

Customer Advisory Panel – Report 4

Response to Portsmouth Water's plans on social value

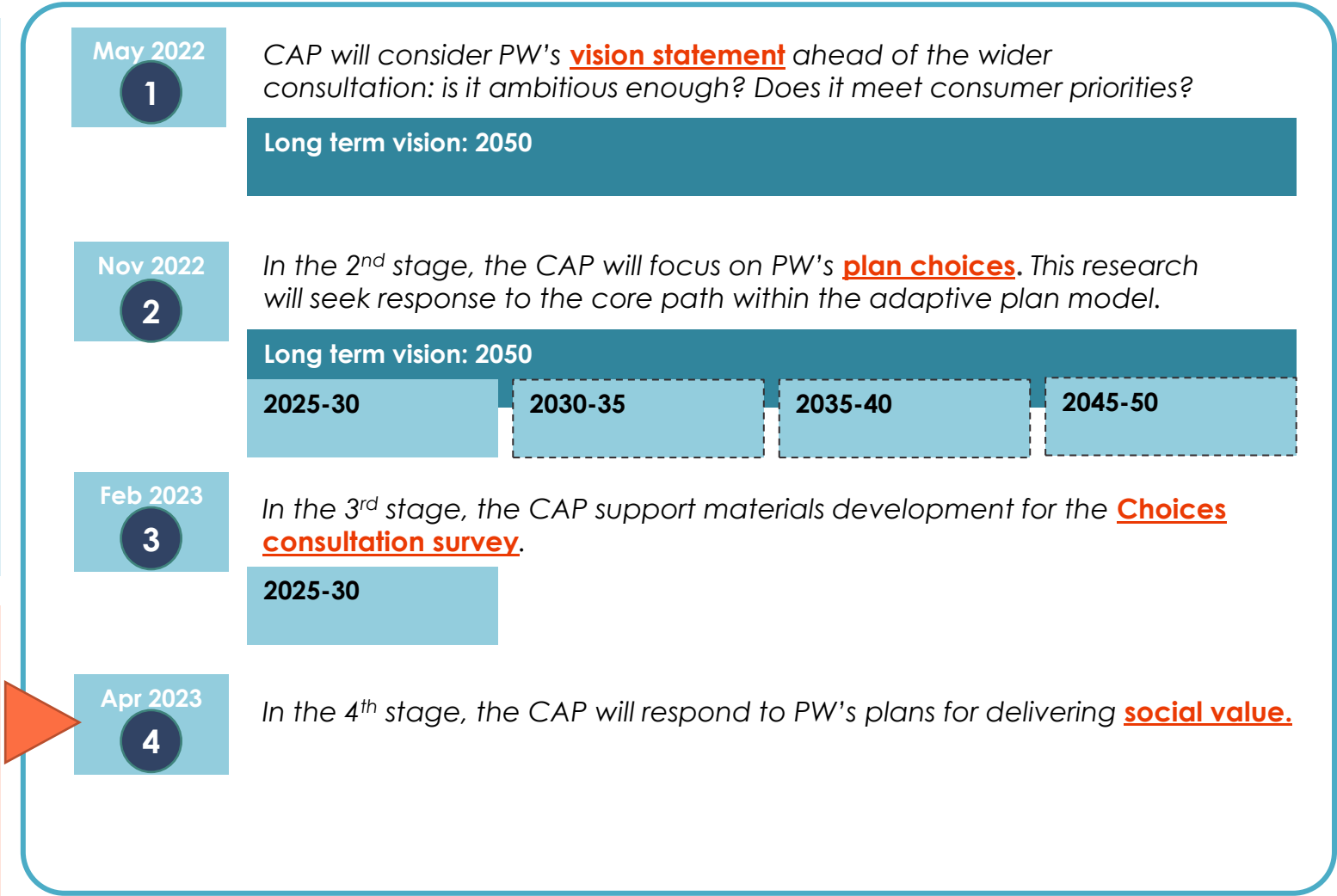
May 2023



- The Customer Advisory Panel (CAP) is designed to be an (increasingly) ‘expert’ citizen sample of Portsmouth Water’s (PW’s) customers and future customers.
- The plan is to use the CAP to consult customers on:
 - The long-term vision
 - Long term plan choices
 - Materials development
 - The draft business plan: is the 5-year plan acceptable to customers as the start of the 25-year trajectory?

