Draft minutes

Meeting name AMO/ENA Bilateral Meeting 26-01

Date and time Wednesday 3 June 2026, 10:00

Location Energy Networks Association, 4 More Riverside

Attendees

Name	Initials	Organisation	Role/membership
Matt Baker	MB	ENA	Chair(person)
Martin Brailsford	MBr	Talan	Consultant
Tracey Foxley	TF	Beboc	Member
Boz Laird-Clowes	BL-C	DESNZ	Member
Andy Hume	AH	IMSERV	Member
Stuart Pyle	SP	IMSERV	Member
Jon Rand*	JR	E.ON	Member
Michael Gorewoda	MG	E.ON	Member
Richard Brady	RB	National Grid	Member
Sean Pickett	SP	Northern Powergrid	Member
Richard Brodrick	RBr	Octopus	Member
Chris Varney	CV	OVO	Member
Phil Waring*	PW	SMS	Member
John Orr*	JO	SP Energy Networks	Member
Philip Powell	PP	SP Energy Networks	Member
Jordan Hills	JH	SSE	Member
Martyn Lenfestey	ML	SSE	Member
Shuba Khatun	SK	SSE	Member
Paul Morris	PM	UK Power Networks	Member
Sean Dollamore	SD	Utilita	Member
Nicole Graff	NG	Talan	Secretary

*Via teams

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed Members to the ENA/AMO 26-01 meeting.

2. Competition law compliance

The competition law compliance slide was displayed and the Chair reminded Members to be mindful of their conduct in relation to competition law. Members should raise any concerns immediately.

3. Safety and welfare moment

The Chair delivered a safety and welfare moment focused on mental health awareness, reflecting Mental Health Awareness Month and ENA's work with charity organisation Mind. ENA's 2026 wellbeing activity included campaigns, charity initiatives and events designed to raise both funds and awareness.

Poor mental health remains a significant contributor to sickness absence and lost working days in the energy sector. The Chair emphasised the importance of creating a supportive working environment by checking in with colleagues, particularly when working remotely, encouraging regular breaks and time away from work, while practising active listening.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of talking openly about mental health, ensuring colleagues feel supported, and promoting simple wellbeing actions such as staying active, seeking help when needed and maintaining contact with friends and peers.

The slides and additional supporting resources will be shared following the meeting.

4. Approval of previous meeting minutes

A comment was received on STIRG being incorrectly referred to as STIG. With this amendment the previous minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. Outstanding actions

AMO/ENA 25-01/01: **Share meter point photographs for further forensic checks and engineer oversight**. This action is kept opened and information will be shared across participants.

AMO/ENA 25-01/02: **JH to investigate examples from suppliers and MEMs**.

AMO/ENA 25-01/03: **AMO Secretariat to liaise with ENA ahead of forums to identify key points for inclusion**. This action is completed and marked as closed.

All actions marked as "propose to close" were confirmed as closed. See Appendix A - Actions Log for full list of actions.

6. Asbestos working and Safety Guidance

The Chair introduced a discussion on asbestos working and safety guidance, noting significant inconsistency in working practices across the industry. Participants discussed acceptable working conditions on cut-outs containing asbestos and uncertainty over safe working limits for metering parties and field engineers.

MOPs noted some organisations only permit specially authorised engineers to work where asbestos may be present, subject to appropriate face-fit testing and personal protective equipment. Where work does not disturb the asbestos-containing material, engineers may in some circumstances proceed in line with existing risk assessments and procedures.

The discussion highlighted the importance of robust risk assessment, including the condition of the equipment and whether the proposed activity could disturb asbestos, alongside clear customer communication to manage safety appropriately without causing unnecessary alarm to the customer where material is undisturbed.

MOPs noted that current reporting and abort arrangements do not always provide a clear route where engineers are unsure whether work should proceed, particularly where confidence on site is low and there is no obvious defect code or escalation pathway. Existing reporting codes were discussed, including circumstances where engineers may proceed and raise a code afterwards, and cases where work must be aborted because equipment or asbestos-containing backboards cannot be safely accessed or altered.

The group agreed that better information sharing across the industry would improve decision-making and engineer confidence, particularly for legacy equipment. Photographs and asset data were seen as valuable, although obtaining consistent image capture in the field remains challenging. It was noted that some organisations are compiling catalogues of cut-outs and suggested that anonymised mapping of current DNO and MOP approaches would help establish a clearer baseline for safe working and more consistent decision-making across the industry.

AMO/ENA 26-01/01: anonymised mapping of current DNO and MOP approaches to asbestos-related working practices, including distinctions between asbestos backboards, cut-outs and associated assets.

