

# Minutes of the meeting of the Dee Valley Water Customer Challenge Group

Wrexham, Wales

20 July 2017

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## Present:

<i>Chair</i>	Clare Evans
<i>Natural Resources Wales</i>	Moirá Reynolds
<i>CCWater</i>	Angela Davies-Jones
<i>CCWater</i>	Lia Moutselou
<i>Independent Member</i>	Paul Roberts

## In attendance:

<i>Dee Valley/Severn Trent</i>	Shane Anderson (Head of Economic Regulation) Heather Thompson (Outcomes Manager) Bomme Stuber (Strategic Insight Lead) Susie Price (Senior Customer Insight Researcher) Liz Franks (Water Resource and Catchment Specialist) Andy Hughes (Head of Credit Management) Claire Nichols (Consultant)
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## These minutes are a redacted version that were taken at the meeting

### 1. Welcome and review of minutes

- The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked members for their time. It was agreed that it would be helpful to continue to recruit new members.
- Members reviewed actions and previous minutes.
- Opening the meeting the Chair noted the content members were particularly interested in is how the company would apply its approach, and the implications of that.
- It was noted that there is a short time in meetings so more targeted presentations would help CCG members to have the assurance they were looking for that the plan will meet the policy objectives within Wales and the needs of customers.

### 2. Regulator updates

- An update was provided from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). There were no operational issues to raise at the meeting and the NEP process, whereby NRW was working with the company, appeared to be working well.
- It was pleasing to see that information around the well-being of future generations was coming through in the information that the company had provided to the CCG.
- A member asked whether it would be possible for NRW to provide intelligence on comparative performance across the whole of Wales

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was discussed.
- It was noted that an annex to Ofwat's draft methodology explains how their document addressed the Welsh Government's policy priorities.
- The company noted that while it was considering how it would need to meet the Welsh Government's objectives it would equally look to CCG members to challenge the company if they felt that its proposals for customers were inconsistent with those objectives.

CHALLENGE – How could the way CCG's work and the area statements that NRW would be publishing in the autumn be worked through here in terms of the value that the company could add to customers' lives.

CHALLENGE - How the company will embed well-being goals into its work for customers in Wales.

CHALLENGE - the company to provide assurance that when it was undertaking customer engagement it was taking into account the Welsh Government's policy in the areas covered by the CCG.

CHALLENGE - How do we ensure engagement that the company is undertaking in Wales would meet customer objectives?

CHALLENGE - Consider that the policy landscape in Wales is different.

### **3. Ofwat methodology**

- The company provided an overview of Ofwat's methodology and the points of particular relevance to the CCG.
- The company stated that it would need to engage with retail companies, as part of its customer engagement.
- It was discussed that the methodology's proposals for PCs and ODIs is challenging. The Chair noted that it was interesting that Ofwat had imposed a leakage target, ahead of customer research.
- It was noted that companies would need to provide a great deal of data, some of it historical.
- The Chair noted that another issue for the CCG to consider would be whether or not it supported the use of in-period ODIs.

CHALLENGE - Ensure that the sample size for research is sufficient.

- The Chair noted that she was to chair the CCG chairs group on 9 August and that as part of that discussion she would ask Ofwat where they felt the CCGs could add most value. It would have been helpful if Ofwat had provided some examples to illustrate where CCGs had made a real difference at PR14.
- The company noted that the company had already made some changes to its approach as a result of challenge from this CCG.

### **4. In AMP performance**

- The company noted that it had published its Annual Performance Report and was reporting back to the CCG on its in-AMP performance in October.

## **5. Strategic challenges for PR19**

- The company outlined the process it was following to identify strategic challenges for PR19.
- It was noted there had been an engagement session the previous week with key members of staff from across the company where they had identified some strategic challenges.
- MR noted that there was some good overlap with the objectives of Wrexham PBS and that she would share contact details

CHALLENGE - Demonstrate how customer data is used to feed into the company planning.

