



CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Public Session

Tuesday, 3 June 2008

City Inn Westminster, 30 John Islip Street, London SW1P 4DD

Present	Chair	Dame Yve Buckland
	English Regional Committee Chairs	David Bland Charles Howeson Sir James Perowne Andrea Cook
	Wales Committee Chair	Diane McCrea
	Independent Member	Timothy Hornsby Mike Barnes Narendra Makanji
	Chief Executive	Tony Smith
	Secretary to the Board	Steven Harrison
	In attendance :	
	Head of Corporate Services	Jane Morris
	Head of Public Relations	Dave Thompson
	Head of Policy and Strategy	Nick Ellins
	Head of Consumer Relations	Carl Pegg

1. **Apologies**

1.1 There were no apologies.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

2.1 Charles Howeson declared his interest as a trustee of the estates of the 19th Duke of Somerset.

3. **Minutes of the public Board meeting held on 1 April 2008 and any matters arising**

3.1 The minutes of the public Board meeting held on 1 April 2008 were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.2 Matters arising:

- With regard to section 4: "Hearing from the water companies", it was suggested that the slide presentations given by the water companies were put on the web site, as well as the minutes, in order to give a better understanding of the key messages.
- With regard to section 4, the Head of Policy and Strategy explained that a paper looking at renewable energy and water companies would be brought to the July meeting for consideration.

4. **Quarterly complaints report**

4.1 The Head of Consumer Relations updated the Board on complaint numbers and performance for the months February to April 2008 and in general for the previous year. He particularly looked at:

- Complaint handling
- Complaint categories
- Contacts
- Complaint handling
- Outcomes
- Performance measures

4.2 The Board discussed the report at some length and concluded that:

- The Board paper was to an excellent standard providing a very comprehensive report
- Thanks should go to all staff concerned
- Note should be made of the successful introduction of the new TAP system
- The concept of continuous improvement must be adopted to ensure the best possible standards for the consumer - CCWater must push improved standards internally if it was asking the companies to improve
- The customer services working group should be reconstituted with new terms of reference including

CRMs and key members with experience. The Wales Committee Chair will be joining the group.

- Consistency must be achieved to ensure all consumers' complaints are treated the same across all offices.
- Benchmarking should be used to set challenging standards.

5. Committee Chairs' Annual Reports 2007-08

5.1 The Committee Chairs gave summaries to their committee reports on their local activities and contribution to CCWater's Forward Programme highlighting particular points:

5.2 Northern

- Northumbrian Water's two year abatement of 'K'.
- Significant improvements in practices at United Utilities' offshore call centre due to committee audit.
- Influenced Northumbrian Water, United Utilities and Hartlepool Water to ensure meaningful customer communications and availability of facilities during the introduction of PayPoint/Payzone.

5.3 Central and Eastern

- Significantly improved the new connection process at Severn Trent.
- Committee advice has improved first time complaint resolution.
- Some companies proactively advising of surface water rebates.

5.4 Western

- South West Water and Wessex Water introduction of innovative tariff trails.
- Significant improvements in complaint handling by companies.
- Liaison with MPs leading to questions on affordability raised in the Commons.

5.5 London and South East

- Constant monitoring of Southern Water's customer Service Programme.
- Persuaded Thames Water to change their Assessed Household Charge from an averaged fixed charge to one that reflects the number of bedrooms.
- Persuaded GLA and the EA to work collaboratively on the Affordability and Metering Study with Thames Water.

5.6 Wales

- Influenced water companies to introduce automatic GSS payments on a voluntary basis to align with England.
- Took up sewer flooding problem on behalf of local residents and put in place a flood forum procedure

with Dwr Cymru now being implemented for all significant flooding problems

- Successfully put consumers' views at the centre of the price increase debate via the Wales PR09 forum.

5.7 Board members agreed that the reports had been very useful in painting a national picture of how much CCWater had achieved in the past year.

5.8 In discussion it was suggested that reports from the regions / Wales could form the basis of an intelligence feed to Ofwat.

6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1 The Chief Executive highlighting points from the written report commented on:

- CCWater in the media
- The water price review in 2009
- CCWater's new complaints handling system - TAP
- CCWater's continuing relationship with the All Party Parliamentary Water Group (APPWG)
- Health and Safety in the organisation

6.2 The Board noted the report.

7. Finance Report

7.1 The Chief Executive presenting the report explained that it provided a summary of current financial performance. In summary, against the budget allocation, to the end of April, the organisation had consumed 6% of the resources allocated to CCWater, with an overall underspend against profile of £110k.

7.2 The Board noted the report.

The meeting closed.