



BLUE MARBLE

# Customer Advisory Panel – Report 1

Response to Portsmouth Water's long term vision

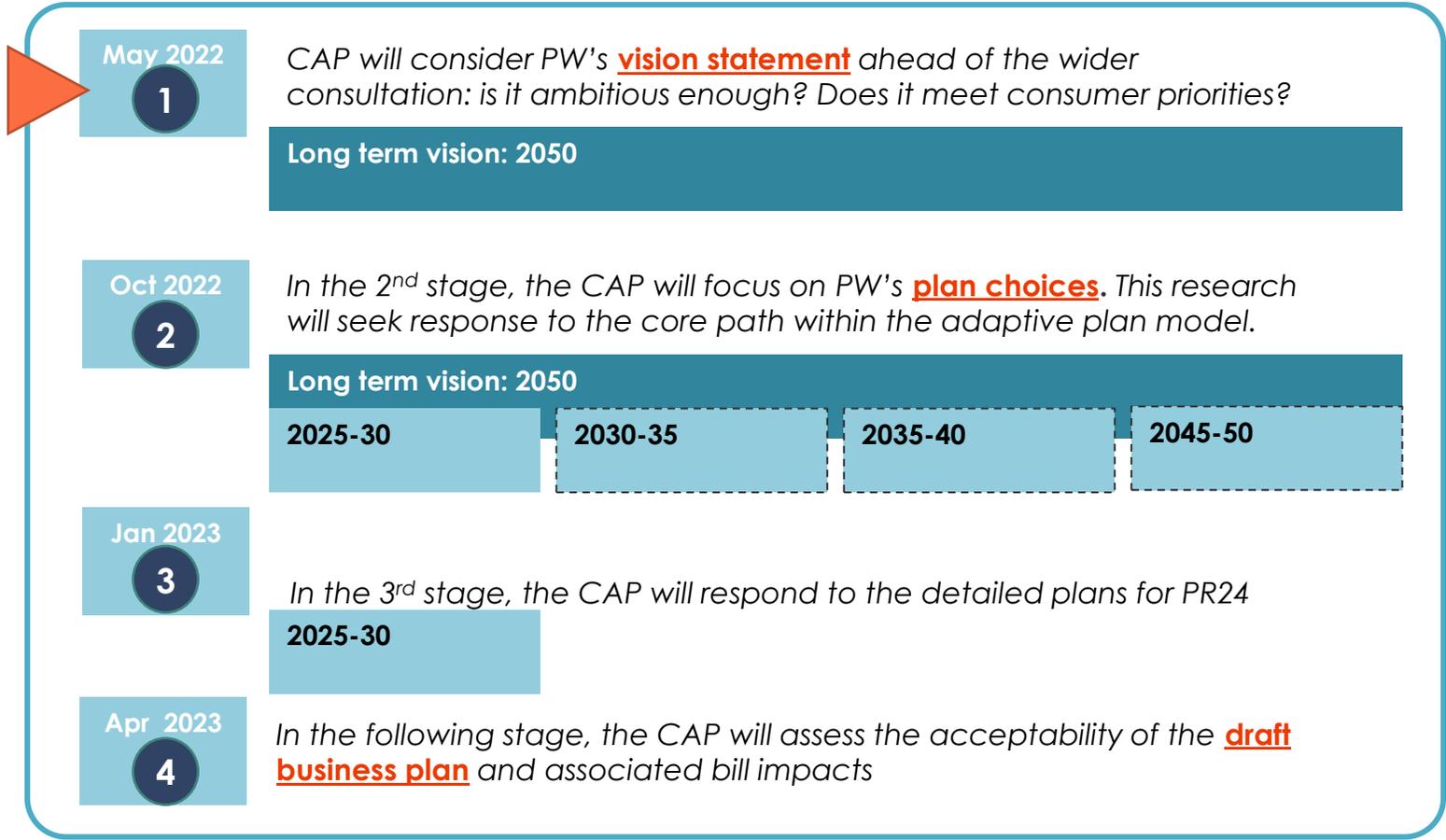
June 13<sup>th</sup> 2022





# Objectives, methodology & sample

- The Customer Advisory Panel (CAP) is designed to be an (increasingly) 'expert' citizen sample of Portsmouth Water's (PW's) customers and future customers.
- Recruited to meet/engage 4 times during PR24 programme.
- The plan is to use the CAP to consult customers on:
  - The long-term vision (this report)
  - The plan choices (covered over 2 stages)
  - The draft business plan: is the 5-year plan acceptable to customers as the start of the 25-year trajectory?



Household sample: 4 x 90-minute focus groups	
ABC1	5 people
C2DE	5 people
Future customers	5 people
Vulnerable customers	5 people
Non-household sample: 5 x 60-minute depth interviews	
NHH	5 people

**Future customers group**

- Included a mix of young people who live with their parents and/or currently at university
- They know very little about Portsmouth Water or water in general – as this is a topic they haven't had to think about or engage with till now
- They are a very price conscious group, with rising costs and price increases being a top of mind concern for them, both in general and in the context of household bills. Though not yet bill payers, they are worried potential sharp increases to household bills could make them hard to deal with in the future

**Vulnerable customers group**

- Included customers with financial vulnerabilities (i.e. on low income, who have recently lost their job, living in temporary accommodation)
- And customers in households with health vulnerabilities (including mental health issues)

**NHH customers included:**

- A livestock farmer using water in their business for animal welfare
- A diversified farm: mixing some crop production, renting part of their land, running 3 holiday lets, using water for all of their business operations
- The owner of an engineering business
- The owner of a community interest company helping vulnerable people learn how to frame pictures
- The sole trader/landlord of a pub in Portsmouth

**Fieldwork dates: 9<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

# CAP Context

A black and white photograph of a row of faucets in a sink. The central faucet is in sharp focus, with water dripping from its spout. The other faucets in the row are blurred in the background. A teal horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'CAP Context' in white.