CAP 4 specifically aimed to:

- Explore customers’ views on a series of ideas relating to social value and how it could be funded.
- Assess which ideas have customer support and which feel less appealing.
- Understand how these ideas would impact perceptions of PW.



Household sample: 4 x 90-minute focus groups	
ABC1	6 people
C2DE	6 people
Future customers	4 people
Vulnerable customers	4 people
Non-household sample: 5 x 60-minute depth interviews	
NHH	4 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.

Fieldwork dates: 25th April – 3rd May 2023



Summary of customers' views on Portsmouth Water's social value plans

1

Portsmouth Water's plans to deliver social value across a wide range of areas are very positively received by customers – and encourages perceptions of Portsmouth Water as a proactive and caring organisation.

- This initiative feels aligned with what other organisations are increasingly focusing on, speaks to issues that customers are conscious of and concerned about, and demonstrates willingness to offer support and do good.

2

But it is important for social value initiatives to be perceived as genuine efforts to contribute positively, as opposed to serving the company's own agenda.

- There is some suspicion and cynicism towards organisations who are pursuing such activities for their own benefit (e.g. to offset negative publicity or harmful activities).

3

Customers feel that Portsmouth Water should concentrate on delivering value in areas that feel relevant to its business. Supporting customers who are struggling (both financially and due to health vulnerabilities) and protecting the environment are the main areas that feel appropriate.

- In these areas customers are in favour of maximising efforts to deliver support, and ensuring any initiatives are accessible, inclusive, and progress is being monitored and evaluated.

4

While there is agreement that local communities and organisations do need further support (especially currently due to being particularly stretched), customers question whether this is something that PW should be seeking to do, and how it could impact its efforts on areas that are perceived as priority.

5

In terms of funding for social value plans, customers are in favour of a combined funding model that would prioritise support for the most important areas (i.e. financial hardship), would not apply pressure on those who are financially stretched, and would be match funded by PW's shareholders.

- It could include voluntary donations, option to round up bills, and an opt-out option for causes of their preference.
- It could also involve a small mandatory tariff to support customers who are struggling financially, but there should be a way of excluding them from paying this.



A background image showing two hands reaching towards each other against a blue sky with white clouds. One hand is at the top center, and the other is at the bottom center, with their fingers spread. A teal horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

Reactions to Portsmouth Water's social value plans

There is strong support for delivering social value, as long as it feels purposeful, authentic and linked to Portsmouth Water as a business

- Overall, customers are supportive of the idea that Portsmouth Water delivers social value, and agree that it is important for large companies to give back to society, the environment and local communities.
- They feel that people are increasingly more likely to support and value organisations with an ethical outlook, especially as they become more conscious of issues relating to the environment and the impact of the cost of living crisis.
- They also highlight that such actions can improve a company's profile and help offset negative publicity - which is often seen as a key motivation for organisations pursuing social value initiatives.

When thinking about social value in the context of Portsmouth Water, customers mostly associate it with providing help to people who are struggling with their bills and improving and protecting the environment.

*"I feel like any business should have some sort of social value because obviously in the eyes of their customers it makes them look better. It makes you more likely to want to work with that business or purchase from them. I think it's a good thing, in general."
(HH customer, future)*



Customers do however stress the importance of any initiatives in this area needing to feel genuine, relevant and to be serving a purpose, to avoid being perceived as 'paying lip service' and doing something just for the sake of saying they are doing it.

Stimulus explored during CAP sessions



financial hardship

Where Portsmouth Water is today:

Portsmouth Water currently has a social tariff, where 27,500 customers only pay its minimum tariff. This currently equates to a 40% reduction (£46), from an average bill of £117 to £71.

