

**Minutes of the seventeenth meeting of the Customer Forum on 20 May 2013  
at the office of Consumer Focus Scotland, Glasgow**

Attendees: Peter Peacock (Chair)  
Fiona Ballantyne  
Jo Dow  
Cowan Ervine  
Sarah Hendry  
Agnes Robson  
Sue Walker  
Bob Wilson

In attendance: Robert Leask, Scottish Procurement (item 5)  
Douglas Millican, Scottish Water (item 6)  
Jim Mulholland, Scottish Water (item 6)  
Alan Scott, Scottish Water (item 6)  
Fiona Templeton (item 6)  
Adam Ralston, Water Industry Commission for Scotland  
Nelly Maublanc, Principal Policy Advocate  
Donna Very, Project Co-ordinator

### **Chairman's opening remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for absence**  
None

**2. Minutes of previous meeting (15/04)**

The Forum agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the last meeting.

**3. Oral update on current issues and events**

Agnes Robson and Fiona Ballantyne updated members on a recent and constructive meeting they held with Scottish Water to discuss the findings from the Forum's customer research. Scottish Water had been given copies of the Forum's report and a supporting document from the Forum's research representative, Emma Partridge, together with the full Mindspace report..

The Forum noted the recent resignation of Regina Finn, Chief Executive of OFWAT.

The Chair updated members on a recent water industry dinner he attended held by Shepherd and Wedderburn and which Sarah Hendry has also attended.

The Chair met with Douglas Millican, Chief Executive of Scottish Water and had discussions around OPAs (Overall Performance Assessment) measures and Service Improvement Measures (SIMs). Going forward, the Forum will agree the process to negotiate with Scottish Water on these.

The Chair met with Alan Sutherland, Chief Executive of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS). Mr Sutherland offered the technical expertise of WICS analysts to

assist the Forum understand OPAs. The Chair also met with Gordon Hughes, Chairman of WICS and updated him on current Forum activity. The Chair anticipated that there may be more direct and regular dialogue with the Commission in addition to contact with Alan Sutherland.

The Forum noted that Consumer Focus Scotland had changed their name to Consumer Futures. The Forum noted the implications of the change of role for Consumer Futures.

The future of the Forum will be discussed at a stakeholder liaison meeting in June.

#### **4. Revision to the SRC timeline**

The Forum noted the revised timetable for the draft and final determination as outlined by WICS.

#### **5. Presentation by Robert Leask, Senior Portfolio Manager, Utilities Scottish Procurement**

Robert Leask gave a very interesting and helpful presentation which outlined Procurement Scotland's utilities portfolio. The public sector contract for the water sector equates to approximately 20% of the competitive retail market and 99% of the public sector are on this contract. With a number of benefits, such as savings of £35million, efficiency tools, accurate meter reading and improved customer satisfaction, the contract has maximised competition and created a level playing field. Procurement Scotland will be tendering the contract again on 31/03/2014. Mr Leask gave some interesting insights into the priorities of the big public sector customers on pricing and the predictability of pricing in particular.

#### **6. Scottish Water**

Findings from Phase 2 Customer Research

Fiona Templeton gave a presentation on Scottish Water's phase 2 customer research - "Listening to Customers". Scottish Water had embarked on further research activities to continue to build on their understanding of customers. The presentation highlighted key findings and issues.

OPA

Scottish Water provided an overview of their proposals for the post 2015 period on OPAs. Scottish Water would like to retain OPA, subject to some minor amendments, in order that they achieve the upper quartile range in performance of those companies in England and Wales. One element Scottish Water would like to add is a measure of customer satisfaction which would have some similar features to SIM (the current performance measure adopted in England and Wales). This would be adapted for the Scottish customer experience. Fiona Templeton provided a background to the way Scottish Water collate customer satisfaction and how it is tracked.

The Forum were greatly interested in these proposals and look forward to working on the detail with Scottish Water. In indicating that the Forum had identified a wider range of potential improvements to the OPA measures, the Forum suggested that a small group of representatives from the Forum and Scottish Water meet to work through OPAs and the proposals in some detail together possibly with representatives of the WICs office.

## Service Improvement Report – Improving Customer Experience

Fiona Templeton presented Scottish Water's proposal for improving the Scottish customers' experience. The main proposal covers how Scottish Water communicates and engages with customers and improvements that can be made.

## Service Improvement Report – Climate Change and Invest to Save

Alan Scott set out Scottish Water's plans to ensure Scottish Water services are resilient to climate change and their commitment to reduce carbon emissions. Scottish Water plan to undertake investment that will result in longer term cost savings for their customers.

The Forum thanked Scottish Water for the final two SIRs and agreed that they would submit a follow up document in due course. There are a number of areas the Forum would like to discuss further.

### **Closing remarks**

The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 June, venue to be decided.