



BLUE MARBLE

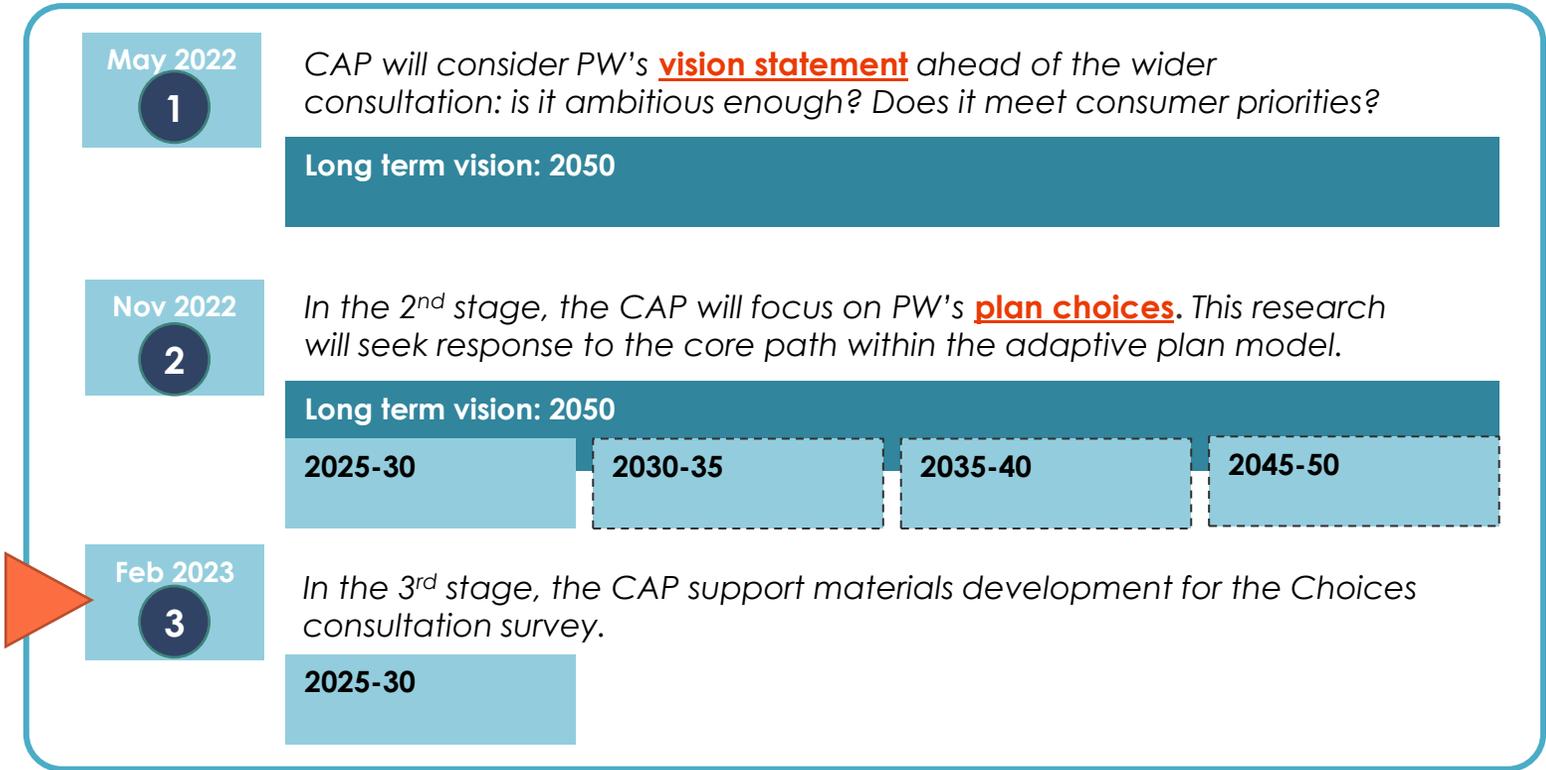
Customer Advisory Panel – Report 3

Response to Portsmouth Water's draft Choices consultation survey

February 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?



Household sample: 4 x 90-minute focus groups	
ABC1	6 people
C2DE	6 people
Future customers	5 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).

