

SUMMARY POLICY ISSUE PAPER

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Summary and recommendation

1. The Solution Architecture team worked collaboratively with Ofgem, DCC and market participants to develop a long list of solution architecture options which can support the goals of the faster switching programme.
2. In parallel a set of decision criteria were developed based on the Ofgem faster switching design principles, and industry standard (TOGAF) IT architecture principles.
3. Market participants were asked to rank the options using the decision criteria and the subsequent scores were entered into the model to allow preferred options to be identified.
4. This short list of options will be used to inform and influence the options included in the RFI/Consultative document.
5. Four solution architecture options were found to have equal preference amongst respondents:
 - Switching database
 - Switching and MIS database
 - Middleware interfacing to MPRS and UK Link
 - Middleware with a switching database
6. These findings will be discussed with Ofgem and consideration will be given as to which to include in the RFI.
7. It was acknowledged that the number of respondents was not as high as desired, with the absence of middle to smaller suppliers being particularly missed. It was speculated that in these smaller organisations, they did not have the time or resources necessary to complete the ranking exercise.
8. Alternative options are being explored regarding how to engage with these market participants in a more efficient and expedited way.

Analysis

9. A total of 11 respondents ranked the 10 solution architecture options using a list of 20 decision criteria. Submissions by two respondents needed special handling as their input had the potential to unduly affect the scoring process.
10. The results of this exercise were entered into a model allowing analysis of the results on many levels. A simple scoring of the options was performed first, offering an insight into the most popular solution across the whole respondent group. Further analysis allowed identification of preferred option by market category.

Key Findings

11. The main finding from an initial review of the data is that there is not an overwhelmingly preferred option amongst the respondents.
12. Further analysis points to a slight overall preference to centralised systems, mainly due to the inclusion of architecture option 9, which marries a centralised system and middleware.
13. When split by participant category, central bodies and suppliers prefer middleware solutions, while distributors prefer centralised systems.
14. Further analysis is available in the main EDAG paper, and will be presented at the EDAG meeting.

Next steps

1. The Solution Architecture team will review the findings with Ofgem and DCC.
2. Alternative options are being explored regarding how to engage with middle to smaller market participants in a more efficient and expedited way.
3. EDAG's recommendation will be subject to consideration by Ofgem/DCC and they will use it to influence and inform the final RFI options.