

**Workstream Report**  
**Amending DM Supply Point Data for Sites with Significant Changes in Usage**  
**Modification Reference Number 0244**  
Version 1.0

This Workstream Report is presented for the UNC Modification Panel's consideration. The Distribution [and Transmission] Workstream considers that the Proposal is sufficiently developed and should now proceed to the Consultation Phase. [The Workstream also recommends that the Panel requests the preparation of legal text for this Modification Proposal.]

## **1 The Modification Proposal**

### **Background**

This issue has been raised by consumers at the Gas Customer Forum and the Demand Side Working Group. In response to these discussions and concerns expressed by consumers and consumer representatives this proposal has been developed in conjunction with other interested Shippers.

Under the current economic climate a significant number of consumers are reducing their levels of production. This is affecting both their levels of gas usage and the numbers of part mothballed or part vacant industrial and commercial properties.

The last minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee Meeting on the 4th and 5th February 2009 stated that the world downturn was 'affecting the United Kingdom, where output had contracted sharply in the fourth quarter of 2008'. It also commented that 'business surveys were pointing to a similar reduction in output in early 2009'. The CBI's quarterly Industrial Trends Survey published 22 February 2009 commented that it found the worst predictions of industrial demand since 1975.

Where a site reduces usage, becomes part vacant or mothballed then Shippers will continue to be attributed transportation costs based on the AQ, SOQ and Bottom Stop SOQ (BSSOQ) for the site. The only option for avoiding these costs is to fully vacate the site and then withdraw from the supply point, isolating the meters.

Prior to the rebalancing of DNO charges to a 95/5 percent capacity commodity split where a site reduced its usage it would see a significant reduction in its costs due to the reduction in the commodity element of the charge. Large sites that had interruptible supply points which at the time paid only commodity charges would have seen an even greater reduction.

Since the change to a 95/5 capacity/commodity regime the customer's only option to avoid charges for capacity they no longer need is to isolate and withdraw from the site.

This choice is neither good for the supplier, shipper or consumer. The consumer may wish to continue to take gas but at a significantly lower level but must isolate to avoid the costs.

For example a car manufacturer may have a factory with a number of production lines. Due to the reduction in demand for cars it may choose to reduce the number of production lines at a factory from five to two. This will result in the car

manufacturer's paint shop reducing their gas usage by over fifty percent. If the site is interruptible then the reduction in demand that happens today will not be recognised by the DNOs until October 2010.

In this example the choice given to the car manufacturer is to either continue to take gas and pay capacity charges at a rate reflecting its previous usage for the next eighteen months or to stop its usage completely. The shipper would then be required to isolate and withdraw. Isolation normally involves separating the meter, installing a lock on the Emergency Control Valve and capping the end of the service pipe.

The network would then disable the service pipe. This is normally done after 12 months. This usually involves cutting off the service pipe at the point where it connects to the gas mains. At this point the MPRN for the site would be set to dead and the service would no longer be considered part of the DNOs network.

NB. Were Shippers to withdraw from a site there is an increased risk that tenants recommence consuming gas without having a registered Shipper in place. This could therefore introduce the risk that the volume of unallocated energy is increased. There are therefore instances when a Shipper may want to remain registered to a vacant site in response to consumer requirements and for the benefit of the industry.

### **NDM versus DM**

The UNC currently allows NDM LSP sites to reduce their AQ (and therefore their SOQ) via the BTU form. There is no such ability for DM Firm sites to change their SOQ and DM Interruptible sites to change their SOQ and Bottom Stop SOQ.

DM sites can only reduce their SOQ in a fixed window. Outside of this window sites are therefore unable to reduce their capacity charges. Interruptible sites use the Bottom Stop SOQ in the calculation of their capacity charges.

In the context of the recent change to a 96.5% capacity pricing regime and the current economic circumstances this has led some consumers to consider isolating sites rather than part mothballing or reducing usage as their only option to avoid transportation charges on sites where they know gas usage levels will be reduced.

It is unclear why a BTU mechanism was never introduced for DM supply points but it seems likely that this was partly due to their ability in the past to avoid such costs by becoming interruptible. In the current regime DM supply points are unable to use this mechanism.

### **Effects of Isolation**

It should be noted that isolation is a significant barrier to the site returning to active use and therefore potentially socialises the cost of that consumers' capacity on an ongoing basis. Experience suggests that once service pipes are cut off and MPRNs are set to dead it is rare that these are reconnected.

Once a site becomes dormant it is far less likely that that site will return to active use. In the global economy a site with ongoing production and an active workforce is more likely to be chosen for increased production than a dormant site. If a site is dormant then it must compete with sites in other locations that may benefit from

lower wage economies.

