ofgem

Minutes

Meeting Notes: Long Term Development Statement

22 July, 10:00-13:00, Ofgem offices

1. Attendees

Bill d'Albertanson	EDF Energy
Ian Povey	ENW
Ian Fletcher	CE Electric
David Spillett	ENA
Alison Sleightholm	WPD
Louise Wright	RWEnpower
Bob Weaver	LowC
Andrzej Michalowski	CN
Alex Murley	RenewableUK
Arthur Probert	Energy Services Partnership
Gareth Evans	Ofgem
Stacy Altman	Ofgem

2. Introduction

GE provided an introduction to the Workshop by reviewing the history of the Long Term Development Statement (LTDS) from its introduction in 2002. He explained that the Workshop was intended to provide an additional opportunity for stakeholders to offer their ideas about the Form of Statement (FoS) and the LTDS as part of the consultation process.

3. LTDS Content

3.1. 11Kv data

It is Ofgem's view, as set out in DPCR5 Final Proposals, that there is still not a case for full 11 kV data to be provided as part of the LTDS, however we acknowledge that it is an issue.

It was noted that there was significant growth and interest in wind and other technologies under feed-in tariffs (less than 5MW) and especially in the medium wind projects which in a lot of cases would be connected to 11kV networks. As a result, there will be a lot of need for this type of information.

One attendee stated that they were aware of a significant demand for access to this type of information about DNO networks.

It was agreed that in response to market changes, there is a need to consider the release of this type of information in some format. It was agreed that it may overburden the LTDS to include 11kV data and that it would be difficult to manage as the 11kV is a dynamic network as opposed to the annual LTDS data published. However it was also noted that there needs to be clarity on the specific information being requested.

One suggestion was that this information could be provided to registered ICPs either to provide a connection advice service or for onward dissemination to specific developers as necessary.

Datasets on 11kV were not as easy to produce and the data needs to be drawn from various sources and therefore one single consistent format would also be complex to pull together. There was a general acceptance by the DNOs that the current process can be used in the short term but that the improvement of this process would be costly.

Some discussion ensued surrounding the provision of simple advice on connection opportunities or the provision of a service in relation to 11Kv providing details of how much, when and where in relation to a specific project. It was raised that there were some parallel issues in relation to confidentiality of the details of these projects. One suggestion was a halfway point between data and service where details on the sensitivity of the network could be provided.

It was agreed that due to market conditions, this would become a potentially complex and significant issue in the future and therefore it must be captured somewhere. It was noted that the current broad measure of customer service would be a place to capture where poor service may have included the lack of information about the 11kV network or the provision of connection offers.

It was commented that network management would be impacted by the increased connection to 11kV and resulting information needs of DG. At present, network management is generally passive, but it would need to change in order to constrain, facilitate and manage the penetration of small scale generation without reinforcement.

3.2. Schematics and maps

Comments were given that there was varying quality and legibility of the schematics and maps provided by DNOs. Some examples were given of those where the diagrams were well presented and not so well presented.

The following improvements were suggested:

- Ordinance survey data to assist with navigation of the diagrams
- Diagrams could be broken into smaller chunks
- Show more clearly what is generation and what is demand
- However due to security concerns some levels of detail cannot be provided

ACTION: Attendees were asked to email any good examples to Ofgem in order to assist in trying to capture this in the FOS.

3.3. Schedule of generators

This is not a requirement under the FOS and it is proposed under the consultation for this to be included. The current table in the FOS document would therefore be developed accordingly.

It was commented that this was definitely necessary as an early indicator of development and that the names of the generators was not necessary, just the size and which network they were connected to.

It was clarified that only accepted offers and live operations should be included as they provide an early indicator of likely future development.

It was suggested that the new DG Direction would go some way to assisting with this.

An additional comment was in relation to current generators on the system who stop generating and do not notify DNOs. It was noted that these generators pose a problem for network planning and for DG but cannot be discounted as they are licensed to operate.

3.4. Data for smaller generators

This data could only be generic and could be covered off under the DG Connection Guide. Further detail could only be given at the stage of Point of Connection and could be provided by the DNO.

It was clarified that the combined DG Connection Guide is intended to be published in August.

3.5. Monitoring quality

It is intended that once the proposed iterations to the FOS are approved, Ofgem will monitor how it has been interpreted and how it is working in its new form.

Attendees were asked to feed in comments on the new FOS and how it is working. If a follow up workshop subsequently becomes necessary to feedback views on the FOS, Ofgem would be happy to coordinate such a forum.

