

Official-level Water Saving Group (WSGO)

Room 308, Ergon House, London

6 February 2008

Attendees

Richard Wood (Chair)	Defra
Mike Walker	
Peter Jiggins	
Nieves Bottomley	
Chiara Sorisi	
Julie Dickason	
Andrew Frankton	Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)
Christine Ogden	Communities and Local Government (CLG)
Karen Gibbs	Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)
Rob Westcott	Environment Agency (EA)
Daryl Fossick	Ofwat
Barrie Clarke	WaterUK
Jacob Tompkins	Waterwise

Apologies: Martin Hurst (Defra), Ian Barker (EA), Paul Hope (Ofwat) and Bruce Horton (Water UK)

Minutes

1. Chair's opening remarks

Richard Wood welcomed Andy Frankton to his first meeting of the Water Saving Group (WSG). BERR had been invited to join the official-level group in light of the addition of a new work stream on water efficiency measures in industry and commerce.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Work stream reports

Each organisation leading on a work stream reported on progress made since the high-level meeting in November. In the case of new work streams,

members of the group set out their proposed approach.

3.1 Measuring success – overarching goal of the Water Saving Group (Defra)

Nieves Bottomley explained this work stream would have two strands going forward. First, the monitoring of progress/uptake of measures already adopted by the Water Saving Group (WSG) and, second, the setting out of specific contributions from each member towards the overarching goal of reducing per capita consumption in households.

On the first strand, most of the measures adopted by the Water Saving Group - like the amendment to Building Regulations, developing a better evidence base and extending the opportunities to metering in seriously water stressed areas - would have an influence on per capita consumption in the medium to long term. Therefore, Defra proposed to take this strand forward by working with WSG members (in particular the EA and Water UK) to analyse the draft Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs), which would give an indication of how the measures already taken by the Group have influenced assumptions in the WRMPs. Working with Ofwat, Defra also proposed to look at the June returns to assess whether there had been a change in the level of water efficiency activity since the Group was established in 2005.

On the second strand, Defra would circulate a draft text for comments in February, for discussion at the next WSGO and for approval at the high-level meeting in May.

Members supported the proposed way forward. In relation to the first strand, it was suggested that Defra should consider the issues raised by the report produced by Tynemarch on per capita consumption (pcc) estimates, as part of Ofwat's leakage review, if per capita consumption was to be used as the measure of success in the future.

Action: Defra to circulate a draft text setting out contributions towards the overarching goal by the end of February.

Action: Defra to consider the issues raised in the Tynemarch report on pcc estimates and report back to members at the next meeting.

3.2 Measuring success – development of proposals for mandatory water efficiency targets for PR09 (Ofwat/EA)

Daryl Fossick reported on progress on this work stream. Ofwat had held two meetings of their advisory Group, involving water company representatives and the EA. They were now at the point where a good level of consensus had been reached on the way forward, although there was still a lot of detail to be worked through. It was anticipated that Ofwat would launch a consultation on the proposed targets in June, following discussion at the high-level meeting in May. Notes of the advisory group meetings had been sent to all water

companies to ensure they were kept informed of developments in this work stream, in particular to ensure they had sufficient notice to factor the targets into their WRMPs.

Attendees welcomed progress and agreed it was encouraging that a level of consensus had been reached on this work stream. Points raised in discussion included the need to view water efficiency targets as only one of the tools towards achieving greater water efficiency and the need to ensure the targets were properly set.

3.3 Information needs: gaps, priorities and funding (Waterwise)

Jacob Tompkins reported on progress in this work stream. The Evidence Base steering group had met in December and again in February. Waterwise were working with WRc and work was progressing well. WRc were currently in the process of disaggregating the various water efficiency measures and allocating savings and costs to them. Water companies would then be able to use the final report to estimate the costs and savings of different water efficiency programmes by aggregating the costs and savings of the different measures. The Evidence Base steering group had decided not to produce monthly reports. The first major Evidence Base report would be produced in March, with a further report in October.

3.4 Understanding and changing customer perceptions and raising awareness (CCWater)

Karen Gibbs gave a progress update on this work stream. MVA had completed the research on consumers' responses to water saving messages at the end of November 2007. CCWater hoped to be in a position to sign off the report shortly, and would then circulate the final version to members. CCWater intended to convene a meeting of the WSG communications sub-group at the end of February to consider the conclusions and recommendations from the research, followed by a further meeting with water company communications staff to discuss next steps in March .

Points raised in discussion included: the need to ensure consistent messages were issued to consumers over the long term, the need for the messages to be sustained and allow for regional variation and the need for CCWater and Waterwise to work closely together on taking this work forward.

Action: CCWater to circulate final MVA testing messages research report to WSG members shortly.

3.5 Pursuing options for the introduction for the introduction of a product labelling scheme (Defra)

Nieves Bottomley reported on the progress made in this work stream. Waterwise were continuing to work on the report on the correlation between the energy and water efficiency performance for dishwashers, washing

machines and washer driers. The draft report would be circulated to WSG members when it was available. The final report on the quantitative research on 'Consumer attitudes to water efficiency of bathroom fittings' showed that price and appearance were the main considerations when choosing a fitting or appliance. Customers that were metered or lived in areas with relatively high water charges were much more likely to take into account water efficiency when making decisions.

The introduction last year of the Bathroom Manufacturers Association (BMA) voluntary labelling scheme had been a welcome step forward and WSG members had a role to play in their dealings with consumers, retailers etc, to help make the BMA label as successful, and recognisable, as possible. Finally, an issue had been raised as to how the norm EN111 could affect the criterion for flow rates in showers. Defra had asked Envirowise to investigate this further as part of the review of the Water Technology List criteria.

