Minutes

Meeting name	Outage Change Management
Meeting number	1
Date of meeting	Tuesday 21 January 2014
Time	10:00 – 15:00
Location	SPEN Operational Control Centre, Strathkelvin House Campsie Rd, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow, G66 1RN

Attendees

Name	Initials	Company
Ivan Kileff	IK	National Grid
Ronald Taylor	RT	National Grid
Mark O'Connor	MOC	National Grid
Stephen Nyemba	SN	National Grid
Milorad Dobrijevic	MD	SP Transmission
Kenny Keys	KK	SP Transmission
Kirsten McIver	KM	SP Transmission
Neil Sandison	NS	SHE Transmission
Alan Inman	AI	SHE Transmission
Graham Wood	GW	SHE Transmission

2 Background

MOC provided background to the formation of the working group: through the Grid Code Review Panel and a written complaint, generator companies have raised the issue of communication regarding outage changes which affect generators with non standard connections. The Grid Code Review Panel referred this to the STCP panel.
NS said generators priority is to generate and they do not want to be off. However this is sometimes inevitable if the generator has a non standard connection. It was agreed that this is where the issue of outage communication arises as generators with standard connections are generally not concerned.

The scope of the Terms of Reference were read and agreed to by all.

3 Less change to the plan

MOC gave an overview of the level of change experienced in Network Access Planning coming from the Scottish Transmission Owners (TOs). The data showed many requests for each period from 4WA to WA. However it was pointed out by AI that this did not show how long the requests had been sitting in TOGA. The data showed that there was a 60-80% change in plan from 4WA to delivery. This issue also affects the England and Wales TO.

MD went over SPTs plan for reducing the number of outage changes. SP have put in place targets and will monitor outages. There will be active engagement with site and project managers to get outages back on time. All tasks will be carried out well before the end date of the outage and there will be early warning indicators to show if an outage is not on track. However some outages cannot be changed and these should be communicated with users by the System Operator (SO). Also some outages such as faults cannot be seen at year ahead. MD discussed SPT process for reducing the number of within year outage changes and briefed the group on the outage tracking process and the early warning indicators \ KPI's that are being used to monitor outage performance. The Network Access Policy (NAP) process is key to efficient network operation and managing network changes that can occur due to a variety of reasons.

The group then discussed the new Network Access Policy (NAP) process[1]. MD said utilising the NAP policy and core principles should reduce the level of change and the NAP provides a high level view of the long term plan. It was agreed that users should be made aware of the NAP policy document however the NAP change documents had confidential data and would only be shared between TOs and SOs as part of the policy

GW said SHET have a similar policy to that which SP introduced. The plan is now produced in detail and there are regular meetings with the SO. SHET are driven to keep changes down in the current year. There should be an improvement over last year as none of the controls that they have now implemented had been in place however weather and faults can have a major impact on the plan. MD and GW agreed to put together a presentation detailing the changes in their processes and this would be presented to the generator companies.

Action: MD and GW to prepare presentation on NAP process changes

4 Improved notification

One issue with the current process is that the generators cannot see outages that are in the initial stages of planning or which are in the pot. Outages in the pot are those which had been planned but have had to be postponed. These are placed in the pot until new dates for the outages are found. This is further complicated in that the two TOs use different systems for non placed outages. SHET will set the outage state to TBA whereas SP will move their outages to the 24th/25th December. This is because SP uses a different system called OPD for their outage planning and not TOGA. NS suggested that an option might be for the TOs to talk directly with the generation companies about certain outages. At the moment all communication goes through the SO. This would require protections for the TO such as rule about what can and cannot be said and when the SO should be present.

Action: on the group to consider TO to generator communications.

5 Can outages affecting generators be planned further in advance?

It was said that there are times of the year when wind farms will have low output and other times it would be high. To minimise the impact outages should be planned for the low periods. However this is not easy to do.

There are certain parts of the network that are at risk of higher levels of outages due to new connections and reinforcement work. IK asked the TOs if this is communicated to the users. SHET said their commercial department give historic data and a small projection. SP said there is many 100's of MW coming and these would impact on current generation.

IK asked if there was anything at connection time which allowed customers to know how likely it was that they would be off in the future. MD said that the DNO were strengthening the part of the connection agreement on operating conditions and faults. MD said that the BCAs were good when they were implemented but had not kept up to date with network changes.

[1] https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/consultation-transmission-owners-proposed-network-access-policies

GW and MD said generators were not informed at connection time of future work that would affect them. MO highlighted that a large amount of potential connections requiring network access do not go ahead.

It was suggested the generators are given an idea of the risk they would be off. NS said this would be a lot of work and the information is available in the Ten Year Statement. It was pointed out that there were sometimes communication issues within generation companies, for example, the legal department may be aware but the operators would not. GW said the whole purpose of the NAP process was to highlight visibility.

