

Summary Note of Retail Market Opening Management Group meeting on 19th December 2016

Present

Sarah Hendry (Chair, Defra), Cathryn Ross (Ofwat), Ben Jeffs (MOSL), Adam Cooper (Ofwat), Amanda Rooney (Ofwat), Steve Lyon (MOSL), Martin Silcock (MOSL), Helen Robinson-Gordon (Ofwat), Sebastian Catovsky (Defra), Jess Keedy (Defra), Sam Jackson (Defra, secretariat).

Apologies: Gillian Tanfield (Ofwat)

Engagement and customer awareness

At the final management group meeting of 2016, members were pleased to be joined for part of the meeting by Neil Dhot, Head of Corporate Affairs for Water UK. He shared plans for the delivery of a national awareness raising campaign, which will commence in late January, and run alongside a set of programme-led events and media articles.

Management group expect companies to continue their own communications, supported by Open Water [branded material](#), and are confident that Open Water's digital, targeted activity will support these efforts.

Programme update

A substantial discussion was held to review the programme's delivery against key milestones, both those recently achieved and those expected in the upcoming period. In particular the group welcomed that MOSL members approved their [2017/18 business plan](#) and revised articles of association. Management group also recognised that the mitigations planned for a number of key risks, particularly on continuity of programme staff, market readiness arrangements and customer awareness, had progressed successfully and thus reduced the associated level of risk.

The programme status remains at Amber overall. Management group pulled out a number of key requirements against which we will evaluate progress by the January meeting to determine whether this remains an accurate assessment. These included: further progress on Central Market Operating System (CMOS) releases, delivery of the national awareness campaign, whether system or process changes are needed after Ofwat's consultation on the market codes, successful outcomes from Water UK's drinking water quality workshop and positive further advice from the independent Open Water assurance group.

Enduring market operation and monitoring

All programme partners hold an interest in maintaining a healthy and well-functioning market beyond April, within which each organisation has particular defined responsibilities and requirements. The group held a productive initial discussion on how we maintain close working relationships between Ofwat, Defra, MOSL and market participants. This is tied to

arrangements to gather and evaluate information on the success of the market which will be outlined in Ofwat's market monitoring consultation. The Programme Management Group took an action to report back in a future meeting on working arrangements and governance after market opening.

First day switching

The management group discussed an overview of feedback from water companies on the logistics of a 'pre-registration' process, which enables customers to switch to be supplied by an alternative retailer with effect from the first day the market opens. Management group considered the benefits and risks of pursuing this option, before reaffirming that the programme will implement the first day switching approach to support a positive customer experience. It was agreed that MOSL will provide clear guidance to the industry on the process and requirements.