There was discussion about whether more proactive replacement or maintenance programmes would be appropriate for older cut-outs and related assets. The legacy infrastructure was recognised as a challenge and while targeted intervention may be beneficial in some areas, a blanket replacement approach would be costly and would in practice resemble a new meter or asset replacement programme.

It was noted that metal cut-outs are not always the primary issue, as many remain operationally robust, and that the greater concern is often the asbestos-containing backboard or surrounding material. Responsibility for remediation remains uncertain where asbestos forms part of the wider property rather than the network asset. Similar issues were raised in relation to older CT meter panels and non-standard meter positions, where replacement work may not be possible without disturbing asbestos and where reporting routes and ownership between DNOs, meter operators, landlords and property owners remain unclear.

The importance of customer communication was emphasised throughout. The consensus was that consumers should not be left caught between different parties on questions of ownership or responsibility, and that messaging should be transparent. Communications should explain that asbestos does not necessarily present an immediate risk if it is undisturbed, while making clear when follow-up with the relevant DNO, landlord or property owner is required.

AMO/ENA 26-01/02: ENA and AMO to consider and develop consistent customer messaging on asbestos, including how to explain undisturbed asbestos and clarify follow-up responsibilities.

7. Fuse and Cut-out Best Practice

The Chair introduced a discussion on fuse and cut-out best practice, focusing on the customer journey where oversized fuses or legacy cut-out arrangements are identified during meter work. Examples where fuse downgrading had enabled work to proceed and improved customer experience were discussed, but there is not yet a consistent industry process for when and how such changes should be made.

The importance of clear communication and ownership was highlighted where connection agreements, historic supply arrangements and legacy equipment are involved. Any decision to

downgrade a fuse should be supported by appropriate evidence, including maximum demand information where relevant. A more standardised process would help provide confidence for both network operators and metering parties.

It was noted that many heavy-duty or oversized cut-outs remain in service and that wholesale replacement would not be practical. Asset and metering records do not always provide a complete picture of what is installed on site, particularly where assets were installed with future load growth in mind, making it harder to identify issues in advance or distinguish between fuse size, CT ratio and other equipment characteristics. A pragmatic and standardised process is needed to reflect different equipment types and site conditions. It should also require a clear owner, a single customer arrangement, and confirmation that associated equipment and tails are suitable before downsizing can proceed.

The Chair noted broad support for developing a defined process to manage these cases. Participants discussed whether requests for fuse changes should be raised directly by customers to the DNO and whether this would be chargeable under existing load increase or decrease arrangements. Wider questions were also raised about ownership and cost responsibility where the issue lies beyond the cut-out itself, such as tails or surrounding equipment, as replacement can be disruptive and costly. While many of these cases were described as anomalies rather than widespread issues, there was agreement they arise often enough in some domestic and small-site settings to warrant a consistent approach, even if practical solutions such as conversion blocks may be constrained by space and asset ownership.

8. Neutral Diversion

Participants discussed neutral diversion and noted that the issue is not currently recognised by some DNOs as a widespread network problem. Earlier internal work and legacy arrangements, including historic use of concentric cables to communal metering positions, do not always align with current standards. However, there was concern about creating a formal process if the scale and nature of the issue remain unclear. Some noted that the issue appears to arise most often in specific property types, including terraced housing and certain EV-related installations, but that examples and evidence have not yet been brought together in a way that demonstrates a clear or common pattern across networks.

Meter operators are encountering cases in the field but are not always receiving clear responses when concerns are reported to DNOs. There is uncertainty over what values or indicators should be reported, who the reports should be directed to, and how any resulting safety position should be communicated back to engineers and customers.

The discussion highlighted that responsibilities are not always clear where the issue may sit beyond the metering point or relate to another customer's installation or wider earthing arrangement. Some DNO representatives noted that, without specific examples and supporting evidence, it is difficult to determine whether the matter is a network, customer issue, or a more localised installation problem.

It was agreed that better information sharing would be the most useful next step. Collating examples, including the types of properties involved, the circumstances in which neutral diversion is being identified, and any links to EV or low-carbon technology installations, would help determine whether further guidance is needed and which forum should take the issue forward.

AMO/ENA 26-01/03: compile examples of neutral diversion cases and share them with ENA and DNOs to help establish the scale, circumstances and any need for further guidance.

9. Service Alterations and Third-Party Work

The discussion centred on service alterations and third-party work, focusing on asset ownership and responsibility in relation to CT chambers and associated service equipment. It was noted that where new CT connections are installed, these would typically include a new cut-out. However, the discussion highlighted continuing confusion over where the network boundary sits in some cases, particularly where responsibilities may fall between DNOs, IDNOs, BNOs and metering parties.

