

Minutes

Meeting Name	DCP 010 Working Group	Meeting Number	001
Meeting Date	23 November 2007	Meeting Time	10.30
Meeting Venue	ElectraLink, 289 – 293 Regent St, London, W1B 2HJ		

In Attendance

Attendee

Rosie McGlynn (Chair)
Glenda Simons
Glenn Sheern
Jacqueline Gerhman
John Lawton (Teleconference)
John Lees
Kevin Woollard (Teleconference)
Lorraine Reddington
Nigel Nash
Peter Waymont
Rob Friel
Elizabeth Lawlor (Secretary)

Representing

EDF Energy Customers
The Electricity Networks Company
E.ON UK
Scottish Power Energy Retail
United Utilities Electricity Ltd
RWE Npower
British Gas
CE Electric UK
Ofgem
EDF Energy Networks
EDF Energy Networks
DCUSA Limited

1 ADMINISTRATION

- 1.1 Rosie McGlynn was appointed as Chair of the group.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 The Working Group approved the Terms of Reference and asked that they be updated to reflect the new group membership.

ACTION: EL

3 ROTA DISCONNECTIONS PRESENTATION

- 3.1 PW informed the group that he had invited RF to provide background information on the rota disconnections process to assist the group in its understanding and development of DCP 010.
- 3.2 RF informed the group that the provision for rota disconnections is included in the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC) which sets out the procedure the government may take to deal with an electricity supply emergency. The ESEC also sets out the actions which parties may be required to take in order to deal with such an emergency.
- 3.3 RF explained that the rota disconnections process is designed to enable an equal share of demand across the country with the protection of certain customers in an emergency situation. The group noted that process divides areas of the country into blocks which can be disconnected as needed to reduce demand.
- 3.4 RF informed the group that ENA is responsible for managing the rota disconnections provisions for DNOs. The group noted that the ENA has identified that in order to ensure the rota disconnection process is workable the industry needs to find a way to communicate customers' alpha identifier block directly to them. RF noted that the ENA has considered a number of options such as map based, online and telephony solutions but that given the scale of potentially affected customers (over 20 million) it has been almost impossible to develop a process that can cope with such a high level of enquiries.
- 3.5 RF noted that the ENA has concluded that the most practical solution is to find a mechanism to reduce the number of customers requiring personal assistance that down to an exception level. The group noted that the proposal to put the alpha identifier on each customer bill / invoice would allow media communications to be focused on telling customers where to look on bill rather than trying to communicate the identifier directly to customers. RF noted that if the block alpha identifier is printed in a common place on each bill it would allow newspapers etc to communicate the information clearly.
- 3.6 NN informed the group that BERR was intending to write to suppliers requesting that they implement the publication of the block identifier onto their invoices in the near future.

4 DCP 010 - NOTIFICATION AND PUBLICATION OF ROTA LOAD BLOCK ALPHA IDENTIFIER

- 4.1 GS informed the group that E.ON UK had raised DCP 010 to ensure that there was a standardised process in place for all Suppliers to use to communicate block alpha identifiers to customers. GS noted that E.ON recognised the requirement for information to be in public domain and wanted to find a mechanism for reducing supplier workload in the event of an energy emergency. GS noted that if an emergency situation was invoked mass media communication could be used to direct customers to their bills in the first instance. Customers requiring assistance would then be directed to national / local DNO telephone contacts. GS acknowledged that Suppliers may still receive some overflow calls but that the numbers would be greatly reduced if customers could identify their own block references without support from customer call centres.
- 4.2 GS advised the group that DCP 010 comprised two key elements: the requirement for Suppliers to publish the alpha identifiers; and the requirement to ensure regular communication between DNOs and suppliers to keep the data accurate. GS noted that the obligation for DNOs to send data of postcode to block reference mappings is already in place but the timing of the provision of data could be considered by the group. GS noted that E.ON is satisfied that the current principle of managing the process through the central hub of the ENA is sufficient and that current format is user friendly and appropriate. GS noted that the specifics and the drafting of the CP need to be considered in more detail and confirmed that E.ON was happy to vary proposal based on the recommendations of the group.
- 4.3 Glenda Simons asked the group to consider how IDNOs would be informed of the alpha identifiers for their customers. PW confirmed that DNOs should notify each IDNO of the block references for any connections the IDNO had to the DNO to allow the IDNO to meet its obligation to suppliers. All Distributor parties will have the same obligation to provide the data to suppliers. Members agreed that the drafting should set out obligations on DNO to provide data to both suppliers and IDNOs, and the requirement for suppliers to publish the data on their bills. RF agreed to speak with the ENA to determine if they can provide IDNOs with the an example of the CD for information.

