

Minutes of the 64th NERSAP Meeting

The Arden Hotel, Birmingham & Microsoft Teams on 15th February 2022

Attendees:

Arden Hotel

Les Thomas (LT)	LRQA	les.thomas@lr.org (Secretary)
Chris Roe (CR)	UCCG - Eon	chris.roe@eonenergy.com
Andy Thomas (AT)	SSE	andy.thomas@sse.com
Paul Costelloe (PC)	LRQA	paul.costelloe@lr.org
Karl Miller (KM)	LRQA	karl.miller@lr.org

Via Microsoft Teams

Kyle Smith (KS)	WPD	ksmith3@westernpower.co.uk
Andrew Wilkinson (AW)	ESPUG	Andrew.Wilkinson@espug.com
Symon Gray (SG)	EA	symongray@EnergyAssets.co.uk
Martyn Crocker (MC)	UKKPN	martyn.crocker@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Paul Wragg (PW)	Power On	Paul.Wragg@poweron-uk.co.uk
William Cass (WC)	Last Mile	William.Cass@lastmile-uk.com
Eirwyn Thomas (ET)	PSUK	et@powersystemsuk.co.uk
Brian Hoy (BH)	ENWL	Brian.Hoy@enwl.co.uk
Gareth Pearson (GP)	NPG	Gareth.pearson@NorthernPowergrid.onmicrosoft.com

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from
Gareth Pritchard of the HEA

Vanessa Buxton - Kyle Smith is now in post and will be the WPD Representative

Jayson Whitaker - Simon Gray was in attendance for Energy Assets

Tracey Taylor - Brian Hoy is in attendance for ENWL

Mel Swift

1. Introductions

Following brief introductions, the Secretary informed the meeting that the Chairman could not be in attendance due to short notice family commitments and asked if MS had spoken with any of the DNO representatives regarding the vacant role of Vice Chairman. During discussion the number of DNOs in attendance was questioned and the need for formal introductions identified.

A formal introduction of those in attendance was completed.

1.1. Nominations and appointment of Vice Chairperson

The Secretary once again asked if there were any nominations for the role of Vice Chairman and there were no volunteers. The meeting continued without the formal appointment of a chairperson.

BH confirmed he had raised the issue of attendance at a NO Group meeting and hence all the DNOs were in attendance except for Scottish Power.

Action: BH to raise NERSAP Attendance in the CIC meeting Thursday	Action Closed
Action: LT to issue place holder meeting requests with these minutes.	Action Closed

2. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting dated 23rd November 2021 had been issued prior to the meeting and subject to some “typos” that were corrected, were confirmed as a true record of events.

3. Matters arising:

3.1. Update on Competency Working Group

Action: LT & MS to discuss a new schedule and circulate proposed dates.	Ongoing: Further meetings of the working group to be arranged following discussions with EUSR. Feb 22 - With the absence of the Chairman no further update was available but work with EUSR continues.
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3.2. Update on NERS Strategy Working group

Action: 1st Meeting held and program of meetings to be developed to ensure scheme remains fit for purpose to respond to the requirements of external impacts in the industry	Open: To be discussed in item 7.1 below
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3.3. Raising Standards with ICPs

The question as to which body should be representing the NERS community was not discussed at this meeting.

Action: MS agreed to raise the action at the ENA and WC (Agreed in a later session) agreed to raise at the INA	Open: Ongoing Feb 22 - With the absence of the Chairman no further update was available.
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3.4. Network Authorisations

PW confirmed that a meeting had been held with UKPN and explained that an agreement had been reached to allow the network to be handed back “Control to Control” The revised process resolves Power on Connections immediate concerns; However the arrangements may not fit for all ICPs and a common approach by all NOs would be appreciated

Action: MC & PW agreed to have a local discussion between PoC and UKPN, so UKPN can gain an understanding of what is seen as best practice and then ultimately review what changes UKPN can make to their current self-connect offerings.	Closed:
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3.5. Communications (Access to Infrastructure) Regulations 2016

PC reminded the panel that LRQA had been approached regarding identifying a scheme requirements document for a possible new scheme for monitoring third parties' requiring access to existing apparatus. SSE had a policy document and PC asked the panel if any other NOs had such a document so that a scheme requirements document could be developed based on the statutory instrument and respective Network Operators' policies.

