

Customer Connections Steering Group 24/06/2016 - Gloucester

Key points:

A&D Fees – the potential for upfront charges for quotes to be introduced. No decision has yet been made and is not a 'done deal' according to DECC.

Request for National Grid representation at the CCSG as their network operations and constraints have a direct impact on WPD customers.

Preference for a more Q&A style session with Robert Symons with less emphasis on presentation of performance. Some of the information available on the slides will already be available in other WPD engagement.

A panel member expressed a view that works and engagement activities are very generation led and suggested that WPD could increase engagement in other areas such as Competition in Connections (CiC) and demand. It was suggested WPD look at the CiC Code of Practice workshops which other DNO's were holding and consider a similar approach. A demand forum/breakout session may be beneficial to find out if there are other issues arising which are not DG related.

WPD will continue to review and vary the format of the workshop in response to feedback from the panel members.

Breakout Sessions

1) Quicker More Efficient Connections

Statement of Works

Graham outlined the process with National Grid and the trial of new "Appendix G" approach, with various categorised 'pots' of generation, listed in order against successively more onerous transmission-related requirements for connection.

On acceptance of an offer the customer is formally placed in Appendix G. Process may take up to 6 weeks (NGET advised once a month and require two weeks to process).

Currently (as at CCSG) Appendix G is in place for all South Wales and South West plus 60% of Midlands GSP's. Appendix G provides a smoother quicker process to deliver relevant information to customers.

South West - Area wide scheme – 4 circuits to be protected, 1 GSP with reverse power flow.

South Wales - 3 GSP's with reverse power flow to be managed. Area wide issue during winter peak – Wind & Solar can continue to be managed towards connection but thermal generation will be subject to a MOD application to NGET.

WPD are now commencing monthly update process for Appendix G meaning we can tell customers making applications the current monthly status of the GSP.

Quicker More Efficient Connections (QMEC)

Tim discussed QMEC, outlining two recent ENA consultation documents:

- Milestones in connection offers – see below
- Material changes in connection offers – WPD have re-issued guidance on allowable changes to connection offers

19 responses have been received to date (as at CCSG).

Tim set out the principles for milestones and the milestones that ENA members are planning to introduce:

- Initiated planning permission
- Secured planning permission
- Land rights
- TSO interface
- Progress adoption agreement
- Commence works
- Constructions of generating facility

Queries raised:

- How would the milestones be applied and what evidence would be required to ensure that a developer is progressing a scheme?
- What is the process for withdrawing an offer when milestones are not met?

These queries are planned to be answered in a forthcoming guidance document to be issued by the ENA later this year.

Releasing unused capacity

Tim explained that we are writing to DG customers with unused export capacity $\geq 1\text{MVA}$ asking them to relinquish capacity where they are underutilising it.

Letters have been sent to over 100 customers with the potential to release 280MVA across WPD.

Letters of authority

Tim provided an update on the WPD position on letters of authority.

He explained that WPD had drawn up a draft template LoA and circulated it to interested parties for comment, including some members of the CCSG.

The purpose of the template was to provide surety with regard to;

- (a) who the landowner has granted authority to;
- (b) that the DG developer has approached the correct third party landowner; and
- (c) that the DG developer has obtained the landowner's authority to make an application for a connection and to permit the Connection Works to be constructed over their land.

The template was generally favourably received although some respondents pointed out that it could create more bureaucracy. There was a particular concern that where land is unregistered it may require the involvement of a land agent or a solicitor.

Tim agreed to consider further all the responses and develop a revised draft that would endeavour to reduce the perceived level of bureaucracy.

2) Legals & Consents

Side Letter

Bruce Pollard discussed the new side letter for legals and confirmed it can apply to all types & sizes of connection but requires individual assessment of risk. The side letter allows connection when legals are almost complete but there is some hold up, e.g. mortgage letter of consent.

The customer (with authority to sign legal rights) would sign the side letter to commit that legals will clear and the letter will be registered with land registry.

If legals are not progressing or it is evident that issues could prevent or significantly delay legal clearance, the side letter would not be used.

Query – in the event of incorporated rights – who would sign the side letter? Bruce to investigate further.

Geldards LLP involvement

Bruce confirmed that improvement measures have been put into place with Geldards. Each step is logged on a data management system from which monthly reports are produced. Figures produced for May 2016, measuring from the date request is received into their office.

Query – are the timescales calendar days or working days? Bruce to confirm

Some customers would like project specific status/information. At present a project is shown as legally cleared or not cleared but does not determine what stage in the process it is at. There are data protection considerations to how this information is shared and to what level of details – Bruce to look into it.

Request for improved leaflets & guidance (with reference to SSE's guidance document). WPD's current guidance is high level – what is a wayleave? What is an easement? Could improve on advising what information we need from customers to the process. It was also suggested we look at UKPN provision of weblink to the documents customer's will need and the checklists provided by SSE.

Suggestion to include a checklist with offer letters – this could be a standard approach checklist rather than job specific to save time.

Suggestion that website information could include the service level agreement timescales rather than % performance updates which most customers won't understand or be interested in. Targets are more beneficial as they show there is a driven direction for legals.

Performance itself will be published in the ICE KPI pack.

Query – incorporated rights is felt to differ from how other DNO's are dealing with them. WPD use Geldards to check the documents and invoice the customer accordingly, plus they are finding issues that other DNO's aren't flagging up. Bruce determined it is appropriate to use Geldards in case the standard version is amended and will investigate whether the costs should be direct or indirect.