

The Business Case

Enquiry Service Evolution Project - Phase 2

Overseeing operations, driving transparent technological advancements, and delivering exceptional outputs to meet phase one objectives on schedule and within budget



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Description	6
Expenditure Plan	10
Risk Analysis	11
Implementation Plan	14
Conclusion	18

Executive Summary

The Retail Energy Code Company (RECCo) is required to deliver a follow-on Implementation Phase of the Enquiry Service Evolution Project to meet new and improved requirements – and deliver services that are fit for the future at the right price.

After delivering the previous phase of the project in 2024 to define the new service requirements, a decision will be made in March 2025 on which Service Provider(s) will be selected to deliver the Enquiry Service, either through one or both incumbents or via an entirely new entity through competitive procurement.

RECCo proposes to set up a project team to ensure continuity and quality of deliverables, as identified in the previous phases of the project. This team will provide assurance to the operation that technological advancements have undergone rigorous testing protocols. Additionally, it will ensure that the critical day-to-day operation of the Enquiry Service runs seamlessly in parallel with the introduction of new and/or improved requirements.

Fundamentally, it will implement all agreed new and improved requirements to time, cost, and quality measures.

High-Level Objective(s)

- Ensure continuity and quality of deliverables.
- Provide consistent, high-quality outputs that align with the project scope and objectives.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance Service Provision and Service Levels to build confidence in delivering new and existing requirements.
- Complete key milestones on schedule, within the agreed timeframes, to demonstrate progress.
- Enhance stakeholder satisfaction and engagement.
- Implement process improvements for efficiency.
- Mitigate risks and resolve challenges.
- Develop and execute a knowledge transfer and handover plan.
- Deliver a high standard of documentation and reporting to provide insights and transparency of progress and challenges, supporting decision-making about contract continuation.

Background & Context

In September 2021, the Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) was migrated to RECCo as part of the Retail Code Consolidation. Subsequently, in July 2022, the Gas Enquiry Service (GES)—developed under the Ofgem-led Faster Switching Programme to support the deployment of the Central Switching Service—was also migrated to RECCo, accompanied by an enhanced version of the EES.

Together, these services, along with the Secure Data Exchange Portal (SDEP) and the Green Deal Central Charge Database (GDCC), constitute the Enquiry Service.

The Enquiry Service is a tool that enables organisations to access gas and electricity market data, provided they are entitled to do so in accordance with the data access and service specifications outlined in the Retail Energy Code (REC).

Data is sourced from existing industry systems, and the Enquiry Service does not prescribe any further validation of those data items. The Enquiry Service is the only means by which industry and broader stakeholders can access registration information relating to Registered Meter Points across the whole market. There are currently more than 30 different classes of entities that can access the Enquiry Service.

A centralised Enquiry Service is essential to the overall operation of the market. For example, it supports the change of supply for consumers while also enabling crucial aspects of individual organisations' operational delivery, such as call centre operations and increasingly machine-to-machine communication via Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

Looking to the future, the electricity components of the Enquiry Service will form a key component of Market-Wide Half-Hourly Settlement (MHHS). The Enquiry Service contracts have an initial term of three years, running until July 2025, with an option for RECCo, at its sole discretion, to extend the contracts for an additional two years, until July 2027.

Since go-live, we have taken action to ensure costs are economic and efficient. We have implemented re-use of the EES infrastructure to deliver GDCC and negotiated a significant reduction in the GES charges. Together, these improvements will deliver around £1.5m per annum in cost savings to the industry. In less than two years since go-live, we have witnessed a significant increase in Enquiry Service usage alongside the emergence of new use cases. For example, research bodies and local authorities to meet government sustainability obligations, as well as government initiatives to support vulnerable customers, and housing associations, etc.)

Looking to the future, we expect usage to further increase with the introduction of an “open data taxonomy” and the adoption and adherence to the Ofgem Data Best Practices policy, as a return to historic levels of consumer switching is anticipated.

In our role as intelligent customers on behalf of the industry – and reflecting stakeholder priorities of enabling the efficient operation of the market as well as their own individual company operations – it is opportune that RECCo considers the longer-term future of the Enquiry Service. The development of a [Business Case](#) in 2023 delivered a comprehensive assessment of the available options and provided recommendations and considerations for the evolution of the Enquiry Service. (Project Cost: £168k.)

Enquiry Service Evolution Project

In 2024, we developed this foundational work by initiating a follow-on project, 'Enquiry Service Evolution' (Project Budget: £300k), to safeguard the future operation of the industry-critical Enquiry Service and to determine the best strategic direction for its evolution.

The approach for this project was first to seek to establish whether the incumbent service providers could deliver a compelling economic, technical, and service provision case that demonstrates the development of an Enquiry Service over the near term to meet the known current and future market needs and has sufficient elasticity to continue to develop and grow within a changing and evolving market.