Action: Network owners are requested to forward any policies they do have on third party access to infrastructure to PC to inform any scheme requirements document developed.	Update: No other responses had been received and KS agreed to investigate if WPD have a pole sharing policy and pass to LRQA.
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3.6. LRQA and Inspection Services Sale

KM Confirmed that the sale to Goldman Sachs was completed 2nd December 2021 and that letters to the stakeholders had been issued confirming the finalisation and confirming arrangements. It has since become apparent that issues arose due to the volume of emails issued. Many companies do not accept bulk emails and consequently the letters went to SPAM. LRQA are working through Issues.

Action: LRQA to address the web site link issues	Closed
Action: LRQA to provide literature on the sale progress, including timescales to legal transfer etc.,	Closed

Due to the technical difficulties experienced sharing documents to the room and via Teams the matters arising from minutes 3.5 and 3.6 relating to changes to the requirements document were deferred to later in the meeting.

4. NERS DATA February 2021 - January 2022

The NERS Data was presented (see attached)

- 345 Companies on the NERS Register
- 258 Construction companies holding at least some scopes @ Full accreditation
- 20 Companies only hold Design scopes @ Full accreditation
- 4 Companies only hold civil scopes @ Full Accreditation

66 Companies remain at partial

Five companies have been suspended

- 2 have let their Partial certificates lapse.
- One has left their Recertification lapse
- One has failed to respond to repeated requests for SVs
- One has not paid for an assessment Invoiced March 2021

Number of new companies since last meeting – 2

ADDENDUM TO MEETING

During discussion it was stated that LRQA had issued the report prior to the meeting as part of the NERS Forum Minutes. LT Apologises to the panel as he had extracted the file from the NERS minutes for clarity for attendees but had not included the extracted PDF file in the meeting Pack.

The detailed report is included as an attachment to these minutes.

5. Previous Minutes item 3.5 & 3.6

5.1. Proposed amendments to the Requirements document

5.1.1. Operational Requirements

Paul Costello reminded the meeting of the background to the Operational requirements proposal. He explained that currently, where a Network Operator enters into a Framework Agreement with an ICP, the ICP would need to hold Project management to set a different jointing ICP to work.

It was agreed at the last NERSAP that those ICPs holding Construction; Network Connections - Jointing scopes (where LRQA currently already assess procedures relating to their understanding of operational activity), are able to utilise the services of another appropriately accredited ICP to undertake the operational activity relating to their new connection without the need for holding the Project Management scope. It was also agreed that the arrangements for safety rules would need to be robust and LRQA would need to re-iterate the requirements on each future visit/assessment to these ICPs. In order to provide that clarity, PC presented the following proposed words for sections in V9 of the NERS requirements document to provide clarity for discussion:

3.3 Construction

Note 3: Where a Provider holds Network Connection scopes above it is allowable for those Providers to sub-contract operational activity (e.g. fusing/linking/switching etc.) to an appropriately accredited 2nd Provider in order to achieve the new connection. **This is subject to a satisfactory competency assessment by the 1st Provider of their own staff's understanding of the activity being performed by the 2nd Provider (e.g. receipt of safety documents etc.).**

And

3.3.1 Highway Electrical Equipment (HEE)

Note 2: Where a Provider holds scopes 3 and 4 above it is allowable for such Provider to sub-contract operational activity (e.g. fusing/linking/switching etc.) to an appropriately accredited 2nd Provider in order to achieve the new connection **This is subject to a satisfactory competency assessment by the 1st Provider of their own staff's understanding of the activity being performed by the 2nd Provider (e.g. receipt of safety documents etc.).**

During discussion there was a tacit agreement that there was no requirement for the highlighted text as competency of the company and operatives to receive safety documents is assessed as a matter of course at various stages under the assessment process.

