ESO

Connections Process Advisory Group

Meeting 1 Minutes

Date:	11/01/2024	**Location:**	MS Teams

Participants

Attendee	Attend/Regrets	Attendee	Attend/Regrets
Merlin Hyman, Regen, CHAIR	Attend	Holly Macdonald, Transmission Investment	Attend
Neil Bennett, SSEN Transmission	Attend	Alasdair MacMillan, Ofgem	Attend
Chris Clark, Emtec Group	Attend	Deborah, MacPherson, ScottishPower Renewables	Attend
Catherine Cleary, Roadnight Taylor	Attend	Jennifer Pride, Welsh Government	Attend
Liam Cullen, Ofgem	Attend	Oz Russell, ADE	Attend
Arjan Geveke, EIUG	Attend	Andrew Scott, SSE Distribution	Attend
Ben Godfrey, National Grid Electricity Distribution	Attend	Patrick Smart, RES Group	Attend
Garth Graham, SSE Generation	Attend	Ian Thel, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero	Attend
Tessa Hall, Ofgem	Attend	Spencer Thompson, INA	Attend
Frank Hodgson, Regen (observer)	Attend	Matt White, UKPN	Attend
Paul Hawker, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero	Attend	Camille Gilsenan, ESO	Attend
Claire Hynes, RWE	Attend	Robyn Jenkins, ESO	Attend
Jade Ison, National Grid Electricity Transmission	Attend	James Norman, ESO	Attend
Jasmine Killen, Scottish Government	Attend	Mike Oxenham, ESO	Attend
Allan Love, SPT	Attend	Mike Robey, ESO (Technical Secretary to CPAG)	Attend

Agenda

1.	Welcome and matters arising	Merlin Hyman
2.	Purpose of CPAG and ToR	James Norman
3.	Context - Connections Action Plan - Connections Reform Final Recommendations	Tessa Hall & Paul Hawker Mike Oxenham
4.	CPAG work plan	James Norman

5.	Next steps	James Norman
6.	Any Other Business	Merlin Hyman

Discussion and details

#	Minutes from meeting, including online meeting group text chat during meeting, where referenced as "[*From online chat*]"

1. Welcome and Matters arising

- The Chair welcomed all members.

2. Purpose of Connections Process Advisory Group – Terms of Reference (ToR)

- James Norman drew attention to slides shared with CPAG members summarising the size of the connections queue, recent policy initiatives and the progress of connections reform to date. CPAG members were invited to comment on the proposed Terms of Reference for CPAG:
- ToR Purpose bullet 3: change 'transitional' arrangements to 'additional' actions or arrangements.
- ToR Purpose bullet 5: Ofgem welcomed early views from CPAG on potential licence changes to support connections reform.
- ToR section 4 Interaction with other groups: A member requested clarification of the relationship between CPAG and the ENA Strategic Connections Group.
  - ESO noted that as CPAG has wider industry representation than SCG there may be benefit in CPAG providing some challenge and review for consideration at SCG's discretion, for example related to the Distribution Forecasted Transmission Capacity approach at the Transmission / Distribution interface. The member encouraged strengthening the interface between CPAG and SCG. Another member sought confirmation that an iDNO representative participated in the SCG subgroup.
  - Replace 'Reserved Developer Capacity' (RDC) within ToR with 'Distribution Forecasted Transmission Capacity' (DFTC).
- ToR section 4 Interaction with other groups - a member recommended adding linkages to CUSC and TCMF and that it would be useful to provide project updates to these groups. Members noted their presence on other industry groups which will support a good flow of information between groups.
- Sharing information - ESO will publish minutes of the CPAG meetings, after review and agreement by CPAG members. ESO does not intend to publish papers tabled at CPAG. CPAG members can share papers with colleagues in the sectors they represent to seek views except where ESO flags information to be sensitive. ESO also noted that whilst they would aim to share materials a week in advance of CPAG meetings, in some cases it might be three working days in advance.
- A member raised whether there should be prioritisation of connection applications. The Chair noted this is something for government and the regulator to comment on and may be a consideration for the Connections Delivery Board (CDB).
- A member queried the extent to which CPAG was a strategic or working group.
  - ESO and the Chair advised that CPAG is positioned somewhere between the two.
- **Action 1.2.1:** ESO to circulate the updated Terms of Reference document. CPAG to assume this updated version is approved unless issues are raised at meeting 2. Share the final version of the ToR with the CDB for noting.

3. Key Context

Connections Action Plan
- Tessa Hall and Paul Hawker summarised the Connections Action Plan and CPAG members raised the following matters:

