Ofgem Connections Delivery Board
March 2024 Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Thursday 21 March 2024 – 13:00 – 16:30

MS Teams Meeting

Attendees

Role Category	Representative	Organisation
Chair	Jack Presley-Abbott	Ofgem
Technical Secretary	David Boyer	Energy Networks Association
	Kyle Smith	Energy Networks Association
	Allan Boardman	PA Consulting
	Adam Wissen	PA Consulting
Electricity System Operator	James Norman	Electricity System Operator
	David Wildash	Electricity System Operator
Chair of SCG T/D interface group	Andy Scott	SSE Distribution and Chair of the SCG
Transmission Owners	Christianna Logan	Scottish Hydro Electricity Transmission
	Allan Love	Scottish Power Transmission
	Paul Lowbridge	National Grid Electricity Transmission
Distribution Network Operators	Mark Adolphus	UK Power Networks
	Kester Jones	National Grid Electricity Distribution
	Steffan Jones	Electricity North West
	Gareth Hislop	Scottish Power Energy Networks
UK Government	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
	Lily Furber	No. 10
National Governments	Jasmine Killen	Scottish Government
	Jennifer Pride	Welsh Government
CPAG	Catherine Cleary	Connections Process Advisory Group (CPAG)
Connections Customer Representatives	Barnaby Wharton	Renewable UK
	Charles Wood	Energy UK
Energy Regulator	Tessa Hall	Ofgem
	Klaudia Starzyk	Ofgem
	Peter Bingham	Ofgem
	Lee Wilkinson	Ofgem
	Alasdair MacMillan	Ofgem
	Liam Cullen	Ofgem
	Gillian Capewell	Ofgem
	Salvatore Zingale	Ofgem
	James Macauley	Ofgem

Apologies

Role Category	Representative	Organisation
Transmission Owners	Scott Mathieson	Scottish Power Transmission
Electricity System Operator	Milly Lewis	Electricity System Operator
	Deborah Spencer	Electricity System Operator
	Mike Robey	Electricity System Operator
Transmission Owners	John Twomey	National Grid Electricity Transmission
Distribution Network Operators	Ben Godfrey	National Grid Electricity Distribution
	Annette Sloan	SSE Distribution
	Paul Glendinning	Northern Powergrid
	Sue Neves e Brooks	SSE Distribution
	Graham Halladay	NG Distribution Operations Director
	Dan Randles	Electricity North West
UK Government	Paul van Heyningen	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
	Amber Woodward	No. 10
	Oliver Dixon	Office for Investment
	Nadya Thorman	No. 10
National Governments	Eleanor Hoare	Welsh Government
CPAG Chair	Merlin Hyman	Independent Chair of Connections Process Advisory Group (CPAG)
Connections Customer Representatives	Eddie Proffitt	Major Energy Users Council
	Graham Panell	BayWa r.e. UK
	S Turner	Global Infrastructure Investment Bank
Energy Regulator	Shabana Akhtar	Ofgem
Code Panels	Trisha McAuley	Chair - CUSC/ Grid Code Panel
Consumer Representatives	Andy Manning	Citizens Advice

Key Summary

The meeting of the March Connections Delivery Board (CDB) was extremely proactive, with a focus on what actions from the Connections Action Plan (CAP) could be brought to fruition through Board activity.

One of the key focuses was on ESO proposals for (i) the definition of project readiness proposed to be used to determine queue position in a reformed queue process - termed 'Gate 2 Project Progress Milestone, potentially slashing the queue and accelerating those ready projects. This discussion on (i) was centred around what it meant to be 'connections ready' and how this would be both defined and consulted upon to make this a reality. The Board also had a productive discussion on (ii) developing ESO's connections reform proposals to date so that the process applies to both new and existing connections customers - termed 'Packages 3-5 on additional actions. Both (i) and (ii) were presented to the CDB by the board for steer to guide decision-making on queue positioning for viable and robust projects. Additionally, the ESO presented their recommendations on further actions to expedite connections reform. The board expressed overall support for this approach.