- As noted in previous research, customers don't really think about their water supply in their day-to-day life

- They only engage with their water provider when they pay their bill and when issues arise – and for most no issues have occurred with Portsmouth Water / these occur very rarely

- As a result, most don't interact with Portsmouth Water and know very little about it, how it operates, and performs. There is a view that:

*'Portsmouth Water is invisible and as long as we don't have any issues or don't hear anything bad about them, they must be doing well'*

**However, some NHH customers (particularly those in the farming industry) seem to be more aware of Portsmouth Water, its activities and efforts such as maintaining the infrastructure. They interact with PW regularly through collaborating in various schemes (e.g. reducing nitrates) and joining efforts to maintain water resources and wildlife in their area (e.g. helping PW to maintain an old reservoir).**

*"I haven't really thought about it to be honest, I just pay the bill."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

*"They are very keen on the environment, working with farmers, they take infrastructure very seriously, they seem like a responsible water company, I think they are doing a good job"  
(NHH customer)*



Less positive views



- Some **vulnerable customers** appear slightly more critical of Portsmouth Water
  - Water in their area is hard (and harder than other areas they have lived in)
  - Some think the bills might be higher than other areas

- **Future customers** are far less aware and knowledgeable about PW (and water providers in general)
  - But sense that PW is probably doing things right since they haven't heard anything negative
- **C2D** customers appear relatively neutral about PW, as most don't really think about / interact with it.
  - Most assume it must be generally fine as they haven't had any issues
  - NB: those who have interacted with PW have had positive experiences



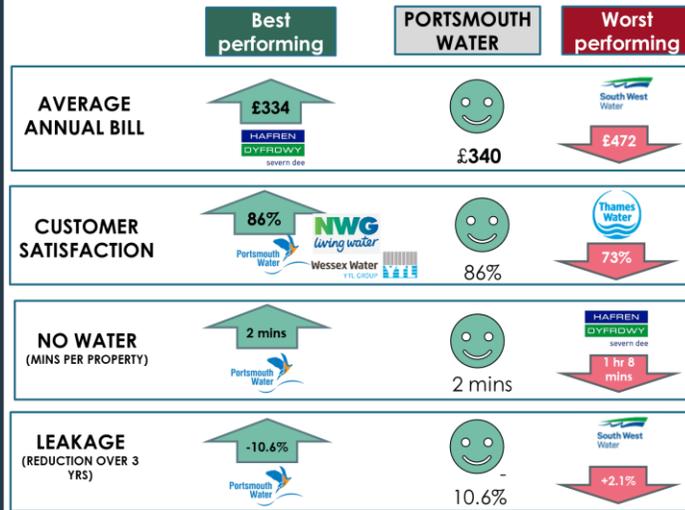
More positive views

- **BC1** customers are generally positive about PW
  - Most have not experienced any issues with their water supply
  - The few who have had issues feel that interactions with PW were handled quickly and efficiently
  - Positive views are reinforced by negative stories from friends/family who have had problems with other water providers
- **NHH** are also generally positive about PW
  - Perceive a reliable and proactive company (e.g. looking after its infrastructure; protecting the environment)



# Customers react very positively to the comparative performance information, as it reinforces views that Portsmouth Water is generally doing well

## But how is Portsmouth Water performing now?



"I think it makes me feel a bit more appreciative of it to be honest, and the fact of moaning about bills and things ... I kind of get a better understanding of the work that they're putting into it really."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)

"It's very reassuring to know we have a good provider that cares about the leakages, and I'm pleased about the price compared to other providers."  
(HH customer, future)

- The comparative performance information **generates positive reactions** for most as it helps them place PW's performance in context – seeing that it is the best performing company in nearly all presented categories
- It also **helps improve overall views** of PW, particularly for those who are less familiar with it or have more critical starting points



- Those better aware and positive towards PW (i.e. BC1, NHH) feel their **views are reinforced and supported** by the data – a sense that it *'reflects my experiences, and confirms my earlier thoughts'*

- Whilst those less aware/ have low understanding (i.e. future customers, C2D) **feel reassured** – especially when they hear that these figures are on a UK-wide level (and not just among companies in the South of England)



- Those initially more critical towards PW (i.e. some in the vulnerable group) **appear to be more positive** after seeing this information and how PW compares to other companies across multiple areas of its operation and service



# Not everyone is able to spontaneously identify challenges faced by Portsmouth Water

This is mainly due to low awareness and engagement with water services, and their water company in general



- Most future customers and some vulnerable customers **struggle to envisage** what **current and future challenges** PW might be facing now – with only a couple of them bringing up population increase as an issue

