

Your Voice Stakeholder Sub Group

31 January 2024

Meeting Minutes

	<table><tr><td>Present Jo Lappin Chair Bernice Law Damian Waters Peter Fitzhenry James Copeland Sue Lomas</td><td>In Attendance Chris Matthews Shy Bayly Michelle Atkinson Emma McCabe Andrew Cunliffe</td></tr></table>	Present Jo Lappin Chair Bernice Law Damian Waters Peter Fitzhenry James Copeland Sue Lomas	In Attendance Chris Matthews Shy Bayly Michelle Atkinson Emma McCabe Andrew Cunliffe
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1	<p>Introduction and apologies.</p> <p>Jo Lappin (JL) opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and thanking them for their attendance. Apologies were received from Steve Parry and Emma Degg.</p> <p>Actions emerging from the previous meeting are either in an agenda pipeline or currently part of offline discussions between sub group members and UU officers.</p> <p>The Chair again raised the issue of stakeholder representation, comparing the attendance at the ENW stakeholder event, which had twelve representative organisations present for a smaller geography. In the interest of resilience and to ensure full participation she suggested that membership of the Group was extended to cover other bodies, such as local authorities, environment agency, Employer Representative Bodies etc. Members agreed that work should be undertaken to increase stakeholder representation on the group. (Action).</p>		
2	<p>Water Industry landscape including storm overflows.</p> <p>Chris Matthews (CM) set out a number of prominent themes that are affecting the water sector including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This is an election year and storm overflows are likely to continue to feature across the media and other forums. UU intend to continue to set out its planned investment case.2. UU is maintaining a consistent message around its investment plans to tackle storm overflows. UU is committed to moving the debate on from the problem of storm overflows to its proposed storm overflow solutions.3. The wider water industry is committed to tackling storm overflows by 2050.4. The publication of near real time overflow data has been delayed allowing time for a cross industry national launch of real time data information.		

	<p>Q. Bernice Law (BL) stated that UU had promised to release storm overflow real time data by December 2023. This commitment was made at the Your Water Your Say customer engagement events and its disappointing to see this timeline slip.</p> <p>A. CM advised that there is a strong industry wide drive for a collaborative launch and that there had been some slippage as resources had been diverted to dealing with the recent, unprecedented rainfall events. CM further advised that related pollution levels had stabilised.</p> <p>Q. BL asked if it was then worth getting out social media messages to set out why there was a delay in publishing this real time storm overflow information.</p> <p>A. CM advised that UU was currently responding to specific update requests and were not planning to proactively provide a wider communications piece.</p> <p>Q. Damien Waters (DW) stated that perception is often more powerful than reality. CBI members have recently linked the performance of utilities to a downturn in investment in the region. DW stated that it is important to tackle these perceptions in the medium/long term.</p> <p>A. CM agreed that its difficult to respond to perceptions. However, UU was trying to maintain a consistent message about how its future investment plans are designed to tackle the underlying problems associated with storm overflows.</p> <p>Q. DW pointed to the successful switch in perceptions about the nuclear power/industry and that there may be lessons to be learnt from that sector.</p> <p>A. CM agreed and also point to the seven thousand new jobs that will be created within the region on the back of UU’s investment plans.</p> <p>Q. James Copeland (JC) suggested that it may be worth focusing upon ‘customers’ money that is going into the infrastructure in the next AMP.</p> <p>A. CM agreed that it is a difficult message to get over to customers and stakeholders, but that UU was committed to generating new employment, training, and business opportunities, improving the environment through its major AMP8 investments.</p>
3	<p>Demand Management</p> <p>Michelle Atkinson (MA) & Emma McCabe (EM) delivered a presentation about how UU was working to reduce water consumption whilst also saving customers money. This agenda item links to issues previously raised by members of the sub group. The presentation highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demand management challenge – reducing water use by households and non-households. • Current water usage and the planned water saving targets by 2030.

- A regional profile that sets out the socio economic make up of the North West and the link between bad debt and metered/non metered supply. Debt is higher amongst non-metered customers at 12% compared to 5% for metered customers.
- The steps being taken to promote water meters and the safeguards for customers where water meters do not deliver the expected benefits.
- UU's five key pillars aimed to reduce water consumption.
- The way UU was using data and partnership working to target activities based on customer water use.
- Specific case studies of water saving activities within the education sector and allotments.

Q. JC asked if UU took account of specific medical or cultural requirements when reviewing customer water consumption levels.

A. EM advised that UU was conscious of the need to ensure that it considers medical, life style or cultural factors. Analysis of customer usage would include geography, priority services status/data, payment difficulties, household composition and size.

