PR24 – Deliberative qualitative research
Overview of research approach

Stage 1: Online community with 40 customers

Stage 2: Reconvened online focus groups with the same 40 customers

Household sample			
	Younger customers (<45)	**Older customers (>45)**	**Non/future customers**
ABC1	1 group (5 people)	1 group (5 people)	1 group (5 people)
C2DE	1 group (5 people)	1 group (5 people)	1 group (5 people)
Non-household sample			
	1 group (5 people)		1 group (5 people)

PR24 – Deliberative qualitative research
Two-stage process

Stage 1: Online community with 40 customers
Draft research materials

Online community lasting 1 week, taking place via online platform. Customers will be asked to log in for 15 mins per day, to complete specific activities each day.

The following slides show the current activity plan – i.e. what we intend to ask of customers. Blue Marble moderators will probe responses to each task to explore specific areas of interest in further detail.

PR24 – Deliberative qualitative
Online community task guide

Overview of 7-day task guide	
Day 1	Introduction and welcome
Day 2	Customer service expectations and environmental beliefs
Day 3	Portsmouth Water strengths and weaknesses
Day 4-7	Portsmouth Water's big decisions

Day 1 Task 1: Welcome

Audience: All respondents

Share settings: unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:
- Interact with each participant to acknowledge their post with a reply or a 'like'

Hello everyone and welcome to our online community. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project, we look forward to getting to know you over the coming days.

Let's start with introductions. Please tell us a bit about yourself:

- What is your name?
- Where in the UK do you live and who with?
- What keeps you busy in the day (for fun and for work)?
- Please upload a picture that gives us a bit of a glimpse into your life. This can be anything at all!

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 1 Task 2: Life at the moment

Audience: All respondents

Share settings: private

We'd now like you to tell us a bit about life at the moment.

- What's going well in your life right now?
- What's not going so well? Is there anything you're finding particularly challenging?
- Is there anything that has changed over the past 6 months to a year that has impacted your life?

NOTE: this post is private. You will not be able to see posts from others and you will not be able to see theirs.

Moderator notes and probes:
- Ensure respondents give detailed responses and encourage them to tell you why things are difficult if they haven't yet explained
- Some may struggle to answer – use discretion as to whether or not to encourage them to give more

Day 1 Task 3: Let's talk about finances

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** private

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for mention of bills (particularly water)
- Probe any discussions around water bills/ utility bills

We know that finances can be difficult to talk about, but we encourage you to be open and honest.

- How are you feeling about your finances at the moment? Do you feel financially 'comfortable'?
- Do you have any worries surrounding your finances for the next few months to come?
- Has COVID had an impact on your finances? Please explain your answer

NOTE: this post is private. You will not be able to see posts from others and you will not be able to see theirs.

Day 2 Task 1: At your service

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>	**Share settings:** unbiased

Welcome back! Today we want to talk all about service.

For this task, we want you to focus on utility providers (that could be gas, electric, water etc.) Have a think about what excellent customer service looks like from a utility provider.

- What does it look like? Explain what you'd expect from them if they were providing excellent customer service.
- Please share an example of a time you've received excellent customer service from a utility provider – we want to hear the story!
- Do you think your expectations of what excellent customer service looks like has changed since COVID? If so, how?

We'll go onto talk about bad experiences in the next task… so just think about the good bits for now.

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Moderator notes and probes:
- Probe for specific anecdotes/ examples of excellent customer service
- Look to see if there are overlaps/ the respondents mention similar things happening to them. Tag other respondents in comments to encourage conversation.
- Probe specifically for NHH: Why is excellent service important for your business?

Day 2 Task 2: Poor service

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>

Share settings: unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:

- Probe for specific anecdotes/ examples of bad customer service
- Look to see if there are overlaps/ the respondents mention similar things happening to them. Tag other respondents in comments to encourage conversation.
- Probe specifically for NHH: What affect does bad service have on your business?

Again, we want you to focus on utility providers (that could be gas, electric, water etc.) Have a think about what bad customer service looks like from a utility provider.

- What does it look like? What are the things you try to avoid?
- Please share an example of a time you've received bad customer service from a utility provider – we want to hear the story!
- Do you think what you consider to be bad service has changed since COVID? If so, how?

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 2 Task 3: Let's talk about the environment

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>

Share settings: unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:

- Probe on where water fits into their environmental beliefs. Is it something they'd thought about before? Any behaviour changes?

Today we want to talk about all things environment. There are no right or wrong answers here, we just want to hear about your honest opinions and behaviours.

- In general, how concerned are you with the environment?
- What are the things you care about the most when it comes to the environment, if anything?
- Why are these things important to you?
- Is there anything you do or have changed to help the environment in some way? Tell us what they are and why you do them (this can be anything, big or small).

