



CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Held in Public Session

Tuesday, 8 June 2010
Victoria Square House, Birmingham

Present:	Chair	Dame Yve Buckland
	English Regional Committee Chairs	David Bland Andrea Cook Charles Howeson Sir James Perowne
	Wales Committee Chair	Diane McCrea
	Independent Members	Mike Barnes Timothy Hornsby Narendra Makanji
	Chief Executive	Tony Smith
In attendance:	Deputy Wales Committee Chair	Norman Thomas
	Secretary to the Board	Mike Jackson
	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Nick Ellins
	Head of Corporate Services	Jane Morris
	Head of Public Relations	Dave Thompson
	Complaints and Performance Manager	Evan Joannette (part)

CB151 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

151.1 Apologies were received from Colette Isaacs and Carl Pegg.

151.2 There were no specific declarations of interest other than those already entered in the Register of Interests.

CB152 Approval of Board Minutes

152.1 The minutes of the Public Board meeting held on 2 March 2010 were submitted for approval.

AGREED: That the minutes of the Public Board Meeting held on 2 March 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed.

CB153 Actioning of Board Decisions

153.1 The Board Secretary submitted the List of Outstanding Actions relating to Public Board Meetings.

AGREED: That those items identified as having been completed be discharged. Board Secretary

CB154 Chief Executive's Report

154.1 The Chief Executive presented his report which included the referral by Bristol Water to the Competition Commission to re-determine the company's price limits as set under the Price Review 2009; achievements in speaking up for customers; influencing water policy and leading the organisation.

154.2 An appendix was included in the form of a performance scorecard which summarised:

- Benefits for Customers and Business Plan Progress
- CCWater's Governance and Financial Performance
- CCWater Staff
- CCWater: Reputation and External Activities

The scorecard demonstrated that a high level of performance had been achieved.

AGREED: That the report be received.

CB155 Reports from the English Regional and Welsh Chairs relating to local committee meetings

155.1 Minutes of the following local committee meetings were submitted:

- Central and Eastern Region Committee - 27 January 2010
- London and South-East - 10 March 2010
- Northern Committee - 18 March 2010
- Wales Committee - 26 January and 27 April 2010-06-21
- Western Region Committee - 25 February and 27 May 2010 (verbal)

155.2 Each Chair reported on their local meeting and responded to questions put by members. The following were among the points made:

- (a) There had been a significant increase in the number of abandoned calls for South Staffs. Water
- (b) The major issue in London and the South East was metering
- (c) The media interest regarding drought warnings in the northern region and the circumstances relating to the issue
- (d) The number of complaints in relation to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, which was said by the company to be stabilising
- (e) The worry in the western region regarding the demand for higher and higher water standards by the Environment Agency which would affect a large number of beaches

155.3 There was concern about the lack of a standard approach to sewer flooding and inclusion in the Risk Register which had a significant immediate effect on property values.

AGREED: That the minutes be received and the comments noted.

CB156 Consumer Complaints and Enquiries Year End Report 2009/10

156.1 The Complaints and Performance Manager presented a report on behalf of the Head of Consumer Relations informing the Board of complaint numbers and commenting on performance and consumer satisfaction for 2009-10.

156.2 The report identified company complaint trends and looked at how effective the strategic actions put in place had been to address areas of concern. The initiatives taken to improve the complaints handling service to consumers were summarised.

156.3 The Chair advised the Board of the comments made by Colette Isaaks, in her absence, on the report. She had pointed to the significant drop in the number of complaints (14% compared to the year before) and considered this to be evidence of how effective the 'Right First Time' policy had been in improving complaint handling by companies. The Complaints' Team were to be congratulated.

156.4 The key lessons for the future were the importance of managing consumer expectations effectively and the need to communicate to consumers the beneficial effect of CCWater's interventions on companies' complaints handling.

156.5 One issue identified was why if companies had so many complaints were there so few investigations? Companies should be asked this question directly. Other ways of approaching this issue were discussed by members.

156.6 It was considered that it would be helpful to know in relation to investigations how many were found in favour of the customer or the company. Head of Consumer Relations

156.7 The Chief Executive identified two main issues, namely how were companies dealing with investigations and what was CCWater's policy stance with regard to companies resolving complaints by making payments.