Action: IK to discuss within NG whether it is possible to highlight what future connections there may be to new generators and how likely calling off clauses within the customers' connection agreement may be.

6 Is it efficient to wait until an outage is analysed before sending to generators?

The group discussed when notification of outages should be sent to generators. Informing generators earlier could allow them to help optimise the outage. At the delivery stage (3 Week Ahead to Day Ahead) an email is sent out when the request is made but it is not efficient to send out emails at year ahead if the entire plan is going to change. The group discussed whether outages which have been postponed and need to be placed should be sent to users. There could be technical difficulties implementing this as the two TOs use different methods to manage unplaced outages. In addition some customers have automated software which relies on the reports from TOGA. These may need to be updated if the reports change.

The OC2 process was discussed. SN said there were three points in the year defined by the OC2 process. The first did not include the generators, the second two would be when generators are informed of outages. SN said that at year ahead requested outages are checked against generation outages in GOAMP.

GW highlighted a gap in the OC2 process which could mean the TOs additional requests at year ahead would not be visible to the generators for up to half a year. For example, if a request was submitted in week 28 and agreed in 48 there would be a half year gap with no visibility to the generator.

The group discussed the possibility of allowing generators to see unplanned outages. GW said that SHET had a very detailed plan for 2015/16 which was recently submitted therefore would not yet have been accepted into Toga. However there have already been 86 changes to the year ahead plan (2014/15) which was handed over recently.

An automated system making TO outage requests available to generators was discussed but the benefit to generators would have to be significant as implementing such a system would require a substantial IS project. It was also felt that making this information available manually would need significant workforce resource to implement. It was suggested filtering on non standard connections could reduce the work load, however it was noted that this would not give visibility of all potential changes as outage changes elsewhere on the system could have a knock on effect to outages which directly affect the generators.

7 General outage management improvement

MD discussed the possibility of off line build which would reduce the level of network access required which SP are trialling at Windyhill. It would have a big impact on how the SO and TO work and decrease impact on users. As this would be more costly for the TO, MD suggested that the money could come from the SO or Ofgem.

The group discussed general outage management. MOC said that this has been an on going issue for 20 years and there are no longer any fire breaks in the plan due to the volume of work being carried out. NS said that a fixed plan is not always good, if something is out then

it is better to do more work otherwise the work will only have to be done in the future requiring further outages. It is more of a problem now as there are less breaks in the plan.

MO said there is more potential for change now as it used to be 5 years before potential generation would connect, whereas now it has reduced considerably. The volume of change on the network was last seen when the network was being built. MD said there can be issues outside the TOs control such as land access being denied at very short notice.

8 Review outage management sections of code

This Working Group would, if appropriate, recommend changes to the STC Modification Panel and they would subsequently feed this back to the Grid Code Review Panel. NS pointed out that other countries are very open with their outages. IK asked if there were any European transparency regulations coming into force in this area. NS said he was aware of a transparency requirement for generators to publish information on fault outages to ensure they don't have an unfair market advantage. The group agreed to review the outage management section of the System Operator Transmission Owner Codes (STC).

Post meeting note. ENTSOE publish transmission outages on their transparency platform http://www.entsoe.net/outage-domain/outages/show.

Action: All to review the outage management section of the STC.

9 Should generators attend this STC Working Group meeting?

The group discussed whether generation companies should attend this STC Working Group meeting. This may limit what can be discussed between the SO and the TOs and as some proposals discussed may not be practicable it would be better to discuss these first before involving generation companies. It was agreed that it was important to include the generation companies in the process to get their views and to arrive at the correct solution. It was said that any change should start with this group. The group discussed sending a representative to the Grid Code Review Panel. NS said that they communicate with users far less than they previously had done as they are very conscious of business separation.

It was agreed that it is important to get the generators views and to inform them of developments in working practices. MOC will organise a survey of the generators in order to get their views on what works and what does not. MOC will consider if this survey should be for the whole of the GB. The survey will go to large generators which have non standard connections and will be limited to STC and not include questions on the OC2 process. Generators will then be invited to a meeting where the Working Group will give feed back and proposals, this will include a Q&A session. SP and SHET have a presentation on the changes they have made to improve the planning process which they will present. This meeting will be available via teleconference.

Action: on MOC to arrange survey of generators with non standard connection agreements to establish which issues are most important to them.

10 Discuss and agree actions

The actions were reviewed and agreed.

Action 1.1: MD and GW to prepare presentation on NAP process changes
Action 1.2: on the group to consider TO to generator outage change communications
Action 1.3: IK to discuss internally whether it is possible to highlight future connections and how it may calling off of clauses within the customers connection
Action 1.4: All to review the outage management section of the STC
Action 1.5: on MOC to arrange survey of generators with non standard connection agreements to establish which issues are most important to them
Action 1.6: GW to confirm venue for next meeting, prospectively SSE's Glasgow Office
Action 1.7: IK to arrange date for next meeting, prospectively March/April