There were three further papers discussed, presented for information. The first related to disincentivising project modification applications, whereby it was becoming potentially problematic that project owners repeatedly asked for changes to their project. The second considered effectively allocating network capacity released in short-term, and a final one providing a single digital view of

network data for connection customers. These three papers all sought to deliver on the commitments set out in the CAP, which was initially published at the end of 2023.

March CDB also saw significant developments to the initial data dashboard on reform impacts and benefits up to February 2024, as well as the presentation of CAP action summary slides, with progress assessed and benefit metrics called out.

A brief update on Ofgem's strategic steer criteria was presented for information, with an open invitation for members to contribute to strategic criteria framework development and its application. This helps to show CAP progress and implementation and allows the Board to deliver the greatest benefits from the CAP.

Actions from February CDB were presented with no questions from the Board. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved for external publication via the ENA website.

Several AOBs were raised around transparency of paper sharing, quicker turnaround of meeting minutes, update to the CDB meeting schedule (with a move from the third week to the last week of the month), and discussion around duration extension for April CDB given the depth and breadth of topics covered and anticipated for future discussions.

Key dashboard highlights (data correct to end-February 2024):

Transmission and Distribution Summary:

- Networks are connecting customers at a greater pace than ever before, having already connected 13.5GW this regulatory year to date (between April and February 2024). However, the connection queue has surpassed 700 GW, with a slight decrease in the rate of growth. This includes a mix of transmission, distribution, export, storage, and demand projects.
- There is a notable discrepancy between supply and demand in the queue – 44 GW of demand and 657 GW from export and storage – potentially informing thinking around a need for policy alignment with the allocation.
- There continues to be significant capacity in the queue that can connect when customer projects are ready without being constrained by network timescales, highlighting the importance of the queue management reforms mentioned higher up in this summary.
- Despite ongoing connections, most connection offers do not meet the requested dates, particularly in distribution, due to dependencies on transmission works or ongoing assessments.

Impacts of Interventions Summary:

- Accelerated Connection Dates: Progress has been made in accelerating connection dates for projects, primarily through technical limits at distribution and offers at transmission. 2.4 GW cumulative capacity across Transmission and Distribution (T&D) accelerated by an average of four years, with much more expected to follow.
- Capacity Released: Reforms, particularly for storage at distribution, have enabled more efficient use of network capacity, reducing the reinforcement needed and allowing more customers access to the network. 10.7 GW cumulative capacity released across T&D.
- Removal of Non-Progressing Projects: The queue management measures already agreed and in place have effectively removed over 8.1 GW of non-progressing projects across T&D from the queue, enhancing the efficiency of the connection process.
- Customer Service: There remains a challenge in meeting requested connection dates, particularly at transmission, emphasising the need for continued focus on improving the connection process. Only 15% of transmission connections were offered their requested connection date as of February 2024. The average delay for the 85% of applications not offered their preferred date is currently approximately 46 months.

Decisions & key actions agreed at the meeting:

- Within the CAP area summary updates, actions agreed were (1) ESO to clarify LoA Phase 2's introduction timeline (2) ESO to review "TBC" items on the plan on a page (POAP), and (3) ENA to ensure the timely issuance of minutes and POAP for membership review (and SCG data dashboard for information) to enable publication before the April CDB meeting.
- Following discussion around strategic steer criteria, the actions were to invite participation from CDB members who wish to delve deeper into the strategic criteria framework and its

application, and the integration of the strategic criteria framework as part of the CDB's ongoing administrative infrastructure, likely as an appendix updated with each meeting to reflect current prioritisations and decisions. This ensures the framework remains a living document, adaptable to the board's evolving priorities and insights.

- Concerning the ESO's Gate 2 Milestone paper, the ESO were happy with the steer received, contending that they have enough information to start the code modification process. The Board recommendation was that the ESO proceed with the development of code modifications based on suggested recommendations, ensuring more work on the criteria for progression into the queue (i.e. Gate 2 criteria) are considered, finalising the details through industry consultation. A specific action was noted for the ESO to continue engagement with industry stakeholders including to address concerns about the planning process and to explore alternatives or mitigations for potential issues caused by the Gate 2 criteria application.

