

Subject to confirmation



CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Held in Public Session

Tuesday, 4 October 2011

Victoria Square House, Birmingham

Present:	Chair	Dame Yve Buckland
	English Regional Committee Chairs	David Bland Andrea Cook Charles Howeson
	Wales Committee Chair	Diane McCrea
	Independent Members	Mike Barnes Colette Isaaks Narendra Makanji
	Chief Executive	Tony Smith
In attendance:	Secretary to the Board	Mike Jackson
	Head of Corporate Services	Jane Morris
	Head of Consumer Relations	Carl Pegg
	Head of Policy & Research	Deryck Hall
	Public Affairs Manager	Mike Dalton
	Public Relations Manager	Kate Eccles

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CB286 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

286.1 An apology had been received from Timothy Hornsby. There were no specific declarations of interest other than those already entered in the Register of Interests.

CB287 Listening session

287.1 There were no members of the public in attendance.

CB288 Minutes of the Public Board Meeting held on 7 June 2011

288.1 The minutes of the Public Board Meeting held on 7 June were submitted for approval.

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June be approved as a correct record and signed.

CB289 Schedule of Outstanding actions from Public Board meetings

289.1 The above schedule was submitted indicating the present position in relation to each of the actions listed.

AGREED: That the present position be noted and the actions shown as being completed, be discharged.

CB290 Chief Executive's Report

290.1 The Chief Executive presented his report which included a Performance 'Scorecard' with information under headings relating to 'Benefits for Customers and Business Plan progress', 'Governance and Financial Performance', 'CCWater staff' and 'Reputation and External Activities'.

290.2 Some of the key points contained in the report were as follows:

- Complaints to water and sewerage companies had dropped by 4.5%
- All targets for the management of handling complaints had been exceeded
- CCWater had challenged United Utilities (UU) company policy for charging consumers for surface water and highway drainage charges which they had failed to collect. This resulted in UU agreeing to only backdate surface water and highways drainage charges to the start of the financial year (unmetered consumers) or the last meter reading (metered consumers) where billing errors were found to be the company's fault

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- CCWater's consumer support site received 9,961 visitors in quarter one 2011/12. These visitors made 1,540 searches, viewed 13,494 answers and submitted 334 complaints or enquiries. Over 97% of consumers using the site were able to answer their questions from the information provided; only 3% needed to use the form to contact us.
- In early August evidence was submitted to the Thames Tunnel Commission, chaired by Lord Selborne, and CCWater attended a hearing on 17 August to voice customers' concerns.
- During quarter one 2011/12 CCWater received four Freedom of Information (Fol) requests. All were responded to in the 20 day deadline. This brought the total for the year to nine.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

CB291 Europe Update

- 291.1 Members considered a report presented by the Head of Policy and Research updating them on European activity which focused on the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Waters and reform of the Common Agriculture Policy.
- 291.2 Concern was expressed about the potential for increased bills resulting from the Keep Britain Tidy's (KBT's) view of which water quality standard under the revised Bathing Water Directive should determine 'Blue Flag' status. 'Good' would equate to slightly better than current standards but KBT could opt for 'Excellent'. A report on the implications was scheduled to be submitted to the Board in March 2012.

Deryck
Hall/Ana-
Maria Millan

AGREED: That the report be noted.

CB292 Minutes of Wales and English Regional Committees

- 292.1 Minutes of the meetings of Wales and English Regional Committees that had become available since the Board meeting on 7 June were submitted as listed below.
- Central and Eastern Committee
(4 May 2011)
 - London and South-East
(11 May 2011)
 - Western Committee
(26 May 2011)

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- Wales Committee
(11 January and 12 July 2011)

292.2 The 'drought issue' was coming to the fore again in some areas. Preparations being undertaken by companies to gear up for Winter were discussed.

AGREED: That the minutes be received.

CB293 Complaints benchmarking report

293.1 The Head of Consumer Relations presented a report benchmarking performance on complaint handling using data from 2010 /2011.

293.2 The report demonstrated that CCWater compared favourably to other public sector organisations. CCWater was best in class for consumer satisfaction with speed, and performed well when measured by consumer satisfaction with outcome and staff courtesy.

293.3 At 62%, consumer satisfaction with outcome was better than ombudsman services achieved but less than Consumer Focus Extra Help Unit (EHU).

293.4 At 75%, our consumer satisfaction with service had increased compared to 2009-10. However, work still needed to be done to close the seven to 14 percentage point gap between CCWater and comparator organisations such as Consumer Focus EHU, Consumer Direct and Passenger Focus.

AGREED: That the report be noted and staff congratulated on their performance.

CB294 Finance Report

294.1 A report was submitted on financial performance to end of August 2011.

294.2 The Report showed an under spend of £29k or 1% after underspends had been moved to contingency budgets. The largest over spend on an individual budget was £24k due to an increase in accommodation costs. Current budgets appeared adequate for the remainder of the year.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

CB295 Members' Code of Practice

295.1 A revised Members' Code of practice was submitted which

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incorporated changes from a new code of conduct published by the Cabinet Office.

295.2 Members had already agreed the changes previously by email.

AGREED: That the amendments be confirmed.

CB296 Action taken under delegated powers

296.1 The proposed Board objectives for 2011/12 incorporating members' comments were submitted for ratification. They had already been approved by the Chair and Chief Executive.

AGREED: That the Board objectives be agreed and a progress report be submitted in the New Year.

Mike
Jackson/Yve
Buckland

CB297 Any other business

297.1 It was suggested that members needed a day together next year to consider the future agenda and working arrangements. The day could possibly be combined with a Board meeting in Wales. The newly appointed Consumer Advocates also needed to have time with Board members.

AGREED: That the options be investigated.

Mike
Jackson/Yve
Buckland

CB298 Holding of Board Meeting in Private

298.1 **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