- BC1 and C2D customers appear **more tuned in** with the challenges facing PW
- **Spontaneously bring up increasing population and housing**, and subsequent demand for water, as well as **climate change issues** (e.g. higher temperatures)

- NHH customers are **more aligned with Portsmouth Water’s current challenges**, as some of them are also having to consider these as part of their own business operation

**!** Cost is a **dominant concern** across all customer audiences, given the **current context of rising prices and uncertainty**. Many of them are worried about the likelihood of **increased bills** and the impact it would have for them for the future – this is a particular concern for vulnerable, future and NHH customers

*“They should maintain the prices at a level that feels fair towards their customers. Increasing cost in providing their water services is a concern.”*  
(HH customer, future)

*“The population is growing and, with government stipulations on how much new housing must be built, then there’s more and more pressure on what is a finite resource.”*  
(HH customer, C2D)

*“I guess pricing, with the cost of living crisis at the moment. Everything is going up. That puts pressure on us as a business and as a consumer as well.”*  
(NHH customer)



- Customers are not surprised to hear that PW is facing challenges related to climate change and increasing demand due to population growth – these are wider issues that they are all more or less aware of
- Even those who struggled to identify these issues spontaneously, agree that they are important and need to be addressed (although some admitted that they don't tend to think about these issues in their daily lives as they feel too depressing and faraway in the future)
- Hearing that PW is already working on dealing with these challenges, and has been putting plans in place for the future, feels reassuring

*"I find it really concerning because we can't go somewhere else for our supply. Water stress kind of brings me anxiety. Reassuring that they are taking action."  
(HH customer, BC1)*

*"They're really worrying actually. Maybe not so much for my generation but for the next generation it's a big worry."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)*



# As a result, they expect Portsmouth Water to take further action and communicate these challenges more widely



Increase **communications** on these issues (e.g. via customer bills) and **educate** customers on their importance (esp. important for future/vulnerable customers)



Establish ways of **saving water / using it differently** (e.g. collecting rain water for non-drinking purposes, encouraging water recycling)



**Collaborate** with Government and other industries to **maximise** joint efforts, and embed future needs in planning



**Empower** customers to take action in dealing with these challenges (e.g. learning how to use less water)



Invest in **infrastructure** and **equipment**, aiming to be as **sustainable** as possible in the future, to ensure reliability of service and minimise environmental impact



**Ensure** bills are only **increasing gradually**, and avoid sharp increases - particularly important in the context of planning for the future

*"Letting people know about the challenges they're facing and what they can do to help, maybe."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

*"I'd be quite curious to know how much interaction there is with government in terms of changing infrastructure, improving infrastructure."  
(HH customer, C2D)*

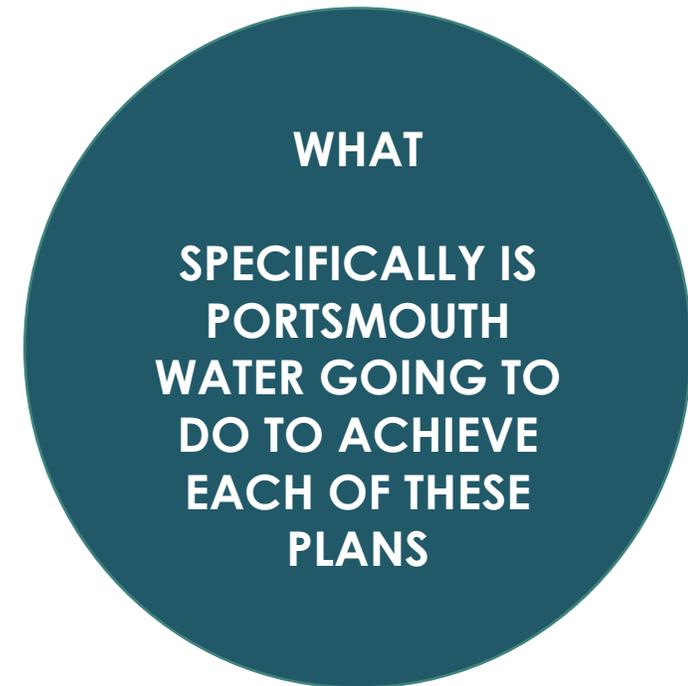
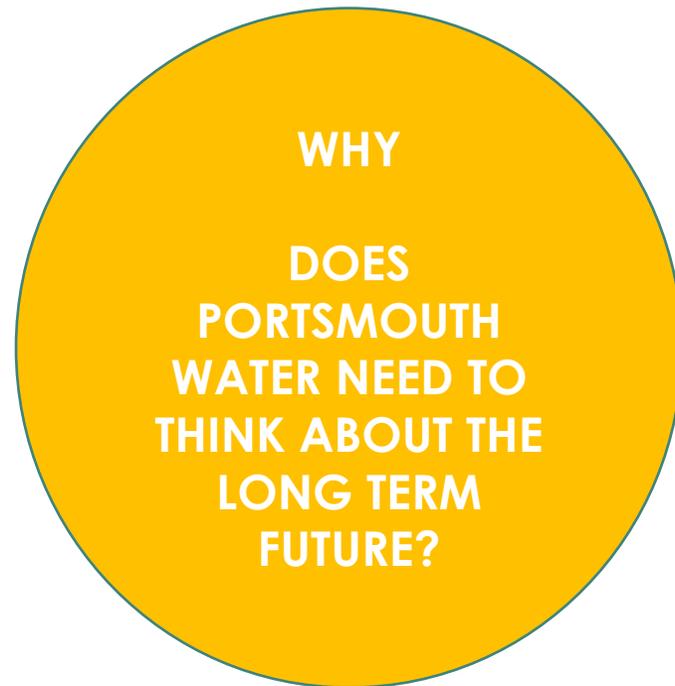
*"They should be checking their resources and invest in equipment to reinforce their supply. Try to become as sustainable as possible without influencing drastically the prices."  
(HH customer, future)*



A close-up photograph of green leaves with water droplets, split horizontally by a teal banner. The top half shows a leaf with a prominent vein and a large water droplet. The bottom half shows a leaf with a network of veins and several smaller water droplets.