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 2 Task 4: Companies and the environment

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>	**Share settings:** unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:
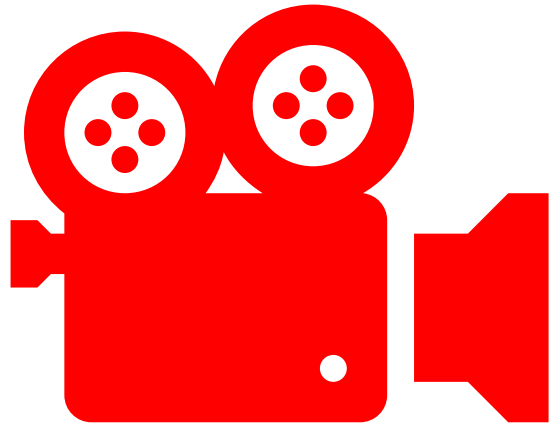- Watch out for any participants having trouble with uploading their video

We've talked your attitudes to the environment when it comes to your personal behaviours. We now want to talk about utility companies specifically.

Thinking about utility companies, please tell us:
- What, if anything, do you expect utility companies to be doing when it comes to the environment?
- Do you think they have any responsibilities when it comes to the environment? Why/Why not?
- Thinking about water companies in particular, do you think there's anything they should be doing or thinking about when it comes to the environment.

- *We want you to record a video of you answering these questions. We suggest you keep it to under 3 minutes.*

Attached are some tips to help you.

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Video tips

Where you'd like you to complete a task or answer a question on video, you can record it on your mobile and upload it to the Recollective platform – get in touch with us if you're having any problems. Here are some tips to make your videos look amazing:

- **Orientation:** film in landscape, i.e. turn your phone sideways, with the longer edge at the top and bottom

- **Lighting:** please record somewhere with good lighting – this doesn't have to be staged in any way, just make sure we can clearly see your face, so no strong light source behind you!

- **Sound:** take your video somewhere quiet and try to avoid background noise if you can

Day 2 Task 1: At your service

Audience: <mark>non-bill payers</mark>

Share settings: unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:
- Probe for specific anecdotes/ examples of excellent customer service
- Look to see if there are overlaps/ the respondents mention similar things happening to them. Tag other respondents in comments to encourage conversation.

Welcome back! Today we want to talk all about service.

For this task, we want you to think about customer service. Have a think about receiving excellent customer service.

- What would that look like? Explain what you'd expect from a company if they were providing excellent customer service.
- Please share an example of a time you've received excellent customer service and tell us who it was from – we want to hear the story!
- Do you think your expectations of what excellent customer service looks like has changed since COVID? If so, how?

We'll go onto talk about bad experiences in the next task… so just think about the good bits for now.

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 2 Task 2: Poor service

Audience: non-bill payers	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**

Moderator notes and probes:
- Probe for specific anecdotes/ examples of bad customer service
- Look to see if there are overlaps/ the respondents mention similar things happening to them. Tag other respondents in comments to encourage conversation.

Again, we want to talk about customer service. Have a think about receiving bad customer service.

- What would that look like? What are the things you try to avoid?
- Please share an example of a time you've received bad customer service from a company and tell us who it was from – we want to hear the story!
- Do you think what you consider to be bad service has changed since COVID? If so, how?

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 2 Task 3: Let's talk about the environment

Audience: non-bill payers

Share settings: unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:

- Probe on where water fits into their environmental beliefs. Is it something they'd thought about before? Any behaviour changes?

Today we want to talk about all things environment. There are no right or wrong answers here, we just want to hear about your honest opinions and behaviours.

- In general, how concerned are you with the environment?
- What are the things you care about the most when it comes to the environment, if anything?
- Why are these things important to you?
- Is there anything you do or have changed to help the environment in some way? Tell us what they are and why you do them (this can be anything, big or small).

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 2 Task 4: Companies and the environment

Audience: non-bill payers	**Share settings:** unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:
- Watch out for any participants having trouble with uploading their video

We've talked your attitudes to the environment when it comes to your personal behaviours. We now want to talk about utility companies specifically.
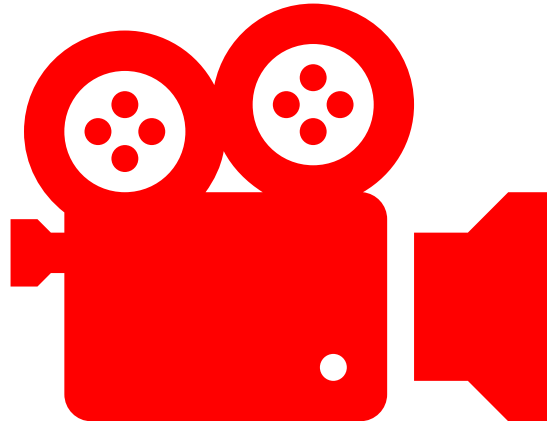
Thinking about utility companies, please tell us:
- What, if anything, do you expect utility companies to be doing when it comes to the environment?
- Do you think they have any responsibilities when it comes to the environment? Why/Why not?
- Thinking about water companies in particular, do you think there's anything they should be doing or thinking about when it comes to the environment.

- *We want you to record a video of you answering these questions. We suggest you keep it to under 3 minutes.*

Attached are some tips to help you.

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Video tips

Where you'd like you to complete a task or answer a question on video, you can record it on your mobile and upload it to the Recollective platform – get in touch with us if you're having any problems. Here are some tips to make your videos look amazing:

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- **Lighting:** please record somewhere with good lighting – this doesn't have to be staged in any way, just make sure we can clearly see your face, so no strong light source behind you!

