

Minute of the 6th meeting of the Customer Forum
Held on 30th May 2012 in Dunfermline

Present: Peter Peacock (Chair)

Cowan Ervine

Johanna Dow

Agnes Robson

Dr Susan Walker

Dr Sarah Hendry

Bob Wilson (tele conf)

Apologies: Iain McTaggart

Trish McAuley (Deputy Director, Consumer Focus Scotland)

In attendance: Mark Nolan (Project Co-ordinator)

Douglas Millican (Scottish Water)(Item 4)

Belinda Oldfield (Scottish Water)(Item 4)

Alan Scott (Scottish Water)(Item 4)

Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Item 1 – Apologies

Apologies were NOTED.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th April 2012 were APPROVED.

Item 3 – Matter arising

The Chair informed the Forum that the Ministerial Objectives were still awaited but that the 2015-2020 Strategic Review would not be delayed. It was expected the Ministerial Objectives will be published in early June.

Item 4 –Scottish Water

Scottish Water came to discuss its consultation on its 25 year vision – “Shaping the Future”. This will go to the SW board at the end of next month. SW discussed many of the changes that had been made from earlier drafts, after feedback from the Forum as well as SEPA, DWQR and CFS.

The Forum was broadly supportive of the aims and welcomed the changes however it raised a number of points for SW to consider, including that, for a consultation, the document was quite long.

The Forum encouraged SW to remain focused on affordability issues noting that the application of RPI to prices when, for example, many pensions would be uprated by CPI, and as we were in a period of considerable economic uncertainty with unemployment high, and with the proportion of the population over 60 forecast to rise significantly, these factors alone could make a difference to affordability. The Forum continued to push the issue of value for money and how the customer would know they were getting this. Also, the Forum noted that the 25 year vision does not allow for a real term reduction in price where customers might share in any 'efficiency dividend', which should be a clear option.

Item 5 – Update on recent meetings

The Chair updated Members on his recent meetings with Opposition Spokesmen in the Scottish Parliament: Jim Hume MSP (Lib Dem), Alex Johnstone MSP (Conservative) and Richard Baker MSP (Labour). All three parties expressed support for the Customer Forum and increasing customer engagement in the water industry. All three were also willing to work with the Forum to encourage customer input into its work. Going forward the Chair was mindful that he had still to meet with the Scottish Greens, which would complete his meetings with all political parties represented in Holyrood.

The Engagement Committee also met for the first time. Douglas Millican, Belinda Oldfield and Alan Scott and the Scottish Water representatives on the committee. The first meeting was informal and agreed how the Engagement Committee would operate, what was appropriate for discussion at the Committee, that the majority of discussions with Scottish Water would take place at full Forum meetings.

Item 6, taken with Item 8 – Discussion on Scottish Water's research programme/ View on Research Programme

The Chair advised that the Engagement Committee will meet with Scottish Water to discuss in more detail the research programme. The Forum therefore needed to provide crisper feedback on the customer research programme and the 25 year vision.

Detailed feedback was considered and prepared for the Engagement Committee meeting.

Item 7 – Discussion on Scottish Water's Strategic Vision (CFP 07/12)

A lengthy discussion took place on the 25 year vision which provided Engagement Committee members with detailed feedback to discuss with SW at the next Engagement Committee meeting.

Item 9 – Proposed meeting dates for remainder of 2012

Proposed dates for meetings for the remainder of the year were circulated.

Item 10 – Dates and venue of next meeting

Wednesday, 27th June 2012, CFS Office, Glasgow

Item 11 – AOCB

The Communication strategy is on-going. An event is planned at the Scottish Parliament in September and it is hoped that as many Forum members as possible will attend. The Logo and Website design have been agreed and the website should go live in June.

A strategy has been proposed for the meeting in August.

Approved 27 JUN 2012