- Concerning ESO's Packages 3-5 recommendation paper (additional actions that could be taken to accelerate connections reform), actions were:
    - (Concerning technology/location Option 2) ESO to engage with Ofgem and the industry to discuss the potential for more centralised intervention in the future, aligning with ongoing programs like SSEP, REMA and RESP.
    - ESO to engage with industry to manage the impact of the proposal on planning applications and local authorities, considering the increased activity that may result.
    - ESO to specifically address how the proposal impacts distribution customers, ensuring fair and efficient solutions are developed in consultation with DNOs.
    - ESO to clarify details around implementation, specifically concerning roles and responsibilities, timeline to implementation, risks (e.g. the treatment of existing contracts, liabilities, securities), and benefits (e.g. modelling the impacts).
    - ESO to confirm naming convention and comms strategy for the proposal - suggestions for using seminars, forums, and trade associations to disseminate information and gather feedback.

- For the 'for information' paper relating to short-term capacity allocation (i.e. focus likely to be on 2024), actions agreed were (a) ESO to introduce a policy for short-term capacity allocation based on the parameters set out within the CDB paper, focusing on readiness and matching capacity with appropriate projects, (b) ESO to revisit proposed position on delayed enabling works in the coming months once there is more data on the volume of project modification applications and how these relate to the potential new queue under the proposals to accelerate connections reform.

Meeting Notes and Actions

1. Welcome & Update from Chair	JPA

Ofgem opened the call by outlining the agenda, welcoming attendees, new and old, and thanking them for good attendance. The agenda was discussed, with no objections or AOB raised.

The initiative to share a series of blogs for increased transparency about the CDB activities was introduced, marking an effort to provide greater visibility into the board's proceedings and decisions.

2. CAP Action Area Summary Update and POAP	JPA

The summary of each CAP area was given, noting that full detailed reports were shared in the meeting pack.

Summary information included:

- Status updates
- Initiatives in design, implementation, and benefit stages
- KPIs and tracking
- Any major decisions required.

Summaries were given, taking the detailed status reports as read. Attention was therefore focused by exception, e.g. on initiatives where the RAG status was flagged as red or amber (suggesting blockers or delays to actions, respectively). Discussions (per CAP action area) included:

CAP 3.1 – Raise Entry Requirements

- Concerning *(the introduction of letters of authority (LOA) – (CAP 3.1.1)),* the introduction of LoA version 1 was highlighted, with implementation by the end of March. The need for a version 2 to broaden the scope, including offshore projects, address potential duplication and being retrospective was discussed. There was discussion about whether there might need to be a potential two-month waiting period before new proposals can be raised, which could delay the introduction of version 2.
  - o **Action –** ESO and Ofgem to clarify any potential two-month waiting period and explore possibilities to expedite the introduction of LoA version 2 and evaluate if it will include retrospectivity. To be brought to CDB in April.
- It was noted that *(introducing a temporary moratorium on new connection applications – (CAP 3.1.2c)),* flagged as amber, is interactive with proposals to accelerate connections reform being considered at this CDB meeting.
  - o **Action** – ESO to come back with update on the amber status for *(introducing a temporary moratorium on new connection applications – (CAP 3.1.2c))* at April CDB.

CAP 3.2 – Removing Stalled Projects

- There was no discussion around this CAP area, for actions are either on track or complete.

CAP 3.3 – Better Utilise Existing Network

- *(Bring forward recommendations to optimise existing network capacity – (CAP 3.3.1a) (Inc. ESO Additional 4 & 5 (Package 1)))* was raised as the action was initially intended to be addressed in March. It was noted that further discussions at CPAG are needed, pushing the update to April.
  - o **Action** – ESO and NGET to further discuss *(Bring forward recommendations to optimise existing network capacity – (CAP 3.3.1a) (Inc. ESO Additional 4 & 5 (Package 1))).*

CAP 3.4 - Better Allocate Available Network Capacity

- There was no discussion around this CAP area, for actions are on track.

