighted their struggle to decide on how much content the OPSG require for a specific topic, and how much preparation is needed.

In relation to the meeting materials, the OPSG considered improving the overview document that gives members a summary of the agenda items that are due to be discussed, however, late papers may make this difficult. The OPSG Chair highlighted the concern of that an overview document merely becomes a slightly expanded agenda, which would add no value.

The OPSG members commented that the level of engagement from OPSG members depends on the topic and suggested no longer including items that they do not engage with.

SECAS advised that they will work on the feedback received in conjunction with the Terms of reference (ToR) review and provide the OPSG with updates on progress, they encouraged the OPSG to inform them of any further feedback or input at any time.

### 11. Any Other Business

#### 11.1 Terms of Reference review

SECAS advised that the OPSG Terms of Reference (ToR) are currently under review. SECAS advised that they will bring the proposed changes to the November meeting to obtain input from the OPSG and bring the redlined text for approval in the December meeting.

#### 11.2 OPSG Elections Update

SECAS confirmed that Nick Coombs and Elias Hanna are stepping down from their seats on OPSG. Alex Ford from Chameleon Technology will be replacing Elias as an "Other SEC Party", and the EDF representative will be confirmed at the next meeting. The OPSG thanked Nick and Elias for their knowledge and support during their time on the OPSG.



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#### 11.3 OPSG 108 12/12/2023 In-Person meeting

SECAS advised that the DCC have kindly offered to host the in-person meeting in Manchester. SECAS advised they would send out a Doodle Poll to confirm attendance for this.

Next Main Meeting: 10 October 2023

Next Reporting Meeting: 23 October 2023





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