

## **Data Services Contract – Change Management Committee**

### **Summary of Application Programming Interface (API) development as at July 2017**

#### **Purpose**

To update the Change Management Committee (ChMC) of the development of the Xoserve API capability.

#### **Background**

Xoserve has not provided a comprehensive report on the development of its API capability. Some updates have been provided but not to a suitable level. This document is presented to the ChMC to address this shortcoming.

#### **Xoserve API capability**

In June 2016, following enquires over a number of years for access to data via API services, Xoserve began to consider how an API capability might be constructed following implementation of the new UK Link platform - implementation at that time was planned for October 2016. To realise this consideration into tangible solution design, a sequence of activities were undertaken. These included the assessment of vendors and suppliers for various options ranging from an on-premise (bespoke) service to cloud (as a service). This then led to a recommended option of a cloud based service and its translation into a concrete solution design.

Due to commitments to the pressing CMA Order, the UK Link Programme and the Ofgem Funding, Governance and Ownership review of Xoserve, Xoserve, unfortunately, did not inform the industry of its plans for the development of the strategic API capability. We appreciate this is inconsistent with the way in which Xoserve would ordinarily undertake its business operations.

#### **Competition and Markets Authority Energy Market Investigation**

During 2016 Xoserve was also addressing the matters raised by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Energy Market Investigation and the proposals to provide access to data to Price Comparison Websites (PCW). Until October/November 2016 an API solution was still under consideration as a means of delivery, although in December the CMA confirmed that the Order was for access to the Data Enquiry Service not any other solution. Note that following the send back of Uniform Network Code (UNC) modification 0593 and Independent Gas Transporter UNC modification 095, by Ofgem for further development, and industry discussions with the CMA, the CMA has now confirmed that the Order can be met by an API service.

The CMA report also sets out some of the business rules for the provision of the service e.g. the service is for domestic customers only. These business rules can be met via an API service, but not the Data Enquiry Service (without change).

To progress with development of meeting the CMA Order, in November 2016 Northern Gas Networks raised Change Order 4110 to assess the feasibility of options for services to the PCW. This

Change Order funded the project up to detailed design including the extraction of the required data into the API Platform, the specification of the APIs required to meet the PCW requirements and the design for the underlying API Platform configuration and setup

### **API development progress November 2016 to July 2017**

In November 2016, following evaluation of API service providers, and with a higher confidence in UK Link delivery, Xoserve commenced work with BackOffice Associates Limited for the design of an API platform. The design is based upon a standard cloud based API Management platform enabling the creation, publication and monitoring of APIs by multiple customers (see diagram below). The key design requirements of the capability included:

- Provision of API services without impacting the core services delivered out of UK Link
- Policies can be built to distinguish data requirements from different customer groups
- API transactions are monitored and recorded, allowing accesses to be audited (where required) and to detect any improper usage.
- API access suspension with immediate effect.
- Each API service is scalable for expected demand e.g. for PCW access service demand is expected to be higher in evenings than during the normal working hours
- Limit API call volume to protect service, from both sudden spikes and continuous high volume. This is optional feature and customisable for customer or customer groups.

### **API development plans July 2017 onwards**

Following review, Xoserve concluded that an API capability would provide new service opportunities for customers to meet some of the requirements stated by customers, and that it would support future change e.g. to assist in managing the consequential impacts of the Ofgem Switching Programme on the gas industry e.g. API may be a replacement for the UK Link Data Enquiry file service.

The costs for build and implementation are circa £170,000 with annual operational cost of circa £139,000. The build and implement costs and first year operational costs funded via the current business improvement budget.

The API capability is expected to be available from December following user acceptance testing. The first service is likely to be the PCW access to data service, either directly or in conjunction with Gemserv to provide a dual fuel service.

Xoserve is now seeking to engage with its current customer base to identify new API service opportunities. These can be at an individual customer level or for customer groups. For example, Suppliers may well wish to access the same API service as PCW, this was briefly discussed in the modification 0593 workgroup meetings.

### **Overview diagram**