- **Sound:** take your video somewhere quiet and try to avoid background noise if you can

Day 3 Task 1: Portsmouth Water

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**
		• Probe for any anecdotes/examples

We can now reveal that this project is being run on behalf of Portsmouth Water. Portsmouth Water are the company who provide water to your home (NOTE: they are not the company that take sewage away from your home, they only provide clean water).

- In one sentence, summarise what you know about Portsmouth Water.
- What are your overall impressions of Portsmouth Water?
- What do they do well?
- What do they not do so well?
- Is there anything they can do to improve overall?

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 3 Task 2: Portsmouth Water

Audience: <mark>Bill payers (HH and NHH)</mark>

Share settings: private (survey tool)

Moderator notes and probes:
- Probe for any anecdotes/examples

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being Excellent and 1 being Very poor, how would you rate the overall service you receive from Portsmouth Water?

Day 3 Task 3: Interacting with Portsmouth Water

Audience: Bill payers (HH and NHH)	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**

Moderator notes and probes:
- Probe for any anecdotes/examples

Thinking specifically about any interactions you have with Portsmouth Water (this could be over the phone, over email, through the post, adverts etc.):

- Do you have any feedback on how Portsmouth Water deal with or communicate with you? e.g. in relation to bills
- What do you like about their customer communications?
- How do you find the process of managing your bill (accessing your bill, checking it, paying it etc.)
- Is there anything they could do better?

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 3 Task 1: Portsmouth Water

Audience: Non-bill payers	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**

We can now reveal that this project is being run on behalf of Portsmouth Water. Portsmouth Water are the company who provide water to your home (NOTE: they are not the company that take sewage away from your home, they only provide clean water).

We know that you are customers of Portsmouth Water but are not necessarily the person in charge of dealing with them/the water bill in your household.

- In one sentence, summarise what you know about Portsmouth Water.
- What are your overall impressions of Portsmouth Water?
- Do you have any impressions of Portsmouth Water and what they're like as a company?
- What are you expectations of Portsmouth Water as your water provider?
- What are the key things they should be providing/doing?

NOTE: you will be able to see posts from other people once you have posted yourself

Day 4-7: Introducing Portsmouth Water's big decisions

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** unbiased

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

Thank you so much for all of your responses this week, it has been great getting to know you and reading your thoughts and opinions.

The task over the next few days is in preparation for the online discussion next week. We're going to keep this task up from Friday-Sunday to give you some time to read through the information and learn more about the big decisions that Portsmouth Water is facing. We'd like you to answer some questions about these decisions as you learn more about Portsmouth Water over the coming days, and then we'll discuss everything in further detail during the online session.

Day 4-7: Introducing Portsmouth Water

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**
		• Look out for any questions

Portsmouth Water supplies clean drinking water to around 750,000 people, across an area of 868 square kilometres – stretching through Hampshire and West Sussex, from the River Meon in the West to the River Arun in the East.

Watch the videos below to learn a bit more about what Portsmouth Water does:
*   *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb0TngBmJi4&t=45s*
*   *[the first minute of this one]: https://youtu.be/r_RvRIsdnFs*

*   *What are your first impressions of this information?*
*   *What information here, if any, is surprising or new to you?*
*   *How do you feel about Portsmouth Water after reading this information?*

Day 4-7: Introducing Portsmouth Water's big challenges

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**

Before we learn more about Portsmouth Water's big decisions, here's a quick recap of the water cycle – some of you might remember this from school, but some of the rest of us may have forgotten this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uC3N2ABUtao

In the Portsmouth area, there are two main sources of fresh water. The majority of water supplied to houses and businesses is taken from ground water and springs at Havant and Bedhampton. Water is also taken from the River Itchen. Although Portsmouth is surrounded by sea water, this isn't currently used. It is very salty and would mean higher costs and water bills if this type of water was to be filtered and treated enough to make it drinkable.

Some big, long-term challenges are already having an impact on Portsmouth Water – and are likely to have a bigger impact in the future.

The first is climate change. The water sources we rely upon today are under threat from climate change. For example, nowadays heavier rainfall is more likely and much of this water hits the ground but doesn't get absorbed. In the future, many water sources won't provide as much as they do today, meaning there will be less water available to supply people, produce products and provide healthy environments where wildlife can thrive.
We are looking ahead to understand the long-term needs of the rivers, streams and underground sources that provide these important habitats and the water we all use. This includes forecasting where water companies and others might need to take less, so more water is left in the natural environment, reducing the impact of climate change and keeping them healthy (i.e. providing a good habitat for wildlife).

The second is population growth. In the future, we will also need to supply water to more people, as the population of the region continues to grow. Alongside the other water supply companies in the South East, Portsmouth Water has recently been categorised as being "water stressed" because it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide enough water for everyone's needs. Portsmouth Water must provide the water needed for the future and increase the resilience of our water supplies, so they don't fail during severe droughts and other events that could affect the region.

Portsmouth Water is planning ahead, developing a plan for addressing these long-term challenges.

