

**Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> WIRS Advisory Group Meeting  
Lloyd's Register EMEA, Coventry on 20 May 2008**

**Attendees:**

Steve Burley – Anglian Water - Chairman  
Dave Manning – Bristol Water  
John Nicholson – Severn Trent Water  
Lee Dobson – Yorkshire Water  
Perry James – Welsh Water  
John Coulthard – Wessex Water  
Jane Torris – United Utilities Water  
  
John Hodge – IUS  
Mark Ridsdale – P N Daly  
Louise Boccaccini - Primeshade  
  
Andrew Walker - Ofwat  
Claire Allard – EU Skills  
  
Martyn Speight – LR EMEA

**Minutes of Meeting**

**1. Review of minutes of meeting dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

In accordance with the accepted process the minutes of the last meeting were deemed approved once they had been issued to the WIRSAP members with item 4.1 (Ownership of Pre-start Meetings) amended to recognise the need for a pre-start meeting to be re-organised when a water company fails to attend.

Discussion at the meeting agreed that where adequate notice is given there should be no reason for a water company not to make a scheduled pre-start meeting.

**2. Actions from previous meeting (not otherwise covered by agenda items)**

**a) Water company representation on WIRSAP**

Lee Dobson is about to leave Yorkshire Water. Lee was thanked for his contribution to WIRSAP and it was agreed that Richard Heighington from Yorkshire Water will replace Lee on WIRSAP.

**b) Water Company feedback on UCP non-conformance**

Martyn Speight reported that since the last WIRSAP meeting he has had no feedback from any water company indicating any issues with UCP WIRS compliance. If this does not represent the real picture he would appreciate if water companies could provide him with information on non-compliance.

**3. Issues From WIRS Forum (held on 6 May 2008)**

**3.1 Feedback on water company levels of service**

It appears that Ofwat has yet to request water companies to provide sample data on their performance against their self-lay level of service target response times.

**Action**            *Andrew Walker agreed to progress the issue of a formal request to water companies.*

Water companies confirmed that they were compiling information on response times for water requisitions.

### 3.2 Duration of works

UCPs had raised concerns from developers about restricting water self-lay agreements to properties that were to be constructed within the next 2 years. Water companies confirmed that they felt it reasonable to have guidelines which limited works so as to:-

- get developers to plan phasing
- ensure that income allowances were reasonably related to actual building
- ensure that water supply demands are placed on new mains soon after they are laid

It was recognised that the reasons for limiting the extent of self-lay work could be explained better to developers.

### 3.3 Linking design to construction

UCPs working in the UU area were under the impression that designs could not be approved until the constructor had been nominated and accepted. Jane Torris stated that this was not the case.

### 3.4 Representation on the Ofwat Self-Lay Group

Ofwat have enlarged their Self-Lay Group and have offered places to an additional water industry representative and a representative nominated through the UCPs Forum. Jane Torris (from UU) is taking up the water industry place and John Snelling (of Pipework GB) has been nominated by the UCP Forum as the UCP representative.

## 4. Update On Current Status of WIRS And Scheme Related Issues

The current situation regarding WIRS accreditations is that currently:

24 UCPs hold Full accreditation (no change since the last meeting)

13 UCPs hold Partial accreditation (an increase of 3 since the last meeting)

12 UCPs are working towards Partial accreditation (an increase of 4 since the last meeting)

Whilst there are signs of a down turn in self-lay activity the numbers of UCPs applying for accreditation is slowly increasing and some who are already accredited are looking at increasing their accreditation scopes.

### 4.1 LR Assessors

Martyn Speight reported that LR is in the process of recruiting additional assessors. Whilst this is to respond to non WIRS related workloads they are looking to secure an assessor with a water background which will provide greater resilience in supporting WIRS. LR have also compiled a list of people with a suitable water industry background who could be called upon to do WIRS assessments on a contract basis.

