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PAB DEEP DIVE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GAS ENQUIRY SERVICE (GES)

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FOR INFORMATION 	We have established PAB deep dives for key REC Services in 2025. To support this, in this paper we have summarised an update on the performance for the relevant period covering key risk areas such as Security Accreditation, System Access and User Management. We have also reviewed the effectiveness of recent improvement initiatives (such as the GES Re-platforming). PAB Members are invited to take the following actions: • **NOTE** the contents of this paper, provided to support the PAB in their consideration of information provided by the Service Provider.
FOR DECISION 	Considering the areas where the Service is currently not meeting its target performance levels and issues that have been experienced in recent months, the Code Manager recommends PAB to: • **APPROVE** the Periodic Monitoring Performance Assurance Technique (PAT) to be applied from the options presented in Section 3 of this paper.

Note: This paper presents a deep dive into the performance of the Gas Enquiry Service (GES) provided by the Retail Energy Code Company (RECCo) as the responsible REC Party and Xoserve (including its service provider Correla) as RECCo's contracted system provider. We have looked at the performance of this service from 01 April 2024 until 28 February 2025. All references to the 'GES Provider' in this paper include work done jointly by RECCo, Xoserve and Correla.

1 THE ROLE OF PAB

The PAB has been delegated the responsibility for overseeing the performance of REC Services by the RECCo Board, including applying techniques to drive improvement. It also has a specific responsibility for specifying REC Service Provider security and data protection requirements, as well as determining the action taken following notification of a data protection or security breach in relation to any REC Services.

As this is a critical role in the RECCo Board discharging its role, the Code Manager will communicate the outcomes of this review to the RECCo Board as part of regular quarterly reporting.

2 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW

This review covered key areas of the GES Service Specification and assessed whether the GES Provider is adhering to its Code requirements. Our observations are summarised below:

Area covered	Status
System Access The GES Provider has evidenced that it has sufficient controls in place to detect a potential or suspected security breach this is done using a Cyber Security Incident Priority Matrix evaluating financial, reputational, regulatory, and operational factors. **No PATs required.**	
User Management The GES Provider has outlined the use of monthly reports to audit its users in line with Master Administrator User responsibility and quality checks to ensure only authorised users have access to GES and all provisioning and revocation requests are processed on time. **No PATs required.**	
User Support The GES Provider demonstrated its prioritisation and tracking mechanism utilised to ensure all queries and issues are appropriately handled. It also provided samples of the dashboards used for oversight to ensure SLAs are met. The service has met all performance levels for this area since March 2024. **No PATs required.**	
Security Accreditation Penetration testing of the GES infrastructure is one of the security requirements that identifies and addresses potential vulnerabilities within GES. The GES Provider informed us that the last penetration testing occurred in August 2024, and provided evidence summarising the findings and recommended actions to strengthen their security. The GES Provider has informed the Code Manager that the Penetration Tests were conducted against the platform upon which the GES product resides. The report shared outlined that the APIs and Azure Configurations assessed in this report were of good standard with minor issues identified:	

Area covered	Status
• APIs: The application issues are mostly due to a minor leakage of technical information such as server software and development 'leftovers' in a script file. • Azure: The issue identified with Azure was due to the permissive access settings and the lack of configured alerts on the resources of one subscription (logical container). It is important to note that none of the findings has been assessed to present a critical or high risk. The GES Provider has also informed the Code Manager these findings did not relate to the GES Product. Therefore, we are not proposing further action. **No PATs required.**	
Service Availability During the 11-month period under review, the performance levels for service availability were not met in 4 months where unplanned outages occurred. Whilst the performance failure in July 2024 was impacted by a Microsoft Global Network issue and outside the control of the GES Provider, other failures have related to the coincidence of database maintenance activity (index rebuilding) with a high volume of other data processing which reduced the system performance, causing severe degradation classed as an outage. There are common tables between the UK Link system used for Gas Settlement and the GES which contain the entire GB Gas portfolio data and need to be maintained regularly to remain synchronised. There are also wider requirements on these systems to maintain audit trail of changes processed, leading to high storage requirements for processing. The GES re-platforming initiative was expected to address these issues, but since the change was implemented in October 2024, further instances have arisen in November and December 2024 – occurring at the start of the month. Further investigation by the GES Provider indicated that rescheduling and re-prioritisation of processes, especially those related to month-end processing would balance the demand on systems and prevent recurrence. There was also, in January 2025, the transition from an offline maintenance solution to an online one which has contributed to improving performance in this area. On 27 February 2025, GES experienced an issue following scheduled maintenance on the technology platform that underpins the service (as well as a number of other non-REC products and services). A manual error in index naming conventions[1] led to a service outage in GES. Due to the proximity of the outage with the change release, the decision was taken to pause the deployment of REC Change R0120 - Search GES API using MSN while analysis into the issue was undertaken. The GES Provider has informed the Code Manager that though the timing was coincidental, this out was unrelated to the increased volumes in queries seen as a result of price cap changes and press coverage of tariff updates.	

