

RADIO SOCIETY

of Great Britain

Smart Metering implementation Programme

Response of the Radio Society of Great Britain to the consultation document

The Radio Society of Great Britain is the representative body for radio amateurs and short-wave listeners in the United Kingdom. It represents the interests of some 60,000 licensed radio amateurs, and the interests of those who listen to the short wave radio bands

Response

The Society believes that the Smart Metering programme has significant potential to deliver value for the end-customer, and supports its objectives. The system must, however, be reliable and deliver perceived value for the end-user.

The RSGB will limit its response to one question in the consultation document:

Question 10: Do you have any comments on the proposal to establish DCC as a procurement and contract management entity that will procure communications and data services competitively?

There are clearly alternative technologies which can deliver the required DCC / WAN functionality. The RSGB has over ten years' experience with one of these, namely PLT or power line telecommunications.

In general, the low frequency PLT currently used for telecontrol on powerline networks, under EN50065 delivers effective performance, and the Society has little argument with its use.

However, as the data rate/frequency spectrum of PLT is raised, to include emissions in the range 1.5-30MHz, the weaknesses of the power distribution network to carry high speed data become clearer, and emissions from PLT networks can and often do interfere with licensed radio services through "leakage" of emissions from cables which in radio frequency terms are "unbalanced". This is a significant issue today with Powerline Adaptors, used to convey data around the home on house wiring. With the much longer cable runs of the mains distribution network, these interference issues become even more significant. This was borne out in trials of "Access PLT" systems a few years ago. Most of these failed for reasons of performance, interference and for commercial reasons.



Furthermore, the issue of ingress from local radio transmitters has been shown to be an issue with PLT systems, where even modest power radio transmitters operating in the vicinity have the capability to cause interruption of PLT service.

For these reasons, the Society firmly believes that the WAN deployed for Smartgrid should be of the wireless variety, using specifically allocated and licensed frequencies or be limited to low frequency PLT, in a similar manner to the telecontrol technology of today.