- *To what extent, if at all, were you aware of these challenges before today?*

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

Day 4-7: Introducing Portsmouth Water's big decisions

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**
		• Look out for any questions

Like other water companies in the UK, Portsmouth Water submits a business plan every 5 years as part of a 25-year forecast. This provides a plan for what it will do – including what its priorities will be, where it will invest customers' money and how it will aim to maintain or improve the service that it provides. This plan must be approved by the regulators.

Portsmouth Water must consider the longer term too, up to 80 years in the future. This includes ensuring that it will continue to be able to provide water to all its customers in the long-term, in the face of the challenges it is facing.

We have asked you to participate in this research because Portsmouth Water wants to understand what its customers think about these issues – including what customers want the company to prioritise as it works towards the future.

- *What would you like Portsmouth Water to prioritise over the next 5 years?*
- *And thinking ahead to the longer-term future, what would you like Portsmouth Water to prioritise?*

Day 4-7: Introducing Portsmouth Water's big decisions

Audience: All respondents	**Share settings:** unbiased	**Moderator notes and probes:**

We've outlined below some further detail on potential priorities for Portsmouth Water over the next 5 years.

- *Please select your top three priorities for the company from this list.*
    - *Better quality water*
    - *Keeping bills as low as possible*
    - *Supporting wildlife and biodiversity*
    - *Reducing carbon emissions*
    - *Fixing leaks*
    - *Helping you use less water*
    - *New ways to supply enough water*
    - *Helping those who struggle to pay*
    - *Supporting local communities and improving local environments*
    - *Paying for the water you use*
    - *Installing more smart (water) meters across the network*
    - *Providing excellent customer service*
- *Please explain why you picked x as your number one priority*
- *Please explain why you picked x as your number two priority*
- *Please explain why you picked x as your number three priority*
- *Was anything missing from our list? If so, let us know what you would like to see prioritised.*

Thanks for your answers. We will be discussing these issues further in next week's online session – we look forward to seeing you then!

- **Fixing leaks:** Portsmouth Water is one of the top performing UK water companies for low leakage rates. We are making big improvements in finding and stopping leaks, but despite this, millions of litres of water still leak from our 3,300 km network of pipes each day. A wholly leak-free network is impossible to achieve with today's technology, but how important is it for you that we invest even more to ensure leaks are minimised?

- **Helping those who struggle to pay:** For some people, times are tough and it can be a struggle to pay the water bill. We already help over 10,000 people in genuine need each year by reducing their bill. We could do more to help these people, but it would mean asking our other customers to pay a little more to help. How important is it for you that we do more to help those struggling to pay?

- **Supporting local communities and improving local environments:** We do more in our region than just providing water. For example we're raising money for local charities, establishing new woodland near our Havant Thicket reservoir site, and improving biodiversity at our sites. How important is it for you that we do more to support local communities and local environmental initiatives?

- **Helping you use less water:** On average, Portsmouth Water customers use up to 20% more water than people in other parts of the South East. Using less water can have lots of benefits like avoiding water shortages, reducing impact on the environment, and keeping bills lower by reducing the cost of investment to supply more water. How important is it for you that we help you find ways to save water in your everyday life?

- **New ways to supply enough water:** Our region is officially 'water stressed' - there's a risk of not having enough water to satisfy demand in a severe drought. Most of our drinking water currently comes from chalk under the South Downs, but taking more water from here to increase supply would harm the ecosystem and wildlife. How important is it for you that we invest in new ways to supply water?

- **Paying for the water you use:** At the moment some of our customers pay fixed rates for water no matter how much water they use, while others pay based on a meter reading of how much water they use. How important is it for you that all customers receive a bill based on the water they use? (Support would continue for customers who genuinely struggle to afford their bill)

- **The lowest water bill:** Portsmouth Water have the lowest bill for supplying water of any water company in England and Wales. Last year our average annual bill was £104, which is £90 less than the nationwide average. How important is it for you that we keep your bill as low as possible?

- **Better water quality:** The water we supply to your tap is high quality and more than 99.9% of the water samples we take meet strict water regulations. On very rare occasions the chlorine we use to make sure your water is safe to drink can affect the taste and smell. How important is it for you that we invest in improving water quality to reduce instances of unusual taste and smell?

- **Supporting wildlife and biodiversity:** ensuring that water sources that are home to wildlife and important habitats are well-managed.

- **Reducing carbon emissions:** investing in renewable energy and ensure that processes for supplying water and treating waste water are managed to minimise the energy required and impact on the environment.

- **Providing excellent customer service:** putting time and investment into our customer service offer and making sure that Portsmouth Water are providing the best service possible to customers.

- **Installing more smart (water) meters across the network:** so Portsmouth Water can understand water usage behaviours better and so that they can more quickly detect and stop leaks,

PR24 – Deliberative qualitative research
Two-stage process

Stage 2: Reconvened online focus groups with same 40 customers
Draft research materials

Each focus group will last 90 mins and include 5 customers. There will be 8 focus groups in total – with same customers who have participated in the online community (stage 1)

The following slides provide a guide for the Blue Marble team to follow when running the focus groups – which they will use flexibly. We have also included some examples of stimulus materials which we plan to use (and where we need your input).