The social tariff criteria for Portsmouth Water is a household income of less than £21,000.

What Portsmouth Water is considering:

Being part of a future national discount scheme

At the moment, we expect this scheme to provide a £5 discount to all customers on universal/pension credit.

This will be a minimum discount, with those who are on universal/pension credit and also qualifying for our social tariff receiving the higher social tariff discount.

Development of a financial hardship fund

This would be a 'pot' of funding that would be available for any customer to access, should they meet specific criteria.

The criteria would be co-created with customers and organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Customers are very supportive of additional financial support, but stress it should be substantial and accessible to anyone who is struggling 8



Customers acknowledge that many people struggle to pay their bills, especially within the current context of the cost of living crisis. They are in favour of a combined social value model (bringing together the social tariff, national discount scheme and hardship fund), to ensure the maximum level of support is being delivered.

National discount scheme

- ✓ **Reactions to a national discount scheme are relatively positive.**
 - ✓ It is recognised as an extra step from where Portsmouth Water is today, and an effort to reach a wider range of people.
- ⚡ **However, some question whether a £5 discount would be meaningful, as they feel that the amount is too low to make an actual difference.**
- ⚡ **And there are some questions regarding how the discount scheme would be set up.**
 - ⚡ Including the involvement and funding from Government as well as other water companies.
 - ⚡ As well as how it would be applied in practice (i.e. whether it would be a recurring or a one-off discount).
- ⚡ **There is also lack of clarity regarding the term ‘minimum discount’.**
 - ⚡ Not everyone is clear on how this will work with the existing social tariff.

Financial hardship fund

- ✓ **Customers appreciate the idea of a financial hardship fund.**
 - ✓ They acknowledge that this would enable greater support levels, even to people who are currently ‘falling through the cracks’.
- ✓ **The idea of co-creating eligibility criteria is seen positively, as customers think it could allow for greater inclusivity.**
 - ✓ There is a view that relevant organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureau, would provide valuable input with regard to people who might be eligible for support.
- ⚡ **But they would like to see more detail and specificity about what the pot would involve and how support would be delivered.**
 - ⚡ Including what percentage of their bill would be covered and how often they would be able to access it.
- **Some also stress the importance of ensuring the pot is accessible to everyone who might need it.**
 - Through raising awareness so customers know to apply for it, making sure that the criteria is not too restrictive, and ensuring that the application process is simple and straight-forward.

I've been in a situation myself where I haven't qualified for things. I couldn't afford lots of things and having the financial hardship fund would be really useful for people in that situation."
(HH customer, C2D)



Stimulus explored during CAP sessions



environmental improvement

Where Portsmouth Water is today:

Portsmouth Water currently maintains all its land designated as 'priority habitat' (i.e. important areas for biodiversity) to 'good ecological status' (which is the required rating); and will continue to improve the biodiversity on these sites into the future.

Portsmouth Water also currently provide £50,000 of grants to local farms to improve biodiversity on their land.

What Portsmouth Water is considering:

Additional grants

In PW's recent consultation, results showed that customers and stakeholders support further grants, up to £200,000 at a cost of 8p per year onto the average yearly bill.

Additional funding to the local community

This could be:

- further grants to farmers
- or grants to other initiatives in the local area e.g. available to local organisations who would submit bids to an expert panel (including e.g. Natural England).

Environmental improvement is seen as an important aspect of social value, that should be available to a wide range of stakeholders



Providing additional support to improve the environment is seen as an intuitive and appropriate area for Portsmouth Water to focus on, due to its direct link to the environment as a business. Diversifying support to ensure it is inclusive of farmers and other relevant stakeholders is seen as the preferred next step.

