

Summary Minutes: Meeting of The Dee Valley Customer Challenge Group

4th November 2016 – Ramada Plaza Hotel, Wrexham

Attendees:

Customer Challenge Group:

Clare Evans (CE) – Chair

Angela Davies Jones (ADJ) – LCA CCWater

Cllr Martyn Delaney (MD) – Cheshire West & Chester Council

Dee Valley Water:

Sue Jones (SJ) – Head Of Customer Service

Angela Easton (AE) – Internal Audit Manager

Tracey Jones (TJ) – Customer Relations & Dept Assistant

Liz Franks (LF) – Environment & Policy Manager

Phil Jones (PJ) – Network Manager

Guests:

N/A

Apologies:

Customer Challenge Group:

Andrew Ellis – Kellogg Company Of Great Britain

Cllr Bob Dutton (BD) – Wrexham County Borough Council

Paul Roberts (PR) – Citizens Advice Bureau

Graham Jones (GJ) – Federation of Small Businesses

Cllr Kerryll Prossor (KP) – Churton Parish Council

Clare Harrison (CH) – Chester Voluntary Action

David Oxley (DO) – Sustainable Blacon

Dee Valley Water:

Ian Plenderleith (IP) – CEO

Action	Page No	Actions	Owner	Due Date
1	4	Send TJ the Chair's updates to be included in the minutes (Done)	CE	17/11/16
2	4	Urgent update on DVW's ability to use text messaging for Information Services to customers i.e.: bill reminders and providing info re Social Tariff	SJ	On Hold
3	4	Obtain contact from KWJ for Wrexham University to see if someone wishes to join CCG CF action.	SJ	23/12/16
4	4	Obtain contact at Chester University and provide to DVW for someone to join the CCG	MD	23/12/16
5	4	Check date of SoC meeting at DVW. Done – this is 15 th November 2016 (Done)	TJ	15/11/16
6	4	Update The Chair and subsequently the CCG on the SoC after the meeting at DVW	ADJ / CE	30/11/16
7	4	Challenge Newspaper and radio for free editorial space on issues of customer interest eg Social Tariffs	SJ	Next Meeting
8	5	Send CCWater an update on what penalty could be applied to DVW for Wholesale revenue incentive correction mechanism CF action	SJ	By Next Meeting
9	5	Discuss website links from Wrexham Council to DVW and vice versa at the councils next quarterly meeting. CF action TJ to contact BD for update (Done – waiting update from BD)	BD	23/12/16
10	4	Investigate website links from Cheshire West and Chester Council website to DVW and vice versa	MD	23/12/16

11	5	Provide update on RPI v CPI to CE/The Chair following a meeting with DG for circulation to the CCG	SJ	23/12/16
12	5	CCWater to share how other Companies may address RPI v CPI CF action	ADJ	When point 10 info given
13	5	WJ and KR to work together to improve service including sharing best practice of call centers CF action now with SJ instead of WJ	SJ	On Hold
14	5	WJ/IP to attend the next Churton Parish Council meeting CF action now with SJ rather than WJ. TJ to chase KR for action update (Done – waiting KR response)	SJ	On Hold pending next Parish Meeting
15	5	Investigate having a customer forum to assist with debt and vulnerability CF action	SJ	On Hold
16	5	Share the FSB research and online survey result with WJ CF action now with SJ rather than WJ TJ to contact GJ for update (Done – Waiting GJ reaction)	GJ	23/12/16
17	5	Provide comments or feedback to CE/The Chair regarding the updated ToR document	All CCG Member	06/01/17
18	5	Contact Technical Supports, DWI, and NRW etc. for updates to be included in the agenda.	SJ	03/01/17
19	5	Circulate Wave 2 of the customer survey results to CCG members (Done)	TJ	30/11/16
20	5	Provide Debt analysis: Measured / Unmeasured, Various timescales i.e.: 0 - 14, 15-21 days, Exclude customers on payment plan etc.	SJ	Next meeting
21		Contact Paul Roberts ex LCA to join CCG	CE	Next Meeting
22	5	Confirm when rewards / penalties would be applied and how this is expected to affect DVW customers	SJ	Next meeting
23	7	Pursue a contact from NRW to sit on the CCG and advise TJ/CE with contact details	LF	06/01/17
24	7	Ensure the first draft of the Customer Engagement Strategy is circulated to CCG members before 23 rd December	SJ	23/12/16
25	7	TJ provided ADJ with Here2Help application form for review and feedback	ADJ	23/12/16
26	7	Review the Here2Help application form and feedback to DVW	ADJ / CE	23/12/16
27	7	Send Here2Help application form to SOH (External communications company) for review alongside DVW new tone of voice	SJ	Next Meeting
28	7	Investigate the possibility of an online application process via the DVW website for Here2Help	SJ	Next Meeting
29	8	Send SJ the 'Delving into Water' report	LM	30/11/16
31	9	Prioritise CCG info on website as urgent with web developers and when available provide the CCG's website link to CE/The Chair to be send to Ofwat. Review Ofwat website for other companies updates	TJ	Next Meeting
32	9	Send next meeting dates to the CCG members (Done)	TJ	30/11/16
33	9	Members send update if unable to attend the meeting & send to TJ	ALL	Future meetings
34	9	Post and email the minutes of the meeting to CCG members	TJ	Future meetings