Action: RF

- 4.4 The group noted that currently alpha identifiers are mapped to post codes. NN asked whether it would possible and more helpful to map MPANs to block letter rather than postcodes. RF commented that the rationale for using postcode rather than MPAN as the mapping data item was that it would be easier for an automated telephony service to recognise post codes rather than MPANs. It was also felt that it would be easier for customers to provide their postcodes rather than their MPANs. RF took an action to find out if all DNOs would be able to provide that level of detail. However the group also recognised customers phoning with queries were likely to be more familiar with postcodes than MPANs. GS noted that current CP allows for either solution.

Action: RF

- 4.5 The group considered non domestic and multi-site customers recognising the risk that not every site receives a bill or that the bill goes to the site address. The group proposed that the block identifiers for multiple sites could be included on a schedule to invoice but noted that the block must be associated with site not billing address. GS agreed that he was happy to draft the CP to cover the use of invoices and schedules and parties noted that in such circumstances suppliers could manage large customers / multi site by exception.
- 4.6 The group discussed the format and location of the alpha identifier on the invoice. It was agreed that the best solution would be for the identifier to appear in the same format and location across all bills to increase consistency for customers. Suppliers already publishing the data confirmed that they are publishing the information on the front of the bill and the group agreed that principle should be used going forward. Those suppliers further confirmed that they had not received any increase in calls from customers as a consequence of publishing the alpha identifier.
- 4.7 The group agreed the basic principles for the format and location as follows:
- Front of bill
 - Top third of bill
 - Single letter in a square box
- 4.8 The group noted that some suppliers also publish additional wording to explain the publication of the alpha identifier. Members suggested that the basic principle of this requirement should be mandated for all parties but did not preclude the publication of additional explanatory information.
- 4.9 The group discussed the potential impact of the publication of the block identifier on Braille invoices and for those customers who receive audio invoices. These specific invoice types may need to be excluded from the publication of the identifier as it may lead to confusion if explanatory text is not provided alongside.
- 4.10 GS informed the group that E.ON did not intend to alter the frequency of the provision of data but proposed that a date for the annual updates be agreed. The group considered that an energy emergency is most likely to occur in the winter months and that it would be important for the most current data to be on supplier bills in advance of that period.
- 4.11 The group considered that on a typical quarterly billing cycle the October bill should be targeted. Supplier members indicated that the refresh data should be provided by July to ensure that the October bills are up to date. The group agreed that the drafting should specify the timeframe for the DNO to issue the data to the ENA rather than a specific timeframe for suppliers to publish the data on the bills. Members agreed that suppliers should be obligated to ensure the data was published on the 'next statement after the update is received'.
- 4.12 KW asked whether there would be any liability issues for suppliers as a consequence of the wrong identifier being published on a customer bill. The group agreed that provided the suppliers published the information provided

to them by the DNO there would be no issues. The group noted that it was working to provide a reasonable endeavours / good faith solution to give customers guidance under emergency situations. Members agreed that the point should be captured within the legal review process.

- 4.13 PW informed the group that the DCUSA Panel had recommended that the CP be issued in the June 2008 rather than November 2008 release if possible. The group agreed that June 2008 was an achievable target date.