CHALLENGE – Take into account the point of view of the ‘worst served customers’ and to consider measures that focus on repeat incidents.

- An update was provided on the Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) process.
- It would be necessary to provide two plans: a Welsh plan that would follow Welsh Government and NRW guidance and legislation; and an English plan that would follow Defra and Environment Agency guidance.
- Members discussed future water resource challenges and building resilience.

## **6. Customer research**

- The company explained that members had attended a conference call on the WTP research and there had been a number of helpful challenges.
- The company outlined its customer centric research plan and the customer needs research. A member noted that some customers need more help and support than others and that many customers just want the company not to cause them problems.
- It was noted that there are opportunities to use data to identify those customers who have experienced real problems with their service.

CHALLENGE - Does research explore with customers whether or not the existing service offering is acceptable.

CHALLENGE - How it would triangulate all of this information and in particular how peripheral voices would be heard.

A CHALLENGE - Explain how the research would give a sample of sufficient scale for this to be statistically representative of smaller demographic groups.

CHALLENGE - Does the research consider that business customer views are likely to be very different.

CHALLENGE- Customers in rural and urban areas experience different forms of disadvantage.

CHALLENGE - Be aware of the many customers in Powys with limited or no access to the internet or to mobile reception. The company should also be mindful of the Welsh language requirements of many customers and to be aware of different Welsh dialects.

- The company provided an overview of its plan for WTP. There would need to be differences in the survey for customers where the company does not supply wastewater services
- A member noted that it would be interesting just to compare the results of the two surveys, to see whether there were any differences and identify why that might be
- The Chair noted that the company should identify appropriate attributes from the data it has, for example from the SIM, Rant and Rave, complaints etc.
- The company noted that it had an open mind as to what should go into the plan at this stage and that if significant drivers for investment emerged from the research then it would consider all of those.
- It was noted that the WTP was just one input into the wholesale plan. There would be other cross checks including adherence to legislation.
- A member further suggested that for an attribute to be included on the list there would need to be a meaningful and measureable definition of the performance measure.

CHALLENGE - Ensure that those who make appointments and conduct surveys are bilingual.

CHALLENGE - Take into account the fact that a large number of complaints relate to water quality but that this could be very localised as an issue.

CHALLENGE- If there were areas where there were supply differences that impacted on the customer's experience then they would need to ensure that those distinct areas were not missed out in the survey.

CHALLENGE – How is the approach to lead being considered?

CHALLENGE - Should interruptions to supply be measured by number of times it happened rather than the length of time that customers were concerned about.

CHALLENGE - Provide assurance to members as to how it was validating the service attributes.

CHALLENGE - Explain how it would make the measure meaningful while not losing the nature of the company's contribution to that measure.

## **7. Customer service retail plan**

- The company explained that it was currently developing its thinking around the overall retail ambition and vision for 2025.
- An area of particular focus for the company at the moment is service vulnerability
- There was discussion on the approach to developing third party data where data is shared with other companies in order to build up a deeper understanding of an individual customer's financial circumstances including any vulnerability.
- It was noted that any good aspects of the processes of the company should not forgotten.
- It was agreed that the CCG would like to consider the social tariff research more fully and that it should be added to the forward plan.

CHALLENGE – Will a translation service be offered if Welsh speakers are not provided at the call centres?

CHALLENGE - ensure that checks were made to avoid mistakes leading to written complaints with approaches to using third party data. The company responded that it was talking to other

service providers about how data sharing occurs across industries and how this might be used in a positive way in order to more closely tailor services.

## **8. Forward plan**

- The company noted that it would arrange for board members to attend some of the CCG's future meetings.
- The CCG should meet again in early September, as it was a long time to go until the next scheduled meeting in October.
- The meeting in September would focus on just the research. There was likely to be a need for a separate call on social tariffs.
- A date of 13 September was agreed for the next meeting. It may be helpful if the meeting takes place in Welshpool.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked people for attending.