Decision	Page	Decision	Owner	Due Date
1.		Move the Action list to the beginning of the minutes	TJ	Future meetings
2.		Add Key Customer Issues as a regular agenda items	TJ	Future meetings
3		Telephone application to be accepted for Here2Help applications	SJ	Ongoing
4.		Include regular debt overview in ODI update	SJ	Ongoing

	Date	Challenge Description / Raised By	Owner	Due Date
1	4/11/16	Challenge DVW to consider preparing a regular/annual update to their customers on DVW's performance and justify to customers why decisions have been made. Update to be concise and creative. Challenge raised by CE	SJ	Next Meeting
2	4/11/16	Challenge to DVW and to the CCG: Should the CCG report on their activities/achievements on a regular/annual basis and how it his best achieved? Eg as part of DVW annual report or a separate document. Challenge raised by CE	IP/CE	Next Meeting
3	4/11/16	Challenge to DVW to make the Here2Help Application Form available to be submitted online. Challenge by CE.	SJ	Next Meeting

Agenda:

1. Welcome from the Chair and Introductions
2. Chair's Update
3. Minutes to be agreed
4. Matters Arising (not on the agenda)
5. Terms of Reference – To be adopted
6. ODI Performance
7. Key Customer Issues
8. Water Resource Management plan
9. PR19
10. Information Assurance Statement
11. Update on Vulnerability and Social tariff
12. Homeserve Update
13. Openwater – Non Household Competition
14. Members Update
15. CCG Website Presence
16. Items and date for the next meeting

1. Welcome by the Chair and Introduction of new members

CE/The Chair opened the meeting and welcome the new Head of Customer Service, Sue Jones (SJ) to the CCG and meeting. She wished to record the CCG's thanks for the work undertaken by the previous Head of Customer Service, Wendy Jones who had introduced some exciting new processes and practices in to the business.

2. Chair's Update

Action: CE/The Chair gave a brief overview of events she had attended in her capacity as Chair of DVW CCG and agreed to send TJ the updates to be included in the minutes

3. Previous Minutes and Actions

CE/ The Chair reviewed the minutes and actions from the previous meeting, firstly checking for accuracy. It was resolved to adopt the minutes as a true record of the previous meeting.

Action 1 & 2: SJ advised that she is in touch with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to understand best practice regarding text messages for reminder bills and installments. She advised that she would like to trial a reminder on the first installment. SJ also advised that call centre and control room staff at Dee Valley Water (DVW) are receiving training on the upgraded text messaging system. Going forward text messages will be dealt with during office hours by the Customer Support team. SJ advised she is meeting with Tracy Bragg, Head of Legal and Regulation at DVW, regarding the legalities of using text messages to promote the Here2Help social tariff and bill reminders

ADJ commented that she didn't think information such as Here2Help and bill reminders would be regarded marketing and pressed the company to verify asap.

Action: It was resolved for the company to make enquiries and provide an urgent update on this action

CE/The Chair also asked what tracking was available for text messaging services. **SJ** was confident that DVW could report on this services Inc.: bounce backs and volume of opened messages.