# Response to the vision

Information shared with customers was presented in the context of why, how, and what:



The following slides summarise what customers think about the plans and their response to the way these have been expressed

Response to plan 

Response to language 

Perceive PW considering a wide range of issues facing the area; proactively making plans to address in the long-term

## Response to plan



- ✓ **'Change our approach today to meet the challenges of tomorrow'** sounds proactive and forward-looking
- ✓ References to **'protecting unique biodiversity and chalk streams'** seen very positively: important for PW to look after environment & these unique features. Esp. important for some NHH customers also mindful of the environmental challenges
- ✓ **'...significantly reduce the amount of water taken from rivers'** viewed positively: specific action to protect the environment (although word 'potentially' seen as meaningless, weakening the statement)
- ? However, vision feels **too vague**. Lacks 'hooks' for customers to provide specific feedback on – and some raise questions about how PW is planning to achieve each of the broad aims
- ? Also potentially **too ambitious**. Perceived hard to achieve all the aims (e.g. keeping bills affordable) whilst addressing all the issues
- ? A few question if **2050 is too distant and long-term** and whether more specific, shorter-term goals should be set for net zero
- ? Some not sure what **'increasing customer expectations'** means or how it is linked to the other broader challenges



“ We pride ourselves on delivering excellent services, low bills and support to our community. But as we look forward, we face our biggest challenge in over 160 years of providing water to the area:

- The impact of changes to our climate
- The needs of the environment
- A growing population
- And increasing customer expectations

So we need to change our approach today to meet the challenges of tomorrow:

- Ensure our aging infrastructure continues to deliver wholesome, reliable water to our customers
- Decarbonise how we operate to limit our impact on climate change and meet the UK pledge to reach net zero by 2050
- Potentially significantly reduce the amount of water we take from rivers to protect their unique biodiversity.
- Specifically, protect our unique chalk streams like the River Test and Itchen in Hampshire, and the Meon, Ems and Lavant in West Sussex

All this has to be achieved while ensuring that our bill is affordable to all our customers; for this generation and the next. ”

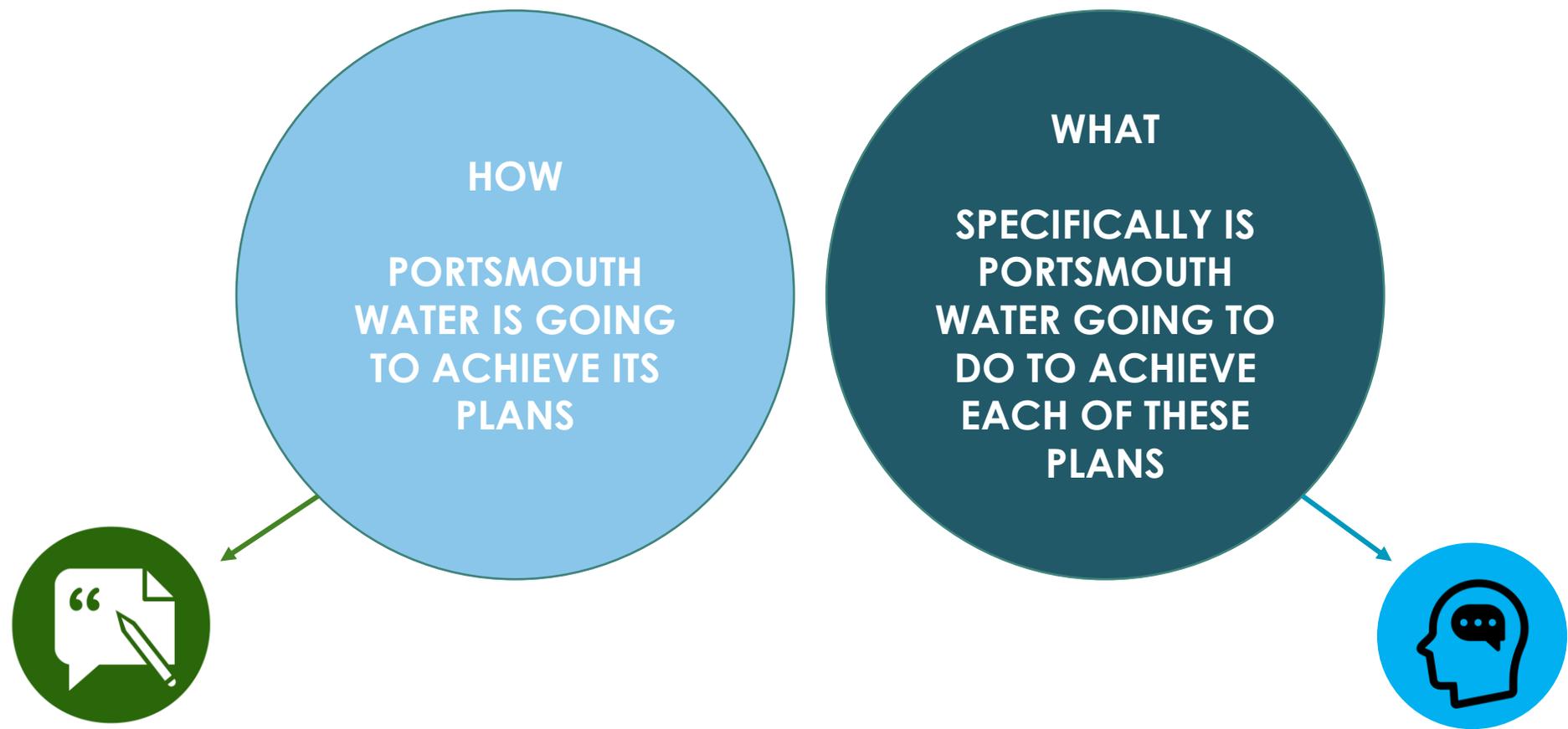
*“It definitely has some good parts there, they are responsible ... adding the complexity of looking after biodiversity and chalk streams, there are some fairly big tasks ahead.”*  
(NHH customer)