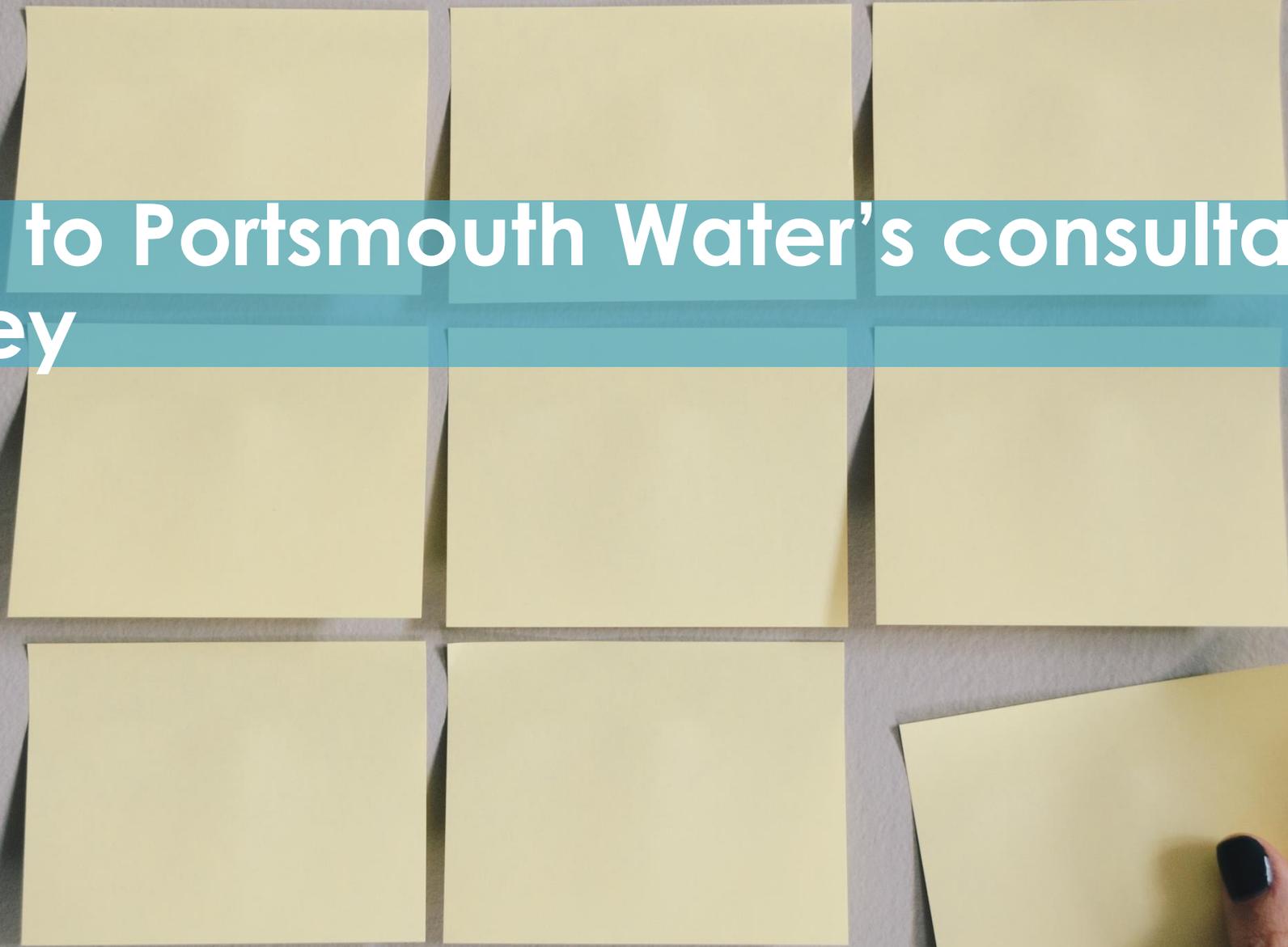
NHH customers included:

- 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: 8th – 17th February 2023.



Reactions to Portsmouth Water's consultation draft survey



Summary of customers' views on Portsmouth Water's draft Choices consultation survey

1

Information on Portsmouth Water's four areas is seen as clear, easy to understand and concise.

- Setting out where Portsmouth Water is now and what they want to do in the future is positively received and helps put the survey in context.

2

Future bill options are also regarded as straightforward, and customers understand their choices and implications within this.

- The graphs are seen as helpful in illustrating how bills will look like in the future, for each option.

3

Customers feel able to make choices for each of the four areas and appreciate the visual and concise delivery of information.

- They are clear on the different options for each area, and how these work in terms of credit amounts.
- There is only some uncertainty expressed regarding the options for lead pipes, with customers feeling they need to have a better understanding in order to make informed decisions.