Action 3: CE/The Chair felt it was essential to have someone on the CCG panel with an expertise in research methodologies to assist the CCG in challenging the Company plans. This point has been referenced at previous CCG meetings yet no representative had yet been suggested which was disappointing.

Action: CE/The Chair asked for an update before the next meeting on this point.

Action: MD to pursue a contact at Chester University and provide to TJ/CE

CE/The Chair asked the CCG members to consider anyone else they felt would be beneficial to join the Group and to advise her of any suggested contacts.

Action 4: SJ advised that the Scheme of Charges is not yet available.

Action: TJ to check date of SoC meeting at DVW.

Action: ADJ to update CE/The Chair after the SoC meeting and for CE/The Chair to circulate to the CCG

Action 5: Complete. CE/ The Chair advised that some other CCGs in England provide some comments on performance of their related Companies, with some forming part of the Companies' annual report and others as a stand alone document. The Chair asked members if this was something the DVW CCG wanted to do. Her thoughts were that the CCG could report on what the Group does, their challenges and activities and so on. CE/The Chair noted that DVW do not currently have a target communication specifically for customers regarding updates and **challenged DVW** to consider something other than the annual report. SJ advised she is discussing communication channels with DVW Head of Communication, Yvonne Owen, and is reviewing opportunities for Radio Campaigns, newspaper articles, community updates and the website and to look at doing something quarterly. SJ commented that advertising can sometimes be costly, however ADJ felt that if the information was informative rather than marketing, the company may be able to get editorial space as opposed to advertising space.

Action: SJ to challenge newspapers and radio on editorial space on customer interest issues eg Social Tariff

Action 6: Carried forward action point regarding Ofwat penalties

Action 7: Carried forward action point regarding links from council websites to DVW

Action: MD to discuss website links with Cheshire West and Chester Council

Action 8: Complete

Action 9: Complete

Action 10: CE/The Chair advised that there was nothing succinct from Ofwat regarding RPI v CPI.

Action 11: Complete

Action 12: ADJ advised it was too early yet to provide an update on how other companies may address RPI v CPI but that she would like to know from DVW what their concerns are in changing from RPI to CPI, how will this affect the Company and its customer. ADJ will then ask what CCWater for feedback from other companies to see if they share the same concerns.

Action: SJ to discuss with Dan Gollins, DVW Interim Finance Director and provide an update before the next meeting to CE/The Chair

Action 13: To be rearranged in 2017

Action 14: Complete

Action 15: Carried forward action. Sharing best practice for Contact Centres with KP

Action 16: Carried forward action. Churton Parish Council Meetings

Action 17: Carried forward action. Investigate a customer forum

Action 18: Carried forward action. Share FSB research and online survey result

Action 19: Removed

Action 20: Agenda Item

4. Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

The CCG had nothing to discuss for this item

5. Terms of Reference – To be adopted

A copy of the ToR had been circulated prior to the meeting. CE/The Chair presented her updated version to the group (copy included with the minutes along with the tracked changes). CE/The Chair advised she had made some amendments to the ToR following the discussion at a previous CCG meeting. She reminded members that the CCG were not there as customer representatives but were there to challenge the Company to ensure it was effectively seeking the views of its customers and that these views were being taken account of in the company business plans. She advised that some wording had been updated in the document to reflect this. ADJ queried page 1 of the ToR under "Role of the group". She challenged the wording ".....sought by Dee Valley Water" and would like the wording to be considered for change so ensure it wasn't too onerous on the group. ADJ also asked if the paragraph about "remuneration" on page 3 was needed. CE/The Chair felt it was to ensure the CCG were fully transparent with DVW customers.

Action: CCG Provide comments or feedback to CE/The Chair regarding the ToR

Action: SJ to contact Technical Supports, DWI, NRW etc. for updates to be included in the agenda.

6. ODI Performance

SJ gave an update on the ODI report and commented that Water Quality was on track and positive. Customer Satisfaction/Rant and Rave scores remain high and that Billing are currently 1st in the SIM survey for Billing contacts. CE/The Chair commented that DVW were 16th for Operations. SJ advised that a SIM improvement plan meeting was now held monthly which targets issues and customer feedback with focus on the operational side of the business and targeting areas of improvement. SJ also introduced Phil Jones (PJ) DVW Network Manager, who would update on the recent issue experienced by DVW customers that has affected this quarter's ODI results.

