

Minutes of the Meeting of the Customer Challenge Group

Tuesday 16 March 2021, 10:00 – 13:00

Teams Meeting

CCG MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE		
Caroline Warner	<i>Chair</i>	CW
David Cheek	<i>Friends of Mimram</i>	DC
Tom Perry	<i>Environment Agency</i>	TP
John Ludlow		JL
Bob Winnington	<i>Money Advice Liaison Group</i>	BW
Ana Maria Millan	<i>CCW</i>	AM
Tina Barnard	<i>Watford Community Housing</i>	TB
Richard Tunnicliffe	<i>CBI</i>	RT
Richard Haynes	<i>Up on the Downs</i>	RH
Gill Taylor	<i>Groundwork East</i>	GT
Unette Spencer	<i>Mastercard</i>	US
Simon Morrison	<i>British Association of Dermatologists</i>	SM
AFFINITY WATER ATTENDEES		
Jake Rigg	<i>Director of Corporate Affairs</i>	JR
Stève Hervouet	<i>Director of Regulation and Strategy</i>	SH
Joe Brownless	<i>Director of Customer Operations</i>	JB
Anne Scutt Webber	<i>CCG Manager</i>	ASW
Clare Carlaw	<i>Consultation lead WRMP/DMP</i>	CC
Katy Taqvi	<i>Head of customer experience and strategy</i>	KT
Ed Barnes	<i>Head of demand management</i>	EB
James Tipler	<i>Head of billing and debt management</i>	JT
APOLOGIES		
Karen Gibbs	<i>CCW</i>	KG
Pauline Walsh	<i>AWL CEO</i>	PW

AGENDA ITEM	MINUTE	Action
	Welcome	
	<p>CW welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Pauline Walsh. Ana Maria Millan Villaneda, policy manager from CCW attended in the place of Karen Gibbs.</p> <p>CW thanked members for their time and open discussion in the 1:1 sessions held in January which reviewed how they would like to see the role of the CCG evolve. The overall consensus was that members wish to add value, on behalf of customers, to the development of the Business by bringing independent perspective and professional insight from their external expertise. The insight from local knowledge was also seen to be valuable.</p> <p>CW had met with David Black (new Interim CEO of Ofwat) to discuss the role of CCGs. David agrees that the remit of CCGs should take account of ongoing</p>	

	<p>business planning in relation to customers rather than focus narrowly on the Business Plan for the Price Review.</p> <p>Ofwat has not yet published its guidance for PR24 so the role of the CCG is yet to be confirmed in this area. CW confirmed that the CCG would meet the requirements but the time and resource may have to be reviewed once this is clear.</p> <p>CW confirmed that she was working with the business to agree the role and remit of the CCG over the next few months. This would also include the terms of reference of the sub groups.</p>	Review role and remit of CCG (AWL,CW)
1.0	Performance	
	SH summarised the good progress that had been made this year in the companies performance. This has been a tough year with the impact of Covid and some tough targets already set by Ofwat. Although the company has not been able to meet all its year 1 targets, it has set a glide path to achieve the commitments in coming years and these targets are being met.	
	The impact of Covid 19 on PCC has been seen across the industry with people working from home and not taking holidays. Companies are reporting a 8-12% increase in demand in 2020/21. Frontier Economics are carrying out a detailed study for AWL on the impact, the results will be reported to Ofwat as part of an industry review.	
	TP noted that the description and unit of measure of the AIM performance commitment did not align.	Review AIM description in Performance table (ASW)
	<p>CW asked if the metering programme had been impacted by the pandemic. JB responded that the metering programme had been stopped during the first lockdown in March 20. The meter optant programme recommenced in July and the universal metering programme in September. The team are now on track to achieve the year 1 target of 25,000 meter installs in the 6 month period. The team have been working with the demand management team to target areas of high demand. The year 2 target is to deliver 51,000 meters so this has provided the confidence that this is achievable.</p> <p>The company has also been developing the map of a customer’s metering journey and using research gained added insight into what makes a meter a positive experience for a customer and why some customers refuse. The results of this research will be shared with members in April.</p>	Share report on findings from metering research (KT)
	JB noted the positive outcome of the recent freeze/thaw period which reflected the implementation of lessons learnt from previous experiences. The company’s focus was to minimise disruption to customers, no households lost supply for > 12 hours and although the bursts resulted in an additional leakage of 50Mld, this was recovered and reduced by a further 10Mld within a short period of time. The CSAT score for this activity also saw an increase for this period.	
2.0	Strategic Direction Statement (SDS)	
	The SDS will provide the strategic link between the company purpose and the business plan.	
	The company has worked with industry experts and regulators and run stakeholder and customer engagement workshops to develop our long term ambition and to ensure that our 4 ambition statement resonate with customers and communities. SH thanked members who had contributed to the stakeholder workshops. All agreed with the 4 ambition statements. DC noted that the company’s main purpose of providing water was not prevalent in the ambition statements, however it is embedded within the purpose.	

