



Paul Cooper MD Alt HAN Co

## Mobilised for Safe Launch

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Alt HAN Co newsletter.

As we approach the end of the calendar year we are delighted to have reached the point where the teams and systems to take us into Safe Launch are being mobilised. Safe Launch is a key phase in the Alt HAN journey in which a few of our energy supplier members start deploying Alt HAN devices as part of “live” installations of smart meters. This phase of operation, which will last around six months, will build confidence and learning ahead of mass rollout.

And more importantly this begins the process of opening up smart metering to customers who have been excluded until now, but because of Alt HAN are now able to access the benefits of smart.

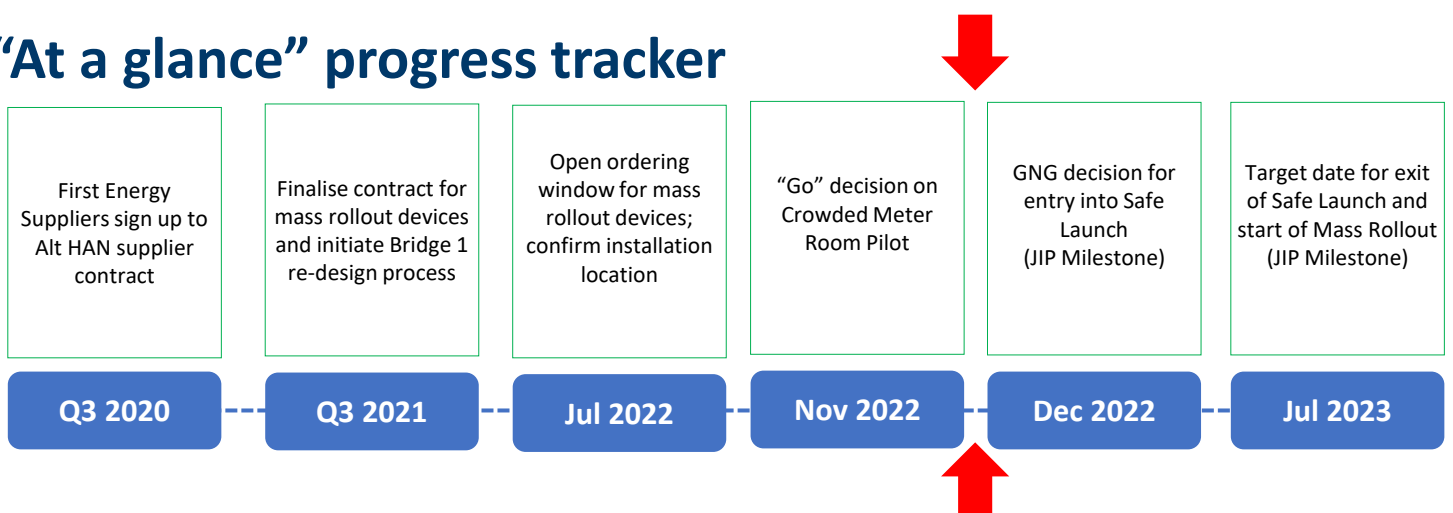
In parallel, earlier this month our energy supplier members took a decision to run a “Crowded Meter Room Coordinator” pilot. This involved Alt HAN coordinating works in meter rooms on behalf of all energy supplier to create more space to complete smart installations where Alt HAN devices are needed. This is a further example of how Alt HAN are looking to find innovative ways to break down barriers to installing smart meters. The pilot is planned to run for around six months, and will inform a decision on whether ramping up the service represents value-for-money.

The start of safe launch and the decision to process with a crowded meter room pilot are examples of how AHC is delivering on its vision to deliver collective solutions that benefit energy consumers in a cost efficient way.

The Autumn quarter also saw us complete our annual budget-setting process. The firm budget for 2023/4 and indicative budget for 2024/5 was developed by the Alt HAN Board, and approved by energy suppliers at the November meeting of the Alt HAN Forum. We are pleased to have been able to lock in lower charges next year as a result of efficiency savings realised this year, and are committed to continuing to be rigorous and transparent in how we manage our costs.

Finally, I would like to welcome Joe Mills from OVO Energy onto the Board of Alt HAN Co following his nomination during this quarter. Senior support from our energy supplier stakeholders is critical for Alt HAN’s success, and continuing support at Board-level is a key part of this.

