
FRIDAY 10 JUNE 2022

MEETING HELD AT THE GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL, STATION ROAD, PETERBOROUGH
AND ONLINE

MEETING NOTES

PRESENT:

Chair and Independent Member: Melanie Laws

For CCW: Barbara Leech (online)

For Environment Agency: Roger Martin

For the Communities theme: Mary Coyle, Independent

For the Customer theme: Simon Roberson, Independent

For Economic Impact theme: Sarah Glendinning, CBI and Iain Dunnett, New Anglia LEP (online)

For National Farmers Union: James Copeland, Vice Chair and Independent Member

Water Forum Independent Author: Sarah Young

For the Company: Heidi Mottram, Andrew Beaver, Louise Hunter, Claire Sharp, Richard Warneford, Jim Strange, Ross Smith, Elaine Erskine, Andy Duff and Colin Day (online)

Jill Slater (online) and Judith Huffee (Water Forum Secretariat)

NOTES AND ACTIONS

1. Welcome, apologies and aims of the meeting

Melanie Laws (MJL) welcomed Members to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Lesley Crisp, Graham Dale, Melissa Lockwood, Richard Powell, and John Torlesse.

2. Notes and actions from the last meeting

On the new arrangements for the Forum, Members need to consider how it will report on PR24. It was agreed this can be discussed in afternoon session and the Scottish Water example given in Agenda Item 7 paper would be picked up.

There were no other matters arising and the minutes were approved as a true record.

3. Members' Deliberation

Members had been supplied with the following meeting papers:

- Our Purpose
- Annual Performance Report
- PR24 Programme
- Papers A, B and C

Members discussed the papers they had received and prepared for discussion with the Company.

4. General Company updates and questions

MJL welcomed the Company to the meeting.

The Company gave a general update on their current position, advising they are in a stable position and highlighting the recent C-MeX results which put the Company in second place for 2021/22.

On Storm Arwen, Members recommended that once the Jacobs report was complete this should be used to engage with customers to highlight how the Company deals with extreme weather events and how the Company engages with other utility companies, including where responsibility lies between these companies during these events.

On the innovation fund, the Company advised that the National Leakage Centre was an industry project and one of the key elements of the fund was collaboration. Stream would initially cover water, which was the main driver; however, the plan was to extend this to the wider utility industry.

Members noted the publication of the Coasts and Rivers report and found it to be a useful and well presented document that would be of interest to customers. It was clear for customers to see what the Company was doing and going to deliver. The Forum would like the Company to be more vocal and share more information on this report.

On the Ofwat common framework, Members commented this looked like they were being proactive and acknowledging that there is an issue on asset maintenance and needs to be a common framework across the industry. Some assets can have a life span of over 100 years so it is very important that the Company look at this, although any changes to the process of assessing costs are likely to take two AMPs to implement. The gas and electricity sectors have done a lot of work in this area so there is potential to learn from them.

Members noted that storm overflow legislation was going to be a challenge so needs a really honest discussion. The Government needed to understand the risks and the decisions that were being taken. Customer expectations are that this is the Company's job and there needs to be a full open discussion on responsibilities across the industry. The Company needs to get this message out to customers including on cost. With the current cost of living, the Company said it expected to see a dip in support for environmental spend, but this would depend on when the research is carried out as priorities are changing on a weekly basis.

5. Our Purpose

Members had been supplied with a paper which was taken as read, and Ross Smith (RS) gave an overview, covering key points. The report was an evolution from the Our Contribution report and now tied in with the Company's Purpose. The Company were reviewing the measures included in the report with customers to make sure they were reporting on areas that fit with customers' expectations. RS highlighted that the report will be similar to the Our Contribution and to the Coast and Rivers report in format. The full draft report would be circulated to Forum Members prior to the Performance and Delivery Sub-Group meeting. The Company welcomed input from the Forum.

Members advised the following:

- Report needs to reflect what customers were saying and cover the topics important to them.
- Report focused on what had gone well, it needed to also include what hadn't gone well, to give readers a balanced view. It needed to flag performance that isn't where the Company would expect to be such as D-MeX or water resource issues in Hartismere.
- There needed to be a range of case studies including a split of NW and ESW case studies.
- There needed to be continuity and once measures were agreed with customers these need to be the same year on year for the AMP.
- There was an opportunity to connect with the Coast and Rivers report.

- On the corporate natural capital account, Members asked if there was any narrative to compare with what other water companies or the wider utility industry were doing in this space. The Company advised that there were only a few other organisations who have done the same and to the same extent, although they expected this area would develop over the next few years and so they should be able to benchmark as more organisations go through this.
- Ordering of measures needed to be considered to help engage with customers using the document to keep interest of reader.
- It was missing a broader articulation of the impact the Company had on the areas they serve. It needed to showcase the extra things they do beyond core services more clearly.