### **The Proposal**

It is proposed that the UNC is modified so that:

1. The Gas Transporters (or their agent on their behalf) will introduce a process for mandatory DM sites which allows Shippers to amend DM AQs, SOQs and/or BSSOQs.
2. The Shipper must change Supply Meter Point AQ to at least 73,201kWh's or greater.
3. The SOQ must be decreased by more than 20%.
4. The SOQ and BSSOQ must be greater than 1/365 of the AQ and the SOQ must be greater or equal to the BSSOQ.
5. By using this process the Shipper warrants that they have confirmed, using reasonable actions, that the updated AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ represents a reasonable assumption of gas demand for the next 12 months.
6. The newly updated AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ will remain at that level for at least 12 months unless the Shipper reapplies. The site must remain DM for this period and will remain liable for applicable DM charges. The existing ratchet regime would also continue to apply to these sites.
7. Reapplications may be made by sites which, as a result of using the process, are below the mandatory DM threshold provided they are within the 12 month period referred to in 6.
8. In instances where the process has been used twice or more at a single Supply Meter Point within 12 months, then the Gas Transporter (or their agent) will ensure that where the registered Shipper proposes to increase the AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ that they are charged retrospectively for the capacity charge element avoided in the original reduction.

NB. In instances when the process had been used to re-set the AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ and this had remained unchanged for 12 months then there will be no liability to pay any historic capacity charges.

NB. If a consumer chooses to use this process to give up capacity rights, they will no longer have any rights over that level of capacity. The network would be free to reallocate that capacity and the consumer would risk that capacity would not be available in the future.

This will ensure that Shippers can continue to comply with UNC requirements that the AQ should represent a reasonable assumption as to the quantity of gas offtaken, whilst providing sufficient incentives on Shippers and Consumers to not use this process to regularly change their registered capacity to reflect their process loads. This proposal will also benefit consumers by ensuring that they are not exposed to significant capacity charges for capacity that they will not access. This change will therefore provide GB business with the flexibility they need to support their survival

in the current economic climate and on an ongoing basis.

While this process contains safeguards to avoid misuse of the regime by Shippers, it is suggested that the DNOs could report activity to the Billing Operations Forum. This would allow consideration of unusual behaviour should this occur.

## **2 Extent to which implementation of the proposed modification would better facilitate the relevant objectives**

### **Standard Special Condition A11.1 (a): *the coordinated, efficient and economic operation of the pipe-line system to which this licence relates;***

It would appear likely that AQs, SOQs and BSSOQs play an important role in planning the short term operation of the pipeline system. Having AQs, SOQs and BSSOQs that reflect actual usage will therefore enable the Gas Transporters to operate their pipeline systems in an efficient and economic manner. Further in the long run the process could be used by the Transporters to identify any underlying trends in the number and operation of part vacant or part mothballed sites. This could also help in the long term planning and development of the system.

### **Standard Special Condition A11.1 (b): *so far as is consistent with sub-paragraph (a), the (i) the combined pipe-line system, and/ or (ii) the pipe-line system of one or more other relevant gas transporters;***

It would appear likely that AQs, SOQs and BSSOQs that reflect actual usage would help to ensure that the Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) book an appropriate level of NTS Exit Capacity required for the consumers connected to their system, thereby facilitating this objective.

### **Standard Special Condition A11.1 (c): *so far as is consistent with sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), the efficient discharge of the licensee's obligations under this licence;***

Standard Special Condition A5.5 requires the Gas Transporters to develop a charging methodology so that charges reflect the costs incurred. The current methodology relies on AQs, SOQs and BSSOQs as the basis for charges. If any of these do not reflect actual usage then arguably the charges developed will not be as accurate as possible. Allowing Shippers to register an AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ that reflect actual usage will therefore facilitate SSCA5.5 and so in turn facilitate A11.1 (c)..

### **Standard Special Condition A11.1 (d): *so far as is consistent with sub-paragraphs (a) to (c) the securing of effective competition: (i) between relevant shippers; (ii) between relevant suppliers; and/or (iii) between DN operators (who have entered into transportation arrangements with other relevant gas transporters) and relevant shippers;***

By ensuring capacity costs are targeted at the correct Shippers this will reduce any cross subsidisation that would otherwise occur and so be beneficial to competition.

By implementing this proposal it will reduce the likelihood of Shippers isolating and withdrawing from sites. This will reduce the likelihood of the long-term socialisation of the cost of the capacity provided to the consumer.

This proposal provides Shippers with DM sites the opportunity provided to NDM sites to amend the AQ, BSSOQ and SOQ and therefore affect the level of capacity charges levied.

**Standard Special Condition A11.1 (e):** *so far as is consistent with sub-paragraphs (a) to (d), the provision of reasonable economic incentives for relevant suppliers to secure that the domestic customer supply security standards (within the meaning of paragraph 4 of standard condition 32A (Security of Supply – Domestic Customers) of the standard conditions of Gas Suppliers’ licences) are satisfied as respects the availability of gas to their domestic customers;*

Implementation would not be expected to better facilitate this relevant objective.

**Standard Special Condition A11.1 (f):** *so far as is consistent with sub-paragraphs (a) to (e), the promotion of efficiency in the implementation and administration of the network code and/or the uniform network code.*

Implementation of this proposal would reduce the requirement for Shippers to gain warrants for powers of entry to vacant or mothballed sites as more of these sites would continue to take gas. As recognised by Ofgem in implementation of P196 avoiding these costs would represent a pragmatic and effective solution.