[1] This is separate from the index maintenance issue previously noted, and was caused when index names fell out of sync due to a manual processing issue relating to compatibility of names.

Area covered	Status
The GES Provider informed the Code Manager that the largest index maintenance activity takes place annually in April and that has completed successfully in April 2025 without causing any service availability issues. **In Section 3 of this paper, the Code Manager has set out Performance Assurance Techniques the PAB may apply so that performance improvements are sustained.**	
Service Responsiveness Service responsiveness for GES has been an area of focus due to frequently missed performance levels noted. This is also impacted by the index maintenance operations described above which reduced responsiveness. The GES re-platforming initiative was expected to address these issues. While the service levels noted have improved, performance has not achieved the 100% target consistently. The GES Provider may also consider raising a REC change, if it believes that a 100% target for this area is not appropriate and a lesser target would still provide GES users the expected level of service without causing downstream impacts. **In Section 3 of this paper, the Code Manager has set out Performance Assurance Techniques the PAB may apply to drive further improvement in this area.**	
Data Latency Since go-live, the GES Provider has been unable to report whether or not it is meeting the service levels associated with processing and reflecting updates it received. The GES re-platforming was expected to make this reporting available however, since November 2024, the GES Provider continues to report this data with a caveat that due to the constraints with how gas industry data is structured and processed across REC and non-REC services, the reporting methodology used reports entire table replication which may understate actual performance. It is also not meeting the service level required by the Code. The GES Provider may also consider raising a REC change, if it believes that a 100% target for this area is not appropriate and a lesser target would still provide GES users the expected level of service without causing downstream impacts. **In Section 3 of this paper, the Code Manager has set out Performance Assurance Techniques the PAB may apply to drive further improvement in this area.**	

3 CODE MANAGER RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the observations presented, the Code Manager sets out the available Performance Assurance Techniques (PATs) the PAB may apply to drive improvement:

PAT	Description
Option 1: Action Plan	PAB require the GES Provider to set out Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound actions it will complete to demonstrate the service performance has improved by ensuring:

	• All service availability, service responsiveness and data latency measures meet the expected performance levels. • It has sufficient oversight to have early sight of emerging/potential issues to enable preventative action.
Option 2: **Periodic Monitoring**	**[RECOMMENDED]** PAB require the GES Provider to provide monthly reporting, to supplement existing measures, on: • Where service response times are not meeting the expected performance level, the GES Provider must report the maximum and mean response time for all instances within a month where target was not met. • Where service response times are not meeting the expected performance level, the GES Provider must report the impact on GES users by specifying the hours impacted and the traffic on the service that the time. • Where data latency exceeds the maximum permitted duration with the Code, the GES Provider must agree appropriate reporting with the Code Manager. The GES Provider must also continue to assess the impact of this delay on GES users and inform the Code Manager.
Option 3: **Independent Validation**	PAB require the GES Provider to appoint an independent assessor to investigate the issues and recommend remedial actions to prevent further performance level failures. PAB will delegate the Code Manager to agree the scope of this review with the GES Provider and their appointed Independent Assessor.

PAB may apply any one or more than one of the PATs listed above as they deem appropriate.

PAB DECISION

The Code Manager recommends PAB to:

- **APPROVE** the Periodic Monitoring PAT described in section 3 of this paper to be applied to improve GES performance.