

Ofgem Connections Delivery Board

December 2023 Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Wednesday 6 December, 2023 – 09:30 - 1130

MS Teams Meeting

Attendees

Role Category	Representative	Organisation
Chair	Jack Presley-Abbott	Ofgem
Technical Secretary	David Boyer	Energy Networks Association
Electricity System Operator	David Wildash	Electricity System Operator
	James Norman	Electricity System Operator
Transmission Owners	John Twomey	National Grid Electricity Transmission
	Scott Mathieson	Scottish Power Transmission
	Christianna Logan	SSE Transmission
Distribution Network Operators	Mark Adolphus	UK Power Networks
	Steffan Jones	Electricity North West
	Paul Glendinning	Northern Powergrid
	Gareth Hislop	ScottishPower Energy Networks
	Ben Godfrey	National Grid Electricity Distribution
Chair of SCG T/D interface group	Andy Scott	SSE Distribution and Chair of the SCG
UK Government	Paul van Heyningen	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
	Daniel Boorman	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
	Paul Hawker	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
	Ian Thel	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
	Amber Woodward	No. 10
	Nadya Thorman	No. 10
National Governments	Jasmine Killen	Scottish Government
	Jennifer Pride	Welsh Government
CPAG chair	Merlin Hyman	Independent Chair of Connections Process Advisory Group (CPAG)
Connections Customer Representatives	Barnaby Wharton	Renewable UK
	Charles Wood	Energy UK
	Andy Manning	Citizens Advice
	Eddie Proffitt	Major Energy Users Council
Energy Regulator	Tessa Hall	Ofgem
	Kludia Starzyk	Ofgem
	Eleanor Warburton	Ofgem
	Peter Bingham	Ofgem
	Ben Watts	Ofgem

Apologies

Role Category	Representative	Organisation
Electricity System Operator	Deborah Spencer	Electricity System Operator
Connections Customer Representatives	S Turner	Global Infrastructure Investment Bank
Code Panels	Trisham Cauley	CUSC/ Grid Code Panel

Meeting Notes and Actions

1. Welcome & Introductions and Apologies	JPA, EW, PB
<p>JPA opened the call and was introduced as chair. Ofgem welcomed and thanked all for joining and efforts to date and introduced PB as taking on ownership of the connections area for Ofgem going forward.</p> <p>The board all gave introductions.</p> <p>It was noted Lily Ferber will join on behalf of No. 10 going forward.</p> <p>Membership of Scottish Government was checked – and confirmed Jasmine Killen is included in the membership.</p>	

2. CDB and CPAG overview	KS/ JN	
<p>The structure and role of the CDB was introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A request was raised for further details regarding the publication of data & information <p>An introduction and overview of the Connections Process Advisory Group (CPAG) was given, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update of the latest confirmed representatives for the CPAG, noted a request for additional DNO representation: BG (NGED) and AS (SSE) were confirmed as additional DNO representatives. It was also noted that the ESO Connections Reform Final Recommendations Publication has now been published 		
New Actions		
1	List of members of the CDB to be circulated to the CDB	ENA

3. Terms of Reference	TH
<p>Comments were invited on the CDB Terms of Reference</p> <p>A number of comments and requests were raised, which were broadly supported to be looked at for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was requested that the ToR note the requirement for external communication and transparency of the CDB – potentially including publishing CDB minutes and/or papers. It was requested that further emphasis be made on the CDB purpose regarding supporting net zero as well as ‘speeding up’ connections. 	

- Increased emphasis was requested on the prioritisation role of the CDB as well as its role in forward strategic review. Interactivity was noted with strategic planning and Commissioners Report recommendations, but not necessarily to be included in the CDB ToR

Early scheduling visibility of CDB sessions was requested to support attendance and offline review and contributions.