4

Having a summary screen to conclude the survey is seen as appropriate, but information needs to be streamlined.

- Customers appreciate getting a confirmation for completing the survey and being able to go back and amend their choices.
- They would like to see less information on one screen and simplify the options to go back and amend their responses.

5

The concept of credits receives pushback, as customers don't understand what this means in actual bill terms and struggle to envisage what this could look like.

- They don't use this term in their daily lives, they feel it's been introduced too early in the survey, and they only get to see how it might relate to bill amounts only at the very end as part of the summary slide.



Summary of elements that work well and less well

Things that work well

- ✓ **Comparative data (e.g. comparison to industry average).**
- ✓ **Short and concise sentences / paragraphs.**
- ✓ **Simple and easy to understand language and terminology.**
- ✓ **Visual graphs and summary tables (e.g. bill options).**
- ✓ **Flexibility in terms of being able to amend responses to the survey.**

Things that work less well

- × **Too much information presented at once, ahead of being able to see it being applied in practice (e.g. being told they can save based on their options without knowing what options they have).**
- × **Data that is seen as outdated (e.g. 2018/19) or out of context (e.g. 32 million litres).**
- × **Concepts that are complex and hard to understand (i.e. credits).**
- × **Screens that are overly busy (e.g. introduction 3 and summary screen).**
- × **Tone/language that implies this survey is a game and is not being taken seriously (e.g. happy, have another go).**



Reactions to the introduction section are positive, with customers feeling it is straight-forward and includes all the necessary information

INTRO 1

Thank you taking part in this survey. It's important that you as one of our customers have a say in Portsmouth Water's longer term plans.

There are some things Portsmouth Water **have to do** in the next few years, to meet our legal obligations and to secure safe, reliable drinking water in future. In addition, there are other things that Portsmouth Water **could do** to further improve your services.

Both the things we **have to do** and the other things that we **could do** would be paid for through increases in the water bill.

Completing this survey will help us make **choices** about the following four things:

- How quickly we reduce the amount of water being lost through **leaks**
- How far we go to ensure the future **reliability** of the water supply
- How much we do to help find and replace water pipes made of **lead**
- How much we help the **local environment** and wildlife

INTRO 2

Before we ask you to make some choices, we'd like to show you some information about each of the four things you'll be making choices on.

*"It is clear, it explains that it will be paid via the water bill and gives them choices."
(NHH customer)*

- ✓ **Seen as very clear and concise.**
 - ✓ Language is simple and easy to understand.
 - ✓ Information is broken down in paragraphs and bullet-points, with key words being highlighted to draw emphasis – this is seen as very helpful as it helps direct their attention to the most important bits of information.
- ✓ **It clearly explains what Portsmouth Water need to do and why, and sets out the areas where customers need to make choices about.**
- **There are some suggestions about how the introduction could be improved, mainly by BC1 customers.**
 - They note that there is a slight repetition of the phrases "things we have to do" and "things we could do", as they are mentioned twice.
 - There is also a suggestion to change "increases in the water bill" to "increases in your water bill" in order to be consistent with other references such as "your services".
- **NHH customers also feel that this is a clear introduction to the consultation, and do not have any suggestions for improvements.**

*"It is straight-forward and not overly long, keeps attention."
(HH customer, BC1)*





Reducing leakage

Water leaks both from Portsmouth Water's mains supply pipes and also from pipes within customers' properties and business premises.

In 2018-19, 32 million litres of water were lost through leaks each day in the Portsmouth Water region. While Portsmouth Water have made progress in reducing leaks since then, and are meeting the targets that have been set for us, we know that more needs to be done.

What's the choice we need to make?

We are already committed to halving leakage by 2050 – but we want you to tell us if you think we should achieve this goal sooner.



Keeping your water supply reliable

We measure reliability by how likely each customer is to be without water for at least three hours – which is the government's definition of a supply interruption.

Our services are the most reliable in the country. Our customers have a less than 1% chance of being without water for three hours in any year. This compares to an industry-average of more than 5%.

What's the choice we need to make?

We want to give you a choice about how much we should invest to improve and upgrade our pipes and pumps, to make sure water keeps flowing to your taps in future.

"It could be 'decisions', so people know that this is a priority and that there are decisions that have to be made which could affect water bill costs."