CAP 3.5 – Improve Data & Processes; Sharpen Obligations & Incentives

2. CAP Action Area Summary Update and POAP	JPA

- The CAP action *(Assess and convey transmission impacts of distribution connections – (CAP 3.5.2)),* which involves a process to reserve transmission network capacity for connections of distribution customers that would impact the transmission network, was flagged as amber. It was recognised that finalising the criteria for Gate 2 and the potential interactivity between different reform proposals necessitates further review of this action. A paper intended for discussion was delayed allowing for this review. The expectation is to revisit this discussion in April.
  - o **Action** – ESO and Networks to provide an update on *(Assess and convey transmission impacts of distribution connections – (CAP 3.5.2))* at April CDB.
- *(Identify and resolve inconsistencies – (CAP 3.5.4))* was raised and an update on the cost apportionment issue was provided noting the ongoing review by Ofgem. Ofgem noted that a problem statement has been drafted, and that they have collected ESO data from SCG T&D workgroups. A paper on this topic is expected to be discussed at the April CPAG meeting, with further updates at April CDB.
  - o **Action** – Networks to provide an update on *(Identify and resolve inconsistencies – (CAP 3.5.4))* at April CDB.

CAP 3.6 – Longer-term models; align with strategic planning

- Strategic CPAG was discussed, noting that a workshop has been proposed for early May, signalling a move towards regular strategic planning sessions.

CAP 3.7 – Additional Areas Not Mapped

- There was no discussion around this CAP area, for actions are on track.

Several points were raised concerning the plan on a page (POAP):

- ESO noted the existence of many TBCs within the POAP, with an expectation for these to become clearer following a dedicated working session with Ofgem in late March. This session aims to delineate which actions are 'complete', will 'continue', 'stop', or have their timelines adjusted in light of new proposals or developments.
  - o **Action** – ESO and Ofgem to conduct a working session in late March to review and provide clarity on items marked as TBC.
- Highlighted was the initiation of a CDB chair blog and the inclusion of the POAP within the meeting minutes, as part of efforts to enhance transparency. These initiatives aim to provide the broader community with detailed insights into the board's progress and decision-making processes.
- The need for greater clarity around TBC items and potential shifts in the design phase timelines was voiced, reflecting community interest in understanding the pace and direction of ongoing actions. This feedback underscores the community's desire for regular and detailed updates on the board's activities.
- **Action** – Technical Secretariat to issue Minutes, POAP and data dashboards (SCG T&D & CDB Impacts) to membership for review and update before publication (which has now been confirmed to take place two weeks after CDB).

New Actions

1	ESO and Ofgem to clarify any potential two-month waiting period and explore possibilities to expedite the introduction of LoA version 2 and evaluate if it will include retrospectivity.	April CDB	ESO / Ofgem
2	ESO to come back with update on the amber status for *(introducing a temporary moratorium on new connection applications – (CAP 3.1.2c))* at April CDB	April CDB	ESO

2.	CAP Action Area Summary Update and POAP		JPA
3	ESO and NGET to further discuss *(Bring forward recommendations to optimise existing network capacity – (CAP 3.3.1a) (Inc. ESO Additional 4 & 5 (Package 1)))*	April CDB	ESO / NGET
4	ESO and Networks to provide an update on *(Assess and convey transmission impacts of distribution connections – (CAP 3.5.2))* at April CDB	April CDB	ESO / Networks
5	Networks to provide an update on *(Identify and resolve inconsistencies – (CAP 3.5.4))* at April CDB	April CDB	Networks
6	ESO and Ofgem to conduct a working session in late March to review and provide clarity on items marked as TBC on the POAP	April CDB	ESO / Ofgem
7	Technical Secretariat to issue Minutes, POAP and data dashboards to membership for review and update before publication (which has now been confirmed to take place two weeks after CDB)	Immediately	Technical Secretariat

3.	Strategic criteria - principles and RAG rating for future initiatives		TH

The for-information discussion on Strategic Steer Criteria revisited the objectives set in January, focusing on creating a framework for prioritising various initiatives given limited resources. The conversation highlighted the development of a scoring system based on eight criteria, which does not aim to produce a rating based on empirical data but rather to serve as a guide for prioritising initiatives.