Focus group plan: introduction and warm-up (10 mins)

Audience: All respondents		**Moderator notes and probes:**
		• Look out for any questions

Housekeeping

- *Introduce self and Blue Marble –* *independent market research company that runs research on behalf of organisations.*
- *Recap first stage –* *thanks so much for taking part in the online community last week. It was great reading through your responses and getting to know you a bit better.*
- *As you'll have gathered by now this project is on behalf of Portsmouth Water –* *this part of the research that we're doing today is going to focus on some of the challenges that Portsmouth Water face – they would like to hear from their customers and represent their views in their future plans.*
- *Data protection –* *this session is being audio/video recorded. What you share with us will be used for research purposes and Portsmouth Water will use this research to inform their future plans. Everything you say will be kept anonymous.*
- *Honesty and respect –* *for this session we want you to be completely honest with your opinions but please respect other people in the groups whose opinions may differ.*

Introduction

So let's start with some quick introductions as you may not have had a chance last week to interact with everyone here.

Can you please introduce yourself and tell us:

- Name
- What keeps you busy in the day?
- Who's at home?

Focus group plan: securing our long-term water supply (20 mins)

Audience: All respondents

In the online community, we provided some detail on the long-term challenges facing Portsmouth Water in terms of ensuring that we all have enough water for our needs in the future. Portsmouth Water need to make some decisions to ensure that they can continue to do this in the future.

We're going to look now at some of the options available to them. I would like to hear your thoughts on these.

Moderator to go through each supply option in turn and ask relevant questions. [n.b. order will be rotated for each group]. Moderator to spend 5 minutes on each option.
- **Water recycling**
- **Havant Thicket reservoir**
- **Desalination**
- **Transferring water between regions of the country**

Examples of questions we could ask:
- What would you think about Portsmouth Water using this option?
- What are the key benefits of this option?
- What are the drawbacks?

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

Water recycling

The water that companies provide for their customers is taken from the environment. After customers use it, it can be treated and returned to the environment once more. The cycle then repeats.

Water recycling essentially speeds up the natural process of water treatment. Instead of returning treated water to the environment, companies can recycle it. This means it can be kept it within water company networks – reducing the amount they need to take from the environment.
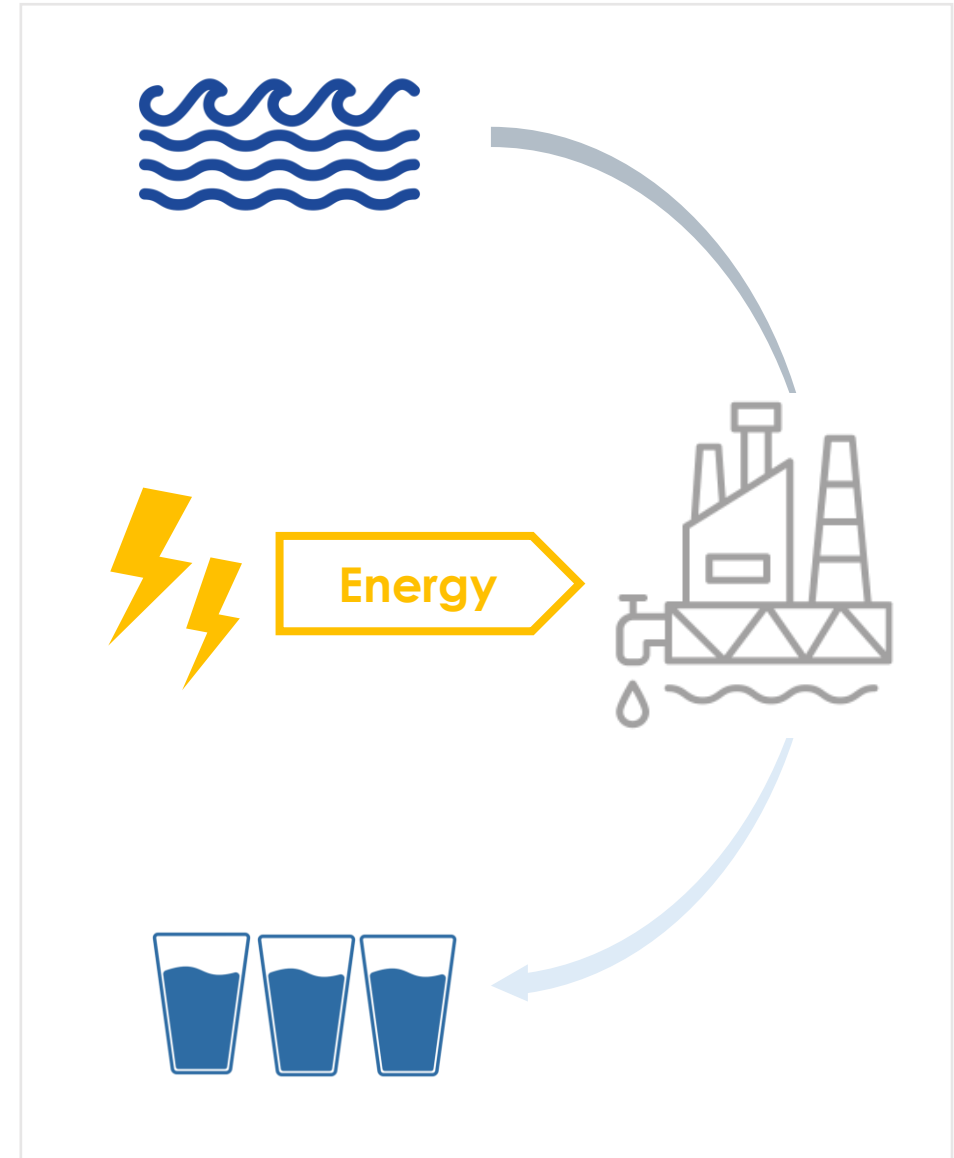
Havant Thicket Reservoir

Desalination

Desalination is the process of taking salt water and treating it to remove the salt so that it can be used for drinking water.