# Throughout, customers found it hard to provide feedback on the ideas related to the 'How' as they feel too broad and generic

Feedback on the following slides is mostly focused on responses to the 'what's', with some comments on specific language references included in the 'how's'



# While the overall plans regarding maximising water usage, sustainability, and leakage reduction sound broadly good, customers have feedback on specific language used

References to 'being water smart' and 'abstracting' are seen as unclear, and customers struggle to articulate their meaning

Our future is about being water smart.

1. **Making water go further** and ensuring it is available to use, so we can abstract less from the vulnerable environments.
2. Creating **new sustainable water sources** to protect our rivers.
3. Continuing to push the boundaries of **reducing leakage** to reduce water wasted.

**Building the first new reservoir in a generation at Havant Thicket** to capture spring water that would otherwise flow out to sea, creating a second sustainable source of water to reduce abstraction in Hampshire.

**Invest to increase the reliability and robustness of our assets** to ensure we continue to deliver safe and secure supply of water in a future with more unpredictable weather patterns (storms and droughts) and uncertainty about availability of water.

**Using smart technology to monitor our network**, to enable us to reduce water wasted through leaks.

11



? Customers see **'being water smart'** as a relatively confusing and ambiguous term

- ? Some think it might be linked to technology or using water more efficiently, but others struggle to understand why it is being mentioned and what exactly it means
- ? One NHH didn't like the term as there is a brand called Smartwater, and it reminds them of that

"I'm not sure, I'm all that struck on that statement [water smart] to be totally honest".  
(NHH customer)

"When you say abstract less water do you mean extract less water?"  
(HH customer, vulnerable)



# Investing in a new reservoir, existing assets, and smart technology are seen as broadly good focus areas, but customers need more information to be able to assess them further



HOW PORTSMOUTH WATER IS GOING TO ACHIEVE ITS PLANS

WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS PORTSMOUTH WATER GOING TO DO TO ACHIEVE EACH OF THESE PLANS

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<b>New reservoir</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Building a new reservoir sounds like a <b>good idea overall</b>: An additional source of water in the area ensuring future supplies. Some already aware of Havant Thicket reservoir plans</li> <li>⊕ However, some wanted <b>specific information</b> about the impact the new reservoir: on the environment, on customers, how long for it to be built, and how much it would cost</li> <li>⊕ A couple also wondered if there are <b>other ways of reusing or saving water</b> that could be more cost-effective (reusing/recycling water or collecting rain water)</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Investing in <b>ensuring future reliability</b> of the water supply is again seen as a good idea, as it's important to ensure the service is not disrupted</li> <li>⊕ But see a <b>lack of clarity</b> in the phrase 'robustness of our assets': assets could be referring to multiple things such as water resources or equipment (NHH less confused by this term than HH customers)</li> </ul>
<b>Smart tech</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Using smart technology to reduce leakages also seen positively, as customers feel its important to avoid <b>wasting water</b></li> <li>⊕ However, they focus more on the <b>aspect of smart technology</b>, and raise questions about how this would work in practice – e.g. whether it would involve smart meters, whether certain types of customers would be excluded by use of technology, how long it would take to implement</li> </ul>

*“The reservoir is quite a big thing, it can cost a lot, it goes back to my idea about looking at harvesting rain water, might have a better return for Portsmouth Water”.*  
(NHH customer)

*“Robustness of our assets is a bit vague, has to be more specific and more explanatory.”*  
(HH customer, future)

# Customers have mixed views on the term 'lowest cost', some link it to lower bills, while others worry about low quality of materials/equipment



Our future is about being water smart.

4. Supporting our customers to use water wisely and ultimately reduce water usage.

5. Ensuring our water is **always wholesome** and always available at our customers' tap.

6. Investing in our **assets** so we use our lowest cost, most sustainable and lowest carbon water sources while continuing to deliver excellent service.