For some organisations, CT installations are delivered to a defined specification and commissioned by the metering party without issue. However, it was also observed that different approaches still exist across the industry, including examples where some DNOs permit changes to CT chambers and service arrangements while others do not.

Participants discussed cases where DNO representatives had attended site and stated that certain CT panels were not their asset, with meter operators taking a different view. Although such cases are relatively low in volume, they reflect continuing uncertainty over demarcation and ownership.

The discussion highlighted that responsibilities can become blurred depending on which party carried out the original connection works, and differing asset boundaries between DNOs, IDNOs and building network owners can add to the confusion.

It was also noted that CT arrangements for smart metering and traditional CT metering have historically been treated differently, and that this does not always sit neatly within existing reporting or coding frameworks. Clearer demarcation diagrams and more consistent asset labelling was suggested to help reduce confusion over ownership, especially in more complex installations.

10. STIRG Guidance and Cut-out glossary

Participants discussed outstanding issues with the STIRG guidance and cut-out glossary, including missing or incorrect images. It was observed that the current approval route can be slow and that delays in making necessary corrections risk undermining confidence in the document. It is the REC Metering Expert Panel that currently holds responsibility for approving the document. The discussion highlighted wider concern about whether the current governance arrangements are proportionate for a document of this nature. If changes to safety-related content take several months to implement, the process may not be working effectively.

The wider status of related documents was discussed, including the cut-out glossary and other ENA guidance, noting a lack of clarity over ownership and update responsibility. Some material had been excluded during migration to the REC portal and some participants had limited visibility of the latest versions.

There was support for a full review of the STIRG guidance, with the AMO/ENA bilateral to establish a subgroup to take this work forward and collate required changes. A structured review undertaken code by code, would help improve formatting and consistency of the document.

Before a subgroup undertakes detailed review work, confirmation is needed from REC for the group to proceed. Jordan Hills offered to speak to REC and confirm whether the proposed subgroup can take this work forward.

11. Asset Condition Reporting and Online portals

Proposals to use an online reporting tool to improve asset condition reporting and communication between metering parties and DNOs was discussed. It could provide a more structured and informative route than existing data flows alone, particularly where photographs and free-text explanations are needed to support category B reporting.

Participants discussed whether the process would rely on manual data entry and the potential resource implications for meter operators. It was noted that, in some cases, the online tool could sit alongside existing abort and reporting processes by allowing engineers to submit photographs and additional context while the relevant background flows continue separately.

The importance of simplicity for field engineers was highlighted, noting that any process must be quick to use onsite and avoid duplication. Some observed that taking photographs and recording additional information is valuable, particularly where standard codes do not fully explain the issue but stressed that the reporting route should be as streamlined as possible.

A key concern raised was the lack of consistency across DNOs. MOPs noted that where different portals or processes apply in different network areas, this creates additional training and operational burden, particularly for transient workforces. There was broad support for developing a more universal solution or standard template that could be adopted across DNOs, even if individual systems differ in appearance.

The discussion also covered cost and implementation issues. It was suggested that integrating photographs and richer information directly into formal data flows for all parties would require significant system development and cost, whereas an online portal could offer a more proportionate and lower-cost alternative. Participants noted that the tool has already been in use in some areas and could provide a practical basis for wider adoption.

Questions were raised about how the tool would interact with existing notification flows, including whether meter operators would be informed when rectification work had been completed. It was noted that current flows would remain separate and that further consideration may be needed where site status or blocking information needs to be communicated more clearly.

Participants also discussed whether the tool is suitable for supplier-appointed meter operators and SIPs, particularly where MPAN data or supplier identification may not be available in the usual way. It was noted that some adjustments could be made to accommodate these scenarios, although the current design was not originally built with SIP use cases in mind.

The current REC and DCUSA change processes were also discussed. Relevant proposals are under consultation and if approved, the use of an available reporting portal for category A and B issues may be reflected in future process changes. There was support for continued engagement with REC to help shape a collective solution and establish a common set of data requirements and operating principles.

12. A19s and Misreporting

The discussion focused on the use of appropriate voltage testing equipment and the importance of establishing whether a stable voltage is present. Volt sticks and other test devices must be used in line with their intended purpose, and the relevant guidance should be followed when identifying and confirming voltage.

Participants discussed the existing A19 guidance and the use of test lamps and single-pole voltage indicators, including the VT7, to support identification and testing. It was noted that there may be inconsistency in how the guidance is being applied in practice, and that some engineers may not always distinguish clearly between identification tools and devices intended to confirm a stable voltage.