### 4.2 Project Management Definition

In response to a need identified in another scheme to provide greater guidance on the requirements for project management accreditation it is proposed to add an appendix to the Scheme Requirements Document which focuses on 'project management' requirements. The purpose of this is to provide greater guidance and clarity rather than adding further requirements.

WIRSAP agreed to this change being made to the scheme requirements.

**Action**            *LR to update the WIRS Requirements document.*

### 4.3 Managing Surveillance Visits

To address the issue of surveillance visits being postponed LR proposed enhancing Appendix 1 (covering accreditation management arrangements) in the Scheme Requirements Document with the following requirements:

1. Surveillance visit programme to be formally notified to UCPs annually and UCPs to take responsibility for notifying changes in workloads etc. that impact on achievement of surveillance visit programme.
2. Requirement on UCPs to arrange surveillance visits no later than the end of the month following the notified date for each visit.
3. If surveillance visits are not done in accordance with the programme the status of the UCP will be changed to 'Partial' requiring them to notify LR of the first piece of work available for surveillance.
4. UCPs on 'Partial' status will have a 'monitoring' visit within 6 months of being moved back to 'Partial' and then 12 monthly thereafter.
5. To require that where UCPs appoint a technical advisor that this person meets with the LR assessor during a surveillance visit at least once annually

WIRSAP agreed to this change being made to the scheme requirements.

**Action** *LR to update the WIRS Requirements document.*

## 5. Instigating Standardised Notice Template

Following on from the discussion at the last WIRSAP about UCP compliance with water company requirements for notices etc. Martyn Speight had proposed that a standard notice template be introduced (see attachment for draft layout). This template would provide a single sheet summary of water company notice requirements and communication arrangements.

The template had been circulated around the Water UK Self-Lay group but no feedback had been received. Whilst it was suggested that the template could be included in the updated national Code of Practice there looks to be merit in introducing it sooner and testing out the wording, layout etc.

**Action** *Water companies to review the template and look to introduce it as soon as practical.*

## 6. Design Practice

A number of designs for schemes in the UU area were reviewed. These indicated the good design practice that was being followed in the UU area. Establishing these design standards had been prompted by UU recognising the need to clearly set out the standards they expect self-lay designs to satisfy. Hence the UU approach provides a benchmark for all companies to follow.

**Action** *Water companies to consider the design standards that UU are able to demonstrate and consider using these to benchmark their own designs against.*

Martyn Speight provided feedback on the situation he had encountered on 'service laying only' sites where often the only plan issued to the UCP is an early design which did not necessarily relate to 'as-laid' details. The suggestion being that where water companies issued a 'services only' agreement they should ensure that an as-laid plan is also issued.

**Action** *Water companies to consider 'as-laid' plans when 'services only' self-lay agreements are issued.*

## 7. Routine Connections Proposal

There had been no further developments with the proposal to allow accredited UCPs to make 'routine' connections as water companies were first waiting on a steer from Ofwat.

Claire Allard reminded WIRSAP of the development time that would be needed to introduce the proposed qualification and training identified as being needed to support this initiative.

## **8. Updates**

### **8.1 National Code of Practice**

Steve Burley reported that he believed that most water companies had accepted the costing structure for WRc co-ordinating the proposed Code of Practice update and that work on the project should start soon.

### **8.2 Ofwat Consultation**

Andrew Walker reported on the progress that had been made in preparing for the consultation on the Ofwat self-lay (and requisitioning) guidance and financial arrangements. This had included getting feedback from a number of stakeholders. Whilst there were some issues still to be resolved by Ofwat before the consultation could be finalised he was hopeful of getting the consultation underway during the coming July.

## **9. EU Skills Update**

Claire Allard reported on a number of EUS initiatives.

QCA had deemed that the proposal to use the EITCB qualification framework for the proposed Level 3 NVQ for water network designers was not acceptable so EUS have now had to themselves develop the qualification requirements. CABWI have undertaken to promptly progress establishing the qualification so it is hoped to not lose too much time in developing the now stand-alone qualification. The qualification framework is already well advanced and Claire Allard will arrange for it to be circulated for comments and feedback. The material has been written with a view towards setting up parallel qualifications for designers of gas and electric networks.