AGREED: (1) That the report be received and complaints staff congratulated on its quality; Head of Consumer Relations

(2) The Complaints Team in conjunction with Head of

the Executive Team submit proposals to Board members to address the outstanding issues identified above; and

Consumer Relations

(3) Companies be asked directly by Committee Chairs to explain why there were so few investigations.

Head of Consumer Relations/
Committee Chairs

CB157 Finance Report - April 2010

157.1 The Finance Report was submitted setting out financial performance against the budget for 2009/10 and financial performance against the 2010/11 budget for April 2010. Members discussed the report in detail.

157.2 There was a year end underspend of £416k for 2009/10.

157.3 For April 2010 there had been an overall spend of £447k against a budget for the month of £488k. The one small budget overspend (£887 re accommodation) was purely a phasing issue.

157.4 The Chief Executive was asked to consider how best to ring fence unallocated spend to meet future specific needs.

Chief Executive

AGREED: That the report be received.

CB158 Code of Governance and Codes of Practice Review

158.1 The Board Secretary submitted draft changes to the Code of Governance, Code of Practice for Members and the Code of Conduct for CCWater Staff for consideration by the Board.

158.2 Approval was sought to the implementation of the proposed changes subject to any objection received from Defra or WAG.

158.3 Some changes had already been made to the Code of Governance as agreed by the Board on 2 June 2009 with Defra and WAG's agreement.

158.4 The suggested changes were set out in the governance documentation and had been previously considered and supported by members of the Conduct Sub-Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Minor 'tidying-up' changes had also been suggested by the

Staff Council.

158.5 The most significant changes to the Code of Governance related to:

- Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Remuneration Committee to reflect when they were acting under delegated authority on behalf of the Board
- Changes re Annex A para A1.1 relating to the minimum number of formal Board meetings required in a year (this was originally revised from 6 to 5 but as a result of the Board discussions on 11 May this was being further reduced to 4) and para. A2 with regard to the time required for notice of meetings.
- Updating the document to reflect current structures e.g. 'Policy Manager' instead of 'Regional Manager'

158.6 One of the main changes to the Codes of Practice was the insertion of specific paragraphs setting out the arrangements with regard to media contact reflecting current CCWater policy. Breaches of the Code could give rise to disciplinary action.

AGREED: (1) That the proposed changes be agreed subject to no objections being raised by Defra or WAG; Board Secretary

(2) That the Expenses Policy, Gifts and Hospitality Policy, Appeals Procedure and Declarations of Interest be explicitly referred to in the Code of Practice for Members and the appropriate documentation be included as Annexes as appropriate; and Board Secretary

(3) That the revised governance documentation be publicised once it had been cleared and made accessible to Board and Committee members and staff. Board Secretary

CB159 Board and Committee Attendance

159.1 A report was submitted enclosing the record of attendance at Board and Board Committee meetings during 2009/10.

159.2 Sir James Perowne advised that he had attended the Board Seminar in May 2009 though not the Board meeting as correctly recorded and Neil Sykes had deputised for Andrea Cook at the March 2010 meeting.

AGREED: That the record of attendance be received subject to the amendments set out in para. 159.2 above and that it be published on the CCWater website.

Board Secretary

CB160 Annual Declarations of Interest

160.1 Members had been advised prior to the Board meeting of the entries appearing against their names in the Register of Interests. Members had been asked to update the entries in the Register by notifying the Board Secretary accordingly as required under CCWater's governance arrangements.

160.2 A revised Schedule was tabled which showed the present entries in the Register as updated. Charles Howeson confirmed he would no longer be Chairman of the UK Seafish Industry Authority from 1st July 2010.

160.3 Any further amendments were to be sent to the Board Secretary as soon as possible.

AGREED: That the revisions be noted and the current Declarations of Interest, as updated, be published on CCWater's website.

Board Secretary

CB161 Holding of Board Meeting in Private

AGREED: That the Board confirm the decision to hold the first part of the meeting in private session on grounds of confidentiality (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.)