

Sewerage Adoption Panel
Meeting on 22 September 2020 at 11.00am via MS Teams

In attendance:

Victor Olowe – Chair
Kate Raybould – Secretary
Nick Ayling – Thames Water
Gary Boddington – Anglian Water
Jenny Henman – Yorkshire Water
Marcus Maughan – Redrow
Richard Starritt – Severn Trent Water
Alison Tregale – South West Water
Sam Vernon – Bellway
Karl Walker – Seddon

Apologies:

Gavin Thorne – Barratt

	Item	Action
1	Introduction and Apologies The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the Panel. It was noted that the meeting was quorate, with the required number of representatives from both Sewerage Companies (SC) and developer members in attendance. Apologies had been received from Gavin Thorne.	
2	Declaration of Interests There were no interests to declare from any member.	
3	Future Meeting Arrangements It was noted that the meeting had been arranged as a matter of urgency due to the receipt of a change proposal for the panel to consider, which was initially received in January 2020 and formally resubmitted in July 2020 after the panel became operational in April 2020. In light of the urgent nature of the meeting, all members gave their consent to the waiver of the notice period for the meeting and the publication period for the change proposal in accordance with the panel's Terms of Reference.	
4	Approval of minutes of Shadow Panel Meeting held on 10th February 2020 The minutes of the Shadow Panel Meeting held on 10 th February 2020 were approved and there were no matters arising from the minutes. It was noted that the minutes would not be published as they did not relate to a formal meeting of the Panel.	

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Consideration of change request submitted by British Plastics Federation (BPF)

The Panel considered the change proposal submitted by the BPF relating to the change of maximum permitted depth of inspection chambers from 2m to 3m. It was noted that, in considering the request (change proposal), the Panel:

- should only recommend the change to Ofwat if there are compelling reasons for it to do so;
- should ensure that it has sufficient information to make a recommendation to Ofwat.

It was noted that the issue of depth of the inspection chamber had been considered in the consultation process and that this should be documented in the responses that were submitted to Water UK (WUK).

The Panel considered the anecdotal feedback about inspection chambers with a depth of 3m, which had resulted in difficulties of access for maintenance and CCTV. In addition, SC Health & Safety advisers had raised concerns regarding the risks to customer and public safety, particularly for chambers that were situated on private property.

The Panel noted that overall the numbers of 3m chambers being offered to (SCs) for adoptions is very low and it was acknowledged that there is a very limited application of 3m depth chambers in practice. The current specification is also in line with Building Regulations and NHBC guidance.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Panel required further information before making a decision on any recommendation to Ofwat. It was agreed that:

- further technical advice would be sought from the Water Research Centre Ltd (WRc) on the change proposal;
- the advice previously given to the Technical Review Group, particularly regarding health and safety concerns, would be reviewed;
- the WUK Infrastructure Policy Group (IPG) would be asked to provide input on the potential operational issues.

Contact WRc (KR/VO)

Check with WUK (KR)

Following review of the additional information, a further Panel meeting would be convened so that the Panel can finalise its decision on the change proposal and confirm its response to Ofwat.

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Panel recruitment

	<p>As Justin Gaggini is no longer on the panel, a replacement member will need to be recruited in accordance with the panel's Terms of Reference. Panel members should make any suggestions of potential candidates to the Chair and Secretary.</p>	
7	<p>Clarifications/minor changes to Code documentation</p> <p>The Panel noted that WUK have been receiving queries regarding clarifications to aspects of the Code documents or pointing out errors/inconsistencies. This has raised a question over the Panel's role in dealing with these issues and how far it extends to offering clarification or guidance on the Code documents, rather than only considering change proposals. One option is that queries are directed to the change proposal process and this can be used to rectify or clarify issues, even if a change is not formally recommended.</p> <p>It was agreed that the documentation must be consistent and kept up to date, and that there is a risk that providing bespoke indirect guidance and making regular minor piecemeal amendments will lead to further inconsistencies.</p> <p>The Panel suggested that general queries could be addressed to WUK as publishers of the Code documentation and WUK could then seek confirmation or advice from the Panel if required, but it is unclear whether WUK's remit in relation to the Panel extends to this.</p> <p>The Panel recognised that for companies, a lack of clarity on the documentation causes problems in responding to queries and also impacts on reporting metrics. There is a further related issue regarding regular updates to the documentation, which could form part of an annual review process carried out by WRc.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the instruction of WRc to periodically review the documentation would be raised with IPG; WUK would be asked to confirm whether it can provide guidance on its published documentation' the Panel will liaise with Ofwat in due course on a separate process for dealing with minor amendments to the documentation, including notifying them at least at six monthly intervals or as appropriate of any changes made. 	<p>Raise with IPG (AT) Raise with DS (VO/KR) Liaise with Ofwat (VO/KR)</p>
8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>It was noted that the BPF change proposal had also been sent to stakeholders British Water, The Home Builders Federation (HBF) and The House Builders Association (HBA), and no comments had been received.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that the change proposal had been published on the Panel's section of the WUK website and WUK are currently working on a new page for the Panel's meeting documents.</p>	
9	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that a further meeting to finalise the decision on the change proposal would be arranged for November, to take place within the three month period to report to Ofwat on the proposal. It would be a short meeting to consider the draft decision notice following the review of the additional information. The notice period for the meeting would be 20 business days.</p> <p>In 2021, meetings will be scheduled at least on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Arrange meeting (KR)</p>