3.6. Updating

At present the LTDS is updated annually, however the information can often be out of date even from the day of publication.

It was suggested to have a separate updates sheet or log to list out the specific updates to the information in the LTDS. The delivery of these update sheets was discussed as either a front page to the document, a separate log to the document or within the document in an appended explanatory note.

It was agreed that the update log should not require a re-publication of the whole document.

It was clarified that there could not be a single public domain system for access to all of the data from a DNO as the data is pulled from various datasets. Therefore there is not one single, consolidated dataset with all the information that could be made available.

It was suggested that the LTDS could be amended and published twice a year or possibly quarterly.

3.7. Provision of models

It was clarified that this topic was related to the provision of data in a format that could be easily migrated into other models. It was agreed that the FOS should not be specific about the software, e.g. Excel, but focus more on the fact that it should be useable as an input into further analysis. It was suggested in later discussions at the workshop for the wording to involve the concept of easy extraction of data.

4. LTDS Format

4.1. Structure

It was commented that the current 2 part structure of the LTDS is beneficial. Part 1 provides detail and guidance and is used by some DNOs to gauge whether the Part 2 section of data will be requested by someone asking about the LTDS. In addition, some members found the Part 1 useful to refresh certain technical understanding.

4.2. Consistency

There were no real comments in relation to consistency. Most members were not surprised where there were inconsistencies as it was a large document to draft and publish each year. DNOs made it clear that they appreciate being notified of any inconsistencies so it can be addressed.

4.3. Electronic format

This was discussed at great length under previous agenda items. It was suggested that there were some cost benefits to be had to have the LTDS available on the website and members signalled their willingness for any password protection facilities installed to allow for electronic access.

However, others commented that they had no preference whether electronic meant by email or website as by email, they would have their individual copy to hand constantly. In addition, DNOs signalled that the former practice allowed them to keep a tab on those who had requested it and do some initial screening to gauge what this information may be used for.

5. LTDS Access

5.1. Publication methods

Publication, charging and registration were taken together within the discussion. Ofgem signalled that some parties had raised issues with the uncontrolled publication of the LTDS in the public domain. There is a realisation that it is not practical to prohibit the publication of this document and mechanisms for registration should be put in place. Ofgem suggested that some level of screening should therefore be considered.

It was again re-iterated by some attendees that they would be willing to register and enter a password protected area on a DNO website to gain access to the LTDS.

A discussion commenced on possible situations where the information would be refused. It was noted that several requests for the LTDS come from students and increasingly Local Authorities who have planning and forecasting obligations. It was also discussed that in the case of student requests, requests on university headed paper or through their sponsor, were the practice to screen these requests.

One DNO reported that they had only one incident where a person was refused access to the LTDS and another indicated that in principle there would be no instance where they would not supply the information when requested as there were issues of discrimination involved.

5.2. Charging

Ofgem clarified that they are minded to say that it should be provided free of charge.

It was commented that at present two DNOs charge for the provision of LTDS, one of which commented that they could review this policy.

It was responded that the charges succeed in reducing frivolous requests by signalling commitment to receiving the information. However it was clarified that there is a licence requirement related to this requirement and that this does not require charging.

A distinction was noted in what was being charged for: charges for the statements themselves vs. charges for the provision of additional HV data on the back of the LTDS. It was clarified that DNOs were allowed to charge for the latter.

5.3. Registration

Discussed in 4.1 above

6. AOB/Next Steps

Ofgem intends to draft a new version of the FOC and issue a new direction to replace the FOC of 2002. It is hoped to have this done in time for the 2010 LTDS, however Ofgem is thinking through some options to meet this aspiration. One DNO commented that preparation of their 2010 LTDS was already at an advanced stage and that it would be difficult to incorporate changes proposed as a result of this review.

Ofgem will take into account the comments from the workshop in the iteration to the FOC. In amending the format for the table to include generators, members were again asked to forward on good examples they have come across. One attendee offered to send some comments to Ofgem directly.

It was noted that the issues surrounding small generation had not been fully covered off, in terms of making access easier and in relation to network management, especially with the new projects being proposed under separate initiatives like the Low Carbon Fund. Ofgem provided their willingness to facilitate any roundtable discussion suggested on this issue. There was an action on DNOs to approach Ofgem in order to facilitate this discussion.

It was suggested that an appropriate forum for this discussion was a previously Ofgem convened micro generation forum. It was suggested this could be reconvened to address these issues. Ofgem endeavoured to consider this and provided assurance that if such a workshop was organised, it would be publicised widely to ensure a reflective level of representation from interested groups.