Principles were amended since January and summary view of applied criteria shown. Comments were given around the prioritisation ranking showing most factors as equally as important – 'a lot of greens'. This low bar criteria issue has been acknowledged by Ofgem.

Action – Ofgem to solicit feedback and participation from CDB members who wish to delve deeper into the strategic criteria framework and its application. This is an open invitation for members to contribute to refining the process and ensuring it accurately reflects the board's priorities.

Action – integrate the strategic criteria framework as part of the CDB's ongoing administrative infrastructure, likely as an appendix updated with each meeting to reflect current prioritisations and decisions. This ensures the framework remains a living document, adaptable to the board's evolving priorities and insights.

New Actions

8	Ofgem to solicit feedback and participation from CDB members who wish to delve deeper into the strategic criteria framework and its application. This is an open invitation for members to contribute to refining the process and ensuring it accurately reflects the board's priorities	Ongoing	Ofgem / Board Members

9	Technical Secretariat to integrate the strategic criteria framework as part of the CDB's ongoing administrative infrastructure, likely as an appendix updated with each meeting to reflect current prioritisations and decisions. This ensures the framework remains a living document, adaptable to the board's evolving priorities and insights.	April CDB	Technical Secretariat

4. Specific Updates from the 6 CAP areas (papers)	JN, DW, Board

Gate 2 Milestone – For Steer

ESO provided an overview of ESO's recommendation for the Gate 2 Project Progress Milestone, used to determine queue position for viable and robust projects. ESO's position is that, for Gate 2:

- The developer has secured the rights to lease or own the land (or already leases or owns the land) on which the Site is planned to be located and this is within appropriate parameters e.g. any option agreement should have a minimum and maximum term.
- The developer is required to submit the application for planning consent at the earlier of: i) the Queue Management Milestone M1 ("M1") calculated back from the connection date (as per current CMP376 methodology); or ii) M1 calculated forwards (based on an agreed standard time period for each planning type) to move from Queue Management Milestone M3 ("M3") to M1.

ESO emphasised Gate 2's critical role in the GB connections reform proposals and the focus on project readiness ('Limb 3 of Gate 2'), while noting ongoing work with government and Ofgem on strategic priorities ('Limb 1') and projects that provide critical system stability or security of supply ('Limb 2') as part of connections reform.

ESO sought a steer on the recommendation above and next steps, which are to progress ESO's recommendation as part of an urgent Code Modification.

Clarifications were sought from the board, and included:

- What constitutes Gate 2 readiness; specifically questioning if it involves exclusive land rights and the requirements around planning consents. ESO clarified that Gate 2 (M3) involves securing rights to lease or own land but will not include exclusive land rights (which is currently an option within M3) as this is a lower bar than intended. For planning consents, a progression timeline from M3 to M1 (planning consent submitted) is proposed, with considerations for an appropriate timescale to incentivise developers.
- It was queried if the code modification would focus solely on TMA F3 (projects that are ready(ier) to connect) or if F1 (projects that have official designation by Government) and F2 (projects that provide critical system stability or security of supply) would also be included. ESO responded that while the primary focus is on F3 (project readiness), F1 and F2 would also be considered, with F1 potentially outside the code process due to its developmental stage.
- Concerns were raised about the potential influx of planning applications to local authorities and the subsequent implications. ESO acknowledged the concern and highlighted ongoing industry discussions. The intent is to avoid exacerbating pressures on planning authorities by not establishing Gate 2 application windows, thereby preventing a surge of simultaneous submissions.
  - **Action** – ESO to continue engagement with industry stakeholders to address concerns about the planning process and to explore alternatives or mitigations for potential issues caused by Gate 2 criteria application.
- It was inquired about flexibility in timelines for events outside a developer's control, like additional environmental survey requirements. ESO confirmed that existing provisions for exemptions or extensions in the queue management milestones would be maintained to accommodate such scenarios.
- Discussion pointed out the need for clarity on applying Gate 2 criteria to embedded customers and the implications for the planning process. ESO noted ongoing work to address these specifics,

