

# Minutes of Board meeting

Meeting held on Thursday 17 December 2020  
By video link (BlueJeans)

## Board members / standing attendees

Jonson Cox	Non-executive Director, Chairman
Mark Bayley	Non-executive Director
Nicola Bruce	Non-executive Director
David Jones	Non-executive Director
Seema Kennedy	Non-executive Director
Jonathan Kini	Non-executive Director
Alison Munro	Non-executive Director
Catherine Waddams	Non-executive Director
Rachel Fletcher	Chief Executive
Aileen Armstrong	Executive Director
David Black	Executive Director
John Russell	Executive Director
Jenny Block	General Counsel and Board Secretary

## Other attendees

Lisa Commane	Senior Director
Claire Forbes	Senior Director
Alena Kozakova	Senior Director
Keith Mason	Senior Director
Paul Hickey	Managing Director, RAPID
Christine Farnish	Board Advisor
Martin Lawrence	Board Advisor

## 1. Opening Items and Declarations

- 1.1. The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 19 November were approved.

- 1.2. Jonson Cox welcomed Nicola Bruce, David Jones, Seema Kennedy and Jonathan Kini, who joined Ofwat as Non-Executive Directors on 1 December 2020, to their first Board meeting.

## **2. Chief Executive's Report**

- 2.1. The contents of the Chief Executive's report were noted and discussed. The Board noted in particular updates on:
- the latest information on the tragic incident at Wessex Water's Avonmouth facility;
  - the CMA redetermination process; and
  - Ofwat's high level results in the Civil Service people survey.
- 2.2. The Board approved the award of the contract for temporary resources to support policy development.
- 2.3. The Board noted the final membership of the Board committees.

## **3. Sector readiness for winter months**

- 3.1. The Executive provided to the Board an update on how the sector is preparing for the winter months, noting principal risks. Companies are monitoring these risks and working collaboratively to mitigate them.
- 3.2. The Board noted that the sector has well established, tested and effective systems for preventing and managing incidents at both company and national level. These arrangements have been strengthened by work on EU exit, the response to Covid-19 and lessons learned from events like 2018's 'Beast from the East'. This experience has highlighted the benefit of the industry working collaboratively and having a good forward assessment of risk. Ofwat participates regularly in sector briefings.
- 3.3. The Board discussed the focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable customers and the broader work Ofwat is undertaking or participating in with the sector, other regulators and Defra.
- 3.4. The Board noted that Ofwat is an active member of the storm overflows taskforce set up to address the issues of damage to the environment caused by combined sewers overflowing into rivers and other water bodies. The focus of the taskforce is on a range of potential solutions and developing a longer term plan on how to substantially reduce the harm from these incidents.

## **4. Forward plan for 2021/22 and to 2025**

- 4.1. The Chief Executive provided an overview of the work plan for 2021/22, and early thinking on the development of a multi-year plan to the end of March 2025. It was noted that much of the work outlined had already started and the Board discussed how Ofwat would measure success against planned outcomes in relevant areas.
- 4.2. The Board noted the next steps.

## **5. Update from Committee Chairs**

### **Major Projects Committee**

- 5.1. The Chair of the Committee briefly reported on the November meeting and it was agreed to return to this following the next Major Projects Committee meeting.

### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

- 5.2. The Chair of the Committee reported on the December meeting at which the Committee received an update on key developments for each strategic risk and discussed the proposed approach to risk management within RAPID.
- 5.3. The Committee also received updates on:
  - progress in implementing Ofwat's IT Strategy and how it addresses key risks including cyber risk;
  - the timetable for the Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21; and
  - the further development of Ofwat's governance framework since April 2020.

## **6. AOB**

- 6.1. The Board reflected on the meeting and discussed what had gone well and what might be improved upon.
- 6.2. There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting.

**Jenny Block**

**Board Secretary**

**17 December 2020**