It is a reliable source due to the abundance of seawater providing large volumes of additional water, and can be built in a modular fashion so that extra capacity can be added as needed over time.

However, there are some drawbacks including high cost, high energy requirement and large quantities of salt (brine) being produced which needs to be safely disposed of.

Energy

Transferring water

Transferring water revolves around sharing water with other water companies.

Water may be transferred:
- Within a company
- Between companies
- Between regions

Water may be transferred via dedicated pipelines, or using rivers or canals.

Focus group plan: paying for long-term investments (15 mins)

Audience: All respondents

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

How we pay for long-term projects to improve our water security is also important. Portsmouth Water's ability to invest in future projects comes from customers' bills – and so the plans will affect our own bills. Below we've outlined two scenarios about how Portsmouth Water could pay for this important work, which I will explain now.

Let's look at building a reservoir, as an example. A reservoir typically takes 20-30 years to complete.

- Which of these scenarios do you prefer? Why?
- What would be the impact on you of each scenario?
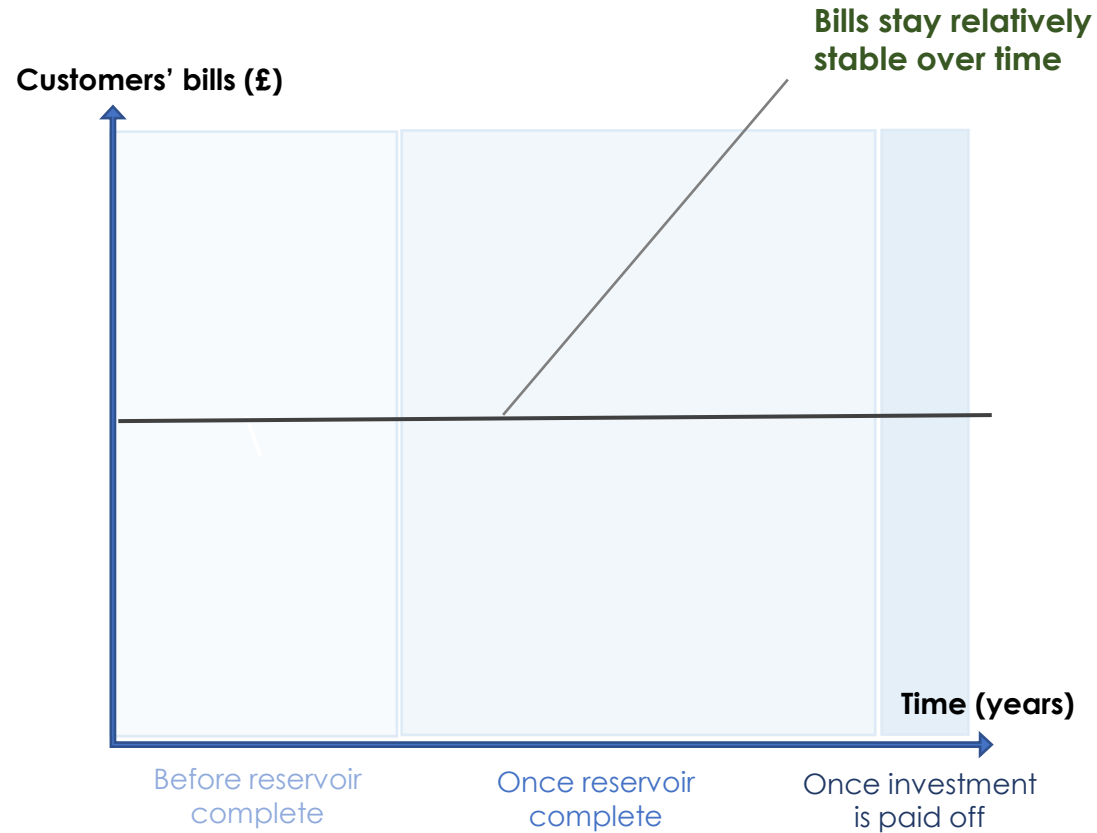
Moderator notes:
In scenario 1, we pay for the reservoir over the long-term – from now until the reservoir is ready (and beyond this). This means that the overall cost of the reservoir is lower (because the water company doesn't have to borrow as much money to pay for it) and spread across both current and future customers. The impact on customers' bills each year is lower (because the payments are spread over a very long time and the overall cost of the scheme is lower), but some customers will pay more but never benefit from the reservoir.