4. Specific Updates from the 6 CAP areas (papers)	JN, DW, Board

especially considering the potential impacts on local planning authorities and ensuring equitable treatment across project types.

ESO were happy with the steer received, contending that they have enough information to start the code modification process.

Board recommendation - ESO to proceed with the development of code modifications based on suggested recommendation, ensuring more work on F2 and F3 is considered, finalising the details through industry consultation.

ESO Packages 3-5 recommendation paper – For Steer

The discussion was prefaced on the rapid acceleration of the connection queue, which has significantly exceeded initial expectations. With this context, the discussion began with the ESO outlining their recommendations on additional actions that could be taken to accelerate connections reform. The ESO recommends:

- Apply the Gate 2 aspect of TMO4 to the current queue (that is, to all contracted projects, as well as to new applications).
- More specifically, that Option 1 (a largely technology and/or location strategy-agnostic approach, based on meeting the currently scoped Gate 2 criteria) is taken forward into the code modification and licence change process for TMO4.
- that it continues to work with Ofgem, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and industry to consider whether/when to subsequently go further and introduce Option 2 (a more strategically planned technology and/or location approach).
- that Ofgem and Government work together with the ESO to fully explore options for earlier implementation of Option 1 (that is, to deliver material impact in 2024) under appropriate regulatory and industry frameworks.

There was broad support for the above recommendations, acknowledging that they represent significant reform, meeting the need for a measure that addresses the challenge posed by the current queue. Considerations raised and discussed included the potential to create winners and losers, and the importance of maintaining investor confidence and a market-led approach.

Concerns/Clarifications:

- A strategic discussion was introduced on whether to include technology or location criteria in Gate 2 requirements (Option 2 as listed above). The board took the stance to proceed without these technology / location specifics, thus preferring Option 1, focusing instead on the broader application of Gate 2 criteria. This is with acknowledgment of the need for future work on strategic spatial energy planning and a potential move to Option 2 over time.
  - **Action** – ESO to engage with Ofgem and the industry to discuss the potential for more centralised intervention in the future, aligning with ongoing programs like SSEP, REMA and RESP.
- The potential impact on the planning process and embedded customers was highlighted, with a call for detailed considerations on how the proposal would work for distribution customers and ensuring equitable treatment across transmission and distribution.
  - **Action** – ESO to engage with industry to manage the impact of the proposal on planning applications and local authorities, considering the increased activity that may result.
  - **Action** on the ESO to specifically to address how the proposal impacts distribution customers, ensuring fair and efficient solutions are developed in consultation with DNOs.
- There was suggestion, with corresponding proposed **Action,** to further clarify details around implementation, specifically concerning the treatment of existing contracts, liabilities, securities (and their possible refund if projects have already paid but are not qualified for Gate 2), and how parties can move from pre-Gate 2 to meeting Gate 2 criteria.
- A more accelerated implementation timeline was discussed but also caution was expressed about ensuring a realistic and manageable timeframe. The concept of a grace period was discussed, suggesting that clear communication and engagement with the industry are crucial during the transition.

4. Specific Updates from the 6 CAP areas (papers)	JN, DW, Board

- The importance of careful communication and naming conventions regarding the status between the period between Gate 1 and Gate 2 was raised to manage developer expectations effectively.
  - **Action** – ESO to confirm naming convention and comms strategy - suggestions for using seminars, forums, and trade associations to disseminate information and gather feedback.