Action: Defra to circulate draft Waterwise report as soon as it is available.

Action: Defra to report back to members on discussions with Envirowise on the EN111 issue.

3.6 Standards for rainwater harvesting, grey water and raw water use (Defra)

Julie Dickason outlined Defra's initial thoughts on the potential scope for this work stream. The Market Transformation Programme (MTP) last year undertook research into rainwater harvesting and grey water reuse. Following this research, they produced three reports: one on the technical and economic feasibility of rainwater harvesting and grey water reuse; a guide for specifiers and finally a report recommending standards for rainwater and grey water systems. The purpose of adding this work stream to the WSG action plan was to take forward MTP's work on the development of standards for these systems. Since then, the British Standards Institute (BSI) had undertaken the development of a code of practice for the design, installation, alteration, testing and maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems supplying non-potable water in the UK. Defra had met with the Chairman of the BSI Committee and attended the second of their technical committee meetings. Defra were still considering their next steps on this work stream and agreed to keep members informed of developments.

Points raised in discussion included: the need for CLG and Defra to work closely together on this work stream going forward due to the link with amendments being made to the Building Regulations; and also the need to bear in mind the potential impact on water company revenue if rainwater and grey water technologies became widespread, as sewerage charges were based on the amount of potable water supplied.

Action: Defra to circulate an outline scope and timetable for this work

stream for next WSGO meeting.

3.7 Proposals for setting standards for key fittings (Defra)

Peter Jiggins outlined the proposed way forward on this work stream. The timetable proposed was to review the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 along the same timetable as amendments are made to the Building Regulations. The review would consider enforcement issues, the need to update references to technical standards, notification issues, as well as addressing the cross contamination issue in relation to non-potable water use. Defra were currently in the process of drafting Terms of Reference, which they would circulate to WSG members by the end of February. Steering group members would be identified and approached shortly. It was anticipated that a consultation would be launched on the review towards the second half of 2008. For the next meeting it was agreed that Defra would produce a clearer project timetable of the work required.

Action: Defra to circulate a draft Terms of Reference and approach steering group members by the end of February.

Action: Defra to prepare a project plan for the WFR Review in time for the next WSGO meeting.

3.8 Water efficiency in new and existing buildings

Christine Ogden reported on progress on this work stream. Development of the new requirements on water efficiency and associated technical guidance was now underway following the first meeting of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) Working Group, which was held in December 2007. The new requirements were being developed as part of a wider review of Part G focussing on more robust requirements for the safety of hot water systems and the introduction of devices to prevent scalding. It was anticipated a full consultation on the content of the technical guidance would be launched in April. CLG were also in the process of developing a calculator, which would align with the methodology for the Code for Sustainable Homes and could be used by building control officers to determine whether proposed installations would comply with the 125l/p/d calculated whole building performance standard.

In relation to existing buildings, CLG were currently reworking options and were hoping to convene a meeting of the BRAC working group to review the proposals in late February. For this meeting, CLG wanted to widen the membership of the group, to include views on the applicability of options to non-domestic buildings.

3.9 Water efficiency measures in industry and commerce

Chiara Sorisi outlined the proposed next steps and timetable for this work stream. Working in close conjunction with other WSG members, Defra

planned to conduct a review of trends in water use in the industrial and commercial sectors, alongside a mapping exercise of the existing water efficiency measures in place for these sectors. The review would largely be informed by the Envirowise report 'Water use in industry and commerce', once it had been published, and Defra's report 'Quantification of business benefits of resource efficiency' report. Findings from the scoping study would be presented to the high-level WSG in May. The second phase of the study would investigate any gaps identified by the review and would develop recommendations for further work, if appropriate. Final recommendations would be presented to the high-level WSG meeting in November.

Points raised in discussion included: the need to take account of the work CLG were currently undertaking on non-domestic water efficiency and the need to ensure the recommendations presented to the high-level Group in November were cost-effective.

Action: Defra to liaise with Envirowise regarding the timing of the publication of their report.

4. Date of next meeting

It was agreed the next meeting of the official-level group would be held in mid-April.

Action: Defra to contact WSG members for their availability

5. Any other business

Rob Westcott raised an important issue about the use of the EA's water stressed areas map. It was important to note the map had been developed for the specific purpose of designating areas of serious water stress for the purpose of extending opportunities for metering in water stressed areas. The methodology behind the map meant that it should not be used as a general indicator of water stress, as it only showed part of the picture. Members were asked to contact colleagues at the EA before using them in another context.

Once the Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) cycle was complete by the end of March, the EA expect to have an overall CAMS map. The EA were considering how they might use CAMS assessments as an indicator of environmental water stress in the short term. If and when any general indicator of water stress was developed by the EA, they would inform the group as to its suitable application.

Action: EA to report back to members on the use of the CAMS plan

The EA gave an update on this year's Water Efficiency Awards. They planned to reduce the number of categories from the current 7 to 3 as there were overlaps with some projects being considered in more than one category. The new categories would be titled "Inspire, Improve and Innovate".

The EA would contact WSG members shortly to discuss their organisations' involvement.

At the last WSGO meeting Waterwise also raised an issue about the way water efficiency projects should be treated in accounting terms. In one specific large scale pilot project the issue had arisen as to whether the project was cap-ex or op-ex and clarity had been sought from Ofwat. There had been further discussion following this meeting and members sought a definitive position from Ofwat.

Action: Ofwat to report back with a definitive position on cap-ex/op-ex issue at the next WSGO meeting.

Finally, Jacob Tompkins alerted members to an event being held by the European Water Partnership in conjunction with the European Parliament on 13-14th February in Brussels following the publication of the European Commission's Communication on Water Scarcity and Drought to launch a pan-European water efficiency prize.

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, April 2008