(HH customer, vulnerable)

- ✓ **Customers generally feel that the information presented here is clear and easy to understand.**
 - ✓ It sets out what Portsmouth Water are currently doing and what they want to do in the future.
- ✓ **Language and terminology is seen as clear, and customers don't report any issues with comprehension.**
 - ✓ Inclusions of percentages in reliability of water supply, and comparison to industry average are seen to be particularly helpful in clarifying the status quo.
- **They do offer some feedback on how the information could be strengthened further.**
 - Data for reducing leakage is seen as outdated, with customers noting that they would like to know what the current situation is.
 - Not everyone is clear on whether 32 million litres are a lot or not, and some comparative data could help put this into context.
 - The phrase "the targets that have been set for us" needs further explanation clearly setting out who has created those targets.
- × **Some customers feel that the term "choice" does not portray the seriousness of the decisions customers need to make, and make the tone of the information sound "laid back".**
 - × Instead the words "options" or "decisions" are seen as potentially more appropriate.

"It is clear enough, not too wordy. Fairly clear what they're meant. All readable."
(NHH customer)



Information regarding lead pipe replacement and environment enhancement is also understood, and can be further clarified with some additional information / specificity



Finding and replacing water pipes made of lead

Lead used to be a common material used for water pipes, both in water companies' networks and in people's homes. However, it was banned for new pipes because it can impact the health and development of very young children.

We've already replaced the vast majority of lead pipes on our network, and continue to replace them when we find them. However, we think there are about 82,000 homes and 150 schools connected to our network with lead pipes which are usually their responsibility to replace. At the moment, we use harmless chemical additives to reduce traces of lead in drinking water.

What's the choice we need to make?
We want to help customers find and replace lead pipes at their properties. We'll give you a choice about how soon we should aim to achieve this.



Enhancing the local environment and wildlife

The government expects Portsmouth Water to take action to enhance the environment at sites that we own. We measure this by understanding the variety of plant, animal and insect life at our sites, or in other words the 'biodiversity'.

We also give grants to partners like farmers to improve the environment by helping stop water running off fields and creating new wildlife habitats.

What's the choice we need to make?
We want to give you a choice about how much we should do above our legal requirements to enhance the environment we all rely on and enjoy

*"Who is creating the new wildlife habitats? Is it farmers, is it PW?"
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

- ✓ Overall, the information presented about lead pipes and biodiversity is seen as easy to understand.
 - ✓ Again, it explains the current situation and what Portsmouth Water want to do in the future.
- But there are some points that could be further clarified in order to help customers feel informed about the issue / current situation.
 - Providing more information about the "harmless chemical additives", would help alleviate concerns over the process (e.g. information on who is approving them as harmless).
 - Providing more concrete information on how Portsmouth Water is planning to "help customers find and replace lead pipes", would also be helpful in terms of clarifying PW's plans.
 - Being more explicit about who is "creating new wildlife habitats" as there was some confusion about whether this is referring to PW or farmers.
- × There is also some confusion in the second paragraph of the "environment" information.
 - × The phrase "helping stop water running off fields and creating new wildlife habitats" is seen to imply that the water that is running off is creating wildlife habitats.

*"By helping stop water running off fields it implies they want to stop them from creating wild life habitats ."
(NHH customer)*



Introduction 3 is seen to include too much information making it hard to engage with. The mention of credits at this stage is confusing, as customers are unsure about what this will look like in practice 10

INTRO 3

We're going to ask you to make some choices about what Portsmouth Water should do in the 4 areas we've just described.

When you make your choices you're going to have a certain amount you can spend on these areas – in the form of **credits**.

First of all we want you to decide how many credits you'll have to spend. The credits you get will depend on how much water bills are in future.

We'll show you three different options showing what future bills could be. Bills go up in all of the options, because they all include the investments we have to make. The difference between the bill options is that bill increases happen at different rates and at different times. If bills go up sooner, this means we would have more money to invest, and so you will have more credits. If bills go up later, we have less money to invest, and so you will have fewer credits.

When thinking about the future level of bills, please bear in mind that currently Portsmouth Water bills are the lowest in the country, and that we are committed to making sure that our services are **always affordable to all customers**, through bill support schemes that assist those who genuinely struggle to afford their bill.

