



CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Held in Public Session

Tuesday, 7 September 2010
Victoria Square House, Birmingham

Present:	Chair for the meeting	Sir James Perowne
	English Regional Committee Chairs	David Bland Andrea Cook Charles Howeson
	Wales Committee Chair	Diane McCrea
	Independent Members	Mike Barnes Timothy Hornsby Colette Isaaks Narendra Makanji
	Chief Executive	Tony Smith
In attendance:	Secretary to the Board	Mike Jackson
	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Nick Ellins
	Head of Corporate Services	Jane Morris
	Head of Consumer Relations	Carl Pegg

CB185 Appointment of Chair

Sir James Perowne chaired the meeting in Dame Yve Buckland's absence as her duly appointed deputy.

CB186 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

186.1 Apologies were received from Dame Yve Buckland who had to attend a meeting in London.

186.2 Charles Howeson declared a new interest as Regional Chairman of Harvey Nash plc. There were no other specific declarations of interest other than those already entered in the Register of Interests.

CB187 Listening Session

187.1 There were no members of the public in attendance.

CB188 Approval of Board Minutes

188.1 The minutes of the Public Board meeting held on 6 July were submitted for approval.

AGREED: That the minutes of the Public Board Meeting held on 6 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed.

CB189 Actioning of Board Decisions

189.1 A schedule was submitted detailing the outstanding and outgoing actions from Board meetings held in public.

AGREED: That the completed items be discharged.

Board Secretary

CB190 Chief Executive's Report

190.1 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.

190.2 The final decision of the Commission was to allow Bristol Water to raise prices by 15 per cent (£23) by 2015, which meant that even before inflation was taken into account the company's average water bill would rise from £157 in 2009-10 to £180 in 2014-15. This would be difficult for some customers to accept and manage to pay.

190.3 CCWater were pleased to have helped customers to almost halve the 29 per cent (£45) rises originally proposed by Bristol Water. CCWater would now go through the information behind the decisions in detail as it became available. Bristol Water would also be scrutinised extremely closely over the next four years to be sure that customers' money was used wisely, and Bristol Water delivered the investments it had been funded to do.

190.4 The Chief Executive also outlined the achievements in speaking up for customers; influencing water policy and leading the organisation.

190.5 It was reported by the local committee chair that Karen Gibbs, Policy manager, had worked very effectively in relation to the Water Resource Management Plan for Thames and the South East.

190.6 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

190.7 It was reported that the number of complaints continued to reduce. This was welcomed as a measure of CCWater's success in this area.

AGREED: That the report be received.

CB191 Reports from the English Regional and Welsh Chairs relating to local committee meetings

191.1 Minutes of the following local committee meetings were submitted:

- Central and Eastern Region Committee - 28 April and 21 July 2010 respectively
- London and South-East - 14 July 2010
- Wales Committee - 12 July 2010
- Western Region Committee - 27 May 2010

191.2 Each of the Chairs of the above committees reported on their local meetings and responded to questions put by the other Board members. Amongst the key points discussed were the handling of the drought issue and whether, as some members believed, the recent constraints on member expenditure on expenses had affected the level of service that could be provided to consumers.

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

CB192 Finance Report

192.1 The report for the period 1 April to 31 July 2010 was presented by the Head of Corporate Services and showed an overall underspend of 5% or £89k for the year to date.

192.2 A large part of the underspend was due to slippage against budget as well as under spending of the Policy and Strategy budget and Personnel Overheads. A year end under spend of 9% or £550k was forecast.

AGREED: That the report be received.

CB193 Benchmarking of CCWater activities

193.1 The Head of Consumer Relations presented a joint report with the Head of Corporate Service informing the Board of CCWater's position in relation to costs, performance and satisfaction compared to other organisations, using data from 2009/10.

193.2 CCWater were in a strong position in relation to the overall tangible value delivered to water customers compared to our costs e.g. a saving of £50 per customer in the 2009 Price Review compared to 2004.

193.3 Complaint handling performance had significantly improved and compared favorably to other organisations.

193.4 Corporate Services costs were comparable in terms of costs to other Defra and other government organisations particularly taking into account the need support eight offices. There was potential for further reductions in costs particularly from estates if changes were made to CCWater's network of local offices.

- AGREED:** (1) That the changes to table 3 (consumer satisfaction) and footnotes be approved; Head of Consumer Services
- (2) Annex B para. 2.1(Ofwat SLA)be amended to make it clear that up to April 2010 Ofwat provided part of a Human Resources Service; and Head of Corporate Services
- (3) That the report be received and noted.

CB194 Report on Welsh language Scheme

194.1 A paper and report on the Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) and its implementation from July 2009 to August 2010 was submitted together with an updated version of the CCWater WLS incorporating the Welsh Language Board’s (WLB’s) recommendations on new reporting and monitoring arrangements.

194.2 It was planned to translate the amended WLS into Welsh and submit it to the WLB, for approval of the amendments by the 10th September 2010.

- AGREED:** (1) That the WLS implementation update and report to WLB for the period of July 2009 to August 2010 be approved; and CCWater Wales Committee Policy Manager
- (2) That the revised WLS incorporating the WLB’s recommendations on reporting and monitoring arrangements be agreed subject to Annex 1 (contacts) being updated.

CB195 Decisions taken under delegated authority

195.1 The Board Secretary reported on the decision made by the Delegated Powers Sub-committee relating to freezing of members’ pay.

195.2 Under the Board’s governance arrangements, delegated action was required to be reported to the next appropriate Board meeting.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

CB196 Programme of Board and Committee meetings to March 2011

196.1 A programme of Board meetings to March 2011 was submitted which incorporated the three-monthly cycle agreed at the Board discussions in May.

196.2 The programme replaced the dates for Board and Committee meetings previously agreed.

AGREED: That the programme be approved.

Board Secretary

CB197 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.)

End of meeting