

Minutes of the 61st NERSAP Meeting

Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams on 16th March 2021

Attendees:

Mel Swift (Chair) (MS)	GTC	mel.swift@gtc-uk.co.uk
Les Thomas (Secretary)	Lloyds Register	les.thomas@lr.org
Chris Roe (CR)	UCCG - Eon	chris.roe@eonenergy.com
Nigel Evans (NE)	SPEN	nigel.evans@spenenergynetworks.com
Karl Miller (KM)	Lloyd's Register	karl.miller@lr.org
Paul Wragg (PW)	Power On Connections	paulwragg@poweronconnections.co.uk
Shaun Crosbie (SC)	Energy Assets	ShaunCrosbie@energyassets.co.uk
Ian Cairns (IC)	NPG	ian.cairns@northernpowergrid.com
Andy Thomas (AT)	SSE	andy.thomas@sse.com
Chris Wonfer	UKPN	chris.wonfer@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Mike Doward (MD)	ENWL	michael.doward@enwl.co.uk
Martin Baker(MB)	Lloyd's Register	martin.baker@lr.org
William Cass (WC)	Last Mile	William.Cass@lastmile-uk.com
Grant Rogers (GR)	WPD	grogers@westernpower.co.uk

Apologies :

Symon Gray(SG)	Energy Assets	symongray@energyassets.co.uk
Colin Jamieson (CJ)	ESP	colin.jamieson@espug.com
Eirwyn Thomas (ET)	Power Systems UK	et@powersystemsuk.co.uk
Simon Burnett (SB)	Morrison US	simon.burnett2@morrisones.com

1. Introductions

Following brief introductions, the Chairman welcomed the attendees to the meeting and apologies noted.

2. Election of a Deputy Chairperson

As minuted in the previous meeting Steve Rogers has retired and there is a need to appoint a Deputy Chairperson. As the current Chair is from an Independent Network Owner, the requirement is for the deputy to be from a DNO. Only Mike Doward has shown an interest to take up the role and was elected uncontested.

3. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes dated 17th November 2020

The minutes and been issued prior to the meeting and were confirmed as a true record of events.

The outstanding actions were discussed as follows:

3.1. Summary of Proposed Changes to NERS Requirements Document

Action: Closed Latest Document issued and discussed at the strategic working group for formal approval in agenda item below	LT to issue a Draft version of V8 of the requirements document with the minutes.
Action: Closed Latest Document issued and discussed at the strategic working group for formal approval in agenda item below	All Review the proposed changes in V8 and respond to LR with comments & amendments by Christmas

3.2 Update on Competition in Connections Code of Practice Working Group

Action: Open. Nothing to report, Working group to be reconvened	LT discuss the makeup of the working group with MS and PC and arrange a meeting.
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3.3. Update on NERS Strategy Working group

Action: Open.	1 st 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
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3.4. Update on NERS Passports Working Group

Action: Closed	Working group activities complete working group stood down
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3.5. Update on Competency Working Group

During discussion it was agreed that due to the external influences that are going to impact the competency requirements of all staff and operatives, the competency working group will remain in place. It is proposed that the existing members are to be retained and Nigel Evans and Chris Wonfer offered to join the working group and were accepted.

Action: Open	LT & MS to discuss a new schedule and circulate proposed dates.
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3.6. Raising Standards with ICPs

Due to the need to meet the future challenges with the industry, there was a requirement for Working Groups to continue their work, particularly with respect to raising competence levels. During discussion, it was stated that IGEM are seeking to develop a workable system in conjunction with the various working groups rather than have a framework imposed.

This raised the question as to which body should be representing the NERS community. This is going to develop over the next few years and could impact on NERSAP. It is something we need to be aware of as we need to future proof industry competency.

Action: Open there has been no meetings of either the ENA or INA	MS agreed to raise the action at the ENA and WC (Agreed in a later session) agreed to raise at the INA.
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4. NERS Data November 2020 - February 2021

The latest LR Statistics are embedded below



NERSAP STATs 16th
March 2020.pdf

During discussion it was noted that the two areas with the highest deficiencies were under the following requirement clauses

- 13 Passport Incorrect Format /Incorrect contents
- 7h Sufficient equipment is available for the work being done and that, as required, this equipment is maintained and kept in calibration.

During discussion it was clarified that deficiencies under section 7h were rarely about not having equipment but normally the issue lies with calibration. It was agreed there were many reasons for the deficiencies and that whilst this can be seen as an “Easy Hit” for an auditor, it should also be easily resolved for the ICPs. There was a consensus that the issue lies with competency and with some feeling it is “*not my responsibility*”.

Best practice appears to be when companies have arrangements for the team to carry out its own van inspections and that the regular plant and equipment check sheets are subject to audit. During discussion it was agreed that there should be a regular agenda item for best practice and that tools and equipment calibration would be the first feature and included in the next providers forum.

