



MINUTES of the Customer Challenge Group

Held over Microsoft Teams

On 9 February, 9am – 2pm

Present:

Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs	Chair of Customer Challenge Group	SK-S
Nisha Arora	Financial Conduct Authority	NA
David Brindle	Ambient Support	DB
Jeremy Crook OBE	Action for Race Equality	JC
Peter Daw	Greater London Authority	PD
Dr Charlotte Duke	London Economics	CD
Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE, DL	ukactive	BGT
Councillor Adam Jogee	Haringey Local Authority	AJ
Kay Lacey	Pang Valley Flood Forum	KL
Sarah Powell	Environment Agency	SP
Tiger de Souza MBE	National Trust	TDS
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury	Oxfordshire County Council	PS
Doug Taylor	CCW	DT
Monica Wilson	HM Treasury	MW

Thames Water:

Warren Buckley	Retail Director	WB
George Mayhew	Corporate Affairs Director	GM
Andrew Burton	Customer Research & Insight Manager	AB
Heather Marshall	PR24 Stakeholder Engagement & Comm Lead	HM
Jonathan Read	Director of Policy and Investigations	JR
Jennifer Genevieve	Head of Regulatory Engagement & Policy	JG
Mariana Simpson	Stakeholder Relationship Engagement Manager	MS

Agenda Item No.		Action
1.	Apologies / Declaration of interests	
	No apologies or additional declarations of interest were recorded.	
2.	Minutes and actions from previous meeting	
	Minutes from meeting on 27 January 2022 were agreed. WB provided high level update on C-MeX Q3 results, noting more details will be provided at the performance meeting on 24 Feb 2022. The Chair announced the appointment of BGT as a vice-Chair of the CCG.	
3.	Scene setting	
	The Chair introduced the session outlining the purpose and key areas of focus for the engagement session.	

	<p>GM introduced the stakeholder and communities elements of the engagement programme, highlighting the focus on rebuilding the relationship with stakeholders and creating a positive environment for discussions with regulators.</p> <p>KL asked about stakeholder reputational research. GM to share results when final report is available in April and include progress from previous year. It was noted that TW now have reputational sentiment tracking in place.</p> <p>WB recognised that TW faces a challenge on how they capture not just the generic themes voiced by communities, but also the raw feedback from individual customers on a personal basis (e.g. vulnerability) and ensure they capture representative views of their customer base. Finally, the needs of customers today vs what their needs may be in 20 years. It is very complex, and it is important CCG understand that, but TW are looking to the CCG to help TW understand what they can do to make sure they are getting a holistic view of what customers and communities need.</p> <p>AB provided a high-level summary of customer engagement and explained the drivers for engagement.</p> <p>The discussion focused on an explanation of C-MeX and D-MeX, purpose of customer engagement including meeting customers' expectations, fostering trust in TW – recognising this will be shaped by disappointing customers in the past as well as the company's positioning. CCG suggested TW should focus on a few solutions where they can make a difference. TW should also interrogate all the data points they obtain on a continuing basis to see if trust in TW is improving. CCG were interested whether TW is aware of any blind spots, and in their confidence in customer engagement – identifying any gaps where more effort is needed. CCG recognised this is a long term journey and they were interested to understand what the incremental steps are.</p> <p>Action: TW to provide overview of all customer measures C-MeX / D-MeX / R-MeX and TW position at the Performance meeting on 24 Feb 2022.</p>	
4.	<p>How we understand customer, community & stakeholder preferences, and priorities best practice guidance</p>	
	<p>AB introduced the session by explaining how TW segment their customers and what approaches are taken to understand customers' needs and expectations. HM added the stakeholder and communities perspective, highlighting the importance of translating insights for the business to allow meaningful discussions and decision making for the company's future plans, including co-creating and involving communities in solutions.</p> <p>The discussion focused on opportunities to build stronger links with parish councils, proactive communication, embedding customer insight to help delivery, stakeholders and communities collaborating on solutions, understanding of ethnic minorities including live pockets of communities who TW may not be engaging with. JC offered to have discussions to identify any gaps. TDS shared information regarding Build ID software which can be used to help get a broader spectrum of understanding of communities and ensure those less vocal are also considered. KL offered to meet with TW to discuss her thoughts about developing links with Parish Councils and improving two way communications. This was taken up by HM.</p> <p>The GLA maps vulnerability in London at a granular level – environmental vulnerability (air quality, access to green spaces, flooding, risk of overheating, other environmental impacts, with overlay of social vulnerability age, deprivation, unemployment, proportion ethnic minorities) to build a picture</p>	

