

Consult21

Briefing

Consult21 Process

Briefing number C21-MG-028

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Important note

This document is supplied by BT to Communications Providers, being customers of BT Wholesale and/or Openreach, as part of the Consult21 consultation process.

Details within it may be subject to change as a result of that process and/or for technical, commercial or operational reasons.

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1 Introduction

This document provides an overview of the Consult21 consultation process and how it relates to the 21CN programme (BT's NGN programme) via the 21CN Deployment Strategy Plan (DSP), reference C21-MG-015. It also sets out the principles by which consultations regarding the 21CN programme will be carried out.

The document also includes the key checks and balances put in place to enable compliance with regulatory obligations including those relating to obligatory / SMP products.

Consult21 exists as an arm of BT Wholesale but this process may be used by other BT lines of business including group functions if so desired.

2 Principles of consultation

The processes developed under Consult21 are to fulfil customer experience criteria in line with the BT strategic policy. This is undertaken by a programme and process of consultation with UK Communication Providers (CPs).

Consult21 has a stated mission of

- Awareness - Ensure industry is aware of the 21CN vision and BT's progress towards it.
- Engagement - Achieve a shared understanding with Industry.
- Influence - Ensure industry has an opportunity to input to, and influence, 21CN development.

The key elements of the DSP that will be consulted on are:

1. 21CN product roadmap (and selected¹ individual product features and commercials)
2. Systems (interface) roadmap
3. Network service availability data (including roll-out or capability) and including interconnect data (e.g. that may be appropriate to be recorded in NIPP)
4. Migration schedules and impacts for both products and end users
5. Network interfaces and end user equipment compatibility
6. Network upgrade plan (capability & outages)

These documents will be reviewed and formally re-issued on a quarterly basis to track the evolving DSP and enable CPs to understand the latest programme position.

After a consultation, the results will be reflected in the appropriate elements of the DSP.

If any CP believes these principles have not been followed within a consultation exercise, this should be communicated to the contact named within the consultation (or other person as agreed by the Consult21 programme).

This document outlines the working practise to be followed when consulting on specific aspects of 21CN.

The Equality of Access Office (EAO) will also monitor that consultations follow these principles.

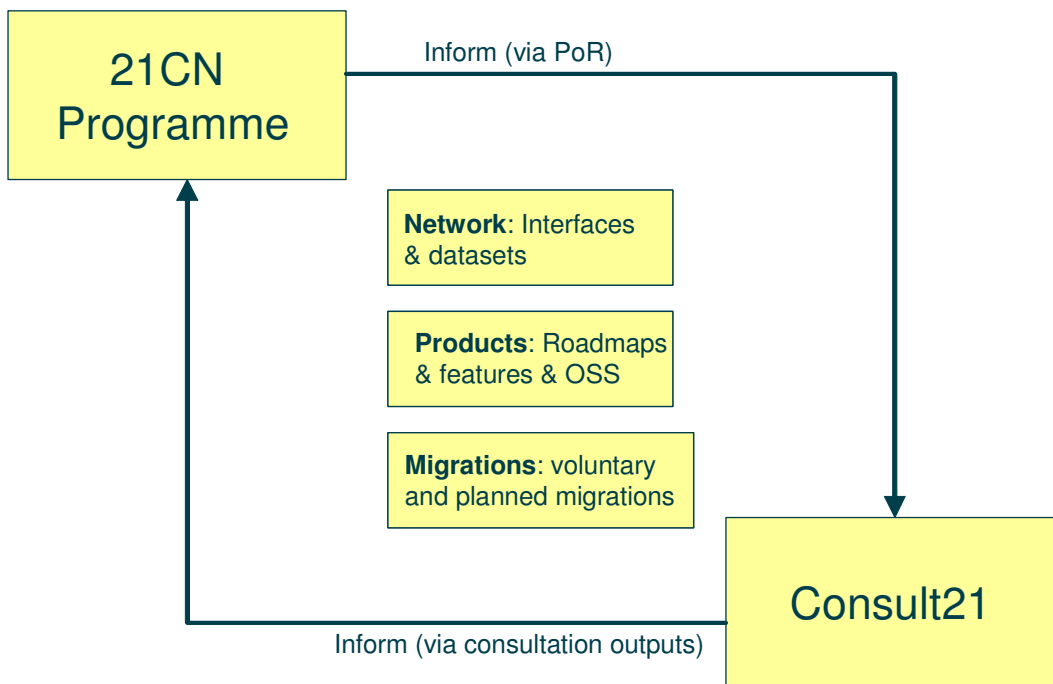
3 Consult21 – current working practise

All aspects of 21CN are managed via a linked programme that draws on teams within BT's Lines of Business including BT Design, BT Operate and Openreach, whilst complying with BT's undertaking obligations.

