

South Staffs Water
Customer Challenge Group (CCG) Customer Research Task Group
Minutes
Friday, 8th February, 2013

Attendees:

Colin Greateorex	CCG Deputy Chair and Lichfield Councillor
Barbara Julye	Head of Customer Engagement, South Staffs Water
Ryan Miller	Customer Engagement Coordinator, South Staffs Water
Amanda Borrmann	Project Manager, ICS
Scott Reid	Technical Director, ICS
David Wurr	Consumer Council for Water
Greg Marshall	Environment Agency
Ray White	Walsall Citizens Advice Bureau
ElinorCordiner	Principal Inspector, Drinking Water Inspectorate
Ralph Tennant	Federation of Small Businesses

Apologies:

Rachel Barber	Customer Operations Director, South Staffs Water
Matt Lewis	Finance and Regulation Director, South Staffs Water

1. Welcome and Introductions

Barbara Julye welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair (Colin Greateorex) explained the purpose of the meeting was for ICS to discuss and inform how they agreed the shortlist of Output Performance Measures (OPMs) to be included in the Willingness to Pay survey.

ElinorCordiner stated that she has replaced Jacqueline Atkinson on the CRTG.

2. Developing the Valuation Framework presentation

Scott Reid presented Developing the Valuation Framework for Cost Benefit Analyses which provides a methodology to agree the OPMs. The presentation covered:

- Aims and objectives of Willingness To Pay, customer engagement and stated preference
- The purpose and an update on the Focus Groups
- OPM Framework

During the discussion members of the CRTG raised questions and commented on several aspects of the presentation, these are as follows:

- Scott Reid confirmed to members that ICS had referred to previous MVA work and found it quite useful.
- Amanda Borrmann confirmed that customers receive one bill which itemises both water and sewerage.

- The subject of average water bills was raised – Amanda Borrmann stated that customers were informed at the most recent focus group that the average bill is £140 for water only companies and many customers were not aware of this.
- Greg Marshall asked how SSW and ICS decided upon the focus group locations. Amanda Borrmann explained that three locations were chosen, two urban and one rural. Walsall, Sutton Coldfield and Uttoxeter were chosen as they would provide a representative sample of SSW customers.
- Greg Marshall also asked if ICS selected different types of groups during the focus groups, and if so, was this to provide diversity of customer views – Amanda Borrmann responded that it was important for SSW to hear a range of views from a range of people in different circumstances, however this is not based on demographic
- Amanda Borrmann provided an update on the focus groups and explained that the feedback was generally fairly positive, barring a few misunderstandings relating to the descriptions of the attributes in the showcards. Amanda Borrmann stated that ICS and SSW will ensure all information displayed in the showcards is clear to understand for respondents.
- Clarification was sought in relation to the Peer Review – Scott Reid confirmed Ken Willis will be conducting the peer review and the purpose and role of a Peer Review is to:
 - Review the approach ICS has adopted
 - Comment on any deviations from UKWIR recommendations
 - Highlight any concerns and make recommendations for improvement
- The subject of face to face interviews with domestic customers was discussed – Amanda Borrmann responded that 500 Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) will take place with domestic customers and 300 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) will be conducted with business customers.
- It was questioned whether the CRTG had seen the output from the Water Resources customer engagement event – Barbara Julye stated that SSW is expecting a summary from the event shortly and will circulate once the information has been received.

3. Attribute List

Amanda Borrmann presented the list of attributes that had provisionally been agreed. The following questions and comments were raised during the discussion:

- Should SSW include more than one environmental attribute (also known as OPMs). Low Flow and Catchment Management were requested to be included with the list of attributes – Barbara Julye confirmed the request will be brought back to the business.

4. WTP Questionnaire

Amanda Borrmann proceeded to summarise the structure of the WtP survey, the following questions or comments were raised:

- A discussion ensued regarding inflation. Several members of the CRTG agreed that it is imperative that some information on inflation is covered in the survey – ICS suggested that to ensure information on inflation is available to customers, interviewers will be provided with a list of inflation figures for a given bill amount.
- It was suggested that any figure stated in the Choice Cards should be pre-empted with ‘this is for a five year period’. ICS confirmed that there is scope to include similar wording either in the Choice Cards, or in an explanation in the survey before the Choice Cards.

- There were several concerns regarding the structure and content of the survey and it was suggested, where possible, ICS produce a survey where customers could make informed decisions, based upon clear and concise information provided by ICS and SSW.

5. Recommendations

It was agreed that the following presentations would be circulated to group members:

- Developing the Valuation Framework for Cost Benefit Analysis
- WtP Questionnaire
- Attribute Cards (B1,B2,B3)

Barbara Julye asked the CRTG to provide feedback on the agenda items by Tuesday 12th February.

The agenda items include:

- Developing the Valuation Framework
- Attribute List
- Attribute Cards
- Survey Presentation

Barbara Julye agreed that the suggested attributes, Low Flow and Catchment Management, will be referred back to SSW for review and a decision will be relayed to the CRTG in due course.

6. Date and time of next meeting

To be confirmed.