BH questioned the process for the revision of the requirements document and what was the relationship between V8 and V9. It was explained that the published version is V8.1 and the V9 is currently in draft for discussion. It was clarified that once the revisions are finalised the new version can be published but this would be no more than annually and not on a piece-meal basis. It was also reiterated that NERSAP have the final say on the requirements as published and it is hoped that a finalised version of V9 would be presented in advance of the July NERSAP for formal approval.

<p>Action: LT to include PC's proposal letter with the minutes so that they can be considered in readiness for the next NERSAP in July.</p>	<p>Ongoing: LRQA to revisit the appropriate sections in V9 of the NERS requirements document to provide clarity.</p> <p>Feb 22 - LRQA to finalise wording in readiness for V9 as directed above</p>
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5.1.2. Highway Electrical Equipment

In the last NERSAP, PC had requested an interpretation of the need for (unmetered) in the Highway Electrical Equipment scopes. There was a consensus that it was not required. LT explained that he felt there was a reason it had been left in but would check before removing it for Version 9.

LT informed the meeting that having reviewed the previous document he felt that leaving the term Unmetered in Version 8 was in probably a typo as there was a statement in the words of the hosted version that stated supplies to a dedicated single phase meter pillar were included in one of the scopes. For Version 9 it was suggested that it would be prudent to remove the statement from within the block text and add it to the bullet list.

During discussion it was identified that if the scope included connections to a dedicated single-phase meter pillar this was of concern as it could also be deemed to include temporary building supplies or single domestic dwellings. LT reiterated that the scopes were for Highway Electrical Equipment only and a discussion ensued without conclusion.

Addendum to meeting

During the meeting there was some debate as to if the phrase was included in previous versions of the scheme requirements document. LT can confirm that the statement “*This scope also includes the connection to a dedicated single-phase meter pillar*”. Was introduced to section 3.3.1 Un-metered Connection scope 1. Un-metered connections in V7 November 2017 and remained in V8 in section 1. HEEU transfers underground single phase, published July 2021

Action: LT to check why Unmetered remained in V9.	Feb 22 – Finalised wording to be confirmed
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5.1.3. NERS requirements document V.9 “Design Lite” CIC

In the CICCOP Panel meeting LRQA had been asked to raise a modification proposal at the next NERS meeting, to see if there is scope to revise the existing accreditation for design i.e. create a new design ‘lite’ option or include simple design in the existing construction standard. Due to the importance of understanding the scale of this e.g. how many connections etc, an initial clause was tabled for discussion at the November NERSAP:

At the last NRSAP it was agreed that the requirement as written was too prescriptive and did not take in to account that some DNOs have a self-service process up to 70kVA for a non-disturbing load. LT informed the meeting that as requested he had carried out the review of previous minutes and actions and had identified that this issue had originally been raised in 2017 and following various discussions it had been referred to the Design Working Group in March 2018. Unfortunately, there has been no further progress recorded in the minutes. During discussions in LRQA it has become apparent that due to the range of issues that impact on the various Network Operators it is not possible to provide a prescriptive requirement as a scope and LRQA propose the following statement for clarity:

3.1.1 Standard Designs of single-phase connections (NERS Design scope accreditation not required).

Design Scope may not be required for a Single-Phase load that is in compliance with the adopting NO’s technical design criteria. The design criteria may vary regionally, and an agreement is required between the NO and the Provider regarding actual design parameters.

During discussion CR stated that as any ICP must be able to demonstrate they are working to an approved design and have the approval of the adopting network owner, having the above statement as a clause should not be necessary. However, the fact that the issue had arisen twice in recent years would suggest that the requirements document is not clear, and it may be necessary to include a note as appropriate to clarify the issue.