The continuous interaction between the Consult21 consultation process and the 21CN programme is summarised in figure 1 below.

¹ To include but not necessarily restricted to identified regulated/SMP products and services

Figure 1: Interaction with the 21CN programme



The likely triggers for consultation include:

- Changes to network design that will affect other CPs operations, investment decisions and business models
- Timings and impact of network deployment and migration plans
- Proposals for new products in markets in which BT has SMP, including base-band voice (including WLR and its successor), ISDN, local access etc.
- Proposals for products/product changes in non-SMP markets that are deemed to be of significant interest to CPs
- Strong areas of concern for CPs that are raised as issues concerning 21CN.
- Any change that affects products or features or network design (topology and standards) previously consulted on (including anything consulted on via Consult21 and NGNuk).
- System interfaces, customer facing processes and other aspects around the service wrap of 21CN products

These “consultations” are undertaken using a variety of approaches that are deemed suitable for the topic under security and the outcomes sought. Such engagement may be via more informal means including workshops and interactive sessions at working groups or may be executed formally via briefings and/or structured consultation documents. All consultations are managed through a working group structure with associated governance. The governance includes a clear issues management process (driven by CP’s concerns – see Appendix 1) and a Consult21 Steering Board that has wide CP representation as well as participation by Ofcom and key leaders in BT.

There are currently working groups covering the following work areas:

- System interfaces (including customer processes)
- Network Structures
- Contracts (Master Service Agreement)
- End user migration communications (including sub-groups for resellers and corporate communications)
- Products (split as Data/TDM, Voice Access, Interconnect and Broadband)
- Implementation & Migration (including conformance testing)

These groups may generate several experts groups; the experts groups may manage the transition of a topic from one working group area to another.

4 Consultation process in action

Engagement through consultation will be stimulated either by a requirement to inform the 21CN programme or to satisfy a particular CP issue.

During a period of specific consultation a number of briefings may be issued and meetings held as part of the consultation activity. The actual procedures followed will differ from case to case and be managed by the parent or controlling working group, via actions recorded in the WG minutes.

These industry consultations are not mutually exclusive and the completion of a consultation carried out under Consult21 does not necessarily mark the closing of all discussions on the area under scrutiny.

Rather, this is an ongoing process and as illustrated in the attached diagram, a closure of a particular industry consultation may immediately trigger another consultation activity or may simply close a chapter of activities which may be picked up later when additional information has been made available (such as initial consultation of high level requirements for a product followed by a later consultation on some of the detailed design choices).

This process provides a clear understanding to BT and to industry of where we are with any aspect of network structure, systems evolution, product development or migration activities carried out under the 21CN programme.