**HOW PORTSMOUTH WATER IS GOING TO ACHIEVE ITS PLANS**

**WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS PORTSMOUTH WATER GOING TO DO TO ACHIEVE EACH OF THESE PLANS**

Over time, giving all customers a smart meter with real time visibility of their water usage, access to advice on how to use less and reward them for doing so **possibly** through innovative tariffs.

Protecting customers' health by **eradicating use of lead pipe by 2050** and protecting the standards of our drinking water.

Developing ways to operate our plant that **reduces reliance on power and chemicals** to limit the impact on climate, costs and support PW's goal of carbon net zero.

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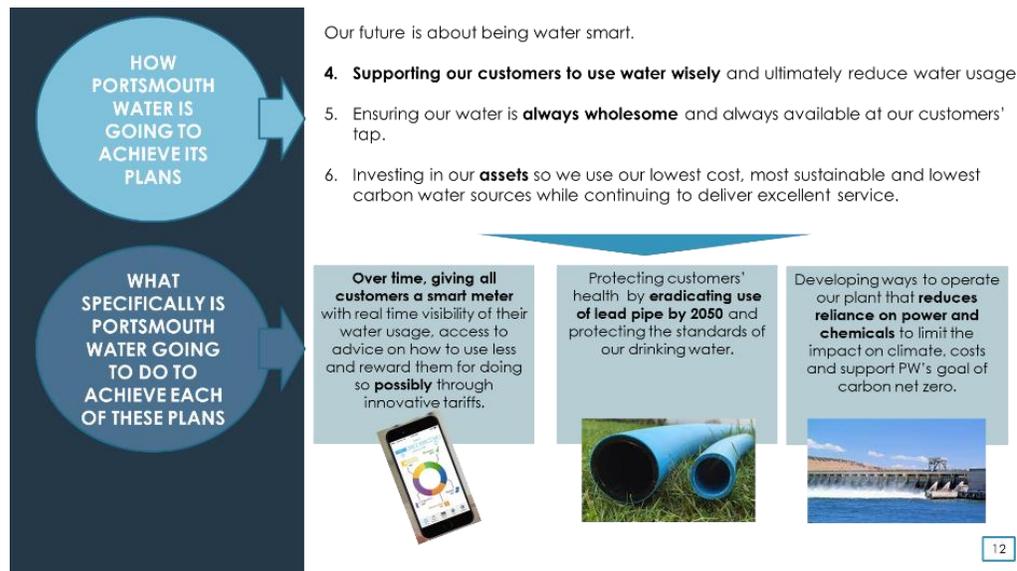
"If they are using their lowest cost that will be reciprocated to cost going out to customers."  
(NHH customer)

"It is unclear as it doesn't state if it is going be lowest cost for the consumer or for the company. What will the lowest price look like?"  
(HH customer, future)

- The phrase '**lowest cost**' receives generally mixed reactions
  - ✓ Some customers (particularly NHH) see it positively as they **link low cost with lower bills** for customers, and approve of PW taking cost into consideration for their planning – especially as it's also linked to sustainability. They also feel this plan is aligned with their priorities for affordable bills
  - ⊕ However, others view 'lowest cost' as **alarming**: it might impact the quality of materials/equipment used and therefore their longevity/durability and the service that they receive. They don't like that PW is placing emphasis on low cost (especially the word 'lowest') and feel it is prioritising costs and profitability over other more important aspects (e.g. sustainability, longevity, quality)
  - ⊕ There is also a question about what 'lowest cost' is referring to, and whether it means '**lowest cost for the company or for customers**'?
  - ⊕ The phrase **innovative tariffs** also creates some confusion: customers are unsure about what 'innovative' means in this context, and what this would look like in terms of how tariffs would be calculated
  - ⊕ The word '**tariff**' in general is **not widely understood**, and there is some uncertainty about what exactly this means in relation to their bills



# They also express mixed views on smart meters, and want to see more information on plans regarding eradication of lead pipes and reduction of reliance on power and chemicals



"Smart meters actually make people aware of their usage, this is not a bad thing"  
(HH customer, BC1)

"I think it's an excellent idea (eradicating lead pipes) but I also think 2050 is a very long way away to be doing something that, to be honest, probably should have been done already."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)

## Smart meter

- Customers have **mixed feelings** about idea of giving smart meters to all
  - ✓ Some react very positively: it will **support customers** in saving more water (and one customer who has an (energy) smart meter agrees it has made them more aware of usage)
  - ⊕ Others are more **cynical**: smart meters don't have a good reputation, and put the guilt on customers for their usage
  - ⊕ Ambitious – as so many houses don't have (non smart) meters yet
  - ⊕ One customer also raised a question around **fairness** of this plan in relation to larger households (with presumably higher usage)

## Lead pipes

- ⊕ A belief that lead pipes should have been **eradicated a long time ago** (some surprised they are still being used) - and that 2050 is not very ambitious in this context
- ⊕ Customers would like more **detailed information** on efforts taking place to give a better sense of timeframes
- ✓ A minority were **aware** that PW is already working towards this direction: one has had their lead pipes removed

## Power/chemicals

- ✓ Looking to **reduce reliance on power** and **chemicals** is seen positively
- ⊕ But customers want to see **more information** about how PW is planning to do this
- ✓ Some (mainly NHH) see **opportunities** for PW to be collaborating with and incentivising farmers to increase efforts in this area