In the event that they are unable to do so, RECCo will have sufficient time to conduct a competitive market procurement before the contract ends in July 2027.

The 2024 project, which is set to conclude in March 2025, comprised four key phases:

1. **Develop Requirements:** Using internal and external expertise, we developed a “model answer” against which the incumbent’s proposals will be assessed. This model answer reflects what the market might deliver if a competitive procurement were carried out (e.g., contract T&Cs, service level agreements, performance regimes, technology options, delivery structures, service provider capabilities, etc).
2. **Request for Proposal:** We developed a Request for Proposal (RfP), which the incumbents were asked to address.
3. **Service Provider Proposals:** Service providers submitted their responses to the RFP in December 2024.
4. **Assessment:** During the final quarter of 2024/25, we will formally assess the incumbent’s pricing and quality responses to our RfP. The outcome of this assessment will determine whether to extend contracts with the incumbents beyond 2027 or only up to 2027. If the latter, we will initiate a full market procurement project.

High-Level Outcomes

- Timely achievement of project milestones and deliverables.
- Enhanced RECCo operational and stakeholder satisfaction.
- Increased efficiency of the Enquiry Service.
- Resolved project challenges and reduced risks.
- Documented value of additional scope and service enhancements.
- Effective knowledge transfer and documentation process.
- Budget adherence and financial transparency.
- Improved stakeholder visibility and decision-making.
- Established record of accomplishment of high-quality deliverables.

Recommendation

This Business Case recommends the approval of Phase 2 of the Enquiry Service Evolution Project and the allocation of a project budget. This will allow the project to continue delivering high-quality outputs, as identified in earlier phases, address the evolving needs of the Enquiry Service, and ensure the realisation of the anticipated long-term benefits.

Description

Benefits & Outcomes

Improved Service Quality

- **Accuracy and Reliability:** An enhanced Enquiry Service will ensure that consumers receive accurate and reliable information about their energy consumption, billing, and related queries.
- **Timely Responses:** The evolution of the Enquiry Service is expected to reduce response times, providing consumers with timely solutions to their queries.

Cost Savings

- **Reduced Service Charges:** Enhanced operational efficiency may result in lower service charges for handling consumer enquiries.

Enhanced User Experience

- **User-Friendly Platforms:** The project aims to implement more intuitive and user-friendly enquiry platforms, making it easier for consumers to access and understand their energy information.

Increased Transparency

- **Clear Information:** The evolution of the Enquiry Service will enhance the presentation of information, making it easier for consumers to understand their energy usage and billing details.

Enhanced Security & Privacy

- **Data Protection:** An enhanced Enquiry Service will incorporate stronger security measures to safeguard consumer data, ensuring that personal and usage information remains confidential and secure.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** The project will ensure that all consumer data handling complies with relevant privacy and security regulations, providing consumers with peace of mind.

Deliverables & Outputs

Dependency: Determination from Assessment Phase (previous Enquiry Services Evolution Project Phase 1)	March 2025
Detailed Phase 2 project plan covering Implementation Phase	April 2025
Change Roadmap	April 2025
Benefits Realisation Plan	May 2025
Change Management & Service Transition Strategy	June 2025
Requirements Traceability Matrix	August 2025
Test Assurance Completion Certificates	Release frequency to be agreed

Objectives

Improved Service Quality

- **Accuracy and Reliability:** An enhanced Enquiry Service will ensure that consumers receive accurate and reliable information about their energy consumption, billing, and related queries.
- **Timely Responses:** The evolution of the Enquiry Service is expected to reduce response times, providing consumers with timely solutions to their queries.

Cost Savings

- **Reduced Service Charges:** Enhanced operational efficiency may result in lower service charges for handling consumer enquiries.

Enhanced User Experience

- **User-Friendly Platforms:** The project aims to implement more intuitive and user-friendly enquiry platforms, making it easier for consumers to access and understand their energy information.

Increased Transparency

- **Clear Information:** The evolution of the Enquiry Service will enhance the presentation of information, making it easier for consumers to understand their energy usage and billing details.

Enhanced Security & Privacy

- **Data Protection:** An enhanced Enquiry Service will incorporate stronger security measures to safeguard consumer data, ensuring that personal and usage information remains confidential and secure.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** The project will ensure that all consumer data handling complies with relevant privacy and security regulations, providing consumers with peace of mind.

Options

A comprehensive analysis of options available to RECCo concerning this project was conducted and delivered during the previous phases. For detailed information, please refer to the [Business Case](#).

This Business Case informed the approach to initially determine whether the incumbent Service Providers could present a compelling economic, technical, and service provision case. This case would need to demonstrate the capability to develop an Enquiry Service that meets known current and future market needs in the near term and possesses sufficient elasticity to adapt and grow within a changing and evolving market.

