

## Notes from meeting on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016

9.30am Malmaison, Piccadilly, Manchester

### Attendees:

<p><b>YourVoice members:</b>          Andrea Cook: Independent Chair          Bernice Law: Independent Deputy Chair          Tayo Adebawale: North West Flooding and Coastal Committee          Alice Richards: National Farmers Union          Damian Waters: Confederation of British Industry          Andrew White: Consumer Council for Water</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b>          Keith Ashcroft: Environment Agency          Allen Creedy: Federation of Small Businesses          Alistair Maltby: The Rivers Trust          Richard Jarvis: Public Health England          Robert Light: Consumer Council for Water</p>	<p><b>United Utilities:</b>          Gaynor Kenyon: Corporate Affairs Director          Mark Abbott: Regulatory Contracts Manager          Louise Beardmore: Customer Services Director          James Bullock: Director of Economic Regulation          Jose Davila: Commercial Director – Business Retail          Jo Harrison: Asset Management Director          Ken Dillon: Secretariat, Customer Research &amp; Reporting Manager</p>
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### 1. Chair's opening remarks and comments

Members were welcomed to the July meeting of the YourVoice panel.

### 2. YourVoice forward agenda cycle

The panel reviewed and welcomed a proposal for agenda items to be discussed at successive meetings over the period from July 2016 to March 2019 inclusive. The panel agreed the following additional items should be included;

- Policy updates:
  - APR consultation responses, Oct 16; Consultation on ODI updates, Dec 16; Approach to Resilience , Mar 17
- Papers for noting:
  - NHH draft determination updates Oct and Dec 16

The date of the October meeting was also agreed (6<sup>th</sup> October).

### 3. Actions of the last meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, and matters arising:

The minutes from the previous meeting were noted and accepted as an accurate record. The list of outstanding actions was reviewed, with updates being provided where items did not appear on the agenda.

Action M3/018 – the Chair asked that members forward their review of Board Assurance template documents as soon as possible.

M4/027 – ODI Correction. This action was noted as completed and approved by the subgroup members and subsequently by the full panel. Following this approval the company advised that it would be providing the same information to Ofwat.

# YourVoice meeting notes

New action – the Chair asked the secretariat to circulate a speech made by Cathryn Ross relating to the challenge of investment needed for resilience and the issues posed by affordability considerations.

## 4. Water Framework Directive – paper and presentation (for approval)

The company presented an overview of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and commented that in the light of the 'Brexit' vote, members should understand that most of the EU environmental regulations are based upon international agreements (not just EU), and are therefore still valid and binding.

The presentation summarised the company's approach to the WFD;

- Ensuring a sound understanding of customer priorities and the value they place on improvements to influence the plan. There are, in some instances, affordability clauses in cost:benefit cases which emphasise the importance of customer research and evidence of customer priorities, particularly when costs outweigh benefits.
- Developing a robust evidence base for any requirements, so that investment is only made where benefits will be realised.
- Implementing a mix of 'end-of-pipe' solutions with catchment based solutions to deliver cost effective river quality improvements at an acceptable level of risk.

Members were asked to support the company's approach. The panel agreed that there is a case to be made to encourage organisations to try to reduce the phosphorous load in the first place (beginning-of-pipe). The Company advised that it is working with companies such as Nestle and Sainsbury's on various projects and that discussions with companies adding phosphorous to their products will follow.

The panel also commented that it would be important that should the company undertake research on the customer priorities in this complex subject area, it should ensure that customers fully understand the complexity of the issues and adjust their language accordingly.

A detailed briefing paper was made available for members to review.

## 5. Non-household Retail Price Control Re-opener

The panel was provided with an update on the work on the Price Control re-opener for the Non-household Retail division. The Chair of the subgroup commented that the process had been very thorough and inclusive, and that the company believed it had benefitted from the subgroup's involvement and contribution.

The panel noted that the subgroup report on the company's engagement is now complete and had been provided to members for review and sign-off authority, in line with the action noted during the previous meeting. The report will be co-signed by the Chair of the main YourVoice panel and the Chair of the YourVoice NHH retail subgroup.

