

# THE HOME BUILDERS FEDERATION



## HBF WATER MATTERS GROUP (WMG) MEETING NOTES

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018  
10.00am start

HBF House, 27 Broadwall, London, SE1 9PL

### PRESENT

Steve Wielebski (Chair)	W A Consultancy	Matthew Norris	Croudace
Tim Haines	Countryside	Alistair Aitken (dialled in)	Fortridge on behalf of Barratt
Nick Parson	Barratt (dialled in)	Andrew Walker (dialled in)	MA Infrastructure
Sam Yousef	Bellway	Clive Bell	Bellway
Gavin Thorne	Barratt	Isobel Craig	MA Infrastructure
Adam Swaine	Triconnex		

### IN ATTENDANCE

Ruth Scott                      HBF

### APOLOGIES

Craig Ferrans	HBF	Robin Bishop	T-D-S
John Cover	Barratt David Wilson	Ray Farrow	T-D-S

### 1.00 Welcome, Introductions and apologies

**Action**

1.01 SW opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The group introduced themselves. Apologies were accepted from those listed above.

## 2.00 Review of scope and Terms of Reference

- 2.01 SW explained to the group the reason(s) why the WMG has been created.

The water and sewerage sector is undergoing major reform, starting with the introduction of new connection charges that come into force in April 2018. How this will impact upon the industry is yet to be fully understood as the details are not due to be published until 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018.

The group will consider how we as in industry get to grips with this new structure, together with the many other existing challenges that members are experiencing. It will also consider how we facilitate greater engagement with both DEFRA and Ofwat, together with other industry bodies.

- 2.02 SW ran through the draft ToR and asked the group on their thoughts, and whether anything needed amending or adding on.

Group agreed to the ToR.

ToR circulated to the group 24/01/18.

**Action:** Papers on charging arrangements need circulating to the group.

Part of the remit of this group will be to gather evidence and recognise what the issues are with the water and sewage industry and to communicate its findings and recommendations to the wider HBF technical membership.

## 3.00 New charging arrangements

- 3.01 **Action:** SW has created an excel sheet of new charging arrangements, broken down to the various WaSCs. We are looking to complete this schedule shortly after 1<sup>st</sup> February once each WaSC/WoC has published its new Charging Arrangements on their respective web-sites. Thereafter, the document shall be distributed to members of the group for discussion and to determine what, if any, future strategy is to be considered.

**SW**

**Action:** Group to review the charges schedule and send their comments back to either CF or SW. Also members of the group have been requested to provide feedback on their own experience of the sector's New Charging Arrangements.

**ALL**

It was noted that the charges within the excel sheet vary quite significantly.

- 3.02 SW advised that United Utilities have contacted CC Water (Consumer Council for Water) on charging arrangements and have been very proactive in the consultation period.

- 3.03 HBF are considering writing to the Secretary of State and/or the new CEO at Ofwat regarding the manner in which the consultation has been

conducted. That said, the many discussions and meetings held with Ofwat have not been fruitful. SW and CF to discuss separately. **SW/CF**

3.04 A member also noted that they felt several of the Water & Sewerage Sector consultations did not give any clarification on timings.

3.05 SW noted that there is a Water UK workshop taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> February where the charging arrangements will be discussed. HBF and some members of the working group will be attending and feedback will be provided to the wider group at the next meeting.

3.06 AA: Noted that Thames Water have included misleading examples in their latest iteration of their consultation. In one case study, the Thames Water example does not become self-financing until year 10 out of 12 – this is not the norm with schemes often becoming economic in the first 3 to 5 years.

It was also flagged up that infrastructure charges are quite variable.

When dealing with income offsets, at the moment the final costs for works are re-evaluated when the mains are finally completed. The new Charging Arrangements will see this income offset crystallised at the outset and may well leave the house builder at a commercial disadvantage.

3.07 Traffic management costs are mentioned in all consultations and the fear is one of these costs either being unduly excessive or used as a means of defining a complex scheme. The latter has the potential to create delay. The question here is one of why are they are now included in the consultations?