RECCo will make this determination through a robust quality evaluation process conducted from December 2024 to March 2025.

If Service Providers are unable to present a compelling economic, technical, and service provision case, RECCo will have sufficient time to initiate a competitive market procurement process before the contract ends in July 2027.

In either scenario, the Project team will ensure the effective implementation of requirements to time, cost, and quality standards.

Value for Money

The initial preferred option is to enhance the current service provision, as it presents the lowest risk and protects the investment in MHHS. While it assumes a worst-case, no return-on-investment scenario, cost savings will be pursued through negotiations with the incumbents. Value for money will also be demonstrated through:

- Operational efficiency via a mature and stable service.
- The least disruptive route for service provision.
- An operational fit-for-purpose service, incorporating the right level of flexibility to accommodate new service needs, such as MHHS and other future REC changes.
- A cost-effective approach for initial term decision-making.
- No posed risk to significant MHHS investment.
- Technologically uncomplex.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have carried out robust and high-quality stakeholder engagement, including the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) with representation from a variety of organisations across the industry.

Stakeholders consistently confirm that their priority for the Enquiry Service is to ensure its functions and performance meet their requirements in both the short and long term. They have confirmed the importance of the Enquiry Service to the efficient and economic operation of the market as a whole and their own business operations. Additionally, they have affirmed that RECCo should adopt a low-risk approach to securing the future of the service.

Expenditure Plan

Project Resourcing - £ (redacted)
Consequential Impact on Other Service Providers - £ (redacted)
Capital Investment Value = £ (redacted to preserve confidentiality and competitive tension)
Project Delivery Total = £1.83m

Assumptions

- The implementation project will run for 12 months, including a service transition handover to Business as Usual (BAU) operations.
- All BAU resources outlined in the above table will be available for the duration of the project.
- Scope creep will be actively managed and will not be accepted into the project unless formally agreed upon through a change request and following a post-impact assessment.

Risk Analysis

1. Resistance to Change

- **Risk:** Employees and stakeholders may resist changes to established processes, causing delays or reduced effectiveness.
- **Impact:** Low adoption rates, compromised morale, and a potential rollback of improvements.
- **Mitigation:** Engage stakeholders early, involve them in decision-making, and clearly communicate benefits. Implement a strong change management strategy.

2. Lack of Clear Objectives & Scope Creep

- **Risk:** Without well-defined goals, the project may expand beyond initial objectives, resulting in scope creep.
- **Impact:** Budget overruns, missed deadlines, and a diluted focus on primary improvement areas.
- **Mitigation:** Clearly define project objectives and boundaries. Set a change control process to evaluate and approve changes before incorporating them into the project scope.

3. Insufficient Resources

- **Risk:** The project may lack sufficient time, budget, or personnel to implement changes effectively.
- **Impact:** Incomplete or low-quality improvements, delays, or even project cancellation.
- **Mitigation:** Conduct a realistic assessment of resource requirements during the Planning Phase and secure commitments from resource owners. Regularly review resource allocation and adjust as necessary.

4. Data Accuracy & Quality Issues

- **Risk:** Data used to analyse current operations or measure improvements may be incomplete, outdated, or inaccurate.
- **Impact:** Poor decision-making and a flawed understanding of baseline performance, resulting in ineffective improvements.
- **Mitigation:** Implement data validation processes and conduct regular audits of key data sources. Engage data analysts to ensure accurate interpretation of results.

5. Inadequate Communication

- **Risk:** If communication between the project team and stakeholders is weak, misunderstandings and lack of support may occur.
- **Impact:** Misaligned expectations, delayed approvals, or reduced stakeholder engagement.
- **Mitigation:** Develop a communication plan with regular updates, progress reports, and clear points of contact. Consistently and openly involve stakeholders.

6. Technological Limitations or Failures

- **Risk:** Implementing new systems or tools may reveal compatibility issues or unforeseen technical problems.
- **Impact:** If the technology fails or doesn't integrate as planned, it may result in delays, increased costs, and reduced efficiency.
- **Mitigation:** Perform thorough testing and pilot implementations before a full rollout. Ensure IT support is readily available and establish backup solutions or contingency plans.

7. Lack of Alignment with RECCo's Strategic Direction

- **Risk:** If improvements are not aligned with broader organisational objectives, the project may lack long-term support or face pushback.
- **Impact:** Reduced executive support, difficulty securing resources, and limited impact of improvements.
- **Mitigation:** Align project objectives with RECCo's strategic goals and actively involve leadership in the planning process.

8. Underestimating Time Requirements

- **Risk:** The changes implemented as part of the project may require more time than initially anticipated for analysis, testing, and implementation.
- **Impact:** Missed deadlines, rushed or incomplete implementations, and increased pressure on team members.
- **Mitigation:** Build time buffers into the schedule and regularly monitor the project timeline. Be prepared to adjust timelines based on real-time feedback.