- Letter of Authority (LoA)- what happens to projects that miss providing an LoA
  - o The current approach is that ESO has introduced a voluntary LoA, whilst an urgent CUSC mod is progressed seeking to make this mandatory. Therefore, there is not yet a mandatory requirement. A member noted that there was a discussion on CMP427 taking place this week. Whilst CMP376 (WACM7) does not mandate an LoA it does implement queue management milestones into the existing queue over a period of time, including milestone 3 on land rights.
  - o A member noted the intention for CDB to consider additional entry requirements could be a big task and there may be a role for a subgroup to support this.
  - o A member raised the need for different interpretations of the LoA requirement for some connection types (such as for interconnectors and offshore projects) and offered to support this work. ESO agreed that a different approach was needed and noted that these projects were exempt from CMP427. Timing for the development of this alternative approach is to be confirmed and will also require engagement with The Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland.
  - o A member shared their own analysis of the existing TEC queue and the final version of CMP376 in which estimated 20% of projects will have no milestones until 2030 and 50% of projects will have no milestones until 2026.
    - ▪ **Action 1.3.1:** ESO to share its analysis of the impact of CMP376 on the existing TEC queue.
- CAP Theme 4 – better allocate network capacity – will this include prioritisation of some applications, not just first come, first served.
  - o Ofgem confirmed that defining what is a priority project will be key.
- CAP Theme 5 – Improve data and processes – great to see the good work on technical limits continuing across the whole of Great Britain and to include demand projects too.
  - o A member noted NGED and UKPN are consulting on curtailment and non-firm arrangements (including transmission constraints) regarding risk exposure with a view to being able to expand the offering to more customers.
  - o A member highlighted the relevance to 10-20 GW of battery projects on transmission, clarifying non-firm constraints. Another member supported this, emphasising that developers are keen to hear this, and noted that they understood ESO would be rolling out a tool on this.
  - o A member recommended early engagement with customers, ensuring courtesy calls and advance notice is provided before the legal process begins to advance a project.
- Connections Delivery Board – the ToR and short summaries of the meetings will be published. Above the CDB are two groups, the Electricity Networks Delivery Forum chaired by the Minister and the Electricity Networks Transition Board, chaired by DESNZ. Liam Cullen and Alasdair MacMillan will represent Ofgem on CPAG and Tessa Hall participates in the CDB.

Connections Reform Final Recommendations
- ESO set out the intention to raise urgent code mods by April for the minimum viable product of connection reforms identified in the published final recommendations.
- A member noted that the designation of priority projects may vary in each nation of Great Britain and this needs to be reflected in who is engaged in the development of the priority projects approach. For example, the Welsh government supports a more planned approach, but achieving this will be challenging.
- A member advised that user commitment needs to be considered within the development of the Distribution Forecasted Transmission Capacity.
  - o ESO agreed that these aspects need to be linked together.
- A member asked for details of how issues like Gate 2 will be brought to CPAG to be discussed, how are the possible options to be aired and considered by CPAG?
  - o ESO proposed responding to this within the work plan discussion that follows this item.

4. **CPAG work plan**

- James Norman identified two golden threads running throughout this detailed design and implementation of the reformed connection process: developing the detailed end-to-end reformed connections process (with network companies) and developing the network design methodology for the reformed approach. ESO has appointed Baringa to support this work.
- Package 6 is referenced within the workplan, and this relates to two considerations for connection applications in 2024:
  - o Whether a moratorium should be adopted for a period (e.g., for 3-6 months), when applications would not be accepted, before the reformed process goes live in January 2025.
  - o Whether an interim approach should be adopted for connection offers made during 2024 until the reformed process and its gate 2 approach is adopted.
  - o A member recommended any moratorium be consistently applied across different network operators.
- A member asked ESO to share details of how the network is evolving and the impact of the re-study of contracted connections with new assumptions on the existing queue.
  - o **Action 1.4.1:** ESO to look at how and when details of the outcome of the ongoing transmission works review can be shared.
- A member advocated adopting the precautionary principle when considering between a codified and non-codified approach to delivering changes. They further noted that the principles regarding the terms and conditions for Connections are set out in primary legislation as is the need for GEMA to approve changes to that. If considering non code changes route for items relating to connection we need to be mindful of ensuring a legally robust process.
- A member recommended the CPAG technical secretariat joined the CDB technical secretariat meetings to help co-ordinate agendas between CPAG and CDB.
  - o **Action 1.4.2:** Technical Secretariat to follow-up
- A member reflected that the potential additional measures developed in the autumn had not been consulted upon in the summer 2023 reform consultation and asked whether stakeholder feedback can be shared now, before further details are tabled at CPAG.
  - o ESO was conscious these areas had not been consulted on and welcomed CPAG members sharing views at any time.
- A member asked whether the details of proposed code mods will be included within the package papers scheduled to come to CPAG meetings.
  - o ESO anticipates that not all packages require code mods, but that it intends to consider the need for code mods in the package papers.
  - o **Action 1.4.3**: ESO to confirm how much detail of code mods will be taken to CPAG before going to code mod working groups.
  - o ESO intends to share papers five working days before meetings wherever possible, but it could in some cases be no less than 3 working days due to tight timescales between meetings. These will generally short board-style papers with appendices where necessary.

5. Next steps

- ESO shared slides with an indicative plan for topics to be brought to CPAG and CDB until the end of March 2024.
- The next CPAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday 25 January.

6. Any Other Business

- A member noted for embedded customers it would be great to see thoughts from SCG when available on how technical limits might dovetail into DFTC and whether DFTC will consider embedded demand.

- A member expressed keenness to have a plan to manage as pro-actively as possible the needs of customers given the level of investment involved.
- The Chair thanked everyone for participating and expressed interest in taking note of the balance between strategic and working level discussion as CPAG progresses.

Decisions and Actions

Decisions: Made at last meeting

ID	Description	Owner	Date
ID			

Action items: In progress and completed since last meeting

ID	Description	Owner	Due	Status	Date
1.2.1	ESO to circulate the updated Terms of Reference document	Mike Robey	25/01/2024		
1.3.1	ESO to share its analysis of the impact of CMP376 on the existing TEC queue.	Kav Patel	08/02/2024		
1.4.1	ESO to look at how and when details of the outcome of the ongoing transmission works review can be shared	Robyn Jenkins	08/02/2024		
1.4.2	Technical secretary to follow-up liaison and co-ordination with CDB	Mike Robey	25/01/2024		
1.4.3	ESO to confirm how much detail of code mods will be taken to CPAG before going to code mod working groups.	Paul Mullen	25/01/2024		

Decision Log – (to be populated)

Decisions: Previously made

ID	Description	Owner	Date

Action Item Log – (to be populated)

Action items: Previously completed

ID	Description	Owner	Due	Status	Date