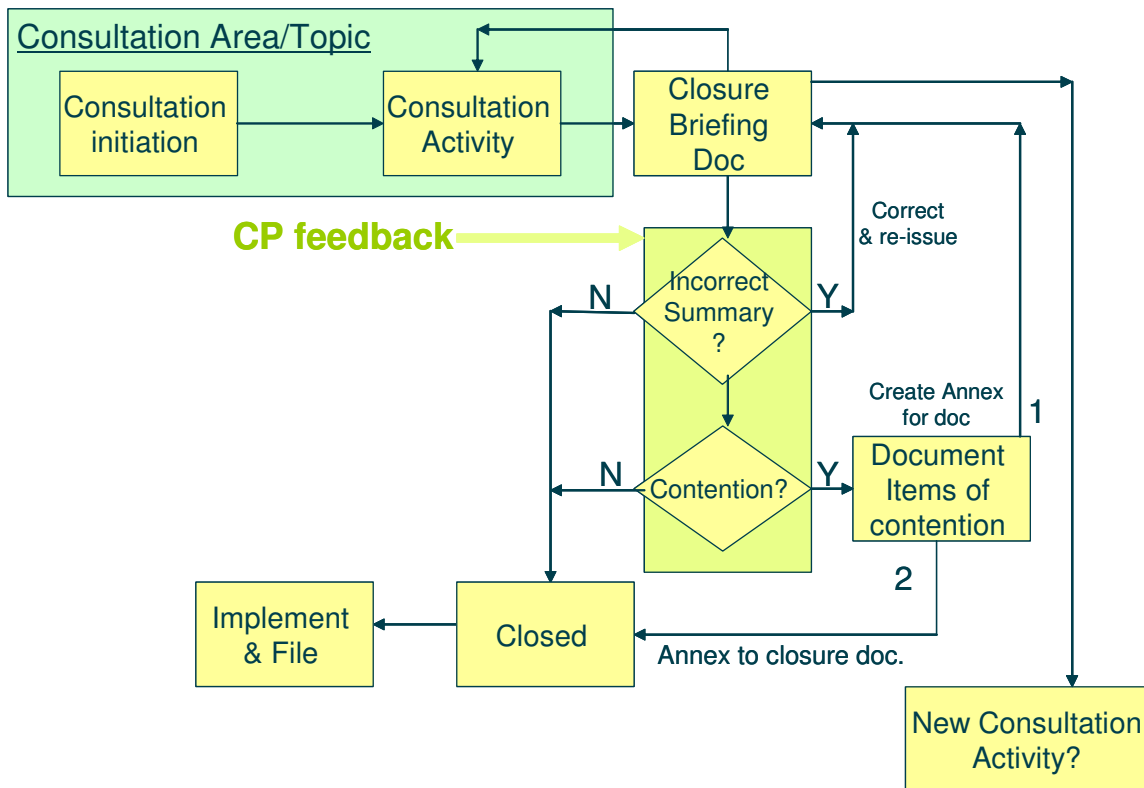
As noted above not all consultations will produce a formal consultation document, although such a document may be deemed necessary at any time through the period of engagement.

It provides an audit trail of the discussion held and the eventual outcomes of those discussions, with understood escalation paths managed initially through the regular Consult21 Co-chairs forum.

It therefore allows BT to develop solutions in line with CP expectations (including BT's downstream divisions) and minimises the risk of needing rework

This process is shown diagrammatically in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Steps during a consultation engagement



From figure 2 there are two points of clarity to note:

- 1.) The closure briefing document may be iterated firstly to include CP responses and then to log the BT commentary which in itself may stimulate a further round.
- 2.) The “Items of contention” is the recording, with both parties view points, those areas where BT and CP(s) do not agree. When documented these will be reviewed at the steering board.

5 Consultation document contents

Since its creation, Consult21 has engaged in a number of individual consultations with industry. Over this period, the process has continually evolved to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operation:

Each Consult21 issued consultation document now contains the following clear statements:

- 1.) The scope of the consultation, including any specifically excluded aspects
- 2.) The clear time scales for the consultation including:
 - a. When responses are required by
 - b. When additional meetings including bilateral meetings will occur to discuss the consultation
 - c. When BT will seek to issue a summary of responses
 - d. When BT will seek to issue a conclusions document, that will contain comments against the responses received.
- 3.) The list of questions that the consultation is seeking responses to and what decisions will be driven by the responses
- 4.) Who to contact either to send in responses or to request any further information or assistance.

Follow up documentation and action:

Following each consultation, the summary of responses and associated BT comments are issued either as a single combined briefing that undergoes various iterations or as two separate briefings.

The outcome of the consultation will be used by the appropriate area within the BT 21CN programme as one of the inputs to decision making.

The consultation activity may close the area or may necessitate further engagement.

All actions generated by the engagement will be tracked through the consultation's parent working group, and an issues escalation process has been established and is documented in Appendix 1.

All documentation is made available via the appropriate pages on the Consult21 website see:

www.btwholesale.com/consult21

A list of all briefings is held on the website, please see

http://www.btwholesale.com/pages/static/Community/21_Century_Network_Community/Consult21_Meeting_Planner.html