9. Inconsistent Performance Measurement & Tracking

- **Risk:** If performance metrics are not clearly defined or tracked consistently, it may be challenging to assess the project's success.
- **Impact:** Limited insights into project impact, difficulty demonstrating return on investment (ROI), and stakeholder dissatisfaction.
- **Mitigation:** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) from the start, ensuring alignment with project goals, and monitor them consistently. Provide regular progress reports to validate the effectiveness of improvements.

10. Financial Risks

- **Risk:** If the project exceeds the budget or fails to deliver measurable improvements, unexpected costs or a poor ROI may arise.
- **Impact:** Budget overruns and difficulty justifying future improvement projects.
- **Mitigation:** Conduct thorough cost-benefit analyses, establish a detailed budget, and closely monitor expenses. Implement a phased approach to reduce upfront costs and regularly reassess financials.

12. Legal or Compliance Risks

- **Risk:** Some operational changes may conflict with industry regulations or compliance standards.
- **Impact:** Fines, legal issues, or damage to reputation.
- **Mitigation:** Involve legal and compliance teams in project planning and assessment. Conduct compliance reviews to ensure all changes meet regulatory standards.

Implementation Plan

Timeline

Dependency: Determination from Assessment Phase previous Enquiry Service Evolution Project Phase 1	March 2025
Detailed Phase 2 project plan covering Implementation Phase	April 2025
Change Roadmap	April 2025
Benefits Realisation Plan	May 2025
Change Management & Service Transition Strategy	June 2025
Requirements Traceability Matrix	August 2025

Resources

1. Project Manager (PM)
2. Operations Lead
3. Business Analyst
4. Operational Subject Matter Expert (SME)
5. Change Management Lead
6. Technical Analyst (Testing)
7. Technical SME – IT Specialist
8. Financial Lead
9. Communications Lead
10. Service Provider(s)

Roles & Responsibilities

1. Project Manager (PM)

Responsibilities

- Define project scope, goals, and deliverables.
- Develop and manage the project schedule, allocate resources, and track progress.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for the team and stakeholders.
- Manage risk, resolve issues, and adapt plans as necessary.

2. Operations Lead

Responsibilities

- Conduct process analysis to understand bottlenecks or waste in operations.
- Identify, recommend, and implement process improvements.
- Develop performance metrics to measure the impact of improvements.
- Work closely with other departments such as Data & Digitalisation to integrate changes into day-to-day operations.

3. Business Analyst

Responsibilities

- Collect, analyse, and interpret data related to current operational performance.
- Create reports and dashboards to track KPIs.
- Conduct ROI analysis to determine the financial impact of proposed changes.
- Assist in identifying trends, forecasting outcomes, and validating project objectives.

4. Subject Matter Expert (SME)

Responsibilities

- Provide technical guidance to ensure changes are realistic and effective.
- Share insights into day-to-day processes and potential obstacles.
- Review improvement proposals to assess feasibility.
- Act as a liaison between the Project team and Service Providers/Internal RECCo Operations

5. Change Management Lead

Responsibilities

- Develop a change management strategy to support the project.
- Communicate the benefits of changes to all stakeholders.
- Organise training sessions, workshops, and resources for team members.
- Monitor adoption rates, address resistance, and gather feedback to refine implementation.

6. Technical Analyst (Testing)

Responsibilities

- Develop testing protocols to validate the effectiveness of improvements.
- Conduct testing/provide quality assurance on testing protocols.
- Analyse test results and identify areas that may require adjustments.
- Provide feedback to the project team to help refine processes or solutions.

7. Technical SME – IT Specialist

Responsibilities

- Configure, implement, and troubleshoot technical systems supporting operational improvements.
- Integrate new tools with existing systems to ensure seamless operations.
- Provide training and support for any new technologies introduced.
- Ensure data security and system reliability.

8. Financial Lead

Responsibilities

- Monitor the project budget and forecast costs.
- Conduct cost-benefit analyses and assess financial feasibility.
- Track expenditures and report on budget adherence.
- Assist in justifying the investment and evaluating ROI.

9. Communications Lead

Responsibilities

- Develop and execute a communications plan to keep stakeholders informed.
- Organise regular meetings, briefings, and updates on project progress.
- Address questions or concerns from stakeholders.
- Organise and facilitate the Enquiry Service Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG).
- Document and incorporate feedback into the project as necessary.

Conclusion

We recommend that the Business Case be accepted to allow the successful delivery of the next phase of the Enquiry Service Project.

Contact Us



www.retailenergycode.co.uk



info@retailenergycode.co.uk



[the-retail-energy-code-company](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-retail-energy-code-company)



Retail Energy Code Company Ltd
27 Old Gloucester Street
London, WC1N 3AX