5 MRA SOLUTION PRE ASSESSMENT FORM 032

- 5.1 JL informed the group that Npower had submitted a related change under the MRA for pre-assessment. JL informed the group that Npower had reviewed DCP 010 and considered that the ECOES tool could be used by suppliers to provide information to customers upon receipt of a query about rota disconnection identifiers. JL informed the group that Npower's billing process would mean that the alpha identifier information printed on the bill would not be available to call centre staff and that they would not be able to assist customers with any queries relating to the information. JL proposed that as Npower staff have access to ECOES and already use the system for dealing with customer enquiries this would be a logical and cost effective resource to use.
- 5.2 JL confirmed that in addition the use of ECOES to maintain the rota disconnection block date, SF032 includes the requirement for suppliers to publish the data on their bills. JL acknowledged that if industry members felt it more appropriate that the requirement be maintained in the DCUSA, the change could be split out accordingly.
- 5.3 The group reviewed the pre-assessment responses circulated by MRASCo and noted that the majority of respondents supported the obligation for suppliers to publish the alpha identifiers but felt that the requirement should be maintained in the DCUSA. The group further noted that the majority of respondents did not support the use of ECOES for customers as they did not feel the benefits would justify the cost of the change.
- 5.4 RM reminded the group that it could only determine the progression of DCP 010 and that MDB would determine the progression of SF 032. The working group expressed preference for obligation to sit within the DCUSA. Noting that the DCP 010 was not dependent on the progression or otherwise of the MRA CP the group agreed that it wished to take DCP 010 forward.

6 DCP 010 VARIATIONS

- 6.1 GS confirmed that E.ON UK would accept the drafting amendments to DCP 010 as recommended by the group in section 4 and would update the CP to v1.1 accordingly. The group agreed that, subject to comments raised under consultation, it did not wish to put forward an alternative solution.

7 DCP 010 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The group agreed that v1.1 of DCP 010 should be issued to all Parties for consultation for a period of two weeks. In addition to the requirement to assess the CP against the DCUSA Objectives, the group agreed that the consultation should seek feedback on the following areas:

- The implementation time needed by Suppliers to ensure that the block alpha identifiers can be printed on to all bills;
- How suppliers envisage the obligation being fulfilled for non domestic or multi site customers;
- Whether parties envisage any issues with the process for specific customer or bill types (e.g. pre-payment customers, online bills);
- Whether the description of the proposed position (front of bill, top third of page, square box) is sufficient; and
- Whether any customer groups should be excluded from the requirement (e.g. special needs).

8 DCP 010 TIMETABLE

8.1 The group agreed the following timetable for the next stage of work:

Activity	Due Date
Draft Consultation document for review by working group	30 November 07
Issue Consultation to all Parties	07 December 07
Consultation closes	21 December 07
Circulate consolidated Consultation comments	27 December 07
Meeting to draft final CP & Change Report	10 January 07
Change Report presented to Panel	16 January 08

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 KW asked RF if there were any plans to provide suppliers with a national communications script in the event of an energy emergency. GS reminded KW that a list of FAQs is provided on the disc provided to suppliers and RF took an action to report back to the next meeting.

Action: RF

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the DCP 010 Working Group will convene at 10.30am on Thursday 10 January 2008 at ElectraLink, London.

Appendix A: Summary of Actions

This section provides details of actions placed at the meeting. The section is split into two sub-sections:

- New actions and progress against actions currently open; and
- Actions that were closed as a result of the meeting or a previous meeting.

Open Actions

Action No.	Description	Owner
01/01	Update ToR to reflect membership	EL
01/02	Send electronic copy of presentation to dcusa@electralink.co.uk for distribution to members	RF
01/03	Speak with the ENA to determine if it can provide iDNOs with the current version of the CD	RF
01/04	Confirm whether DNOs would be able to provide MPAN to Block mapping information	RF
01/05	Re-draft DCP 010 to incorporate comments made by the group	GS
01/06	Draft Consultation Document for review by the group	RM
01/07	Issue Consultation to all DCUSA Parties, Ofgem and energywatch	EL