Given that the industry wants choice in their training providers and the relatively limited number of water network designers who will require training EUS are proposing facilitating the training themselves and are considering themselves holding the licence for the training material. If this happens it would make it possible for various training providers and water companies/UCPs themselves to deliver the training.

EUS have raised again with water industry representatives the issue that whilst UCPs now have to hold the NCO(W) qualification this is far from standard practice across water companies. Andrew Walker indicated that this matter is a concern to Ofwat and that they will be looking at what happens when water companies renew their period contracts.

An EUS sponsored group is currently developing a functional map for activities associated with multi-utility provision. This work will consider the requirements for key roles in self-lay work and make recommendations on addressing gaps in the current qualification framework.

## **10. Other Business**

### **10.1 Water Company Self-Lay Information**

It was noted that information on water company self-lay policies is not always readily available on water company web sites. Andrew Walker indicated that proposed Ofwat consultation would indicate the ease by which Ofwat expects UCPs to be able to access such information.

### **10.2 National Agreement**

Andrew Walker stated that Ofwat had concerns that the national self-lay agreement was at variance with the Ofwat self-lay guidance. In particular that the Ofwat guidance stated that agreements could be with 'developers' or 'UCPs' whereas the national agreement focused the arrangements as being solely between the water company and the developer. The current water company approach was often to the detriment of allowing UCPs to get personally involved in progressing work on behalf of developers thereby allowing developers to only have a background, rather than day-to-day, involvement in each project.

WIRSAP recognised that there had not been any real consultation with UCPs about the national agreement and that it may be worthwhile for this to be done.

**Action**            *Steve Burley undertook to consider this issue with the subgroup which had been involved in drafting and reviewing the agreement.*

## **11. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is currently arranged for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (and the subsequent meeting for Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008). Given the relatively short interval to the time of the next meeting it was agreed that Steve Burley and Martyn Speight would review the need to hold the July meeting in mid June.

MS - 27.05.08

## Attachment Related To Item 5 - Suggested Notice Template

Suggest that a common table is produced for each water company (with their different requirements – notice period, contact arrangements, form references etc.) so that each UCP clearly knows what is required of them regarding communication and can issue it to their construction team along with the job pack.

### Self-Lay Notice and Communication Requirements for ?????????? Water

Stage	We Require		Format
	You to	Giving	
Mainlaying planning	Hold a pre-start meeting with representatives from yourselves, the developer and ourselves	A minimum of x days notice	By contacting
Before mainlaying starts	To issue a notice stating your intended start date	A minimum of x days notice	By contacting X Or email to Y etc.
When you are ready to test and disinfect the mains	To issue a notice stating your programme to test and disinfect	A minimum of x days notice	By contacting X Or email to Y etc.
When you are ready for a main to be connected to the live network	To notify us that the main is ready to be connected and provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- as-laid records of the mains</li> <li>- copy of test results</li> <li>- confirmation of disinfection etc.</li> </ul>	A minimum of x days notice	By contacting X Or email to Y etc.
Before planning service connections	Ensure that you have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- agreed the work with us</li> <li>- have a schedule giving our references for all the connections</li> <li>- have paid the money due (incl infrastructure charges)</li> <li>- have ordered any meters</li> <li>- have checked that the private plumbing has been approved</li> </ul>		In liaison with .....
Before doing a service connection	To issue a notice stating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the plot to be connected</li> <li>- our reference number for the connection</li> <li>- when the work will be done</li> </ul>	A minimum of x days notice	By contacting X Or email to Y etc.
After making a service connection	To confirm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that the work was done</li> <li>- when the work was done</li> <li>- the postal address of the property</li> <li>- details of the meter fitted</li> </ul>	With x days of the property being connected	Using form ?? sent to ..... etc.