	TB proposed that the ambitions should also be used for the shorter term and had suggested that the company could use it to improve its communication of good news, (this had also been raised in the Inclusive Service sub group), using partners to share positive outcomes.	
	CW suggested that the sub groups could be aligned to the 4 ambition statements, this will be considered as part for the review of the role and remit of the CCG.	Review the alignment of ambition statements to sub groups (AWL)
	The SDS will be launched in the spring. AWL is likely to be the first water company to publish their SDS. The SDS will be published on the company website, this will be supported by more detailed papers. The underpinning documents will continue to be updated so that the document is kept “alive”.	
3.0	Drought Management Plan and Water Resources Management Plan	
	DMP Customer engagement for the drought management plan will be done through a WRSE group project. South East Water have already carried out some engagement with Accent and this will be used as a basis for the work. The research will include drought comprehension, views on water shortages, restrictions, communications messaging/channel preferences.	
	The outcome from the engagement will feed in to the formal consultation using the “Bang the Table” platform which will focus on areas prioritised by customers. There will be different layers of engagement so customers can choose how deep they go.	
	WRMP Phase 2 of the customer engagement will use a visualisation tool. The interactive visualisation tool will be developed to share the outputs from the long term modelling – potentially 10 plans, and used to gain customers views on them. This will include, maps, videos, sliders, animations. The team will co-create the tool with customers and stakeholders.	
	RT asked if business users were included in the research, CC responded that one of the segments will be a business group. It was found that if business representatives were included as part of customer groups they tended to respond as a household customer.	
	The group felt that 10 plans was a lot for customers to review.	
	TP asked how local questions/views would be incorporated in to the research. CC responded that the analytics behind the research will enable local issues to be identified	
	The company would like to seek the comments from members on the draft of the tool which should be available end Apr/May.	Share draft of visualisation tool for feedback from members (CC)
4.0	Improvements to Complaints Process	
	The company was pleased to announce that it recently achieved 2 nd place in the industry for handling complaints which is a much improved position from previous years.	
	The company is mapping the complaints customer journey and is already taking any learnings and adding value at key points. Ofwat/CCW have recently published a paper providing best practice for handling complaints – much of this the company is now already doing so it will now need focus on embedding the approach.	