**3 The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal on security of supply, operation of the Total System and industry fragmentation**

No implications on security of supply, operation of the Total System or industry fragmentation have been identified.

**4 The implications for Transporters and each Transporter of implementing the Modification Proposal, including:**

**a) implications for operation of the System:**

It would appear logical that AQs, SOQs and/or BSSOQs that more accurately reflect actual usage should benefit Transporters through the short term operation of the System. In the long term the ability to identify trends from the process may benefit the long term planning and development of the system.

**b) development and capital cost and operating cost implications:**

No indication of the likely level of these costs has been provided by the Gas Transporters.

It is recognised that xoserve may have some development costs to allow the DM sites access to the same functionality as NDM sites.

There would be new costs for the Gas Transporter (or their agent) in instances where the process has been used twice or more within 12 months and the Shipper is requesting an increase in the AQ, SOQ and/or BSSOQ. In this case, the Gas Transporter (or their agent) would charge retrospectively for the capacity charge element avoided in the original reduction. There would be costs associated in administering and calculating this charge and invoicing the shipper.

**c) extent to which it is appropriate to recover the costs, and proposal for the most appropriate way to recover the costs:**

If significant costs are identified, the Gas Transporters may wish to subsequently propose changes to the ACS (Agency Charging Statement) with a view to recovering the costs on a user pays basis.

**d) Analysis of the consequences (if any) this proposal would have on price regulation:**

No such consequence is anticipated.

**5 The consequence of implementing the Modification Proposal on the level of contractual risk of each Transporter under the Code as modified by the Modification Proposal**

No such consequence is anticipated.

**6 The high level indication of the areas of the UK Link System likely to be affected, together with the development implications and other implications for the UK Link Systems and related computer systems of each Transporter and Users**

None identified. The proposed process is only likely to be used in a limited number of circumstances and hence significant investment to amend the UK Link System is not expected to be required or economically justified.

**7 The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal for Users, including administrative and operational costs and level of contractual risk**

*Administrative and operational implications (including impact upon manual processes and procedures)*

If Shippers wish to utilise this process then they will need to have appropriate procedures and policies in place to ensure that the proposed AQ reasonably reflects the expected usage. However, as this is a voluntary procedure, it is expected that Shippers will only utilise this procedure if the benefit of it to the customer outweighs the costs.

*Development and capital cost and operating cost implications*



No such costs have been identified.

***Consequence for the level of contractual risk of Users***

Standard Licence Condition B3 of the Shipper Licence requires the Shipper to not knowingly mislead the Transporter. Potentially having an inaccurate AQ as a result of a site becoming part mothballed, or part vacant, could be viewed as misleading the Transporter, provided that this was sufficiently material. By ensuring that Shippers can lodge an accurate AQ under the UNC this reduces the contractual risk that they could be held in breach of their Shipper Licence.

**8 The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal for Terminal Operators, Consumers, Connected System Operators, Suppliers, producers and, any Non Code Party**

This issue was raised by Consumers, including at the Gas Customer Forum, and this modification proposal has been developed in response to this. This proposal will provide a direct benefit to consumers by ensuring that the capacity costs that they are exposed to are directly related to the capacity that they require and access.

By providing an alternative to isolation this proposal will help to ensure that manufacturing returns to GB when the economic climate improves. This will provide a benefit to consumers through reduced socialisation of capacity costs and GDP in general.

**9 Consequences on the legislative and regulatory obligations and contractual relationships of each Transporter and each User and Non Code Party of implementing the Modification Proposal**

No such consequences have been identified.

**10 Analysis of any advantages or disadvantages of implementation of the Modification Proposal**

**Advantages**

- Ensures costs are appropriately targeted.
- Helps support British industry and UK GDP
- Incorporates principles of P196 into UNC
- Provides a pragmatic and cost effective solution
- Reduces long-term socialisation of costs

**Disadvantages**

- May have a minor affect on Gas Transporters cash flow

- Increases short-term socialisation of costs

**11 Summary of representations received (to the extent that the import of those representations are not reflected elsewhere in the Workstream Report)**

No written representations have been received.

**12 The extent to which the implementation is required to enable each Transporter to facilitate compliance with safety or other legislation**

No such requirement has been identified.

**13 The extent to which the implementation is required having regard to any proposed change in the methodology established under paragraph 5 of Condition A4 or the statement furnished by each Transporter under paragraph 1 of Condition 4 of the Transporter's Licence**

No such requirement has been identified.

**14 Programme for works required as a consequence of implementing the Modification Proposal**

No programme for works has been identified.

**15 Proposed implementation timetable (including timetable for any necessary information systems changes)**

Implementation could be immediate on receipt of a decision.

**16 Implications of implementing this Modification Proposal upon existing Code Standards of Service**

No implications of implementing this Modification Proposal upon existing Code Standards of Service have been identified.

**17. Workstream recommendation regarding implementation of this Modification Proposal**

The Distribution [and Transmission] Workstream considers that the Proposal is sufficiently developed and should now proceed to the Consultation Phase. [The Workstream also recommends that the Panel requests the preparation of legal text for this Modification Proposal.]