

Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Customer Forum on 5 October 2017

Attendees: Peter Peacock (Chair)
Andrew Faulk
Stuart Housden
Mairi Macleod
Bob Wilson
Agnes Robson
Sue Walker
Johanna Dow
Rachel Bell
Tom May

In attendance: Douglas Millican, Scottish Water
Simon Parsons, Scottish Water
Tom Harvie-Clark, Scottish Water
Molly Horsley, Scottish Water
Donna Very, Water Industry Commission for Scotland

Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for attending.

Declaration of conflicts of interest in relation to the Agenda

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes

The minutes were considered an accurate record and were approved.

Actions

Donna Very was asked to check an outstanding action with WICS.

Oral update

The Chair gave a brief update of the various activities of the Forum:

Community Energy Scotland

The Chair met with Community Energy Scotland (CES) to discuss engagement with Scottish Water. CES do not currently have any contact with Scottish Water but would be happy to do so to discuss energy and water issues within the community.

OECD update

The Chair updated members on recent meetings with the OECD. The Chair and Agnes Robson were interviewed by the Peers, who had been appointed as part of the review of the SRC process, and had attended a wash-up session giving all participants an overview of

their work. The OECD had now sent a draft note to all participants of this review. The OECD review considers the SRC process to be in very good shape but there are some improvements that can still be made. The Chair has been invited to the Network of Economic Regulators in Paris in November where the Scottish process will feature on the agenda. Douglas Millican (Scottish Water), Alan Sutherland (Water Industry Commission for Scotland) and Jon Rathjen (Scottish Government) will also attend.

Research Coordination Group (RCG)

Agnes Robson provided an update on the work of the RCG. The RCG had met for the second time and had a very wide-ranging and interesting discussion. The RCG had explored a research brief from Scottish Water and provided input. Scottish Water agreed to develop the research further based on these conversations.

Meetings

The Chair has met with Alan Sutherland, CEO, Water Industry Commission for Scotland. The Chair has met with Sam Ghibaldan, Consumer Futures Unit.

These meetings are regular catch-up meetings and are considered very useful.

Consumer Council for Water

Andrew Faulk attended a Consumer Council for Water - Customer Matters conference in London. The guest speaker was Sarah Hendry, Defra's Director of Floods and Water and there were some interesting workshops on debt/affordability and the 2019 price review.

Scottish Water Annual Consultative Meeting

Rachel Bell attended Scottish Water's ACM and provided feedback on the topics of discussion.

Recruitment of Policy Analyst

The Forum are recruiting for a Policy Analyst and the advert is now live on the Public Contracts Scotland website.

Scottish Parliament request

Alan Sutherland provided evidence at the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform committee in September and as a result the Forum has been asked to provide some information to the Committee. The Committee specifically wanted to know about the membership of the forum, the voice of the community and information on how rural, urban and island communities are represented. The Chair has drafted a response and will circulate to members.

Business customers

The Chair updated members on a meeting he had with Jo Dow, Bob Wilson and Tom May to discuss how the Forum should engage with business customers going forward.

Scottish Water

The Chair welcomed Scottish Water to the meeting.

The Chair thanked Scottish Water for sight of the working draft of the Strategic Projections document which is to be published in February 2018. The Forum asked Scottish Water to allow them time to reflect on this document and agreed to provide Scottish Water with comments at a future date.

Tom Harvie-Clark introduced Scottish Water's engagement approach for the SRC21 process. Scottish Water set out the timeline for the Engagement Plan. The Forum suggested some changes to Scottish Water as to when papers are brought to the Forum. The Forum emphasised the need for "set the scene" papers such as climate change and innovation to be brought to the Forum much earlier.

Andy Dunbar, Scottish Water's Water Service Strategy Manager introduced the first strategy paper on drinking water quality. The paper set out the direction of travel for Scottish Water in this area to ensure that Scottish Water continue to work on being compliant with drinking water quality regulations. Scottish Water provided an update on long term improvement trends and it was noted that water quality performance was now closing the gap with companies south of the border. Scottish Water provided an update on the strategies to improve water quality – organics, disinfection, lead and discolouration and the risks associated to changing environments. The Forum noted this paper and will provide comments.

Andy Dunbar introduced the second strategy paper, "Providing reliable water supplies". The paper set the scene on the integrated approach that Scottish Water are doing around resilience and explained their strategy. Scottish Water plan to improve response and recovery capability, increase reliability by increasing inspection and capital maintenance investment, increase the resistance of water supply to specific hazards and increase the redundancy in the water supply so that customers have access to a back up supply should it be needed. The Forum thanked Scottish Water for these papers and will reflect on them and provide comments at a later date.

The Chair thanked Scottish Water for attending the meeting.

AOB

The Forum will next meet in Edinburgh at the Jury's Inn on 17 October.