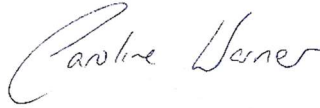
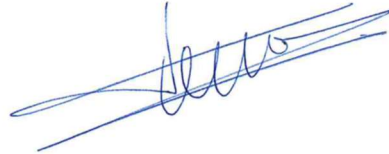
	CCW have changed the definition of a complaint, part one goes live on 1 st Apr 21 and the second part in Apr 22. AWL guidelines have been updated to reflect this change.	
	Work on the customer journey is continuing. The insights gained from the “Voice of the Customer” work will be used to identify key areas of poor performance and also what matters to customers. The group is keen to look at the results of this work and requested that it is discussed at an Inclusive Service sub group meeting.	Update on customer journey and findings from “Voice of the Customer” work to be brought to Inclusive Service sub group for discussion. (KT)
	5.0 Environmental Innovation Projects	
	The sub group have challenged the scope and benefits of the four projects over the last 6 months. The sub group is now satisfied that the projects will deliver benefits to the environment and customers and are scalable, so that if successful can be developed as part of the next Business Plan. The environmental market created as part of the holistic catchment management project may also be developed and run across different companies. Other companies are being urged to take similar actions to restore chalk streams. The group agreed with the sub group’s recommendation to sign off the project scopes (gates 1 and 2) of the 4 projects.	
	The sub group members also recommended the sign off the completion of phase 1 of the Holistic Catchment Management project (gate 3). This is worth 4 units. The group accepted the recommendation and agreed sign off of the 4 units. AWL to share details of the phase 1 completed work of the holistic catchment management project with the sub group.	Share details of the phase 1 completion of the Holistic Catchment management Project with EIP sub group (JR)
	There are 3 areas where innovative projects are being undertaken, the EIP performance commitment, the Ofwat innovation competition and demand management work. CW questioned the process for allocating the projects to these different areas. She would like to broaden the remit of the EIP sub group to include other areas of innovation and would be keen to see further discussions on the Ofwat innovation competition projects at the group.	
	6.0 Innovation in Water Competition	
	Ofwat has received a high response to its Phase 1 innovation competition which is for small scale projects c.£250k. Around 60 bids were put in from across the industry. The competition is a collaborative approach, AWL lead 3 bids and are partner in a further 2. Many other projects were reviewed from across the business but only 3 were taken forward for entry to the competition. The other proposals are still under review and may be developed outside the competition. Work has started on proposals for the larger scale innovation projects – phase 2 which are for projects >£1m.	
	Results of phase 1 are expected in April. The company will consider taking forward the projects even if not successful in the competition.	Consider future discussion of innovation projects at EIP sub group (SH)

7.0	Summary from Sub Groups	
	Demand Management	
	The learnings from year 1 of the demand management strategy have been used to develop the year 2 programme and built on what went well.	
	There is a focus on partnerships and two have been set up with Green Doctor (Cadent gas) and Kent Council initiative to reach vulnerable customers. The company is also looking to promote partnerships through schools. Watford will be the focus of the next campaign. Groundworks Trust is also doing some work in the community in Watford, GT/EB to liaise on areas they can work together. The group agreed that local influencers were very important in getting any message across to communities. Local authorities and housing providers were described as key community anchors.	EB/GT to liaise regarding Watford campaign
	Affordability	
	The initial response to affordability issues brought on by the impact of Covid has now become part of business as usual.	
	Focus is now on how to reach the “hard to reach” customer and how to get these customers to engage.	
	AM suggested that schools are aware of those families that are in financial difficulty, also children’s centres. DC suggested leaflets at foodbanks.	
	The company has data from the DWP and has also tapped in to the Vulnerability Registration Service, having identified these cohorts it is now trying to engage and promote the assistance services available.	
	The team will be following up on the proposal from US in the sub group to map the journey of a vulnerable customers and understand where and why they do not go to the next stage.	
8.0	Open Discussion	
	How is your organisation changing and adapting to ensure they are able to support the changing needs of your customers now and in the coming years?	
	All agreed that opportunities to promote well-being post pandemic will be extremely important as most are drained from their experiences of the pandemic and/or from the strain of working from home and supporting family. In the virtual world people have become more invisible and it is not clear how they will re-emerge.	
	There is an appetite for a collaborative approach going forward and JL confirmed that this is reflected in government with cross group consensus and all party groups.	
	All agreed that there were even bigger challenges coming as we move out of the pandemic and furlough ends. TB and BW said they will be taking the learnings from this period and do more of what has worked well and that collaboration and partnerships were going to be key. There is likely to be a blended solution of what has worked well virtually and what needs to be face to face.	
	GT – Groundwork East are focussing on mental health and well-being through improving open spaces, this is also part of the government’s green recovery. It is also undertaking assessments, working towards achieving net zero.	
	There was no time to discuss the other questions proposed. It as agreed that these will be brought to the next meeting.	
	Next Meeting	
	CW thanked members for their contributions making it a very dynamic and interactive meeting. She will confirm (once levels of restrictions are clearer) whether the next meeting – to be held on 22 nd June, will take place virtually or in person.	

I confirm that the Minutes of 16 March 2021 are a true and accurate record of the business discussed and agreed.

CCG Chair

AWL Director of Regulation and Strategy

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caroline Varner".A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J. W. S.", with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Signature:

Signature:

Date: 21/4/21

Date: 27/04/21