Additional grants

- ✓ **The idea of offering additional grants to farmers in order to improve biodiversity on their land receives very positive reactions.**
 - ✓ Customers feel that farmers are well-placed to carry out such initiatives on their land.
 - ✓ Some are aware of similar projects and agree that they can have a positive impact on the local environment and community.
 - ✓ Also, the cost of 8p for significantly increasing grants is seen as relatively low, and customers would be prepared to support it.
- ? **However, they raise some questions with regard to the bidding process and how funding will be distributed.**
 - ? As well as the process for monitoring those who have received support, to ensure they are meeting their targets and obligations.
- ? **A few also question whether £200,000 is adequate funding to bring about change. It is currently difficult for customers to envisage how many projects would be supported with this level of funding.**

Additional funding to the local community

- ✓ **Opening up funding for environmental improvement to local communities as well farmers is seen the best option for social value delivered in this area.**
 - ✓ Supported initiatives will be even more reflective of the local area and its environmental needs.
 - ✓ There is a view that local organisations with an environmental focus could benefit from support to carry out their existing projects (e.g. local orchids or allotments) and positively impact the community.
- ? **Again, customers feel it would be helpful to understand how funding will be distributed, as well as the application and evaluation processes.**
 - ? Understanding the size of the grants would help customers visualise the scale of support offered.
 - ? Having a sense of bill implications for this option (similar to the 8p indication), would be also helpful in assessing this option.
- **There is a view that funding should be easily accessible through a straightforward application process, to encourage participation from a diverse set of stakeholders (including very small groups).**

"I think it's really positive and 8p is literally pennies. Yeah, I'd support that. It's interesting, exciting."
(HH customer, BC1)



Stimulus explored during CAP sessions



community support

Where Portsmouth Water is today:

Portsmouth Water currently provides support to a range of local community initiatives, with the majority focused on education. These include college STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) initiatives, online education facilities and educational facilities at Staunton Country Park.

What Portsmouth Water is considering:

Additional support to local community

Portsmouth Water could go beyond these initiatives and provide further support to the local community.

This could be a pot of funding available to anyone in the community to put forward a bid, outlining the benefit to the community (e.g. building a new clubhouse).

Bids would go to a panel that would include relevant local stakeholders that represent the community, such as elected councillors.



There is a general agreement that local communities, especially in deprived areas, are likely to be facing difficulties and should be given support. However, customers question if Portsmouth Water should be looking to offer additional support in this area, on top of its existing educational initiatives.

Additional support to local community

- ✓ **Customers appreciate that PW would like to offer additional support to local communities.**
 - ✓ They think it clearly demonstrates PW's intention to deliver support across a range of areas.
 - ✓ Some also recognise the need for additional support, particularly in areas that are struggling financially (e.g. Paulsgrove).
- ✗ **However, customers feel that this is an area where support from PW does not feel particularly intuitive or imperative.**
 - ✗ Other areas, such as the environment or customers who are struggling with their bills, feel more appropriate as a focus.
 - ✗ Some feel that support offered by PW in this area could overlap with existing support that other more relevant organisations might be offering.
 - ✗ Within this, there is a sense that PW could be '*spreading itself too thin*' by looking to offer support in too many areas at once, and not prioritising the ones where support feels more necessary/appropriate.
- **They feel that continuing and strengthening educational initiatives should be the main form of support in relation to local communities, as it is an area where PW is already carrying out activities and feels more appropriate as a focus.**
- **They also stress the importance of ensuring that the selection process for support is fair, unbiased and reflective of local needs.**
 - This could be achieved by ensuring that the panel consists of local community representatives (e.g. community leaders). A number are opposed to the idea of councillors taking part, as they worry their involvement could be part of their political agenda.

*"It's nice for the community to have something extra, but it is something extra. It's not something that is needed."
(HH customer, future)*

*"It just seems a bit strange that Portsmouth Water are thinking of getting involved in all sorts of things. There are going to be overlaps with other companies, and surely they [others] should be doing it."
(HH customer, C2D)*



Stimulus explored during CAP sessions



**vulnerable
customers**

Where Portsmouth Water is today:

Portsmouth Water currently have a Priority Services Register, with over 30,000 customers on it. The Priority Services Register is a free service for customers who might need extra support, due to their age, health, disabilities etc. It offers a range of services, including assistance with sending bills, home visits, warnings for emergencies and interruptions etc.