- ✓ While customers are unsure of what exactly **innovation** would involve, they interpret it **positively**, feeling that PW is aiming to do things differently and come up with new solutions
- ✓ Some also link innovation with **technology** and **digitalisation**, thinking that PW is looking to update its processes and service

*"I don't know what it means but it's exciting, they might come up with solutions I haven't considered."*  
(HH customer, BC1)

*"I think of innovation, in terms of water, for me it must be the way that the water is processed or the way that the water is taken to people's homes."*  
(HH customer, C2D)





# Customers are very supportive of collaborating with other industries, Government and local communities - feeling that collaboration can maximise opportunities for future plans

HOW PORTSMOUTH WATER IS GOING TO ACHIEVE ITS PLANS

WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS PORTSMOUTH WATER GOING TO DO TO ACHIEVE EACH OF THESE PLANS

Our future is about being water smart.

- Working **collaboratively** with **landowners, farmers** and **industry** to find ways to protect our water sources.
- Finding ways to **generate** and **use renewable energy** and **innovative ways** to **reduce** our **impact** on the **causes of climate change**.
- Looking outside the industry to **drive collaboration, innovation** and **efficiencies**.

**Working with landowners, farmers & industry** to protect our water sources, preventing contamination which will reduce costs for treating water and therefore minimising the reliance on power and chemicals to **remove e.g. nitrates or pollutants from our water supplies**.



**Partnering with renewable energy providers** to ensure we have a sustainable source of energy and develop our own energy from solar or through residual heat from water.



Working with the **community** to reduce carbon impact and waste from plastic bottles by actively promoting tap water (i.e. by providing free water for public water dispensers and working with **local government** and **environmental bodies** to promote use of water bottles).



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"I do, I love it. I love collaboration, things get better when you work together."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)

"I'm familiar with working with landowners and farmers it needs to be broader - some of the plans are restrictive."  
(NHH customer)

## Farmers

- ✓ Customers react very positively to the idea of working with farmers and landowners: **any plans for collaboration will help increase efforts and opportunities** for achieving future plans
- ✓ NHH customers who work in farming are **aware of these efforts** as they have been working with Portsmouth Water in this area
- ? They point out that some of the current **plans feel restrictive**, and there aren't enough incentives for farmers. They want PW to look into how NHH use water differently to ensure collaboration opportunities are maximised

## Energy providers

- ✓ The idea of **partnering** with renewable energy providers sounds good in principle as it reinforces the idea of collaboration
- ✓ Supports a focus on **sustainability** and use of renewable energy (i.e. solar power, energy from residual heat)
- ? However, some feel that this all sounds good, but at the same time they would like to see **more information** on what this would look like

## Community

- The idea of working with the community and local government is appreciated (again speaks to collaboration), but mixed reactions to public water dispensers
- ✓ Some have experienced water dispensers in airports and seen how many plastic bottles are avoided through using it – gives instant information on the positive impact
- ? Others feel that in reality dispensers often are not maintained properly in public spaces, with some people drinking straight from the dispenser, and others being reluctant to use it (especially since Covid)





Our future is about being water smart.

10. Driving **digitalisation** of Portsmouth water to better support our customer whenever they need it all year round.

11. Doing all this at the **lowest possible cost** to customers and ensuring that water is affordable for all our customers.

Enabling customers to choose how they interact with Portsmouth Water with the addition of **state of the art digital options to the current options - providing excellent customer experiences.**

Balancing investment needs and **discovering new innovative ways of driving efficiency**, to ensure that we achieve our vision at the lowest possible cost and **not passing on the burden to the next generation.**

Delivering **new social tariffs to ensure no household is in water poverty** and collaborating with charities, local government & other organisations to **give our vulnerable customers access to support.**

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- ✓ Some view '**digitalisation**' positively as they link it to **technological advancements and innovation** in terms of processes and service delivered
- ⊕ Whilst others think it's **vague and hard to understand** what exactly it would involve and what it would mean for them and the service they receive
- ⊕ Some also feel that it can be potentially **excluding those who are less able or familiar with technology**

*"It's meaningless, 'driving digitalisation of Portsmouth Water', they can't even explain what that means in the panel used for explaining what it means."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

*"The digitalisation could exclude people who are not that familiar with technology."  
(HH customer, BC1)*



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**Digital options**

- ⊕ Some feel similar plans around digital options have already featured, making it feel quite **repetitive** at this point of the conversation
- ⊕ Also, some question whether digital options will **exclude** those who are not able / familiar with technology
- ✓ NHH appear more positive as this feels **aligned with their own priorities** - they are also focusing on digitalising services for their own businesses

**Driving efficiency**

- ✓ The idea of not passing the burden to the next generation is recognised as **important** and **forward-thinking** (particularly liked by NHH and C2D customers)
- ⊕ However, customers would like to see **more information** on what this would actually look like including **examples** of how 'efficiency will be driven'

**Social tariffs**

- The concept of '**water poverty**' is **emotive** for customers. They believe access to affordable drinking water is a fundamental right for everyone
- ✓ C2D place great emphasis on this plan and **bring up personal experiences**. They are encouraged to see that PW is planning in this direction

*"Why is that not already a thing? Why are we talking 25-years from now for all of the vulnerable people in this city to have access to water, that should already be a given I feel."  
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

**!** Vulnerable customers respond more cynically to the plans presented here. They don't feel that 'driving digitalisation' is a good way of investing money, and did not like references to plans for vulnerable customers in the future as this needs to be addressed now.