In scenario 2, we only pay for the reservoir when it is completed. This means that the overall cost of the scheme is higher, and only customers alive when it is completed will pay for it. The impact on customers' bills each year will be very high for a short period of time (because the payments are spread over a very short period of time and the overall cost of the reservoir is higher, because the water company will have to borrow money in the meantime to fund the scheme). Only customers who benefit from the scheme will have to pay for this.

Scenario 1

Customers' bills (£)

Bills stay relatively stable over time

Before reservoir complete

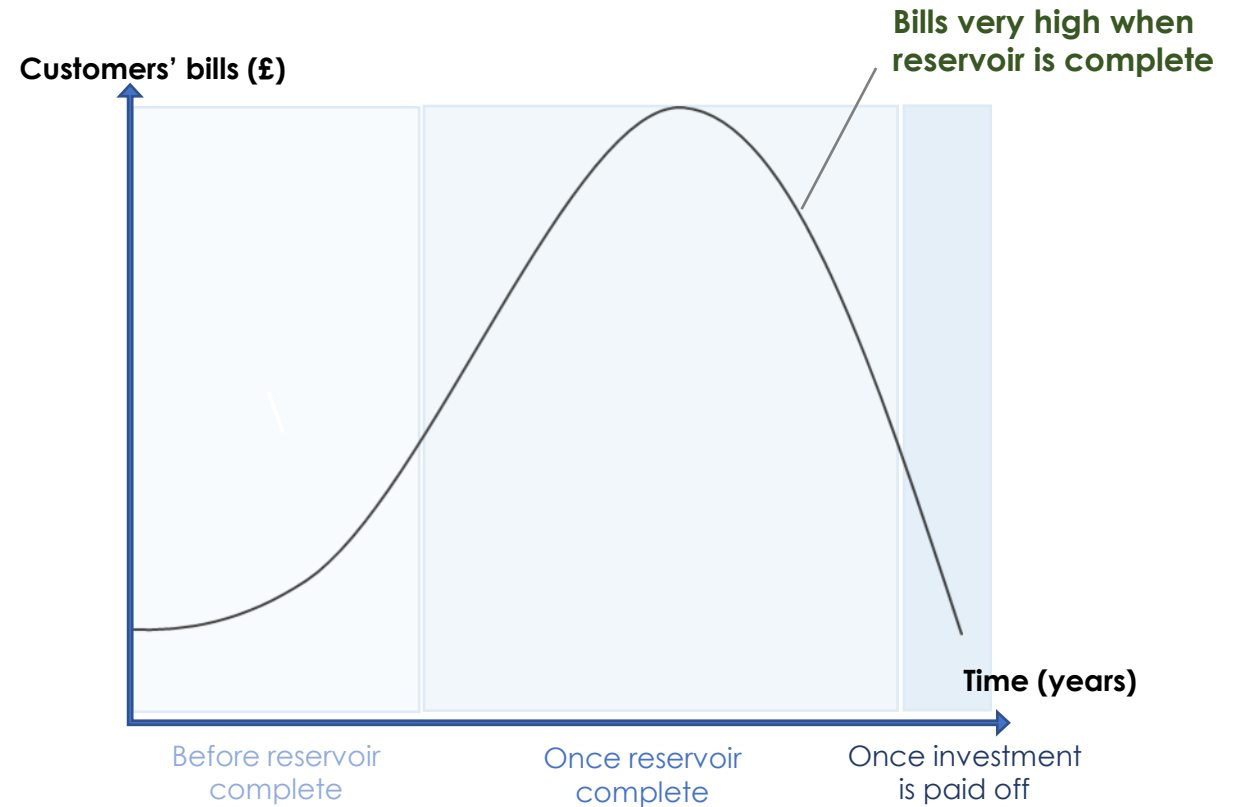Once reservoir complete

Once investment is paid off

Time (years)

In scenario 1, **we pay for the reservoir over the long-term** – from now until the reservoir is ready (and beyond this).

- The overall cost of the reservoir is lower and spread across both current and future customers.

- The impact on customers' bills each year is lower, but some customers will pay more but never benefit from the reservoir.

Scenario 2

Customers' bills (£)

Bills very high when reservoir is complete

Before reservoir complete

Once reservoir complete

Once investment is paid off

Time (years)

In scenario 2, **we only pay for the reservoir when it is completed**.

- The overall cost of the scheme is higher, and only customers alive when it is completed will pay for it.

- The impact on customers' bills each year will be very high for a short period of time.

- Only customers who benefit from the scheme will have to pay for this.

Focus group plan: smart metering (10 mins)

Audience: All respondents

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

We've spoken about the role of Portsmouth Water to help deal with the water supply challenge. I now want to move on to discuss what can be done from customers' perspective.

One of the things Portsmouth Water can do to help deal with the water supply challenge is increase metering. Currently only 1/3 of Portsmouth Water customers have a water meter.

Metering means that customers only pay for the water they use (as oppose to paying a flat rate). This should encourage customers to be more careful with water, therefore helping to reduce the pressure on water resource for the region as a whole.

- How do the advantages and disadvantages of metering weigh up?
- To what extent should Portsmouth Water prioritise introducing meters for those who do not currently have them?

