

Connection Customer Steering Group

Notes from the meeting held 30th June 2020 via Zoom

Present:

David Overman	GTC	Olly Frankland	Regen SW
Helen Ewing	Severn Trent	Richard Shearer	Green Frog
Hugh Taylor	Roadnight Taylor Ltd	Simon Dawson	GTC
Mark Boyce	UCSM	Daniel Sandbrook	TUSC Ltd
Nicki Barnett	Power Systems UK	Paul Graham	Sembcorp Energy UK

Alison Sleightholm WPD Resources and External Affairs
Director

Tim Hughes WPD Connections Policy Manager

Peter Aston WPD Primary System Design Manager

Grant Rogers WPD Connections Policy Engineer

Penny Carolan WPD Connections Policy Coordinator

Kate Shehean WPD Connections Policy Coordinator

1. Introduction

Tim Hughes welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda for the day.

2. Director's Update

Alison Sleightholm gave an overview of WPD's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alison detailed how our response is centred around three pillars;

- **Staff**
 - Safety - implemented processes and PPE for field staff
 - Social Distancing protocols at WPD sites
 - 40% of workforce are homeworking
 - Online Covid-19 portal created to provide information and support for all staff
- **Customers**
 - WPD continue to keep the lights on
 - Limited planned works
 - Maintain critical connections work (hospitals & healthcare facilities)
 - Non-essential connections works suspended.
 - Connection offers could continue to be accepted to secure capacity, milestones extended on by 1 month on agreement.
 - BAU for processing connections applications, issuing offers, design approvals and guaranteed standards

- **Community**
 - Launch of 'In this Together' Community Fund to support communities hardest hit by the pandemic
 - Priority Services Register data offered to Local Authorities and Community Groups, whilst being GDPR compliant
 - Standalone App developed for field staff to refer customers in need of support

Alison discussed our next steps

- continue to monitor government guidance
- Local lockdowns (when and where applicable)
- All WPD offices and depots have been risk assessed ready for when staff return

Our ongoing activities were presented

- Net Zero for communities Strategy
- EV Strategy & Strategy summary published
- DFES Interactive map launched
- "Build Back Better" to actively review our green agenda

Stakeholder Query (RS) - Will WPD be issuing some guidance/rules on expectations and requirements prior to ICP's entering sites?

AS – Yes. All details available via the Coronavirus link on our website.

3. Active Network Management (ANM) – Opening New Zones

Pete Aston presented an overview and proposal for the Opening of new ANM Zones

We currently have 16 open ANM zones made up of a mixture of Distribution ANM and Transmission ANM. All are available to view on the [Network Capacity Map](#)

Pete discussed the existing Process for ANM Zones which is based on a pre-defined roll out of certain ANM areas. There is a plan to open 4 GSP zones by 2021, using a guideline of £100,000/MW of 2 year timescale threshold for conventional reinforcement to trigger ANM.

Noted Issues with current process - £/MW could trigger reinforcement but not an ANM zone

Pete then presented the proposal for opening new zones. Key points being;

- No predefined roll out
- flexible needs based approach to trigger new zones
- New zones based on revised financial criteria
- Reduced timescale of 18 months
- A published flow diagram to explain the process
- Some zones will be opened earlier than before, without investing in systems where they are not needed

Stakeholder Query (OF) - Is it fair to say ANM has had a low uptake?

PA – Lots of ANM schemes have been accepted. For certain customers, ANM might not work so well, it depends on how much curtailment is shown for that particular connection. Very site specific for each customer.

Works well for some, but not so well with others.

Future for ANM depends on OFGEMs Significant Code Review (SCR)

Pete gave details of our next steps on ANM

- use feedback from this session
- prepare internal and external guidance
- update website.

Stakeholder Query (OF) – When do you think any changes under SCR might be implemented, particularly with regard to the connections boundary?

TH – Ofgem are still considering a short-list of options but the intention is that any changes will be implemented in 2023 to coincide with RIIO-ED2.

PA – OFGEM have asked questions around how retrospective should any changes be.

We are looking at how we present our curtailment reports and how customers can create their own curtailment reports alongside our providers.

Stakeholder Query (OF) Is there an option for a demand ANM Scheme?

PA – Yes, potentially with battery schemes.

HT - Can demand ANM be requested now?

PA - Yes

4. Work of the Open Networks – Interactivity and Queue Management

Grant Rogers presented on Open Networks, particularly the areas of Interactivity & Queue Management.

Based on feedback received from the 2019 consultation process, ENA have published the Queue Management Process Guide. Link here - [https://www.energynetworks.org/assets/files/ONP-WS2-Queue%20Management%20User%20Guide%20\(Consultation\)-PUBLISHED.pdf](https://www.energynetworks.org/assets/files/ONP-WS2-Queue%20Management%20User%20Guide%20(Consultation)-PUBLISHED.pdf)

The main proposed change is for the DNO to manage a customer's queue position when a programme is delayed beyond the milestones deadlines within their offer.

Grant gave an overview of the existing process for Queue Management which is based on the Progression Milestones Best Practice Guide where DNO's can monitor milestones. Where milestones are missed they can be extended if appropriate and fair to do so. Where extension isn't possible the offer is terminated.