What Portsmouth Water is considering:

Additional support to vulnerable customers

As Portsmouth Water moves towards smart metering, it could provide further support to vulnerable customers such as a service identifying customers who have not used water and alerting a family member.

This could help identify if someone has had an accident or has become ill.



Customers are positively surprised by the fact that PW already offer a range of services to vulnerable customers. They agree that identifying potential issues and alerting family members is a positive and proactive next step towards enhancing support in this area.

Additional support to vulnerable customers

- ✓ **Customers are enthusiastic about PW's efforts to support vulnerable customers, and agree that it is important for them to receive additional services based on their needs and requirements.**
 - ✓ Even those who are in principle less positive towards the idea of smart metering see merit in utilising data and information to support customers who might be in need, and prevent them from harm.
- **But they stress that the service needs to meet certain standards and criteria in order to work effectively and efficiently.**
 - For example, it needs to be able to alert family members of any potential issues in a timely manner, taking into account customers' usage patterns (i.e. if someone has had an accident and hasn't been using their water for more than x hours).
 - Customers should be able to easily control the service if need be (e.g. if they are leaving the house for more than x hours) in order to avoid unnecessarily alarming relatives.
- **Ensuring awareness of this service among vulnerable customers (and any other services available to them) is seen as key in driving value for this service.**
- **Some also said they would feel suspicious of a water company having access to private data around usage.**
 - It is important that the service does not override confidentiality and privacy of users, who must give permission for their usage to be tracked.
 - And that it only uses access to personal data for the purposes of alerting family members.

"I have a disabled daughter and we're on their priority list already for water and gas, so I understand the value of having this. So I think it's a super important thing to to advertise and make sure that vulnerable customers are aware of what their services are, and how they can access it."

(NHH customer)

"I feel like it is important, but so long as it doesn't become invasive and more of an annoyance. You have to strike that balance, and as long as that's met then I see no problem with it."

(HH customer, future)



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Stimulus explored during CAP sessions



charities and local organisations

Where Portsmouth Water is today:

Portsmouth Water currently works closely with local organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, to help vulnerable customers.



What Portsmouth Water is considering:

Supporting charities and local organisations

Portsmouth Water recognises that these organisations are stretched, with demand for their services increasing.

It could fund/provide resource to assist and help those organisations reach and help more people in the local community.

Customers agree that charities and local organisations need to be supported more, but again, some raise questions regarding Portsmouth Water's role in this



There is acknowledgement that charities and local organisations are under pressure, with demand for their services increasing, and support in many cases decreasing (as people are contributing less via donations due to being stretched). But this is not necessarily something that customers would expect PW to focus on, especially if it takes their attention away from more pressing and relevant initiatives.

Supporting charities and local organisations

- **There are mixed reactions to PW offering additional support in this area.**
 - Some think that it is a great idea as this is another way for PW to offer support to customers who are struggling – indirectly in this case through charities and local organisations.
 - Whilst others say that this area again does not feel particularly linked to PW's remit, and offering support in this area feels excessive for it as a water company.
- ? **Some wonder what would be the impact of this additional support on customers' bills, and point out that carrying this out alongside PW's broader plans would 'add up', and customers would end up paying much more in the future.**
- ? **There are also some questions regarding the selection process for offering support to organisations and charities and how it can be ensured they are relevant to PW and its activities.**
 - ? Some wonder whether there could be a panel of local representatives that could decide how funding and resource can be allocated.
 - ? The Citizens Advice Bureau for example, is seen as a relevant organisation to support, considering it also provides support to vulnerable customers.

"What you don't want to see is that resources are diverted away from what their actual purpose is, which is to provide us with good clean drinking water and protect the environment from which the water comes."

(HH customer, vulnerable)

"It's very good really, if they can identify charities being used a lot by the local community and are able to assist them very responsible and ethical to do."

