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R0092 – DCC SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS FOR THE SWITCHING INCENTIVE REGIME

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

MEETING	**R0092_02**
DATE	**29 June 2023, 15:00**
LOCATION	Via teleconference

Attendee	Representing	Initials
Tina Pearce	Code Manager (Chair)	TP
Elise Handy	Code Manager (Lead Analyst)	EH
Anton Moden	Code Manager	AM
Glenn Sheern	Code Manager	GS
Michael Taylor	Code Manager	MT
Sidni Renmiu	Code Manager	SR
Vaishnavi Sharma	Code Manager	VS
Sarah Mower	C&C	SM
Cordelia Grey	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	CG
Debbie Walker	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	DW
Gary Stuart	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	GSt
Jenny Bridges	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	JB
Leo Brown	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	LB
Nigel Collins	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	NC
Tim Dunning	Data Communications Company (Proposer)	TD

Jacquie Barton	DNO representative	JBa
David Addison	GRDA	DA
Molly Haley	GRDA	MH
Sharon Dudley	GRDA	SD
Claire Hemmens	RECCo	CH
Jonathan Hawkins	RECCo	JH
Carl Dennis	Supplier representative	CD
Cathy Mulliss	Supplier representative	CM

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (TP) welcomed attendees to the second R0092 work group meeting. Apologies were received from Alasdair Macmillan (Ofgem) and Emma Johnson (British Gas).

2 MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

EH noted that DCC had provided comments on the minutes from the last meeting and confirmed that these changes would be incorporated into the final version of the minutes. These changes were altering Central Registration Service to Centralised Registration Service and the incorrect month of go-live for the Central Switching Service which was labelled as June 2022 instead of July 2022.

3 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

EH provided updates on the below actions.

1506_01: The Code Manager to reconcile any differences identified through proceedings of the R0092 workgroup between the REC obligations and performance assurance reporting. GSt advised that there was work ongoing with RPA and Landmark to alter what is reported to the Performance Assurance Board (PAB) and ensure that it is in-line with what is required under the REC. The action remains in progress.

1506_02: The DCC to confirm the required timescales to process synchronous and asynchronous responses during peak demand volumes. This was discussed under agenda item four and the action was closed.

1506_03: The DCC to confirm how long in-hour scaling processes takes to account for unexpected peak volumes. This was discussed under agenda item four and the action was closed.

1506_04: The DCC to produce a slide demonstrating the dependencies on user response versus dependencies on the DCC to complete processes regarding gate closure. This was discussed under agenda item four and the action was closed.

1506_05: LB to provide data on open incidents, their associated priority categories, volumes and any on hold. This was discussed under agenda item five and the action was closed.

4 MESSAGE RESPONSE TARGETS

NC displayed the slide on the mean hourly synchronous response for all message types in May 2023 in line with Action 1506_02. This data highlighted that there was no relationship between the hourly volume of messages and the mean response time. This data showed that if this was the way the DCC was reporting against this SLA, the month would have been met.

NC then displayed the data for the mean hourly asynchronous response for all message types in May 2023 in line with Action 1506_02. This data again highlighted that there was no relationship between the hourly volume of messages and the mean response time. This slide contained some outliers where the SLA had not been met. These were only within the average low volume hours and JH queried why. The DCC agreed to provide some data to explain these occurrences.

Action 2906_01: DCC to provide an explanation on why there was a wider distribution of mean hourly response times at lower volumes within the May data for asynchronous messages.

The slide also showed where data points had not met the SLA but were achieved timescales in under 3.5 seconds. Two Suppliers noted that a timescale of 3.5 seconds would not cause any downstream risks to them, and DA noted that the GRDA is likely to be unconcerned unless it was regarding gate closure. JH also noted that any timescales this group suggests would need to be formally impact assessed and consulted on through the change process.

JH highlighted that as part of the group, we need to look at the current definition for demand in the REC including the definition for average and peak.

NC then provided an update on Action 1506_03 regarding scaling. DCC was unable to provide a full understanding of scaling as Microsoft Azure does not publish timescales for scaling instances, nor does it publish scaling algorithms. CSS can specify the minimum number of function instances. This is currently set at 4 per data centre (8 in total). JH queried whether DCC had to scale up to over 8 instances and Nigel confirmed that at gate closure it was up to 29 instances but would provide information to understand the occurrences outside of gate closure and for inbound messages.

Action 2906_02: DCC to provide the number of times the service needed to scale to over 8 instances in May for inbound messages and excluding gate closure.

DCC then displayed its proposed options for synchronous message responses which was to have a 100% target level if calculated on mean daily and 99% target level if calculated on mean hourly.

JH queried why there was a need to change an SLA if it was achievable and NC noted that the DCC had not yet run data on months prior to May as it was reporting differently. It was uncertain if the DCC had maintained the level of service seen in May in previous months.