There was discussion regarding communication to customers and if a company communication plan was in place. SJ advised there was but that it needs to improve e.g.: frequency of updates and the information provided. SJ and PJ also meet daily to review customer contacts, issues and Rant & Rave scores /feedback for Operations.

CE/The Chair asked if further information was collected when incidents took place i.e.: location of pipes, lead pipes etc. PJ confirmed this information is captured and recorded.

SJ confirmed that wave 2 of the customer satisfaction survey would be circulated to the Group.

Action: TJ to circulate the survey results

ADJ asked about the volumes of customers in debt. SJ advised the bad debt provision is based on 1.1% of turnover and that she is working on analysis of debt which will be shared at the next meeting.

Action: SJ to provide debt analysis at the next meeting

CE / The Chair advised this was vital information which perhaps ought to be included regularly.

CE/The Chair advised that there can be rewards and/or penalties awarded to companies according to their performance against ODIs and asked if DVW was wrapping this all up to the end of the 5 year period or whether it was able to applying these annually? ADJ asked if customers are likely to be affected by performance in the cost of their bill and will this be across all customers or segmented.

Action: SJ to confirm when rewards / penalties would be applied and how this is expected to affect DVW customers

7. Key Customer Issues (page 2 – 6 of the presentation)

SJ introduce this agenda item and advised that IP requested this to be a regular agenda item. DVW wish to update the CCG on issues that have affected the customer in the last quarter, how they handled it, what they feel they did well or could have done differently and to obtain support from the CCG for potential investment requirements.

SJ then introduced PJ who gave an update on a large incident that took place in August 2016. The incident affected a very large area surrounding Wrexham and had been extremely difficult to find as a result of the location and type of leak. PJ explained that 57km (6.5%) and 13,300 properties had been affected with either complete loss of water or low water pressure. The average water consumption per person, per day for the Company is 140 litres, which is the equivalent of 46,000 customers' consumption. This incident in August plus a further in June affecting the center of Chester has had a big impact on the ODI results for interruption to supply. The focus is now on what DVW can further do to try and avoid this situation or to minimise the risk. PJ advised that he is looking to:

- Invest in new equipment to detect a potential leak earlier
- Invest in more flow pressure management equipment
- Invest in more loggers for advance warning of issues

There is also a feasibility study for a sustaining valve which will automatically shut down when a large leak is detected. PJ commented that he was unable to provide specific investment costs and that DVW were still unsure what caused such a failure on a relatively young pipe (44 years old).

As a general point CE advised the Company that it was not there to give support to any DVW investment schemes as such but that background information in to the areas of the business that affected customers was very much welcomed. CE/ The Chair asked if the leak could have been caused by the recent cleaning programme of DVW mains and if it could have caused weakness.

PJ confirmed that Ice Pigging had not taken place on this particular main and so there was no link between the two. Ice Pigging is a proven and trusted methodology for cleaning of large diameter water pipelines.

PJ also advised that he should have a proposal of cost and timescales for the next AMP as the work was in its very early stages yet

Reference was made to this piece of work being an example of where communication for the customer is key and that this was an ideal opportunity to engage with customers, press, radio etc.

8. Water Resource Management Plan (Page 7 – 10 of the presentation)

Liz Franks (LF) Environment & Policy Manager at DVW introduced herself and advised that a key piece of work for DVW at the moment was the Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP). The plan has to be produced every 5 years with the aim now to make it more operational looking at points such as – Is the water we have in the right place? Is the network resilient? Do the reservoirs have limitations? etc. Although currently DVW have a surplus of water LF advised that there is pressure from Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to focus on resilience of supply and our impact on biodiversity and natural resource. More investigation is required on demand management, for example, in the South of England they are looking at community rainwater harvesting schemes.

LF asked the CCG for ideas on ways to engage customers on the value of water – is It knowledge transfer? Updates on the website? Etc.

ADJ commented that there were lots of thoughts and views from different customer backgrounds and situations, so DVW need to be speaking to people making it meaningful to them.