Please hit 'continue' when you are ready

*"Credits? Not sure I understand how this works without seeing it, it's confusing."
(HH customer, C2DE)*

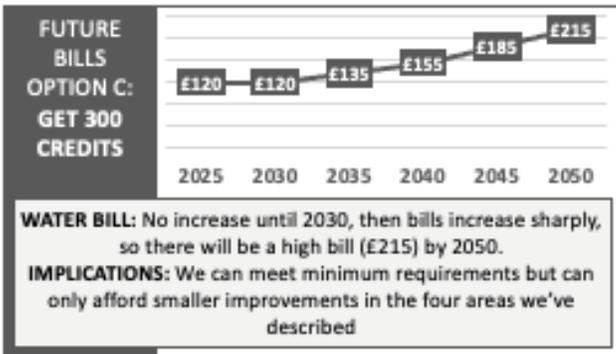
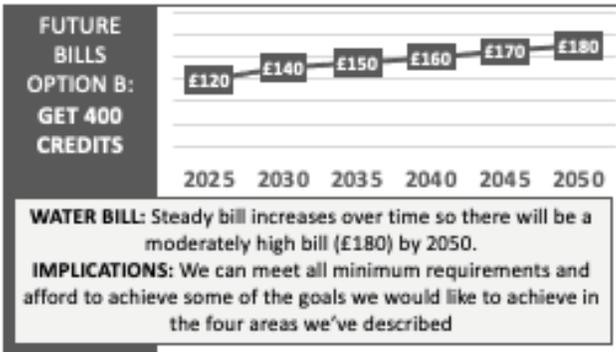
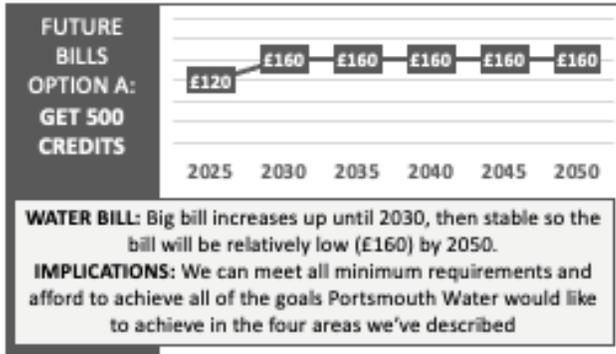
- × **This screen is seen as the most convoluted and difficult to understand.**
 - × Customers feel overwhelmed by the amount of text included in this screen, and have to re-read information a couple of times to make sure they understand it.
 - × The 4th paragraph in particular is seen to include too much information that is complex (mentioning things that feel abstract and they haven't had a chance to see them in practice). It is trying to explain too much all at once, and is having the opposite effect, confusing customers further.
 - × The words "different/difference" are repeated three times in this paragraph and the word "bills" is also repeated many times, making it hard to read through.
- × **The concept of "credits" feels scary, is difficult to understand, and receives pushback.**
 - × Customers don't understand what credits might look like in this context, and don't really think in these terms in their daily lives. They are worried they won't be able to work out how credits work, and therefore will be unable to complete the survey.
- NHH customers however are less likely to say they are confused by the reference to "credits".

*"4th paragraph is quite a lot to take in, have to read it twice. I understand what they're saying, it's just quite a lot to take in."
(NHH customer)*



Bill options are viewed as straight-forward and customers understand they have three options - but some are still uncertain about the reference to credits

Which one of these three future bill options would you prefer? The bill amounts shown are *average household bills per year*. They are in today's prices so *exclude inflation**



*"The concept of credits is still confusing. I think they should give more information about the credits."
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

- ✓ **Future bill options are seen as clear and easy to understand.**
 - ✓ Customers understand there are three options, involving different amounts of credits.
 - ✓ They are clear on the graphs, and how water bills will increase in each instance.
 - ✓ They also understand the implications of each option.
- × **However, the concept of credits is still seen as confusing, and customers are still unclear about what this will mean in actual bill amounts.**
 - × C2DE and future customers feel less confused about it after seeing this slide, but BC1 and vulnerable customers still find it confusing.
- × **Some of the future customers feel that there is a lot of information in one place, making it hard to engage with it, and to compare the graphs / bill options.**
- **One NHH customer suggested that the graphs could be visually displaying the trends in a stronger/clearer way.**

*"The way they laid out the graphs is easy to understand. Bills and implications all clear. All good."
(NHH customer)*



INTRO 4

<IF FUTURE BILL OPTION A SELECTED>

You chose Option A which means you have up to 500 credits to spend on what Portsmouth Water should do.

On the next screen you'll see the 4 areas where there are choices to be made on what can be done in future. You will choose how much you want Portsmouth Water to do in each area.

Selecting different options will change the number of credits you have left so keep an eye on how much you spend.

As you chose Option A just now, you have enough credits to choose the highest options in all four areas. However, when you go through you may decide that you would rather choose different options and save some credits. Any credits left over means that the future water bills would be lower.

