



CH&N Consultation on 4G Communications Hub Dimensions

Your chance to comment on the physical dimensions for 4G
Communications Hubs

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1. Introduction and Context

1. The Smart Data Communications Company (DCC) is Britain's digital energy spine, supporting the transformation of the energy system. DCC is licensed by the Government and regulated by the energy regulator Ofgem to connect smart meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain to a single secure, digital network. DCC supports the roll-out of smart meters.
2. The Communications Hubs and Networks Programme (CH&N) is a DCC initiative geared towards defining and delivering future-proof Communications Hubs & Networks with an efficient supply chain and a targeted longevity of at least 15 years. Maintaining Smart functionality over the longer term will require the introduction of new Communications Hubs (CHs) which use the newer 4G network. DCC has stood-up a CH&N Programme to assess options for and then implement a chosen solution to achieve this.

1.1. Background

3. Smart Energy Code (SEC) Section F4.12 requires DCC to consult with Parties prior to the procurement of any CHs with Home Area Network (HAN) or Wider Area Network (WAN) Variants that have not previously been made available.
4. As part of CH&N, DCC is designing and procuring a new Long-Term Evolution (LTE) 4G connected Communications Hub Service that will replace current 2G and 3G services which are expected to be retired by 2033.

1.2. Purpose of the consultation

5. The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on the physical dimensions of 4G CHs.
6. This consultation is expected to impact Large and Small Suppliers, and Other SEC Parties.
7. Parties can respond to this consultation by emailing consultations@smartdcc.co.uk. This consultation will close on the 15 March 2023 at 17:00.

2. 4G Communications Hubs Dimensions

8. In accordance with SEC Section F4.12, DCC are required to consult prior to procurement of new Communications Hub Variants. To ensure the 4G solution will meet customers' business needs, offers value for money and an efficient transition while maintaining a smooth and continuous roll-out, DCC required input from across the industry. DCC therefore engaged with stakeholders through various industry forums prior to procurement.
9. DCC proposed that the physical dimensions for 4G CHs will remain unchanged from the current 2G/3G Toshiba Cellular Only Dual Band Communications Hub (DBCH) used in the Communications Service Provider Central & South Region (CSP C&S).
10. Through this engagement, DCC received input from some customers' stating that smaller physical dimension requirements should have been proposed when procuring 4G Communications Hubs. DCC notes that the requirement for smaller 4G Communications Hubs did not fit into the categories of the agreed options and Minimum Viable Product (MVP) features which were discussed at Business Requirement workshops with stakeholders and were therefore not initially included.
11. DCC can consider and propose reduced height Communications Hubs after MVP delivery when there will be an opportunity to re-design Communications Hub Hardware. This is because this will need to be assessed in detail in terms of impact on performance of Communications Hubs (i.e. connectivity of WAN and HAN).

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Do you have any comments on the physical dimensions for the 4G Communications Hubs? Please provide your rationale.

3. Next Steps

12. Following the closure of this consultation, DCC will consider respondents' views and will publish a DCC response document outlining the analysis of comments received and the conclusions.

4. How to Respond

13. Please provide responses by 17:00 on 15 March 2023 to DCC at consultations@smartdcc.co.uk.
14. Consultation responses may be published on our website www.smartdcc.co.uk. Please state clearly in writing whether you want all or any part, of your consultation to be treated as confidential. It would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. Please note that responses in their entirety (including any text marked confidential) may be made available to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority). Information provided to BEIS or the Authority, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information legislation (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If BEIS or the Authority receive a request for disclosure of the information we/they will take full account of your explanation (to the extent provided to them), but we/they cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.
15. If you have any questions about the consultation documents, please contact DCC via consultations@smartdcc.co.uk.