CE/The Chair commented that it may be an idea to look cost elements for savings e.g.: using 5% less water – what does that mean to the customer?

LF advised she was looking at new ways of reporting and monitoring. She is starting to look at what campaigns DVW might want to do and what can be done long term. She also commented that some of her research would benefit the work being done by PJ and also making sure DVW are using water in the most efficient way. Engagement with key stakeholders has already started.

9. PR19 (Page 10 – 16 of the presentation) - Water Strategy For Wales

LF presented an overview of the Water Strategy for Wales, produced by Welsh Government, and how it might link to the development of PR19 proposals.

LF first asked the group if they had any questions from the NRW paper that was circulated as a pre read. She also commented that it would be a good idea to have someone to represent the environment on the CCG panel. CE/The Chair said she would welcome this and asked LF to pursue someone

Action: LF to pursue someone to represent the environment on the CCG and update TJ/CE with a contact name accordingly.

LF presented her slides and explained that the Water Strategy for Wales document was published in 2015 and is a 25 year document. It sets out priorities for the first 3 – 4 years

9. PR19 – Customer Engagement

CE/The Chair commented that she was disappointed that DVW weren't further on the journey with the Customer Engagement Strategy. She felt that the Strategy and subsequent Action Plan to deliver were absolutely crucial to get right and so suggested that a draft plan / strategy was required before the next CCG meeting. She advised that she would like to see items such as: Who is to be consulted, when the research would take place, what methodologies were to be used (eg qualitative/quantitative/deliberative, informed/uninformed and so on). ADJ agreed that this was needed urgently as the CCG need to challenge, inform and advise on the plan and suggested this was to be circulated to CCG members at least 3 weeks prior to the next meeting.

Action: SJ to ensure the first draft of the Customer Engagement Strategy is circulated before 23rd December

10. Information Assurance Statement (Page 17 – 22 of the presentation)

Angela Easton (AE) Assurance Manager from DVW, presented the next section on the Assurance Statement. AE advised that DVW had been given the category of "prescribed" by Ofwat which is the lowest of their three categories in the Company Monitoring Framework. AE advised that following consultation the document would be published in November 2016. AE updated on the Data Warehouse and explained that this is a central piece of software which stores data from various systems and that this would assist DVW with improving the robustness and reliability of its information.

CE/The Chair asked if there were any significant updates or changes to the plan after consultation, if AE could provide an update in the next CCG meeting. AE agreed to do this.

11. Update on Vulnerability and Social Tariff

Update on vulnerability given by SJ. She advised 11,000 customers are taking advantage of Help2Pay plans, 1,100 on Watersure tariff, 1,500 on Water direct, 270 customers are using additional services and 25 are on the Here2Help social tariff scheme.

CE / The Chair commented that although DVW supported customers with flexible payment plans, there was a risk if it allowed bad debt to increase. SJ explained that DVW ask the customer questions about ability to pay, the customer's circumstances etc. and review the flexible plan every 6 months and an annual review is in place for fixed payment plans. CE/The Chair commented that she could see a lot of work being done and customers being supported but asked what reporting is in place so that Ofwat can be assured that DVW are providing enough support to their customers.

ADJ felt there must be an obstacle for the Here2Help application process as the uptake on this tariff is slow. ADJ and CE/The Chair offered to review the application form. There was some concern as to whether the wording of the criteria requirement of having a meter fitted may deter customers from applying.

Action: TJ to send Here2Help application form to ADJ and CE/The Chair for review

Action: ADJ and CE/The Chair to review the Here2Help application form and feedback to DVW

Action: SJ to send application form to SOH for tone of voice review .

DVW advised that the Here2Help form could not be submitted online.

CHALLENGE: The CCG challenged DVW to ensure that this functionality is added to the DVW website as soon as possible:

Action: SJ to look at facilitating an online application via the DVW website

A decision was also made for DVW to start accepting telephone applications on the agreement that the customer will forward relevant documentation to DVW within 30 days.

DECISION: DVW to begin accepting telephone applications for Here2Help.

TJ also gave an update on the work that is being done in the community and with local charities and organisations to promote the Here2Help and Help2Pay schemes.