It was clarified that if an item was sufficiently out of calibration, then the issue can and is often raised under the Audit section.

Action:	LT to include Best Practice discussions in future NERS Providers Forums
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5. Review of the NERS Forum Minutes

The NERS providers forum minutes had been issued previously and it was noted that the number of ICPs in attendance during the recent forum was the highest it has ever been. It was concluded that this was a direct result of the meeting being held via Microsoft teams and the removal of travel requirements. There was agreement that there would always be a need for networking and physical meetings, but obviously remote meetings would continue as the wider the audience for these discussion, the more impact on the culture and best practice would be achieved.

Nigel Evans officially clarified the point about Scottish Power not appearing to allow an ICP to operate under Option 1 and confirmed this was not the case as SP do allow companies to operate the system without issue. It was clarified that the forum had been informed that Nigel is the person to contact and this was confirmed.

6. Revision of the NERS requirements document

6.1. V8 of the scheme requirements document

The proposed amendments to V8 of the scheme requirements document were discussed and subject to the following amendments agreed.

Highways Electrical Equipment (HEE) to be re titled Highway Electrical Equipment (Unmetered) as some HEE can be metered and would be subject to design approval.

Clarification to be added to the Technical Advisor role and that it is not the scheme advisor role required by those holding construction scopes as the Assessing Officer and Authorising Officer are the persons that should carry out this activity in a construction company.

Under AOB it was also agreed that the scheme requirements document would remove any reference to DNO and IDNO as now there is no difference between the organisations and the document should just refer to the Network Operator.

Action:	LR to make the amendments and host by 31 st March 2021
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6.2. Operational Requirements

LR recently carried out a 'partial' assessment for a new company (company 'A') whose business model included offering LV Operational activity to ICPs which don't currently hold accreditation for Operational activity in their own right.

The NERS Requirements presently only allow sub-contracting of contestable connection activity (including operational activity) by a company which holds either the relevant Construction scope(s), or Project Management for the relevant scopes themselves.

LR became aware that at least one DNO was prepared to allow company 'A' to carry out Operational activities for ICPs not holding the required scopes, under a 'framework' agreement with company 'A'. It also became evident that this practice had been taking place on a number of previous occasions.

NERSAP is requested to consider that for those ICPs holding Network Connection scopes, an ICP can sub-contract an operational activity to an appropriately accredited ICP without necessarily holding any operational scopes themselves. As LR currently already assesses their capability and understanding for situations where they would need to identify the required operational activity to be carried out in order to facilitate their own construction activity. Such ICPs would need to be capable of receiving and understanding a PTW or other safety document issued to them by a DNO carrying out the operational activity.

There were mitigating circumstances such as the NO's existing relationship with both ICPs

Following discussion, it was agreed that the proposal could not be accepted without further consideration as there were possible contractual and warrant implications.

It was agreed that where LR identify such a situation this would be treated as the exception rather than the rule and that any findings issued would not be escalated further until the issue is discussed at the next NERSAP.

The document is embedded below.



Proposal to NERSAP
to Vary the NERS Req

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
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7. Section 38 - Street Lighting - Nigel Evans

Nigel Evans highlighted an issue where a local authority were unwilling to accept an ICP carrying out Section 38 street lighting activities claiming they were "illegal connections" CR clarified that Section 38 is the adoption specification for the asset and is the standard for use on the development for adoption by the local authority. Section 278 works are for outside the development.

It was also explained that there are two parts to the requirements, i.e. , the requirements of the network owner (the cut out etc.) and the requirements of the Local Authority (the lamp and standard etc.)

During discussion it was clarified that some Local Authorities do not understand the DNO, IDNO and ICP relationship and that GTC had found itself unable to get the LA to adopt the streetlighting due to there being no tripartite relationship. Once again it was reiterated that there is no requirement for a tripartite relationship as the asset is being installed on behalf of the developer and asset approval does not occur until the Section 38 is approved.

8. Working Group updates

Discussed under section 3 above.

9. AOB

- NE sought information on the impact of the Covid Pandemic on time limited qualifications. There was a general consensus that EUSR and other training providers had extended certification dates until the 31st March 2021 and this complied with the guidance provided by the HSE. This is the information used by LR.

A link to the HSE guidance related to first aid can be found here.

[First aid during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - HSE news](#)

- CW queried if the IDNOs are receiving Dangerous Incident Notifications and if so, how are these used when issues that could affect cross operational boundaries are identified. Both MS and WC confirmed that they have operational procedures in place to manage isolation issues and ensure both parties have the appropriate information to manage instances where there are issues that could affect cross operational boundaries.

Dates for the meetings of the NERS Provider Forum and NERSAP in 2021 are:

NERS Provider Forum	29 th June & 2 nd November
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NERSAP	20 th July & 23 rd November
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The venue will be notified in advance of the above meetings.