

**MINUTES OF THE WATERSHARE PANEL MEETING (PUBLIC) – 26 April 2021**

**Present**

Panel Members

Lord Matthew Taylor (Chair)  
Nick Buckland (NB)  
Adrian Bratt (ABr)  
Carole Theobald (CT)  
Mark Duddridge (MD)  
Richard Lacey (RL)

**In attendance:**

Expert Advisors

Michael Barnes – CCW expert adviser (MB)  
Kevin Ward – EA expert adviser (KW)

External Stakeholders

Amber Jenkins – Barnstaple Jobcentre Plus (AJ)  
Barbara Shaw – Westward Housing (BS)  
Ed Vidler – FreshStart Panel (EV)  
Steve Meakin – Freshstart Panel (SMe)

Customer one (C1)  
Customer two (C2)  
Customer three (C3)

SWW Representatives

Susan Davy – Group Chief Executive Officer (SD)  
Sally Mills – Regulatory Director (SMi)  
Iain Vosper – Operations Director – Wastewater Services (IV)  
Jo Ecroyd – Customer Service Director (JE)  
Adele Barker – Group Chief People Officer (ABa)  
Matt Crabtree – Engineering Director (MC)  
Phil Barker – Director (PB)  
Polly Rock – Minutes (PR)

**Apologies:**

1.	<b>Welcome and introduction to the meeting</b>
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the second public meeting of the WaterShare+ panel and extended a warm welcome to the customer attendees and external stakeholders.
1.2	The Chair introduced the purpose of meeting and the role of the Watershare+ advisory customer panel in representing the interests of customers, providing an independent view of the business plan, including commitments and board pledges.

<p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p>	<p>The purpose of the panel is also to increase awareness of Watershare+ across the region, to further develop greater customer involvement and to review and advise SWW on the needs and views of customers.</p> <p>An important role of the advisory panel will be to report annually on the work undertaken by the panel and to provide an overview of the activities and performance of the company.</p> <p>The CEO of SWW introduced the South West Water (SWW) team.</p> <p>All of the panel members and expert advisers also introduced themselves.</p> <p>Due to lockdown restrictions, the meeting was being held virtually.</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p>2.1</p>	<p><b>Approval of minutes</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 12 January 2021 were approved.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p>3.1</p>	<p><b>Overview of our services in North Devon</b></p> <p>The SWW executive team provided an overview of services that SWW provides to North Devon, noting that 91% of North Devon customers are satisfied with overall service, in line and representative of the customer base across the SW.</p> <p>The overview included details of SWW's board pledges, covering issues that matter most to customers including addressing water poverty, delivering outstanding customer service, environmental leadership and supporting the regional economy and communities.</p> <p>SWW also explained how extra investment in the Green Recovery would support the creation of up to 500 regional jobs, addressing climate change and supporting public health.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p><b>Listening session</b></p> <p>The Chair explained that the next part of the agenda was to receive and respond to questions from customers.</p> <p>One question was raised in relation to SWW's use of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and the level to which wastewater pollution incidents are reflected in executive bonus arrangements.</p> <p>SWW highlighted the importance that environmental performance has on our regional economy and wellbeing of our communities within our operating region. This is why SWW takes the guardianship of the natural environment very seriously. We are currently investing £150 million in our largest environmental programme for 15 years, with a commitment to reduce pollutions by 80% by 31 December 2024.</p>

<p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p>	<p>SWW shared the work it is doing in respect of improving environmental performance noting SWW's Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (published on SWW website), Green Recovery plans and SWW's voluntary bathing water information service (Beach Live).</p> <p>It was also noted that a storm overflow is not in itself a measure of an environmental impact and acts as an important trigger to investigate. Whilst water companies are often at the end of complex drainage systems, there are multiple causes including highways, private drainage, and rural run-offs. Working in partnership with others is key to having a plan for the region and protecting the environment.</p> <p>KW explained the Environment Agency's (EA) role in monitoring the storm overflow data.</p> <p>NB noted the comments and highlighted SWW's transparent approach to Executive pay in price review business plan submitted to Ofwat.</p> <p>EV asked about SWW's approach to customer research and engagement. The use of customer focus groups was an important feature in developing business plans with c.70 held during the last price review. The role of the new Watershare + advisory panel would be critical in representing the views of customers going forward.</p> <p>BS asked about the increasing importance of digital service inclusion. JE explained that customers can engage and communicate in a variety of ways, both digital and other methods so that individual customers can choose what fits their individual circumstances.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p><b>Overview of affordability in the region</b></p> <p>The CEO introduced the session noting that affordability has always been a priority for SWW, and is the only Company committed to addressing water poverty by 2025 – the rest of the industry following by 2030.</p> <p>Respective members of the SWW team presented aspects of the customer affordability strategy in the North Devon service area and the innovative solutions and toolkit measures in place to support customers, including how SWW had flexed the approach during Covid.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p><b>Q and A session</b></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting for further questions.</p> <p>Two questions were raised by a customer. The first question was that if water bills have come down over last 10 years, where will SWW get the funding for future investment? SWW said that keeping bills as low as possible is a Board Pledge and the way this is achieved is being as efficient as possible so that any investments can be made in the best interests of customers for the longer term.</p> <p>The second question related to SWW's approach to smart water meters and dual billing and the flexibility a customer could have. It was noted that any customer choosing to switch to a</p>

6.4	<p>metered supply can return to an unmeasured supply within two years if they choose to do so.</p> <p>BS wanted the meeting to note her appreciation of SWW taking a holistic approach to customer affordability.</p>
7	<p><b>AOB and meeting closure</b></p> <p>7.1 The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution, and especially the customers for making the time to attend and for sharing their questions. The next public meeting will be on 7 July 2021.</p> <p>7.2 The meeting was duly closed.</p>

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