	<p>where the intervention would be most impactful. NA recognised the challenge of capturing vulnerability on a dynamic basis to address customers' needs on transient vulnerability.</p> <p>Action: TW to explore how to involve Parish Councils and how they could be used for helping communication.</p> <p>Action: TW to share more details on equality, diversity, and inclusion in the overall approach to engagement and participation in a future meeting.</p> <p>Action: TW to share more information on what success looks like in terms of trust and what the starting point is for customers.</p>	
5.	What customers, communities & stakeholders want	
	<p>AB shared a high-level view of what customers, stakeholders and communities expect of TW and explained the foundation insight framework which has been used to organise key messages, highlighting that the framework has not been prioritised at this stage.</p> <p>The discussion focused on increasing customers' understanding, including encouraging changes to customers' behaviours and lessons learnt from PR19, noting the importance of line of sight for PR24. CCG were interested in understanding more about messages 1.3 on company self-sufficiency in water supply and 4.1 on customer fairness noting the importance of getting the language right.</p> <p>CCG suggested that TW could reflect their desire to collaborate with customers on solutions in the foundation insight framework. Other suggestions included adding a narrative to show how the key messages link to the overall vision and segmenting the key messages in relation to the turnaround plan (fix the basics, raise the bar, and shape the future) to help prioritise which may be focused on first.</p> <p>CCG discussed customers' views in terms of wider environmental impacts as well as TW responsibilities, including compliance with environmental permits and the opportunities and challenges associated with achieving net zero by 2050. AB explained customer research would not include areas where there are no choices to be made e.g. where it is a legal requirement like environmental permits. There may be opportunities for customers to provide their views on the speed of delivery.</p> <p>CCG suggested that forcing customers to prioritise and rank their choices would make them think about issues more deeply, noting that answers may depend on the way questions are phrased and on issues experienced by the customer (e.g. sewer flooding / affordability issues).</p>	
6.	CCG discussion: Thames Water customer and community priorities	
	<p>Reflecting on discussions so far the following points were identified for future discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding other types of vulnerability and what different challenges TW face on regional basis • Understanding how TW weight different customers' views and whether they add greater emphasis on some segments • Vulnerability – nuance looking at different segments (vulnerability / minorities) • Prioritisation and trade offs 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish councils and trusted leaders at local authorities and how they can be used as communication channel and to improve engagement • TW to explore how to get appropriate representative view from all their stakeholders engagement given the wide range of stakeholders (linked to Build ID suggestion above) • TW to explore how they can translate insights to make it meaningful for the business to inform business decisions • Looking at geographical differences between different regions (looking at overlaying vulnerability maps with our open sites e.g. wetlands and where they maximise the accessibility to the most deprived) • Adding the overall vision behind and around the framework and focus to make customers more knowledgeable (including prioritising messages in relation to Fix the basics / Raise the bar / Shape the future) • Transparency in Customer research – where can CCG help to validate and verify the rigour TW have used in customer research to ensure questions are not leading / the difference between what customer say and what they actually mean • Trade-offs - working toward the hierarchy of priority alongside the point of fairness and vulnerability. 	
7.	Customer, community & Stakeholder engagement plan	
	<p>AB shared a forward plan for customer and community engagement highlighting suggested opportunities for CCG input and interactions.</p> <p>As a part of the engagement plan, AB shared upcoming customer, community, and stakeholder engagement to test the scale of the Vision 2050 ambitions; identify the priorities across the ambitions for 2050 and to identify high-level priorities for customers for PR24. CCG discussed the proposed approaches for the engagement, broadly supporting “Customer jury” deliberative qualitative research with informed or expert customers.</p> <p>Further discussion focused on whether this research offered an opportunity to identify priorities and help trade off discussion, and how this will fit into wider PR24 process. It was recognised that this output from discussions with customers will need to be weighted against other outputs.</p>	
8.	CCG discussion	
	<p>CCG reflected on the meeting with some points captured earlier in the minutes. Additional points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should TW consider doing ‘less but better’ in terms of engagement? • How can CCG help in relation to line of sight? (e.g. if customers views are overridden for any reason should that be evidence specifically for PR submission) • Understanding vulnerability and front line contact – early identification of customers in vulnerable circumstances (potential learning from different sectors) • Do customers have faith that TW will act on their feedback? • How do we ensure that the Vision 2050 research isn’t “vanilla” and that there is meaningful engagement on the inherent trade-offs and prioritisation? • Recognition from KL on robustness of previous TW research and commendation on taking CCG’s views on board • For C-MeX, what do top companies do differently? • Reality of what can be delivered in PR24 • Opportunity to have a deeper discussion on Net zero 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation insight framework is a good indication where customers and TW are – TW should focus on language to ensure customers' voice come through to say what the priorities are • Foundation insight framework – if time permits it may be beneficial to have deep dive sessions on a couple of key messages • Recognising that customers' perception is built on their first contact / experience with the company and could take a long time to rebuild if not satisfactory 	
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