12. Homeserve Update

SJ gave an update on the new partnership with DVW and Homeserve which provides emergency cover for pipework. The policy will cost £9 per year, for the first year, for customers who subscribe and is marketed by Homeserve.

ADJ gave an update on CCWater position with regards to this type of partnership and advised that they would like to see co-branded material. SJ and CE/The Chair expressed some surprise with this as the customer is entering an agreement with Homeserve rather than DVW.

13. Openwater

SJ gave an overview of Openwater (www.open-water.org.uk) – the portal for non household retails competition and explained that a lot of work had taken place to support DVW's 15 customers eligible for this. She explained DVW would operate in a shadow market until April 2017 and that Ofwat were supportive that of DVW wouldn't a separate team in place to deal with these queries / customers due to the small numbers of customers this is applicable to and the resource required.

SJ will meet with these 15 businesses in the New Year and advised that DVW staff have been given in-house training in how to deal with these customers queries

14. Members Update

ADJ gave an update on the Delving into Water report which was published this month.

Action: Lia Moutselou (CCWater) to send SJ the report

Report findings:

CCwater Non Household (NHH) Customer Tracker	England	Wales						
Trust	7.6%	8.20%	DVW - 8.34%	DCWW - 8.01%	SVT - 7.41%			
Water Services Satisfaction	92%	95%	" 94%	" 94%	" 95%			
Sewerage	74%	71%	" 78%	" 65%	" 81%			
NPS score	2	33	" 31	" 30	" -8			

Attitudes To Water Research

Our research results show that more could be done to raise awareness of ways to save water and increase in awareness of the metering option. Two separate samples were taken for England and Wales with a sample of 1,008 Welsh residents and a sample of 3,161 residents in England. There are some significant differences summarised below:-

Water meters

- Wales sample reports a lower figure on household meters (W39% v E49%)
- Of these with a meter, Welsh respondents more likely to say they asked for the water meter to be fitted (40%) – England (33%)
- Higher % of customer in Wales would not be willing to have a meter installed (W 23% and E 19%)
- More people in Wales need more information regarding the benefits of a water meter (W 14% and E 11%)

Awareness

More people in Wales not aware of campaigns and initiatives on how to use water wisely (W45% v E38%). However in the past 12 months the number in Wales who have said that their water company has made them aware of ways to use water wisely has increased by 8% whilst the figure has remained stable in England (W58% v E61%)

Tap water or bottled water

More people in Wales prefer tap water and a big reduction in Wales on people thinking water is poor in terms of taste and smell (13%decrease)

Recycling behaviour

Welsh households tend to recycle, for all types of items, in greater numbers

- 3% of Welsh households do not do any recycling, whereas in England this figure is around 7%
- Welsh households do not do any recycling, whereas in England this figure is around 7%
- Welsh households are around 5% more likely to rinse their recycling in used washing up water than those in England (64% W and 59% England)

NHH Competition Research in Wales

The report contains some key findings:-

- Customers In Wales are happy with their current service and the price of their water and sewerage provider
- Just over half of customers are initially supportive of the principle of introducing competition in the water and sewerage sector
- Support for competition drops considerably when customers understand the level of savings that are likely to be achieved
- Customers in Wales are content with the Welsh Government's policy position – there is no strong push for retail competition in Wales

15. CCG Website Presence

CE/The Chair commented that, disappointingly, there was no any presence of the CCG on DVW's website. She would like to see. As agreed in previous CCG meetings, it was expected that the CCG would have a presence on DVW's website which would give an introduction to the work of the CCG and include the following information:

- Background Information to the CCG to include the ToR when adopted
- Meeting agendas
- Minutes when approved by the CCG
- Biographies / Photographs of CCG members
- CCG roles and responsibilities

Action: SJ provide a website link to CE/The Chair to send to Ofwat who had a dedicated section on their website for CCGs

Action: SJ to look at links to other CCGs from the Ofwat website for other Company CCG information

Action: SJ to prioritise this as urgent with web developers

16. Items and date for the next meeting

Members agreed that the next CCG meeting should take place mid / end January 2017

Action: TJ to send dates to CCG

Action: Any member of the CCG who is unable to attend the meeting to provide an update, as appropriate, via email to TJ for the Members Update agenda item.

Action: TJ to post and email the minutes