A recent increase in reported cases was highlighted, including a spike in April following relatively low volumes earlier in the year. It was suggested that this may in part reflect incorrect information or inconsistent interpretation being given to engineers, and the importance of ensuring that field teams are working from accurate and consistent guidance was noted.

A significant proportion of reported cases appear to involve black plastic cut-outs, with damp conditions seen as a particular risk factor. Where equipment or surrounding areas are damp, a more cautious risk assessment is needed, particularly where customers may be able to come into contact with the equipment.

While current STIRG guidance is being followed, there is value in considering whether further clarification or additional guidance is needed on how engineers should respond where moisture, surface voltage or uncertainty over stability are present. Emphasis was placed on the need for testing equipment to be appropriately rated and for engineers to move to more definitive testing where an initial indication is detected.

13. AOB

13.1 Positioning of 3 phase cut-outs

Example photographs of poorly positioned three-phase cut-outs and meter boxes were shared. In some cases, the available space and layout make it extremely difficult for meter operators to carry out work safely or practically once the installation is complete.

Some issues arise from the original design and installation of the meter box and associated backboard, rather than from the cut-out itself. As the wider industry does not always own the meter box and at least three parties may be involved in installation, and subsequent metering work, this makes responsibility and quality assurance unclear.

Participants discussed whether sufficient checks are carried out before installations are adopted, particularly where work has been completed by an ICP and then taken over by another party. While some noted that improvements are being made to these processes, it was acknowledged that assurance arrangements are not yet fully consistent.

Examples were raised where installations appeared not to have been fitted correctly, including cases where the meter box, backboard or surrounding construction limited access or left insufficient room for the meter and tails. Members noted that, in some cases, rectification would require more substantial changes to the meter box or site arrangement.

Practical guidance should be reinforced with installation teams so that sufficient space is left for the meter and associated equipment wherever possible. Better attention to layout at the installation stage would help avoid later access and safety issues for meter operators.

13.2 Service Alterations and Third-Party Work

Adoption on the use of cable reducing blocks remains at the discretion of individual MOPs and views differ on their suitability in practice, particularly where there are multiple connection points or

higher-capacity arrangements. Participants agreed that clearer guidance on acceptable configurations and sealing requirements would be helpful. It was suggested that a simple drawing or briefing note could be developed for wider adoption through the EMF.

An update was provided on the phenolic cut-out analysis by ML. The work remains ongoing and publication of the findings has been delayed. Early observations suggest that the cut-outs tested are not all made from the same constituent materials, with one manufacturer standing out in the initial analysis. The work is also considering the effects of ageing and wider environmental conditions on equipment performance. Further outputs are expected within the next two to three weeks, including analysis linked to the Swindon gas incident and removed cut-outs from the same location. The findings would be shared with the group once available, together with any proposed next steps.

13.3 AMO/ENA bilateral meeting going forward

Meeting frequency of the bilateral was discussed. While there may be interest in meeting more frequently, the current programme of cut-out and STIRG subgroup is likely to limit time. On that basis, the next bilateral meeting is expected to take place in November face-to-face. Cut-out and STIRG matters are due to be discussed at the MEP on Wednesday 10th June 2026.

The importance of timely and complete notifications where DNOs attend sites were discussed, particularly where meters are bypassed, disconnected or resealed. Meter operators asked that, where possible, DNOs provide supporting information such as photographs, seal numbers and the identity of the attending engineer, to support investigation and training. Some notifications should already be reaching back-office teams, although this may not always be happening consistently in practice.

It was noted that some metal-clad cut-outs spare parts and sample units are available for certain legacy cut-out types, and it was discussed whether these could be used to support training or provide greater clarity on temporary repair options. Further detail on the available kits and components will be shared separately where possible.

There was no further business, and the Chair closed the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Day DD November 2026.

Please see Action Log below.

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Appendix A

Actions Log

Action ref	Action	Owner	Status
AMO/ENA 25-01/01	Share meter point photographs for further forensic checks and engineer oversight.		In progress
AMO/ENA 26-01/01	**Anonymised mapping of current DNO and MOP approaches to asbestos-related working practices, including distinctions between asbestos backboards, cut-outs and associated assets.**		**New**
AMO/ENA 26-01/02	**ENA and AMO to consider and develop consistent customer messaging on asbestos, including how to explain undisturbed asbestos and clarify follow-up responsibilities.**	**ENA / AMO**	**New**
AMO/ENA 26-01/03	**AH to compile examples of neutral diversion cases and share them with ENA and DNOs to help establish the scale, circumstances and any need for further guidance.**	**AH**	**New**
AMO/ENA 25-01/03	AMO Secretariat to liaise with ENA ahead of forums to identify key points for inclusion.	AMO	Closed

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