# Summary & conclusions

# Plans that receive an emotional response (lead pipes, water poverty) and those involving technology and collaboration are prioritised

<i>Short-term plans</i>	<i>Ongoing plans</i>	<i>Long-term plans</i>
<p><b>!</b> <b>Urgent action</b> <b>Eradicating lead pipes:</b> Should have been done already, and can be completed within the next 5 years</p>	<p><b>Increasing asset reliability and robustness:</b> Updating and maintaining equipment/resources is an ongoing effort</p>	<p><b>Havant Thicket reservoir:</b> Large investment that will require time and resources</p>
<p><b>!</b> <b>Urgent action</b> <b>No household in water poverty:</b> A fundamental right that should be already in place for everyone</p>	<p><b>Using smart technology to reduce leaks in network:</b> An ongoing plan that can take a while to be implemented across the network</p>	<p><b>Reducing reliance on power and chemicals:</b> It can probably start now, but requires investment and works, and it will be a while until they reach the net zero goal</p>
<p><b>Working with the community / water dispensers:</b> A quick and easy action, that needs to be maintained properly</p>	<p><b>Partnering with renewable energy providers:</b> A very positive action towards sustainability that can start now and keep progressing and expanding over the years</p>	
<p><b>Providing customers with water meters:</b> It can be done relatively easily as the technology is already there</p>	<p><b>Not passing the burden to the next generation:</b> A proactive plan that should start now, and PW should continue working towards in the future</p>	
<p><b>Enabling digital interactions:</b> Customers can be provided with access to this kind of technology and options very easily</p>		
<p><b>Working with landowners and farmers:</b> A plan that can be implemented relatively easily by getting other partners involved</p>		



1

**Overall, Portsmouth Water's vision receives a broadly positive response**

Customers think it's ambitious, forward-thinking, and broad reaching taking into account current and future challenges, ways of improving its service, and demonstrating a strong environmental focus

2

**However, it is seen to lack detail and specificity at this stage, and customers would like to see more information, timelines and figures to be able to properly assess and feedback on these plans**

A number of plans are seen as vague (e.g. reducing reliance on power and chemicals, driving efficiency), and customers would like to have more information in order to understand what these would look like in terms of impact of current issues, specific actions to address them and expected outcomes. They would also like to see how much investment they will require and the impact on customers' bills

3

**Certain language and terms included in the vision are not familiar/ recognised by customers (seen as jargon), and can create confusion - and even scepticism**

For example, references to wholesome water, water smart, decarbonisation

4

**References to 'lowest cost' and 'digitalisation' can be jarring and raise concerns**

There is a view that 'lowest cost' could imply cheaper/lower quality materials and equipment, that could impact their service and experiences with Portsmouth Water. While references to 'digital options/digitalisation' raise questions regarding accessibility for older / less tech-abled audiences

5

**Plans that generate an emotional reaction from customers are seen as urgent, while those encouraging collaboration and innovation/technology are seen as important and easier to implement**

Specifically, customers see eradication of lead pipes and water poverty as urgent actions that should have already happened, while they are excited by collaborative initiatives outside the industry and with communities, as well as innovative ways of measuring and saving water





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# Addressing Ofwat's research principles

## 40. Customer Advisory Panel - Report 1

### Standards for high-quality research:

### How addressed in this project:

#### Useful and contextualised

The Customer Advisory Panel (CAP) is designed to be an increasingly 'expert' citizen sample of Portsmouth Water's (PW's) customers and future customers. This was the first project for the CAP and was used to explore views of the long term vision. For respondents, they were provided with stimulus materials to help understand the question context and in some cases, to help them articulate their preferences.

#### Fit for purpose

- Clear objectives that sat within the wider research and engagement programme agreed at the outset
- Purposefully recruited sample to reflect all types of Portsmouth Water customers: across all ages, gender, life stage, socio demographic groups
- Sample size proportionate for a longitudinal project involving the same participants over time
- Included the views of HH, NHH and Future customers – including customers with financial vulnerabilities (i.e. on low income, who have recently lost their job, living in temporary accommodation); and customers in households with health vulnerabilities (including mental health issues)
- Method to reflect the nature of the objectives: reoccurring online groups and depths to allow for open-ended, personal reflections

#### Neutrally designed

Blue Marble designed research materials including the discussion guides, group activities, stimulus materials and homework tasks. These are all designed with impartiality.

#### Inclusive

- Stimulus produced in plain English – all mediated by a research moderator
- Online community method allows people to move at their own speed, with homework exercises allowing for deeper reflection between the online community and deliberative events

#### Continual

A longitudinal approach with 25 customers that would span the 18-month period providing ongoing customer input to the draft plan.

#### Shared in full

Portsmouth Water to publish this report and supporting appendices on its website.

#### Ethical

Blue Marble is a company partner of the MRS, senior team members are all Members of the MRS and/or SRA. All Blue Marble's employees abide by the MRS Code of Conduct and as such all our research is in line with their ethical standards.

#### Independently assured

This report assured by Sia Partners