The proposed new queue management process involves monitoring the progress of contracted connection customers and, where applicable, managing their position in the connections queue by moving their offer's position in the queue or terminating the offer.

How will the proposed process work?

- Customers can be moved down the connection queue based delayed milestones
- Subsequently, faster moving Customers have the potential to move up the queue **if** the Customer in front is in breach of their milestones **and** the cumulative delay is sufficiently high

- Termination will still be applicable however, unlike the existing process, in the new process customers offers will have, in most cases, moved down the connections queue prior to termination

Stakeholder Query (DO) – Whose decision is it to terminate and what appeals are in place?

GR – It is the DNO's decision to terminate. There is no appeals process; rather we would communicate with customer all the way through. If Customer can provide evidence that the scheme is progressing in accordance with the milestones, as per the best practice guide, we would not terminate an offer.

DO – Should the process be formalised, potentially under DCUSA?

HT – This could lead to unintended consequences. In my experience, the queue management system works well.

TH – WPD take a pragmatic view. We would never just terminate. We would ask for evidence of progression, on more than one occasion. It is not our wish to terminate any Connection Offer. We will look to develop our milestones document with our Capacity Allocation & Reservation to help customers understand the rules of engagement.

Grant clarified that customers can move down in the queue and potentially pick up the reinforcement costs of the customers below. There is no black & white ruling, Customer will only be moved down if customer behind is in a better position.

Stakeholder Query (DO) –if you move down and pay for reinforcement. Would second comer rules still apply?

GR – Reinforcement processes and rules are applied as normal. This does not change – the reinforcement included in a Customers Offer can change e.g. a Customer is moved “down the queue” and subsequently picks up reinforcement. Their Offer will be varied to reflect this and standard reinforcement procedures and policies apply

Stakeholder Query (HT) – With new process will WPD be applying same pragmatism and looking at evidence?

GR –WPD always aim to apply a pragmatic approach however our policies would also align with the best practice guide.

PA – Transmission & Distribution queues should be managed the same way

OF – flexible provider confirm that getting flexibility contract, can you be moved up the queue if providing a solution to constraint on the network?

GR – has been highlighted in working group. Guide, references flexibility (Section 16) but does not give specific guidelines. E.g. notes “the promotion of flexible resources should be considered” and gives an example scenario but it does not include detail guidelines

TH - OFGEM keen on promoting this.

PA – facility for adding storage to assist in queue management process is in the guide.

Grant invited comment from CCSG group to pass on to Queue Management working group.

Grant then presented on Interactivity beginning with an introduction to interactivity and why we need it.

The current Interactivity processes are based on the same principles, however there are variances between each Network Operators approach.

Stakeholder feedback derived from the ENA Workstream 2 Product 3;

- A requirement for a consistent approach
- Improved levels of information
- Better Transparency

Based on the above feedback the ENA released the Interactivity Process Guide. Link here -

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.energynetworks.org/assets/files/ONP-WS2-P3%2520Implementation%2520Plan%2520for%2520GB%2520Common%2520Interactivity%2520Process-PUBLISHED.pdf&ved=2ahUKewiY7aX5wqngAhXksnEKHaSPAjoQFjABegQIBhAB&usg=AOvVaw3sJAKsgKDYgg91wXr8EkoT&cshid=1593519923162>

The main updates include;

- Early warning communication
- Standardised interactivity validity period – 30days
- Unconditional & conditional offers
- Re-application process

Stakeholder Query (DO) - The Project Milestone timescale will be affected by acceptance within 30 days.

GR – Yes, this was initially 65 days, now down to 30 so. We would expect customers to accept fairly quickly but yes this has reduced the time between acceptance and first milestone.

DO – It may be worth flagging up the potential consequence of accepting early

5. Ice Looking Back - Looking Forward May 2020

Penny Carolan presented an ICE update. The update has been published and is available on our website www.westernpower.co.uk/ice

Looking back 2019-20

Key priorities were;

- Transition to DSO
- Accessibility of Info
- Network Capacity allocation and reservation
- Competition in Connections
- Low Carbon Technology
- Community Energy
- Assessment & Design fees

We have 38 completed initiatives from 2019/20.

Penny discussed 3 of these completed initiatives;

Flexibility webinars

Improve online application process – documents can now be attached

DG Post Energisation Guidance

Looking forward plan 2020/21

Penny introduced our ICE 2020/21 plan where we have moved away from key priorities and introduced 4 key areas – Policy Guidance, Customer Support, Communication, Stakeholder Engagement.

There are 28 initiatives across the plan.

The Q2 update will be published in the coming weeks on our website www.westernpower.co.uk/ice.

Penny concluded the presentation by giving details of the completed Unmetered Connection Offer ICE action from the 20/21 plan, where we have conducted a survey of our Unmetered Connections Process and published the feedback and summary document online.

No questions/comments arose.

6. Summary, Feedback & Next Steps

TH thanked the CCSG members for attending and invited general feedback.

Feedback form issued via email at the end of workshop

Future CCSG meetings:

Dates	Topics
October 21 st 2020	Significant Code Review, G99
February 2021	TBC

Major Connections Customer Event

Dates	Venue
November 25 th 2020	TBC