A discussion ensued regarding the reason for developing the Design Lite and LT reiterated that it was because this had been raised as an action on Lloyd's Register at the CICCOP following a request by The Electricity Board.

BH once again reiterated that the process of LRQA bringing suggested amendments to NERSAP for discussion was not ideal and LRQA should not be making proposals solely as a result of a minuted action. He stated that NERSAP want clarity and a smaller group would be preferential. As the company involved with the original request were The Electricity Board, MC, BH and KS stated they would be willing to take part in discussion and as Stephen Davies was their LRQA Assessor, it was agreed it would be beneficial if he was involved in this re write.

Action: LRQA to review previous minutes as this has been discussed before (M. Bracey, M Crocker & S Rogers) and a new group to be arranged do develop the proposed clause	Feb 22 – LRQA to arrange a forum for the design lite requirement to be discussed
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6. Review of NERS Forum Minutes – 1st February 2022

The NERS providers forum had been provided prior to the meeting and the main points discussed as follows:

The ICP Forum continues to increase attendance with 53 in attendance at the meeting with over 48 ICPs represented.

3.3. Section 50 Applications

Forum Frank Welsh had raised the issue of Local Authorities NRSWA 1991 requirements making Section 50 applications overly onerous and forcing ICP's to seek Statutory Street Works Noticing via IDNO's.

MS has agreed to request the GTC Street works Manager to raise the issue Nationally at Street Works UK and at various HAUC meetings to see if there was anything to be done regarding unreasonable Bonds and the lead time quoted for approving a section 50 licence applications.

3.4. New Model Distribution Safety rules

The new distribution Safety Rules are not yet published but that sign off was imminent with publication Late February Early March.

5 Best Practice Discussion

Passports remained the highest numbers of findings and the best practice discussion centred on the apparent confusion between the "Confirmation of Competency Certificate and the "Certificate of Competency" (COC).

During discussion it was clarified that evidence of an annual review is a significant weakness seen repeatedly. If the Certificate is valid for three years this is not an issue but there still needs to be an annual review to confirm the certificate remains valid and evidence of this review retained.

7. Working Group Updates

7.1. Strategic Working Group

KM gave an overview of the meeting held early in January. The meeting had been arranged to ensure the scheme remains fit for purpose and to identify what could be done differently with a view to the next 3 – 5 years.

The group are also looking at the scheme requirements from the point of view of the Network Owners and the Competition in Connections document, with an eye on technology changes to make sure the scheme is fit for purpose for the foreseeable future.

There were no firm proposals yet but initiatives such as a rating system, where providers that are a proven lower risk are reviewed less frequently and those that perform less well could see their schedules increased, were being worked on. A 'Trip Advisor' type rating system that provides additional confidence regarding the customer's choice of ICP is also being considered.

It was stated that the ICP forum had been accepting of such a proposal as minuted in the meeting of the 15th subject to there being transparent scoring and a robust and rapid score updating system.

It was also clarified that whilst this had come from the NERS Strategic Working group this had been broached with other Advisory panels who were also supportive, and the possibility of a collaborative approach was in discussion

Action: SWG to drive forward initiatives to conclusion and implementation as appropriate	
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7.2. MOU

It was reiterated that the MOU had expired and that a Draft MOU had been issued for comment as V1. but that LRQA had not received any feedback to date

BH confirmed that there had been a meeting of the NOs and that whilst the SWG had been a positive meeting there was still no positive strategy in place and therefore, in a meeting outside of NERSAP, it had been recommended that the MOU be reviewed and signed up to the end of this calendar year to allow a further review to move forward the MOU.

8. AOB and Date of next meeting

8.1. AOB

LT requested that due to the difficulties associated with a hybrid meeting that any future NERSAP meetings should either be held on Teams or as a physical meeting.

There was no other AOB

8.2. Date of next meeting

LT thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution and confirmed the dates for the next meeting were as follows:

Agreed Dates 2022

NERS Provider Forum 7th June & 11th October - Teams Meeting

NERSAP 21st June & 25th October - TBC