

MINUTES OF THE WATERSHARE PANEL MEETING (PUBLIC) – 7 July 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)

Customer one (C1)
Customer two (C2)

SWW Representatives

Susan Davy – Group Chief Executive Officer (SD)
Dr Lisa Gahan – Regulatory Director (LG)
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)
Polly Rock – Minutes (PR)

Apologies:

1.	Welcome and introduction to the meeting
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the third public meeting of the WaterShare+ panel and extended a warm welcome to all attendees.
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.
1.3	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.
1.4	The CEO of SWW introduced the South West Water (SWW) team.
1.5	All of the panel members and expert advisers also introduced themselves.

1.6	Due to lockdown restrictions, the meeting was being held virtually.
2.	Approval of minutes
2.1	The minutes of the meeting on 26 April 2021 were approved.
3.	Engaging customers on the environment
3.1	The SWW executive team provided an overview of their engagement approach with customers explaining that research and engagement is at the heart of operations and day to day business.
3.2	The company highlighted that environmental performance measures across the Outcome Delivery Incentives (ODIs), Environmental Capital framework and Green Recovery proposals are all based on customer priorities following both the most extensive research yet in developing the New Deal business plan and our ongoing customer research.
3.3	SWW explained that customers have feedback that taking the lead on environmental matters is a priority with climate change and storm overflow use becoming increasingly important.
3.4	The company confirmed that it continues to track customer priorities as part of its business-as-usual research, including environmental aspects with 94% of customers having trust and confidence in the company and satisfaction with overall services consistently high at 90%.
3.5	The Panel will commission further research to help lead meaningful conversations to drive deeper understanding of customer priorities and preferences in specific areas such as the environment and storm overflows.
4.	Environmental Focus – performance
4.1	The company advised they have committed to spend £150m in their largest environmental programme for 15 years.
4.2	The company provided an overview of environmental performance advising c87% of environment measures are outperforming or on-track but there are some areas of focus (pollution incidents).
4.3	Areas of excellence noted by the company included biodiversity, sewer blockages, sewer collapses and internal sewer flooding.
4.4	Note was given to South West Water being appointed as the water provider to the Isles of Scilly.
4.5	The company have also been redoubling efforts in those areas where performance isn't where it needs to be, particularly around pollutions and have halved the average monthly pollutions since implementing a new plan in September 2020. SWW added detailed plans for this area would be covered in the next item.

<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p>	<p>Environmental Focus – our plans</p> <p>The company presented an overview of their environmental plans and noted their wider strategy focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in the maintenance and upgrading of our assets and processes • Protecting and ensuring the quality of valuable sources of water • Finding ecologically sensitive ways of working • Minimising and managing waste responsibly • Taking steps to reduce our carbon footprint and meet Net Zero 2030 • Working alongside other organisations towards the shared goal of environmental protection. <p>Pollutions remains a key area of focus noting the improvement plans which have been published. The company noted they continue to work with the Environment Agency to identify improvements and to highlight future plans and investments and that they have halved the average monthly pollutions since implementing a new plan in September 2020, accepting there is more to do.</p> <p>South West Water also noted they recognised increasing public interest in the potential for pollution from storm overflows. During heavy rain stormwater overflows act as legal safety valves to prevent homes, gardens, roads and businesses being flooded with less than 1% of the water industry impact on ‘Good’ status being attributed to intermittent storm discharges in the South West area.</p> <p>SWW advised they are engaged with their regulators on legislative change as a member of the Storm Overflows Taskforce and have recently put forward Green Recovery acceleration plans to increase monitoring of the network and improve management, performance and understanding of storm overflows through investigation and work to reduce storm overflows.</p> <p>The company also advised we do all have a part to play in improving how we use our sewer system. Storm overflows can discharge through misuse of the system. Wet wipes make up more than 90% of the material causing sewers to block. South West Water has launched the ‘Love Your Loo’ and ‘Think Sink’ campaigns to bring awareness to this issue.</p> <p>In closing the company advised there is still much to do but are confident in their plans to deliver on their five-year plans.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>Views on performance</p> <p>The Panel’s expert advisor from the Environment Agency provided a view on SWW performance as measured through the Environmental Performance Assessment.</p> <p>Note was made to SWW’s current performance and positive movement being seen on SWW permit compliance which had reach best ever in 2020, although the volume of pollutions remains a concern.</p> <p>He was pleased to see the leadership focus and the energy being directed to the company’s published improvement plan, adding the challenge is significant but progress is being made.</p>

6.4	Examples of wider environmental performance and examples of collaborative working, innovation and best practice were also highlighted.
7	Listening session
7.1	The Chair explained that the next part of the agenda was to receive and respond to questions from customers.
7.2	One question was raised by two customers in relation to SWW's use of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and the level to which wastewater pollution incidents.
7.3	SWW highlighted the importance that environmental performance has on our regional economy and wellbeing of our communities within our operating region. SWW 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.
7.4	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).
7.5	It was also noted 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.
8.	AOB and meeting closure
8.1	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 the first Annual General Meeting held in Autumn 2021.
8.2	The meeting was duly closed.