Q. JC also asked if the allotment pilot was being rolled out across the region.

A. EM advised that a case study and lessons learnt will be posted on UU's website and social media to share this best practise as a way of encouraging other organisations to adopt new practises or to change how they use water.

Q. JC asked if the concerns about how other Utilities had rolled out Smart meters was causing UU any specific issues.

A. MA advised that water meters are of a different nature and are primarily located outside the property. However, UU was aware of these Smart meter concerns and are working directly with customers to address any specific issues. UU's Switch Back Promise and Best Price Guarantee can provide customers with a large degree of billing certainty if they decide to switch to a water meter.

Q. DW asked if the education sector water saving lessons are applicable to other business sectors.

A. EM agreed and stated that UU was currently looking at how it can share these water savings into the care home sector. Again, any water saving lessons would be shared across UU's social media platforms.

JL asked if a significant reduction in water consumption could have an impact on the viability of UU's AMP8 Business Plan if revenue levels reduced. It was agreed that this should be considered further at a future meeting.

4

Performance deep dive: street works

The stakeholder sub group had previously expressed an interest in obtaining a deeper understanding into the issues that are affecting the street works ODI performance. Andrew Cunliffe (AC) from the street works team provided the sub group with an explanation of the factors affecting UU's performance in this area. AC highlighted:

- The scale of street works across the region.
- The performance measures covering this activity – also the impact of the region's different Highway Authorities.
- How UU manage its street works delivery partners

Q. BL asked about the split between direct and indirect street works workforce.

A. AC confirmed that all street work delivery is conducted by UU partners and that there are around nine hundred partner employees engaged with these tasks.

Q. BL asked if UU issued contract penalties associated with poor performance.

A. AC advised that UU pass on any fixed penalty fines to the partners and that it collaborates closely with partners to ensure contract compliance. UU monitor KPI's with its contract partners and it incentivises partners using a pay/gain mechanism. Ultimately in the event of persistent underperformance UU will issue a contractor with a 'red card.' This would see them removed from the contract framework.

Q. JC pointed out that these streetworks delivery partners are in the region's 'shop window.' Poor performance with one utility can have implications for their ability to win work from other utilities. JC asked what steps are taking to ensure that local businesses can operate during street work operations.

A. AC stated that UU is aware of this critical role and that it works closely with its contract partners to minimise any practical impact upon local business. This might include text messages warning of street operations or leaflets advising of the times of operations etc. At a strategic level, UU share its planning data with its contract partners who often work across a range of utilities. This is enabling these partners to advise UU about the practical implications of any proposed street works.

Q. JL asked as to whether there was any significance in the two worst performing areas (St Helens and Warrington) being neighbours?

A. AC agreed to look into this.

JL asked that AC return to a future meeting to provide a performance update on this critical ODI. **(Action)**.

7.	<p>Quarterly performance report</p> <p>The majority of ODI's were performing to target. The main areas of concern had featured in other agenda items and CM focused this agenda item upon the ODI for growth and new development measure. The sub group agreed that Growth & New Development ODI would be the subject of a further in-depth agenda item at a future meeting. (Action).</p>
8.	<p>Future consultation proposals (your water your say)</p> <p>Shy Bayly (SB) set out a range of options for rolling out a series of regular county level customer and stakeholder engagement events. These events (broadcast engagement events, stakeholder and community events and thematic events) could occur twice a year. SB also outlined the potential structure of each session and the organisational arrangements, including event personnel. The sub group comments, and feedback about these proposals included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of existing stakeholder forums as a means to access stakeholders. • The need to balance the audience views from these engagement events with that from other customer engagement activities such as research. • The need to reflect any regulator guidance in any proposed engagement structure and activities. • The need to consider the extra work generated by these type of engagement events. The last series of your water your say events resulted in significant additional follow up work and further local meetings. • To ensure that the outcomes from these engagement proposals are manageable and do not take on a life of their own. • An annual cycle of themed engagement workshops may be more productive. • There is merit in considering an independent chair, who is separate from the company, to address the perception point raised earlier in the meeting. • These proposed engagement sessions would also be a good opportunity to communicate about the scale and extent of the future investment plan opportunities.
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>BL advised that there is a ICG chair's meeting with OFWAT/CCW to consider the findings of their report into the future of ICG groups.</p> <p>JL advised that there has been a recent call for evidence around the role of regulators. JL would circulate Cumbria's respond to this call for evidence. (Action).</p>
10	<p>DONM 15 April 2024 (14.00-16.00)</p>