**REC Podcast Transcript – 06 September 2023**

**Podcast Relaunch and REC Communications Refresh**

Hello and welcome to the REC Podcast – the bite-sized show that brings the latest news from the Retail Energy Code straight to your ears. I’m your host Paul Rocke – the Head of Communications within the REC Code Manager.

The Retail Energy Code is two years old. We switched on our full service on the first of September 2021 after Ofgem designated the code into existence. That date saw the launch of the Code Manager service, the new change process, performance assurance framework, and the systems that enable the REC – like the REC Portal and EMAR. We switched on our Operational Account Management service, and supported Suppliers, Network Operators and Metering Equipment Managers as they formally acceded as REC Parties.

Delivering an effective communication strategy has been a personal objective since the very start. We’re grateful for the feedback that we receive on how we deliver comms – and we’re responding now by making some valuable changes in a number of areas. In this podcast, I’ll explore how we will achieve that.

Let’s start with **podcasts**. Podcasts have been published by the REC Code Manager since before go-live. We scripted them to provide updates to industry about how the code was being developed, including how key milestones were being achieved. We kept up a programme of monthly podcasts post go-live and looked to cover relevant and timely interest areas with subject matter experts. But feedback from stakeholders – and the analytical data we see – is that only a small number of parties have valued our podcast approach.  So, we thought it may be time for a change. We’ve looked at how podcasts are used successfully in other parts of industry, and where stakeholders are in need of additional layers of engagement and have redesigned our podcast schedule to focus more on the impact of live REC Change Proposals. We’re also increasing the frequency and shortening the average length of our podcasts. Now you can expect to see podcasts each fortnight of around five-minutes in length, with at least one podcast a month focused on Change and Release.

Moving on to the **REC Weekly Bulletin**. We created the Bulletin right at the start of the REC as you told us that you were receiving too many emails from the Code Manager and were struggling to work out what the important messages were. The bulletin aggregated all of those messages into a single weekly email, and many stakeholders have told us that they get a lot of value out of these, often sitting down with their operational teams at the start or end of the week to go through the bulletin and make sure the news had filtered through the business properly. We’ve got no plans to move away from that approach. However, you have told us that you’d prefer it if the comms were more targeted at your organisation. We have added impacted party tags to the bulletins, but we appreciate that it can still take time to filter out irrelevant information. So we’ve just launched a trial where we’re attaching a separate version of the bulletin filtering the Supplier, Network Operator and MEM messages to the weekly bulletin emails. You’ll still have access to all the messages in the main email, but can choose to only read or forward on to colleagues the targeted messages if that’s your preference.

Next – **REC events** have been held by virtual webinar since before go-live – and have formed a key part of the strategy for getting messages to our stakeholders about all manner of REC news – from latest code releases to performance assurance strategy, to demonstrating new functionality on REC systems. We have no plans to move away from remote events – we think these provide the best level of access for all parties, and have seen excellent levels of engagement from attendees who have taken to using tools like Slido to raise questions and respond to polls. We record all of our events and make the recordings available on the REC Portal, which means important information shared at these events is never lost, or only accessible only to those who could make the event. But we are improving our approach to ensure that attendees can maximise the value of these sessions. We will shortly be moving away from Eventbrite – the tool we currently use for attendee management at the events. Instead, we will look to utilise the REC Portal more for publicising events, and will provide more information up front about target audience, agendas, speakers etc. We will make sure attendees have the opportunity to raise questions in advance so that our subject matter experts can more reliably field questions at the event. And we’re committing to taking less away to be dealt with after the event – where this is necessary, we’ll turn around comprehensive responses quicker, and ensure these are made available on the Portal for all to see.

And finally with respect to the **REC Portal** – we know that some still have challenges especially with respect to navigation around the Portal, and locating documents that they need. We have just launched a focus group with the Portal developers to take a deep dive into the User Interface to see what can be done to modernise the front page of the Portal, and ensure that your experience of using the system can be improved. I’m also working closely with my Portal Manager to develop a roadmap for future Portal enhancement that can be shared widely, so that you can keep an eye on how we intend to innovate and deliver more value through the Portal. This includes maximising the benefits of our [REC Wiki](https://recportal.co.uk/rec-wiki-landing) which you’ve told us is a very useful function, as well as addressing some of the bugs and issues that provide usability challenges.

Communications is not the only area of focus for improvements from the Code Manager right now. We’re deep into a project to enhance how REC Change Proposals are managed from end-to-end, we’re progressing widescale upgrades to the [Digital Navigator service](https://digital-navigator.azurewebsites.net/), and of course we’re supporting RECCo with wider industry projects and initiatives. We’ll cover all of this and more in future podcasts as a key facet of our refreshed communications strategy.

We make the changes that we make in response to the feedback you give us. Please do keep giving feedback – both positive so that we keep up and enhance the things you like – and more critical so that we know what we need to stop doing or identify more significant improvements. You can get in touch with us via the Service Desk on the REC Portal, by emailing enquiries@recmanager.co.uk, or by completing the feedback form in the [Continuous Service Improvement page](https://recportal.co.uk/continuous-service-improvement-new) on the Portal.

I hope you’ve enjoyed listening to the podcast, I hope it’s been useful to understand the changes we’re making and why we’re making them. And I’ll speak to you on the next one.