Additional ESO papers for information (and March milestones) – For Information

The discussion on *(Disincentivising project modification applications – (CAP 3.2.3a)), (Effectively allocate network capacity released in short-term – (CAP 3.4.1)),* and *(A single digital view of network data for connection customers – (CAP 3.5.1))* revolved around several key themes and actions:

(Disincentivising project modification applications – (CAP 3.2.3a)):

- The conversation indicated that current mechanisms, particularly the CMP 376 Queue Management Milestones, already provide a disincentive to modify connection agreements by not allowing the postponement of key milestones. This effectively discourages speculative modifications.
- It was acknowledged that while there is a current grace period allowing some flexibility, in the medium term, projects that are not close to delivery would not be able to hold up others due to the gate two requirements.
- It was determined that no additional disincentives were needed beyond the existing CMP 376 provisions. This approach was broadly supported, with a note on the importance of ensuring projects connect to the appropriate part of the network considering their size and impact.

(Effectively allocate network capacity released in short-term – (CAP 3.4.1)):

- Discussions emphasised the need for a policy to allocate capacity made available through terminations or modifications before code modifications for the reformed connections process are in place. The consensus leaned towards allocating this capacity to parties ready and meeting Gate 2 criteria.
- Concerns were raised about ensuring the capacity allocated is efficiently used and matches the technology and location to achieve optimal benefits. There were mentions of considering project size and scale for transmission access, as well as considering broader values beyond mere electricity supply, especially in regions like Wales, where local value and community-based projects are highly valued.
- **Action –** ESO to introduce a policy for short-term capacity allocation, based on the parameters set out within the CDB paper, focusing on readiness and matching capacity with appropriate projects.
- **Action –** ESO to revisit proposed position on delayed enabling works in the coming months once there is more data on volume of project modification applications and how these relate to the potential new queue under the proposals to accelerate connections reform.

(Single digital view of connections – (CAP 3.5.1)):

- The ESO provided an update that it was progressing with the ESO digital tool for public access to connections data, referred to as Connections 360, designed to enhance data transparency by providing a digital view of the connection queue in a geospatial format.
- The tool aims to be open-source and capable of integrating data from various sources, improving accessibility for developers and stakeholders. Initial development will focus on publicly available data, with plans for an MVP to be demonstrated soon.
- The initiative was broadly supported, with emphasis on ensuring open access to as much data as possible and the importance of coordinating with other networks to ensure data consistency and comprehensiveness. Further, there was a call for ensuring that the tool provides value in terms of planning and decision-making for all stakeholders, including those with smaller, community-based projects.
- ESO is aiming to share progress on this digital tool during upcoming stakeholder engagement events.

New Actions

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4.	Specific Updates from the 6 CAP areas (papers)		JN, DW, Board
10	ESO to continue engagement with industry stakeholders to address concerns about the planning process and to explore alternatives or mitigations for potential issues caused by Gate 2 criteria application.	April CDB	ESO
11	(Concerning technology / location Option 2) ESO to engage with Ofgem and the industry to discuss the potential for more centralised intervention in the future, aligning with ongoing programs like SSEP, REMA and RESP.	April CDB	ESO / Ofgem
12	ESO to engage with industry to manage the impact of the packages 3-5 proposal on planning applications and local authorities, considering the increased activity that may result.	April CDB	ESO
13	ESO to specifically to address how the packages 3-5 proposal impacts distribution customers, ensuring fair and efficient solutions are developed in consultation with DNOs.	April CDB	ESO
14	ESO to clarify details around implementation, specifically concerning the treatment of existing contracts, liabilities, securities (and their possible refund if projects have already paid but are not qualified for Gate 2), and how parties can move from pre-Gate 2 to meeting Gate 2 criteria.	April CDB	ESO
15	ESO to confirm naming convention and comms strategy for the packages 3-5 proposal - suggestions for using seminars, forums, and trade associations to disseminate information and gather feedback.	April CDB	ESO
16	ESO to introduce a policy for short-term capacity allocation based on the parameters set out within the CDB paper, focusing on readiness and matching capacity with appropriate projects.	April CDB	ESO
17	ESO to revisit proposed position on delayed enabling works in the coming months once there is more data on volume of project modification applications and how these relate to the potential new queue under the proposals to accelerate connections reform.	April CDB	ESO

5.	Review of KPI development and monitoring	DB

The discussion on KPI development and monitoring comprised a run through of two main slides, the SCG developed joint T&D dashboard highlighting key data trends and the new CDB dashboard containing the impacts of various reforms across the connection process.