- It was noted that the board should review ToR in 3 months

New Actions

2	The forward schedule of CDB sessions to be put in the diary	ENA
3	Updates to the CDB ToR to be made and re-circulated for ratification in subsequent CDB sessions	Ofgem
4	The board should review ToR in 3 months	The Board

4. CAP Overview

PH/ TH

An overview of the Ofgem and DESNZ joint Connections Action Plan (CAP) was given, noting:

- the effort, context, that had gone into the recent publication of the CAP, clearly CAP is required as connection delays are increasingly impacting GB wide across sectors
- It is recognised throughout government up to No. 10 as a key priority, and
- that the CAP actions will enable £90 billion of investment in GB. CAP playing a role drawing together all of the required actions into a coherent piece.

The key focus areas of the action plan were summarised and those key areas highlighted that are to be brought to the CDB in Q1 next year, so the CDB will need to consider how / ensure the board is a position to assess and agree those actions in those timescales.

Reflections and feedback on the CAP were invited which included:

- That there are clear challenges at D as well as T, and coordination will be an important focus, potentially linking to network planning – for focus and discussion with CDB.
 - An overview of distribution focused actions through the SCG was given
- It is a great package of actions that should move the dial, however have to note that it is stretching and may need to consider what else can be done to the existing pipeline as queue management may not act fast enough.
 - It was that the ESO endorse potential additional action in this space and have outlined package options in the Final Recommendations Report, and noting that they will be coming to CDB in Q1 on recommendations.
- It is positive set of actions and to see the CDB experts taking them forward. It was asked if this forum will be monitoring and discussing data on solution impacts, particularly linking back to the headline targets (i.e. 6 months delta from requested connection date); it was confirmed that it would.
- Support of the CAP actions was noted, also noting that many early actions are to agree solutions & way forward.
- Many data/ KPIs are lagging and timely insights may require more/ rapid engagement with customers to be able to track progress in a timely manner. Also, focus is required on consistent and clearly communicated rapid implementation. Reflected that non-firm solutions are carrying a lot of weight in solution set, customers require clear data and information consistently available from networks to assess. Finally, Queue management will only bite in the next c. four years as milestone adherence won't be actionable for sometime for later connection date projects.

- It was noted that there is a clear focus on dealing with the queue; but more visibility and clarity of actual network capacity and network build was missing. The CAP was confirmed as ‘process focused’ and that other activities were being progressed with a clear focus on infrastructure delivery
- Comments were given supporting the CAP as a great piece of work, and the other comments made, particularly the focus on data availability and increasing actual network build. There are positive ‘best practice’ examples to build out consistently across the industry.

5. Governance Arrangements & Next Steps	DB
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An description of the governance approach, artefacts, and key next steps for the CDB was given by the Technical Secretariat.

Discussion & feedback included:

- Confirming scope ownership for all areas of the CAP is a key next step
- For any outputs from the CDB, data confidentiality and what is appropriate to publish needs to be considered.
- Regarding dashboards and benefits tracking:
 - When benefits are expected should be considered and understood explicitly
 - Noted that interactivity will also need to be considered
 - Noted that reporting, dashboarding, and data tracking needed to be mapped back both to the CAP action items as well as to the headline benefit target
- Clear dashboarding as well as summaries and key decision focuses would be required need to help cut through ‘blizzard’ of data, ensuring specific requests/ focus points for the CDB.
- It was noted that prioritisation and design updates will be shortly being brought to the CDB, and that preparing assessment criteria is required to support the CDB in its role and making decisions in a timely manner. ACTION on OFGEM/DESNZ.
- It was asked if initiatives related to infrastructure delivery timescales/ improvements/ etc. be tracked/ presented here? It was agreed that would be done through other fora, but potentially could provide updates to the CDB for visibility and coordination.
- Proposed that any external summaries, data, and/or narrative could be agreed monthly through this board.
- It was discussed what would happen in the case of non-delivery.

New Actions

5	Prepare assessment criteria to support the CDB in its role and making decisions in a timely manner	Ofgem/DESNZ
6	CDB governance reporting, status and data dashboards, and programme plan to be developed in line with CDB discussion	ENA