### “At a glance” progress tracker



## Mobilising for Safe Launch

Safe Launch is the final stage of Alt HAN delivery before mass rollout. During Safe Launch our [three] partner energy suppliers will complete smart meter installs at customer premises that need Alt HAN devices. Its purpose is to confirm readiness and capture operational learnings before the volume of installations ramps up. We estimate that around 500 customers will have their smart meters installed during Safe Launch.

In October our energy supplier members voted to mobilise formally for Safe Launch, and in December we will make the decision to start. All readiness indicators are positive currently, and the devices to be used in Safe Launch will be delivered shortly. We have also started the rolling programme of training for energy suppliers in how to install Alt HAN devices

## Device testing and assurance

Safe Launch and mass rollout can only happen if we and our energy supplier partners have full confidence in Alt HAN devices, technically and operationally. The positive progress we made in testing this quarter is helping to build that confidence. The accelerated life testing of our redesigned Bridge 1 device completed, taking us one step closer to UKCA certification.

Our devices need to work effectively in all settings, and this will involve many different combinations of meters and equipment. We completed the first cohort of interoperability testing this quarter, with positive results for our two highest-volume solutions. We have also made strong progress in testing the interoperability of our more complex solution for co-located but remote gas meters, which relies on updated gas meter firmware.

## Crowded Meter Rooms

Our sector-wide project to develop and test ideas for making more building smart ready reached an important milestone this quarter. The specific challenge we are looking to address is how to create enough space in building where Alt HAN is needed, and space is tight. We estimate that this could affect around 10,000 apartment buildings across GB.

The solutions involve the co-ordination of works across multiple energy suppliers, and potential other parties such as the local electricity network. Earlier this month our energy suppliers voted to run a pilot with different potential delivery partners, and around 50-100 buildings. The pilot will run for six months from January and will provide valuable cost and operational information on whether the solution is viable at larger scale.



*The Crowded Meter Room pilot – testing out whether we can co-ordinate works to make buildings “smart-ready” where space is tight*

## Introducing Chelsea Evans, Operations Co-ordinator



I have been part of the Alt HAN journey since 2018 as part of the Gemserv business support team, and was delighted to take the plunge and become an Alt HAN employee in November last year. I am proud to have been part of how Alt HAN has developed, and shown how it can work with energy suppliers to adapt and deliver what is needed. It is also great to be part of a such diverse, supportive and close employee group – and being actively involved in developing the Alt HAN culture as we grow.

The small company nature of Alt HAN has also given me opportunities to widen my experience. Starting with Secretariat and the challenges of helping the Forum and its Sub-Group runs smoothly. Then through secondment into project management and delivery co-ordination as part of the Crowded Meter Room project and device testing programme. And now looking ahead to Safe Launch operations in an enduring role as Operations Co-ordinator.

Outside of work I love to travel, with a recent memorable trip being a road-trip up the east coast of the USA, from Florida to New York.

## Getting involved

Our mission for Alt HAN products and services to integrate seamlessly into smart rollout plans of energy suppliers relies on close partnership working. As an Energy Supplier there are different ways to get involved, depending on what you are interested in understanding or supporting:

### Engagement groups & workshops

The foundations for our working-level engagement are two sub-groups, that meet monthly. These are open to all Suppliers who are Forum Members, and otherwise by invitation.

The Planning, Operations & Testing Sub-Group (“POTSG”) is currently working through the following topics:

- Evaluating the pros and cons of different technical options for enabling Alt HAN devices to be re-set and re-used in some circumstances;
- Tracking progress on device testing ahead of deployment of devices during Safe Launch;
- Interpreting the findings from current survey work on the need for Alt HAN in large apartment blocks.

The Supplier Contract Sub-Group (“SCSG”) is currently focused on the contractual changes required to enable

Meter Equipment Managers (MEMs) to access Alt HAN services directly, when working on behalf of energy suppliers – including forecasting & ordering, and post-installation activities such as returns. This is an important enabling change for smaller energy suppliers. It involves creating a new MEM Agreement and consequential changes to the existing Supplier Contract.

We also engage with market participants through existing industry governance channels, where Alt HAN activities require change. Recently this has involved DCUSA change and a REC Sandbox application for Crowded Meter Rooms, and a SEC modification to enable MEM access to Alt HAN services.

### Advisory groups

We also have two groups who advise the Board of Alt HAN on Health & Safety and Financial matters, respectively. The groups also meet monthly and provide a channel through which expertise can be shared in support of Alt HAN’s activities.