SCG T&D Dashboard Summary:

- Networks are connecting customers at a greater pace than ever before, having already connected 13.5GW this regulatory year to date (between April and February 2024). However, the connection queue has surpassed 700 GW, with a slight decrease in the rate of growth. This includes a mix of transmission, distribution, export, storage, and demand projects.

- There is a notable discrepancy between supply and demand in the queue – 44 GW of demand and 657 GW from export and storage – potentially informing thinking around a need for policy alignment with the allocation.
- There continues to be significant capacity in the queue that can connect when customer projects are ready without being constrained by network timescales, highlighting the importance of the queue management reforms mentioned higher up in this summary.
- Despite ongoing connections, most connection offers do not meet the requested dates, particularly in distribution, due to dependencies on transmission works or ongoing assessments.

CDB Impacts Dashboard Summary:

- Accelerated Connection Dates: Progress has been made in accelerating connection dates for projects, primarily through technical limits at distribution and offers at transmission. 2.4 GW cumulative capacity across Transmission and Distribution (T&D) accelerated by an average of four years, with much more expected to follow.
- Capacity Released: Reforms, particularly for storage at distribution, have enabled more efficient use of network capacity, reducing the reinforcement needed and allowing more customers access to the network. 10.7 GW cumulative capacity released across T&D.
- Removal of Non-Progressing Projects: The queue management measures already agreed and in place have effectively removed over 8.1 GW of non-progressing projects across T&D from the queue, enhancing the efficiency of the connection process.
- Customer Service: There remains a challenge in meeting requested connection dates, particularly at transmission, emphasising the need for continued focus on improving the connection process. Only 15% of transmission connections were offered their requested connection date as of February 2024. The average delay for the 85% of applications not offered their preferred date is currently approximately 46 months.

Action – Technical Secretariat to publish SCG T&D Dashboard summary slides alongside Minutes going forward.

New Actions

18	Technical Secretariat to publish SCG T&D Dashboard summary slides alongside Minutes going forward.	Ongoing	Technical Secretariat

6. Outstanding actions from the previous meeting	DB

The segment on outstanding actions began with a review of the progress made on previously identified actions. It was noted that no outstanding actions were marked as red, indicating critical attention was not required immediately.

7. AOB, CDB Schedule, and date of next meeting	JPA

There were several AOB topics:

- Transparency and Paper Sharing - There was a significant discussion around the level of transparency and the sharing of meeting papers with representative bodies and wider industry stakeholders. There was a general consensus on the importance of transparency, with suggestions to enable sharing future papers unless marked or noted otherwise by the author due to sensitivity. This approach aimed to facilitate better engagement and understanding among stakeholders, particularly representative bodies like Energy UK and Renewable UK, to engage more fully.
  - Ofgem & CDB Secretariat to confirm approach to checking and labelling papers as sensitive going forward.

- Quicker Minutes and Communication – It was proposed and agreed that, in order to more quickly publish minutes to accurately and transparently communicate the challenges and progress of the CDB group's efforts, that draft minutes would be shared and approved offline by the Board rather than waiting for confirmation in the following month's CDB meeting. In this way, CDB minutes can be approved and published more rapidly (e.g. within a fortnight).
- Meeting Schedule and Agenda for Next Meeting - The update to the CDB meeting schedule was noted, with a move from the third week to the last week of the month.
- Duration Extension for Next Meeting - Given the depth and breadth of topics covered and anticipated for future discussions, there was a suggestion to potentially extend the duration of the next meeting to accommodate a thorough examination of all agenda items. The board agreed.

The chair thanked the board for attendance and closed the meeting.