6. Annual Performance Report

Members had been supplied with a paper which was taken as read, and Jim Strange (JS) gave a high level overview of performance in particular in areas where the Company had not met its target.

Customer measures

Company advised:

- The Company were delighted to have ended the year second for C-MeX, a lot of work had been carried out by the teams to achieve this score.
- It still had an issue with customers being aware of the financial support available. The Company did a lot of work during annual billing and had seen an increase in people contacting the Company to discuss their bill and the support available. Regarding customer awareness of financial support, Members were keen to understand if the results reflected who was being asked, as if those customers are financially stable it would not be of interest. Members challenged the Company to review demographics and target particular areas rather than mass marketing. The Company said it would look at this and feed back to the Forum. **Challenge: Company**

Water measures

Company advised:

- As part of the APR the Company were putting forward a case to Ofwat regarding Storm Arwen and the impact this had on performance, including interruptions to supply. The Company would present the report Jacobs carried out, which detailed the impact and how the Company dealt with the incident.
- CRI remained in the same position as last year. While work was continuing to deliver against the DWI transformation plan and performance had improved, it would not impact on the CRI score for a number of years and the score would reduce once the full programme of work is complete.
- End of year leakage performance had just missed the target in both areas. The Company started the year behind target due to the winter months in 2020/21 and they had done a raft of things to bring performance back to current levels.
- Visible leaks had seen a reduction from 12 days to five days and is a good performance compared to the industry, this was due to changes in process and installing data loggers across the network, with more work to be done.
- Innovation funding would also allow Company to set up a leakage centre to give them a better place to test leakage models impact under different scenarios including soil types, temperatures.

Wastewater measures

Company advised:

- The Company was ramping up the Bin the Wipe activity and continue to see positive results. The Company was also working with Water UK on Bin the Wipe as it was being rolled out as a national campaign and would update members when more information is available. **Action: Company**

- On EPA, the Company had received a 4-star rating, with only one amber measure for discharge compliance, with three failures. The Company was monitoring this year's performance as the measures were increasingly difficult and now measure for both wastewater and water assets.

In general the Company advised that this year performance was mixed. Depending on the greenhouse gases measure they were expecting a reward; however, this could be impacted if Storm Arwen's impact on performance was included in relevant measures.

7. PR24 Programme

Members had been supplied with a paper which was taken as read.

Members would like to see the draft methodology to inform them how it would impact the Company and therefore the work of the Forum. **Action: Company**

Members highlighted the importance of triangulation; they were keen to understand the process and their role. **Action: Company**

As part of the discussions Members and Company representatives broke into groups to discuss next steps. Key points were:

Assurance questions

Customer Engagement Panel:

- Does NWL have a genuine understanding of its customers' priorities, needs and requirements?
- Has effective triangulation been carried out?
- Has NWL engaged with its customers on a genuine and realistic range of options?
- Has NWL's customer engagement been an on-going, two-way and transparent process?
- Does NWL understand the needs of different groups of customers, including both household and non-household?
- Has NWL effectively engaged with its customers on longer-term issues?
- Has NWL engaged with customers on current performance, using industry comparison?

Full Forum:

- Does the PR24 plan fit within the Company's long-term plan?
- Does the plan address affordability for all customers, particularly those struggling to pay?
- Has the business plan been informed by a robust and systematic assessment of operational resilience?
- Are the proposed outcomes, performance commitments and ODIs stretching?
- Are large investment proposals robust and deliverable and do they represent the best option for customers?
- Does the plan fit with how wider societal priorities are being addressed by other agencies?

Timetable

2022		Other Task & Finish Groups as determined by Forum	Customer Engagement Panel reviews of research and engagement activity, shared with full Forum
Sept	Full Forum meeting: Overview of plan structure and key questions to be addressed Long-term strategy Draft WRMP development		
	CEP: Approach to customer engagement		
Oct	Full Forum meeting: Enhancement cases overview Environment theme		
	Task & Finish Group: Response to draft WRMP		
	Nominations & Review Committee: Annual member survey		
Nov	Task & Finish Groups: Individual enhancement cases Responses to draft DWMP		
Dec	Full Forum meeting: Overall package of outcomes and costs, and relationship with customer evidence (led by CEP)		
	Nominations & Review Committee: Check progress		
2023			
Jan	Full Forum meeting: Ofwat final methodology and impact on plan		
Feb	Task & Finish Groups: Review WINEP Final DWMP		
Mar	Full Forum meeting: Outcomes of customer engagement (led by CEP)		
	Task & Finish Groups: Responses to draft WRMP		
May	Full Forum meeting: Review Bronze book Develop Forum response		
July	Full Forum meeting: Review Silver book		
	Task & Finish Group: Final WRMP		
Aug	Full Forum meeting: Review Gold book		

The meeting concluded and Members then resumed in camera where their meeting review took place – a summary of this review is in Appendix 1.