

Meeting: Sustainability and Resilience Panel

Date: 27th March 2017

Time: 10.00

Location: Milton House, Cambridge

Present: Craig Bennett (Chair), Alex Plant, Martin Bowes, Joff Edevane, Anne Ramsey (NE), Julia Beeden (Cambridgeshire CC), Ben Bishop (British Sugar), Ben Orchard (Adnams), Philip Pearson (RSPB), Jeffrey Halliwell (Chair of CEF), Tina Popple (AWS), Viktor Tzikas (River Nene Regional Park), Daniel Bean (EA), Rob Wise (NFU), Philip Rothwell (RFCC), Nick Sexton (AWS)

Apologies: Richard Powell (Wild Anglia), Lu Gilfoyle (AWS), Nilam Patel (AWS), Barry Bendall (Rivers Trust), John Giles (EA), Katherine Hardcastle (River Nene Regional Park)

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and introductions

CB welcomed attendees to Milton House and set the scene for the day.

JH gave a short introduction on the role of the Customer Engagement (CEF) and related panel groups and outlined Ofwats expectations around customer engagement and the role of Customer Challenge Groups (CCGs) in PR19 business planning. CCGs role includes challenging AW on customer engagement and monitoring performance on Pr14 obligations. There is an

additional focus on resilience and how other groups & sectors engage with customers.

AR asked how CEF groups ask customers what they want to pay for, JH replied that AW set the questions for customers and CCGs challenge AW on these. Additionally 'Given' consultancy undertake market research for AW.

CB invited all panel members to the next CEF forum on 17th May which will focus on vulnerable customers venue tbc but likely to be in the Peterborough area. Aims of the event will include:

- A better understanding of willingness to pay for environmental enhancement
- Ways in which the environment can be used to enhance mental health and natural capital

2. Presentation – Shop Window

Nick Sexton gave a presentation on AW 'Shop Window' project. This was followed by a site visit in the afternoon to Newmarket WRC to look at Nereda, 'Shepherd' and Sludge thickening technologies

The following comments were made by the panel:

- Presentation may benefit from a statement around climate change and things taking a longer time period to achieve due to an unpredictable future (DB)
- Maybe difficult to encourage reduced consumption as water is cheap, we may want to consider a points reward system similar to that used by Valencia Water (DB)
- Could there also be a focus on customer engagement techniques e.g. getting customers to act collectively as Marks & Spencer have done with their 'Plan A' approach (JH)

3. Presentations – EA ‘Catchment Priorities & Ways of Working’ and Natural England ‘NE Perspective on PR19 & catchment Priorities’

Themes arising from EA & NE presentations:

- Addressing channel physical modification and natural flood management may present opportunities to address a number of WFD non compliance pressures at the same time e.g. flooding, habitats, dissolved oxygen. Citizen Science approach could be considered to assess efficacy of investments (MB, JB & RW). DB stated that the EA would be interested in using this approach where it can be used to strengthen existing data and this is the ambition of the ‘Open Data’ project with caveats around accreditation
- Consider wider approach to flood risk by looking at land management, CAP and Agri Environment funding. Funding in these areas uncertain after 2020 (PR)
- There maybe a need to focus on outcomes rather than processes and clarity is required on what outcomes might be. Post Brexit AW has to assume standards will not be less stringent but there maybe different ways of achieving the overall outcome (CB). DB noted that reporting to Europe can involve complex reporting procedures and there maybe opportunities to simplify e.g. reporting km’s of river improved maybe a better measure for customers

4. Update from CEF – Alex Plant

CEF needs to challenge AW’s emerging plans for PR19, Defra has released their strategic priorities consultation which highlights their priorities to Ofwat. Resilience, sustainability and natural capital themes are addressed as is a focus on affordability. Johnson Cox (Ofwat) gave a speech on challenges to water industry which included a statement on bills staying low.

AW has refreshed its Strategic Direction Statement (SDS) this will be published with a 3 month consultation review period open to all. CEF will

review this work. Key changes from last version include greater weight of evidence for climate change, water supply sustainability reductions and impacts of growth

AW Natural Capital piece produced by Chris Gerrard, this is something the panel might review.

5. Work plan

CB presented draft work plan to group, potential future meeting as follows:

June 2017 – to discuss AW SDS and resilience. Possible presentation from RSPB on 'Blueprint for Water' and AWS on water abstraction issues and Water Resources East Anglia

September 2017 - Natural Capital theme

January 2018 – to finalise output to influence business plan

April / May 2018 – to inform final business plan due in August and review PR14 progress against obligations

Note: Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) releases from the EA are timetabled for 31 March 2017, 30 September 2017 and 31 March 2018.

6. Visit to Newmarket WRC to look at Shop Window technologies

Action: Nick Sexton to prepare one side factsheets on the technologies seen at Newmarket WRC for distribution to the panel plus a general summary of the shop window project.