(NHH customer)



Customers' preferences for funding social value plans



Funding options explored during CAP sessions

Mandatory tariff

All customers would pay an increase on their bill (£1 or £2), with then those eligible for support able to gain access to the support.

Optional tariff to centralised pot

This would be an opt in option onto the customer's bill, which would go into a social value pot. It would then be used to fund the social value initiatives at PWs discretion. This would not be used for anything outside of social value.

Optional tariff based on customer choice

An opt-in option onto the customer's bill, where the customer would choose from a list what category of social value to contribute to e.g. environment, local communities etc.

Donations

These would be donations towards specific schemes, such as a sensory garden for a local charity, a new clubhouse for local football team etc. Local community would put forward schemes for funding in advance, which would then go through a feasibility check and get chosen based on customer research.

Mandatory tariff

All customers would pay an increase on their bill (£1 or £2), with then those eligible for support able to gain access to the support.

*"I feel like a mandatory tariff detracts from those that already need support and just anyone in general."
(HH customer, future)*

- ✓ **Customers agree that implementing a mandatory tariff on bills is the simplest and easiest way for PW to secure support on its social value plans.**
 - ✓ Some acknowledge this is the way of guaranteeing a pot of funding will be available.
- ? **But they would like see more detail with regard to where the money is going and what they would be supporting.**
- ? **They also question if vulnerable customers would be supported through social value initiatives, if their bills have been increased first.**
 - ? Some wonder if vulnerable customers could be excluded from the increase.
- × **Some also express broader concerns around bill increases adding up.**
 - × Customers recall previous discussions around PW's wider plans, and express concerns of what would happen when small amounts all add up
- × **And there is a view that the 'mandatory' element could be unpopular and seen as inflexible.**
 - × If a customer's circumstances change, not having the option to opt-out would be concerning.

*"So it's only £1 or £2 but it's on top of all the other initiatives that Portsmouth Water wanted to do ... Where is your final bill going to end up? Can everyone afford it?"
(HH customer, BC1)*



Optional tariff to centralised pot

This would be an opt in option onto the customer's bill, which would go into a social value pot. It would then be used to fund the social value initiatives at PWs discretion. This would not be used for anything outside of social value.

"An opt-in option would be a better idea because people can then choose if they actually want [it] to go towards that month or that quarter, if they think it is worth it or not."

(HH customer, future)

- ✓ **Customers initially like the idea of an optional tariff to a mandatory increase, due to the flexibility it offers.**
 - ✓ Being able to choose makes the process feel less confining.
- ✗ **But upon further consideration, some express concerns about whether customers would be likely to opt in, impacting the amount of funding available for social value plans.**
 - ✗ There is uncertainty about whether customers would actively opt in, with the cost of living crisis affecting everyone.
 - ✗ Those not seeing a direct impact to themselves and those around them might feel less willing to contribute.
- **A few also think that any bill increases are only fair if they are applied across the board.**
- ? **The phrase 'at Portsmouth Water's discretion' raises some concerns.**
 - ? Customers are uncertain about what this would actually involve.
 - ? They would also want to be informed about where the funding goes, and some would also like a level of control on the process.

"Opting in, it takes time and people can't be bothered. Opting out, you think 'actually, I'm not bothered as I'm already in. I'll just stay there. If you can't afford it, then you make the effort to opt out.'"

(HH customer, C2D)



Optional tariff based on customer choice

An opt-in option onto the customer's bill, where the customer would choose from a list what category of social value to contribute to e.g. environment, local communities etc.

"I think if the customer could choose where it was going. we'd probably get a high take up."
(NHH customer)

✓ Initial reactions to this optional tariff are enthusiastic.

- ✓ Being able to decide where their money is spent is seen as appealing.
- ✓ There is a view that customers more broadly might feel more motivated to donate if they can specify where their money is going.

✗ However, customers again express concerns over the overall process.