JH advised that there is a need to look at how we consider materiality of messages, whether it is mostly important to ensure the two messages of switch requests and change of agent were performing or whether it is only important to ensure the system as a whole is performing well.

Gate Closure

GSt provided the update on Action 1506_04. The green area of the diagram provides an understanding of items within the DCC's control in gate closure. Once a message is taken from the Event Notifier queue, it is sent over the VPN or public internet to a user end point where the DCC has no control over and is reliant on the end-user responding quickly to ensure a good time is calculated and an SLA is met. It was noted that 99% of user end points respond quickly but there are outliers and the DCC want the SLA to be limited to the green area of the diagram which is under its exclusive control.

MT queried where the risk is if there is not enough time for an end-user to respond. LB confirmed that this was only that the DCC didn't want to be held accountable for things outside of its control but would continue to report to industry on the total time including end-user responses. To date, the DCC has undertaken a lot of work with the OAMs to highlight slow responders who are known to significantly extend gate closure. LB noted that normal response times are approximately one second and slow response times are around 60 seconds. DA raised concerns that if the DCC was no longer held accountable, even though he was sympathetic about the DCC's position, this would negate the good work it does to ensure positive outcomes at gate closure. LB advised that the DCC would still want to ensure there is reporting/maintenance of a process for slow responders. Also, that this falls into the larger conversation around end-user obligations and incentives and that slow responders were usually energy suppliers and not central systems.

It was clarified that if a message was sent to an ERDA, the DCC would need to wait until it responds before a further message is sent to that ERDA for that particular function.

JH read the legal text from section 6.3 of the Central Switching Service Definition.

6.3. The CSS Provider shall process the securing of Switches and send synchronisation messages of secured Switches at Gate Closure to each relevant Switching Data Service Provider (from the time of Gate Closure to the point at which CSS sends the last message).

Further that a Switching Data Service Provider (SDSP) means the CSS Provider, the SMDSP (in respect of the services provided under the Smart Energy Code), the Gas Retail Data Agent, the Electricity Retail Data Agents, and the Enquiry Service Providers.

Therefore, where the DCC has been reporting against timings for all market participants, it is only required to report against SDSPs and that these were determined to be less likely to be referred to as slow responders.

JH noted that there was an acknowledgement time-out period within the gate closure slide where a message was then retried and questioned what that time-out period was.

Action 2906_03: DCC to request information from Landmark on how long the acknowledgement time out period is.

5 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TARGETS

GSt noted that there was a request at the previous work group to provide further information on open incidents, their priority categories and any on hold as per Action 1506_05. LB provided two sets of data, one as of 22 June 2023 and one as of 28 June 2023. For the date from 22 June, there were 1042 open incidents in which 98.94% were P4, 1.06% were P3 and there were no major incidents open. 849 of these incidents were on hold with the market participant and most were in relation to the Error API. Similarly, as of 28 June, there were 1364 incidents, 98.98% were P4 incidents, 1.02% were P3 and there was one major incident which was subsequently closed and hit SLA. The majority of these were also related to the Error API.

The number of on hold incidents as well as the length of time these have remained on hold was raised. LB noted that the Service Desk team had a robust process to chase every three days, escalate and make phone calls. However, the incident cannot be closed until confirmation is received from the end-user and any information is verified within their own systems. It was noted that there are issues engaging with Suppliers within the incident management process, issues with the correct contact details being held and that tickets are assigned to an individual person rather than an organisation. It was also noted that 90% of incidents raised are done proactively by Landmark for the attention of the market participant. As there was no engagement in the first place by the market participant, the incident is harder to close down. There is also no obligation for a Supplier to respond within Service Now.

JH queried whether there was a way of determining the number of inbound tickets raised by users as opposed to ones proactively raised by Landmark. There is a different risk associated with proactively raised tickets compared to user raised ones where a market participant is expecting a response. Where SLAs are consistently being met with service user raised incidents, this may no longer be an issue.

Action 2906_04: DCC to provide data on inbound tickets as opposed to proactively raised incidents from Landmark.

LB noted that the DCC was proposing different target and minimum levels for each individual measure rather than having blanket targets. It was raised that for low volumes a target of 99% would be the same as 100%, similarly there were only two P2s recorded within the first year and therefore the DCC was either going to have a performance of 0%, 50% or 100% for these measures. The DCC also proposed for a traffic light system so that where it is a minor failure, this would not constitute performance reviews, however, where there was a major failure, action plans were expected to be enacted.

6 FORWARD AGENDA

Post-meeting note: It was discussed at the post-meeting with the Code Manager, DCC and RECCo that the following meeting will be discussing the following.

Message Response Targets

- Determine the appropriate definition for demand and whether there is a requirement to define “average” and “peak.”
- How many seconds constitutes the appropriate SLA for synchronous and asynchronous messages.

Incident Management Targets

- Consider difference between user driven incidents vs Landmark raised incidents.

Gate Closure

- Consider whether there an issue when reporting is based only on Switching Data Service Providers.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business and TP closed the work group.