

**Minutes of a Meeting of the External
Partnerships Select Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House
on 25 November 2014**

+ Cllr Josephine Hawkins (Chairman)
+ Cllr Paul Deach (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Glyn Carpenter	- Cllr Ken Pedder
+ Cllr Ian Cullen	+ Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr Tim Dodds	+ Cllr Ian Sams
- Cllr Liane Gibson	- Cllr Pat Tedder
Cllr David Hamilton	+ Cllr Alan Whittart
- Cllr Lexie Kemp	+ Cllr John Winterton
+ Cllr Adrian Page	

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Judi Trow (In place of Pat Tedder)

In Attendance: Sarah Groom and Andrew Crawford

12 Chairman's Announcements and Welcome to Guests

The Chairman welcomed Hilary Murgatroyd and Chris Ford from Thames Water and Paul Mooney and Rob Sage from Affinity Water.

13 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

14 Presentation by Affinity Water

Paul Mooney reported that Affinity Water was the largest water supply only company in the Region, employing 1,200 people to provide 900 million litres of water each day to 1.5 million properties and a population of approximately 3.5 million. The average annual bill was £174 in comparison to the industry average of £186.

Affinity controlled 16,500 kilometres of mains pipes, mainly under roads, renewing 1% of the pipes each year, at a cost of £18 million per annum. Some 20 kilometres of piping had been renewed in Surrey in 2014. It was expected that only 2.3 kilometres of piping would be targeted in 2015. However, the Company had commenced a large Trunk Main investigation including piping in Bagshot, Lightwater and West End. At this stage, the Company were carrying out a feasibility study and it would not be known for some time if any works were required.

The Company carried out rolling feasibility studies on failing assets, considering factors such as burst rates and environmental impact. Required work is then planned by a Design Team, who assess the area with local operatives, considering factors such as the proposals, risks and impact on communities.

Given that much of the mains piping is under main/trunk roads, the Team identify businesses, schools, religious and cultural groups and events that might be adversely impacted upon and consult them. Before work commences, Affinity will use newspaper adverts, social media and letters to MPs and Councillors, to give maximum publicity to proposals, timings and potential impacts.

Affinity work with the Highways Agency to coordinate with any other planned work and minimise disruption. Any work and the dates thereof are agreed with Highways and a permit issued three months in advance of the work commencing.

Members noted that Affinity would seek to recover the cost of any works needed during and/or resulting from the construction of HS2.

Referring to recent works on the London Road Bagshot, Mr Mooney explained that considerable pre-planning had taken place with Highways, resulting in the proposed start being put back from September to January. The proposed work had been re-assessed when the disruption to the local community and travelling public became clear and extra traffic management measures were brought in, at a cost of £300,000.

All water companies produce a 25 year water management plan and five year business plans. They consider predicted population, housing and environmental changes and then look at resources and any gaps between expected demand and supply. In the next five years, Affinity will lose significant resources to improve river flows, mainly in chalk rivers and primarily through Hertfordshire.

Mr Sage reported that only 40% of Affinity customers were 'metered'. Mr Mooney agreed to provide Members with a link to the site which detailed the roll-out of water meters to Affinity customer. Whilst the parts of the Borough supported by the Company would not be 'metered' till 2017, individuals could request a meter and one would be installed free of charge.

The relative benefits of metered and non-metered houses tended to depend on the size (and therefore rateable value) of properties and the numbers residing therein. Often, when meters were installed, leaks were identified and resolved based on the difference between water used and water flows recorded. For families who experienced significant increases in their bills through changing to a meter, Affinity would work with them to reduce usage.

Resolved, that the presentation be noted.

15 Presentation by Thames Water

Hilary Murgatroyd reported that Thames Water was the largest water and waste provider in the UK, providing 9 million clean water customers in London and the

Thames Valley. It had 350 sewage works treating 4.4 billion litres per day of waste water and had 67,000 miles of sewers, over 2,500 pumping stations and 1.2 million manholes. Recently, the Company became responsible for private lateral mains connecting semi-detached and terraced houses to the mains systems.

Thames Water was one of the cheapest providers, with customers paying an average of £1.01p per day.

Thames Water had a duty under the Water Industry Act 1991, to be responsible for sewerage. This included a duty to provide, clean and maintain public sewers and to provide and extend sewerage systems. Whilst responsible for foul water, surface water and combined sewers, the Company had no responsibilities to provide capacity for flood waters.

Members were reminded that, in 2007, adverse weather resulted in extensive flooding across the Region. Whilst Surrey Heath was affected, it was much less so than other areas covered by Thames Water.

The adverse weather, which started in December 2013 and ran into March 2014, caused the biggest flooding event in the Company's history, resulting in extensive inundation and an estimated 69,500 customers affected across the region. Many Thames Water assets were overwhelmed, including sewers, pumping stations and sewage treatment works. 900 of 2,500 pumping stations were overwhelmed but only four ceased to work.

In response to the flooding, Thames Water increased the number of tankers in the field from 20 to 100 and coped with an increased daily workload from 600 jobs to 1,200. When the response was assessed, Thames Water identified communications as an area needing strengthening. As a result, the number of customer representatives was increased in both clean and waste teams and a new customer service telephone system was introduced enabling more intelligent messaging for customers.

The number of staff in the field was also identified as a weak point. This year, in anticipation of a wet winter, festive cover would be increased from 50% to 70%.

In terms of local issues, Chris Ford identified two recent complaints relating to Lightwater properties and the remedial action taken. He reported on pollution to the River Blackwater in September 2012, resulting from a failure of Plant in the Camberley Sewage Treatment Works. Thames Water had pleaded guilty on 2 counts and sentencing would take place in January 2015. Chris Ford offered to brief Members at a later stage on the outcomes thereof.

Members noted that one of the issues resulting in the failure of machinery at the Camberley Sewage Treatment Works and an ongoing difficulty for Thames Water was the type and quantity of materials disposed through the sewers. Items which did not biodegrade, including wet wipes and kitchen fat/oil/grease contributed to up to half of blockages reported.

Thames Water had engaged in discussions with manufacturers such as Lever Brothers to either consider the make-up of their products, alert customers or both.

Another common issue was mis-connection of pipes so that clean and surface water is directed into foul water pipes that are not designed to cope with the volumes involved.

Members suggested that the Council could provide publicity on behalf of Thames Water through the Heathscene magazine. Hilary Murgatroyd agreed to liaise with the Media and Marketing Manager on appropriate messages. Members agreed to support the 'Bin It' campaign via social media.

RESOLVED, that the Media and Marketing Team be asked to publicise the 'Please bin it, don't block it' campaign.

16 Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on the work programme for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

All other organisations invited to speak in this municipal year had confirmed their agreement.

RESOLVED, that the Work Programme for 2014/15, as attached at Annex A to these minutes, be agreed.

Chairman

External Partnerships Select Committee Work Programme – 2014/15

Date		Topic	Presenter/ Author
20 January 2015	1.	Crime and Disorder Update	Inspector John Davies
	2.	Police and Crime Panel	Cllr Charlotte Morley
	3.	Street Angels	Karen Kendall
	4.	Your Sanctuary	Fiamma Pather
3 March 2015	1.	Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board	Tim Pashen
	2.	Frimley Park Hospital	TBC

To be allocated:

Collectively Camberley BID
 EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership
 Taxi Marshals