File: **Consultation and briefing document references.**

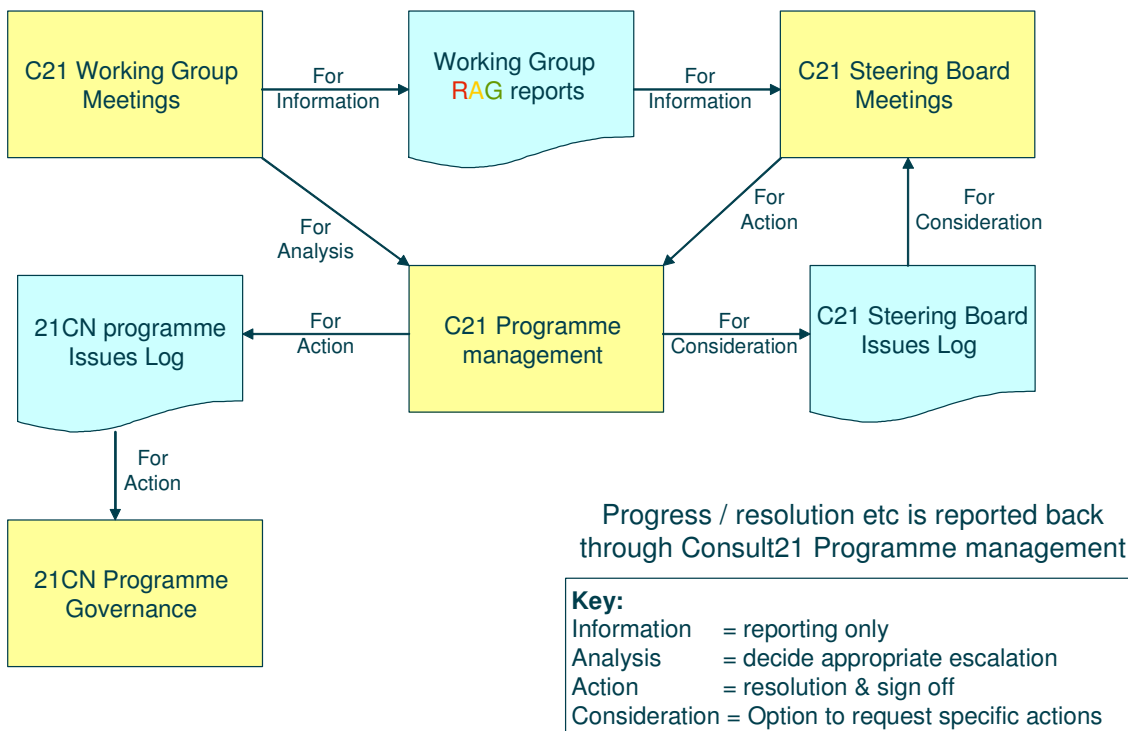
6 Liaison with the Equality of Access Office and Board (EAO / EAB)

Members from the Equality of Access Office (EAO) attend key working groups and along with Ofcom are standing members of the Consult21 Steering Board. The EAO attendance is in a monitoring capacity. Observations provide input to the NGN Headline report for consideration as part of the monitoring “themes” for the EAB. Monitoring is also supplemented by quarterly updates on consultations which are provided to the EAO by BT. The EAO also hold bilateral meetings with CPs to obtain their feedback and perceptions pertaining to NGN, in addition to regular reviews with Ofcom.

7 Issues management process

This process is illustrated diagrammatically below in Figure 3

Figure 3: Issue management process



Notes:

The working group RAG reports are a communication device used to capture achievements, work plans and areas of contention. The latest version of these is posted in the open section of the Consult21 website.

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Issues listed in the working group RAG reports are escalated when such issues cannot be resolved within acceptable timescales by the working group. Such issues are then formally noted onto the C21 Steering board issues log.

The C21 Steering Board issues document is maintained in the secure area of the Consult21 website.

This document is updated in three stages:

- 1.) Existing issues that have progressed are updated following internal programme issues review and then issued to the Consult21 working group industry co-chairs
- 2.) New issues are raised by the working group co-chairs or buddies on industry's behalf
- 3.) Follow up actions including closure is captured at the Consult21 steering board, typically these include requests for specific action plans or presentations covering the issue

Feedback is provided through the documented updates on the issues log or via specific briefings given at subsequent working groups

The 21CN programme issues log is reviewed at the (internal) Consult21 steering group and generates actions and escalations via 21CN programme governance processes.

8 Document history

Issue 1 – Feb 08	Issued initially as part of response to Ofcom enquiry
Issue 2 – June 08	Issued as stand alone briefing to Industry

9 Enquiries

Enquiries regarding this document should be emailed to consult21@bt.com

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