Smart meters offer additional benefits in dealing with the water supply challenge. They provide information on how much water you're using in real time. The key benefits to smart meters are:
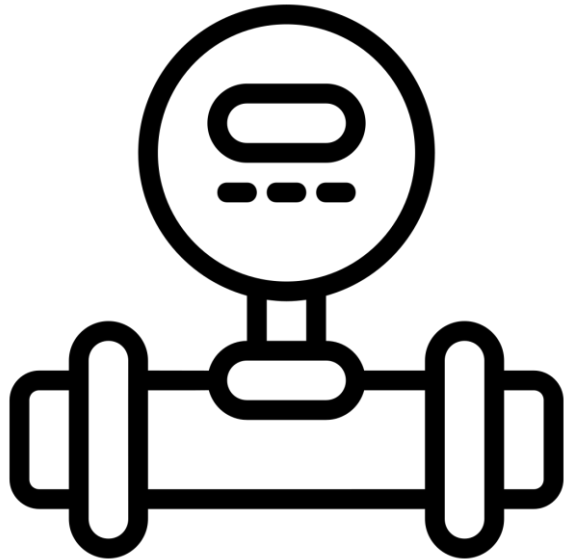- They help customers understand their usage in even more detail, helping them to be more careful with the water they use
- They help the water company see how water is being used across the network and can help identify leaks that may be difficult to find as they are not above ground

Smart metering typically reduces water usage by about 15-20%.

- How do the advantages and disadvantages of smart metering weigh up?
- To what extent should Portsmouth Water prioritise introducing smart meters across the region?

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Smart metering typically reduces water usage by about 15-20%.

Focus group plan: support schemes (10 mins)

Audience: All respondents

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

I now want to move on to talk about the support schemes Portsmouth Water have in place to help customers who can't afford their water bills, are struggling with debt or who have additional needs that they should be aware of such as a disability.

Some of the schemes include:
- **Arrears Assist**
- **Helping Hand – Social Tariff**
- **WaterSure**
- **Payment holiday**

- To what extent, it at all, are you happy to pay a little more on top of your bills to support these schemes and ensure that water bills are affordable for those who struggle with their water bills?

At the moment around 10,000 Portsmouth Water customers are on the Helping Hand – Social Tariff support scheme, and have on average £25 off their annual bill (which is £104 without the discount). On average, other customers pay 83p extra a year to fund this scheme.

- How do you feel about this? To what extent would you be willing to pay more towards support schemes? Or would you rather pay less?

Arrears Assist: if you have arrears on your account of £300 or more and have not been making regular payments to your account it may be possible for you to apply for help under the Arrears Assist Scheme.

Helping Hand – Social Tariff: Helping hand is a tariff for customers who have a low income or are in receipt of certain benefits. If your application is successful, your water bill will be capped at the minimum charge for the year.

WaterSure: WaterSure is a capped tariff for customers who have a water meter and meet the requirements (receive certain benefits and either have 3 or more children at home or a member of the household requires use of significant amounts of water due to a medical condition).

Payment holiday: You can apply to have a three month payment holiday where no payments need to be made within that period.

Focus group plan: the impact on customer bills (10 mins)

Audience: All respondents	**Moderator notes and probes:**
We now want to look at the potential overall impact on customers' bills of everything we've discussed. The scale of future improvements and the speed of these changes will have an impact on the amount that we pay in our regular water bills. At the moment, Portsmouth Water customers pay around £104 per year on average (compared to the national average of £195) – in addition to around £240 for sewerage services via Southern Water. This is less than water customers in any other part of the country. *We've outlined some different options:* • Which of these do you prefer and why? • What would be the impact of this change on you? • What would be the impact of this change on other people you know?	• Look out for any questions

	Lower bills than now*	Same bills as now*	Small increase in bills*	Large increase in bills*
Level of service NOW	Same	Same	Same	Better
Level of service IN THE FUTURE	Lower	Same	Better	Better

*Accounting for inflation

Focus group plan: long-term priorities (15 mins)

Audience: All respondents		**Moderator notes and probes:**

We've explored some potential long-term priorities for Portsmouth Water as it develops its business plan for the next 5 years. We'd like to look at these again briefly to finish:
- *Better quality water*
- *Keeping bills as low as possible*
- *Supporting wildlife and biodiversity*
- *Reducing carbon emissions*
- *Fixing leaks*
- *Helping you use less water*
- *New ways to supply enough water*
- *Helping those who struggle to pay*
- *Supporting local communities and improving local environments*
- *Paying for the water you use*
- *Installing more smart (water) meters across the network*
- *Providing excellent customer service*

- First of all, I want us to categorise each of these priorities based how important you think they are for Portsmouth Water – let's place each of these into one of the following 3 buckets.
- Thinking about everything we've discussed, what is most important here?

Moderator notes and probes:
- Look out for any questions

Not very important	Fairly important	Very important

New ways to supply enough water

Installing more smart (water) meters across the network

Keeping bills as low as possible

Helping those who struggle to pay

Supporting local communities and improving local environments

Providing excellent customer service

Paying for the water you use

Better water quality

Supporting wildlife and biodiversity

Fixing leaks

Encouraging customers to use less water

Reducing carbon emissions