The report is to be sent to Ofwat at the same time as the company's submission on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July. The Chair of the subgroup asked for the YourVoice panel approval to go ahead with submission to Ofwat, and this was agreed. Members thanked Bernice Law and her colleagues for an excellent piece of work which had been demanding of their time.

Action – subgroup Chair to submit the report on customer engagement to Ofwat by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

# YourVoice meeting notes

**Update on action (27/07/16)** – the YourVoice subgroup report for Ofwat was successfully submitted a day earlier than planned, and this was coordinated with the company’s own submission.

## 6. Annual Performance Reporting – review of 12 month cycle (for approval)

The company provided an update on the timeline for the Annual Performance Reporting (APR) cycle and the requirements to engage with the panel. It was agreed that the company will work to improve the engagement with customers and stakeholders during the consultation stage, including using web-based survey apps (e.g. SurveyGismo) and the use of Plain English Crystal Mark accreditation.

The customer summary of the 2015/16 Annual Performance Report (APR) complete with members revisions was further reviewed by members, prior to sign-off. Members were also shown the creative treatment of the YourVoice Chair’s statement on the APR, and requested that a separate web-link be arranged so that this would be easy for customer to access on the website.

Action – separate web-link to be set up for the statement from the Chair of YourVoice on the 2015/16 summary APR.

Sign-off of the APR and publication will be mid-July, after the UU Board has approved the final document.

## 7. Performance Reports (item brought forward, reporting by exception)

### 7.1 Wastewater performance commitments summary

- The summer storms in Cheshire has affected the Sewer Flooding measure.
- The company is focused on its capital programme to limit and reverse the deterioration in the “contribution to rivers improved” measure.

### 7.2 Water performance commitments summary

- The company reported it had been challenged by a water quality event the previous weekend – a burst in the water main in Accrington, 200 metres deep underground, had caused 2,500 households to be without water for 12 hours or more.
- It was noted by the panel that 2 of the measures in the water scorecard (Water Quality Service Index and Water Quality Events) are very dependent on random events over which the company has limited control.

### 7.3 Household Retail performance commitment summary:

- The company noted the SIM survey data was taken during the recent flash flooding in a week that saw a 300% increase in telephony traffic:
  - 980 sewer flooding jobs had been raised in a single day;
  - Results are due in August.
- Work is ongoing throughout the water industry on the future of the Service Incentive Measure (SIM).
- The Brand Tracker Value for Money update will be available from mid-August

# YourVoice meeting notes

## 8. Update on water quality post-Franklaw

The company provided a presentation to explain the level of engagement which is taking place with the Drinking Water Inspectorate, the key areas of concern, the structure of the water transformation programme and the programme of activities aimed at improving water quality.

The panel asked about its role in regular dialogue on the water quality transformation plan and the benefits of inviting the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) to attend at an appropriate point. The company suggested that DWI attendance might be appropriate at key milestone delivery points and following publication of the DWI report on the Lancashire water quality incident.

## 9. Drought plans – copy of plans prior to public consultation

The company provided a presentation on its Drought Plan process which was noted by YourVoice members. A full copy of the Drought Plan was provided for members for reference.

Discussion centred on the process of consultation, and members suggested making copies of the plans more widely available (for example via public libraries), and widening the venues used for the consultation to include other areas across the region, as there was a view that current arrangements are largely centred on Cumbria.

Action – company to review opportunities to make copies of the Drought Plan available via public libraries and to increase the number of consultation venues regionally.

**Update on action (27/07/16)** – arrangements have been made to add an additional consultation venue in Cheshire, in addition to the existing venues in Cumbria and Lancashire. The Drought Plan will be available via a link on the corporate website and an e-shot will be sent featuring this link to circa 700 stakeholders who may have an interest in the Plan. Making copies available via public libraries has not been achievable at this point.

## 10. AOB

The Chair reminded members of the offer from the Consumer Council for Water to provide training for Customer Challenge Group members on the requirements of the Ofwat Price Review process. Andy White was asked to provide further details of the content and YourVoice panel members were asked to let Andy know if they wanted to attend.

Members suggested that the Environment subgroup be reformed to help consider the environmental elements of engagement and planning. Volunteers and nominees were put forward (Tayo Adebawale, Alice Richards, Keith Ashcroft and Alistair Maltby).

The meeting was then closed. Date of next meeting, Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016.