- ✗ Giving customers too much choice might lead to placing money into different projects unevenly, which could be a problem – a solution to this could be putting all funds into one big pot and splitting them evenly.
- ✗ If customer participation in the opt-in tariff is very low, the social value of the initiative will be lost.

? In addition, questions are also raised around how funding would be distributed based on customers' choices.

- ? For example, 'in the case of '60% of people want to fund this, but only 5% of people want to fund that', does that mean 60% of the pot goes to one and 5% to the other, or does the winner take it all?'

- There is a view that an opt-out tariff instead of an opt-in could help tackle any potential issues with participation, as people are less likely to actively opt out.

"I think the [optional tariff based on choice] is good because it's nice to have a choice. It gives you a bit more control over where your money is going to a certain extent."
(HH customer, vulnerable)



Donations

These would be donations towards specific schemes, such as a sensory garden for a local charity, a new clubhouse for local football team etc. Local community would put forward schemes for funding in advance, which would then go through a feasibility check and get chosen based on customer research.

*"That's never going to work because people already have things that they choose to donate to. I would find that hard. I have a set of things I donate to and I don't have spare cash to donate to anything else."
(HH customer, C2D)*

- ✗ **Overall, there is some scepticism regarding donations, as it is reliant on customers willingness to donate.**
 - ✗ Charities are relying on donations to function, and customer donations could be already going towards other causes.
 - ✗ There might not be enough customers willing to donate on each scheme, in order to offer impactful support.
 - ✗ An initiative could be too localised, and customers might not want to support projects they don't feel they benefit them directly.
 - ✗ Some people might not have the money to donate (especially in the current context of cost of living crisis).
- ✓ **Instead, customers feel that it is more likely to work as an additional option, on top of another funding avenue (such as mandatory or opt-out).**
 - ✓ This way, customers can offer additional support on their discretion.
 - ✓ Some made suggestions in terms of raising awareness and participation on donations, such as using the PW newsletter to remind customers or adopting similar schemes to Tesco's token system.

*"I feel like it's quite similar to the little Tesco tokens you get with those sort of grants, where they are based on popularity. I feel like either donations or the optional tariff based on customer choice are a good idea. I feel like there is no reason you couldn't do both ... Obviously both are optional, so there's no reason why it couldn't [happen]."
(HH customer, future)*



- ✓ **Customers' contributions are seen to have greater value when match funded, and the fact that shareholders also contribute shows they care.**
 - ✓ Match funding is seen to add more value to their contributions, makes customers feel that initiatives supported through PW are more likely to happen.
 - ✓ Shareholders' willingness to contribute demonstrates their commitment to delivering social value, and maximising support offered.
- **Some customers also think that shareholders could contribute to initiatives regardless of customer donations, as part of their social responsibility, and customer involvement shouldn't be required in order to influence their support.**
- ✗ **A few customers express some cynicism, stating that the profits come from customer payments so the contribution can be seen as 'smoke and mirrors'.**

*"I don't think it would change my opinion on whether I would tick 'yes' or 'no' but I think it would improve my opinion of Portsmouth Water ... I think as a social value thing, some of the money should come from the company or its shareholders or someone, not just from customers."
(HH customer, BC1)*

*"I feel like that would make people a lot more likely to do the donations, especially ... They know that if they donate through Portsmouth Water that their donation has so much more value."
(HH customer, future)*



Enabling customers to round up their bills: a simple and flexible way for customers to contribute small amounts.

Utilising technology to create a customisable menu of funding options and initiatives, based on regional needs and customer preferences: this approach considers the diverse customer base of Portsmouth Water and aims to maximise social value based on regional characteristics.



Introducing a mandatory tariff to support hardship funds, followed by an opt-out mechanism for supporting local community causes: this would help ensure support on areas which are considered as a priority, as well as give people an opportunity to support local projects.

Allowing customers to contribute more if they would like to: instead of a fixed tariff, customers could have the choice to add an additional amount if they'd wish to contribute more.





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68. Customer Advisory Panel - report 4

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 4 th project for the CAP and was used to consider Portsmouth Water's plans for delivering social value. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