**Action:** HBF to respond to Ofwat on traffic management, to obtain further definition. SW to raise this with CF. **SW**

3.08 Note: Rachel Fletcher - who use to work for Ofgem, is now the New CEO of the UK Water Regulator Ofwat.

3.09 There seems to be a split in England on the way WaSCs assess the capacity of their assets, in particular when it comes to existing public foul sewers. The approach to asset capacity modelling has been created by the Water industry with no external engagement. **Action:** SW/CF to raise this issue with Rachel Fletcher at Ofwat. **SW**

3.10 Notably, urban creep seems to be an issue for at least four southern-based Sewerage Companies.

#### **4.00 Water and Sewerage Futures Group (WSFG)**

4.01 HBF-WSFG will likely look at issues such as water consumption and development of flood risk – later this year the Environment Agency will issuing its revised climate change allowances – this will be a key issue for discussion by this particular group.

In moving forward, the group will also review processes and procedures and will seek to share best practice with developers and the Water & Sewerage Sector.

**Action:** All members of this group to report back on what they think is relevant to the HBF Water and Sewerage Futures Group.

**ALL**

## **5.00 SuDS Best Practice**

5.01 SW highlighted that the forum will also seek to share best practice on SuDS and how SuDS is being implemented within this group. There have been experiences shared across the membership on various matters and it is evident that a central 'go to point of reference' within the HBF would add value to its members.

5.02 NP noted that Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) are requesting that a brownfield site should achieve greenfield run off rates. (This may be an issue for the group to consider given the implications that it has for attenuation storage).

5.03 HBF produced a [guidance on non-statutory SuDS standards](#) with LASOO. If members of the group do not have a copy of this document a link can be provided.

5.04 MN noted that Kent County Council recently published '[Local flood risk management strategy guidance](#).'

5.05 SW asked if the group were happy to share their experiences – Group agreed as long as local authorities aren't named and when the examples are shared with government they're stated as 'HBF member examples' and not as individual companies then they are happy to.

**ALL**

## **6.00 Environment Agency Engagement.**

6.01 Climate change allowance is increasing, especially in Southern England.

6.02 **Action:** SW to invite Andrew Eden and his colleague (Environment Agency) to the next meeting.

**SW**

6.03 HBF has been approached by BGS, University College London and Oxford University to offer support to their research proposal relating to groundwater infiltration into sewers. The research is at the final hurdle for funding from the Science Council and if approved, BGS will be invited to one of the group's meeting to provide further details and to discuss project requirements with members.

## **7.00 Future Work.**

7.01 Sewers for Adoption is undergoing a review with a view to including SuDS infrastructure. Eight draft papers were circulated, with the intent of the group reviewing Parts A, B, C, D & E. SW requested members provide comments at the earliest opportunity. Defra support the concept of the Water & sewerage Sector adopting most if not all forms of surface water sewerage

**ALL**

infrastructure. Each of the papers provided contain provisions for SuDS adoptions.

At present the intended revisions to SfA are written as if the Water & Sewerage Sector is expecting section 42 of the FWMA 2010 to be implemented. HBF will comment on this at the PSG meeting that is taking place 29th January 2018.

**HBF / ALL**

TH commented on the fact that a lot of the text within these papers contradict the building regulations.

**Action:** Group to provide their comments on the revision of SfA for SuDS Adoption 8 papers ASAP to SW.

**ALL**

The Project Steering Group are aiming to introduce the documents by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, though developers feel this isn't enough time to enforce them.

**Action:** HBF and members to contact Ofwat about enforcement date & transitional period.

All WaSCs will be using the revised Sewers for Adoption version 8 once approved.

**Action:** it was agreed that the HBF compile a formal response to the papers.

7.02 HBF think it's essential for members to attend the works shops about DMEX (Developer Services Measure of Experience).

## **8.00 Any Other Business.**

8.01 A member proposed that the excel spreadsheet identifying the new charging arrangements for the various water companies should be broken down into infrastructure charges, with the water mains and the sewers separate.

It was noted that SES and Affinity are missing from the schedule.

8.02 The Group also suggested that HBF identify members in regional house building businesses and who have an interest in the new sub group, subject to their being invited to future meetings. In addition, the conference call facility for ease of engagement by members needs to be communicated.

When inviting members to these meetings HBF should be specific in laying out what the groups intend to achieve, who already attends and why they should attend/why it would benefit them and their business.

**9.00 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