Please hit 'continue' when you're ready to move on

- × **Intro 4 can be confusing as it is now telling customers they can save credits, when they have already made a choice about their future bills.**
 - × Paragraph four in particular, involves too much information about the options and the decision to save credits, without customers really knowing at this stage what their different options will look like (again feeling it's too abstract at this stage).
- × **Vulnerable customers feel that the wording and information here makes it sound like it's a game, not taking seriously the importance of the issue and customers' decisions.**
- **NHH customers are less likely to say they are confused by this screen.**

*"Feels like they're on a game show, with wording of how they're setting up the next section with cautions about how to use credits."
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

*"It's confusing, it now tells us you can save credits."
(HH customer, C2DE)*



EXAMPLE (1) – Option A Selected

Please choose one option for each of the four choices by clicking on the drop down banners. You can change your choices until you're happy. Remember, any credits you have left means the average bill would be lower. When you're finished, scroll to the bottom to continue.

Credits to spend	500			
Summary of your choices				
	-	-	-	-
	0 cr	0 cr	0 cr	0 cr

-  Reducing leakage
-  Keeping your water supply reliable
-  Finding and replacing pipes made of lead
-  Enhancing the local environment

- ✓ **The first screen presenting the four choices is seen as clear, summarising key information in a simple and concise manner.**
 - ✓ Absence of too much detail and text is welcomed.
 - ✓ Table presenting summary of choices is seen as visually clear.
- **Customers don't think it is completely clear what the icons are referring to, but seeing them being consistent with the ones included in the drop down banners of the options below makes it clearer.**
- ✗ **Some vulnerable customers don't think the word "happy" is appropriate for such an important issue, again making the tone come across as less serious.**

*"This is all very clear and looks good."
(HH customer, future)*

*"Unsure about whether "happy" is the right adjective when you're thinking about how much you're going to be spending on your bills."
(HH customer, vulnerable)*

EXAMPLE (2) – Option A Selected

Please choose one option for each of the four choices by clicking on the drop down banners. You can change your choices until you're happy. Remember, any credits you have left means the average bill would be lower. When you're finished, scroll to the bottom to continue.

Credits to spend	360			
Summary of your choices				
	High	-	-	-
	140 cr	0 cr	0 cr	0 cr

Reducing leakage

- Low: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2050. This meets minimum government expectations. 60 cr
- Medium: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2045. 100 cr
- High: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2040. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 140 cr

Keeping your water supply reliable

Finding and replacing pipes made of lead

Enhancing the local environment

EXAMPLE (3) – Option A Selected

Please choose one option for each of the four choices by clicking on the drop down banners. You can change your choices until you're happy. Remember, any credits you have left means the average bill would be lower. When you're finished, scroll to the bottom to continue.

Credits to spend	300			
Summary of your choices				
	High	High	-	-
	140 cr	60 cr	0 cr	0 cr

Reducing leakage

- Low: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2050. This meets minimum government expectations. 60 cr
- Medium: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2045. 100 cr
- High: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2040. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 140 cr

Keeping your water supply reliable

- Low: The chance of supplies being interrupted increases from 1% a year to 5% a year (as reliable as the industry average). 0 cr
- Medium: The chance of supplies being interrupted will stay at 1% in any year (the most reliable in the country). 20 cr
- High: The chance of supplies being interrupted is reduced to 0%. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 60 cr

Finding and replacing pipes made of lead

Enhancing the local environment

- ✓ Options for each area are seen as clear and customers understand how credits work in this context.
- ✗ There is some uncertainty about both leakage and reliability icons, with some customers saying it is not entirely clear what they stand for.
 - ✗ For some, the icon with number of drops being higher and then decreasing feels counterintuitive to low to high options (while shield icon variations feel more appropriate).
- ? A few customers express uncertainty about how the credit amounts have been decided and distributed, and what they stand for.
- ? One NHH customer questioned the phrase “government expectations”, wondering if it should be “government requirements” instead.

“Government expectations is a strange word – is it requirements or recommendations?”
(NHH customer)

“This looks pretty clear, and enough to decide which option to go for.”
(HH customer, C2DE)

There is a sense that some information in relation to lead pipes is missing, and customers would like to see more in order to feel able to choose

EXAMPLE [4] – Option A Selected

Please choose one option for each of the four choices by clicking on the drop down banners. You can change your choices until you're happy. Remember, any credits you have left means the average bill would be lower. When you're finished, scroll to the bottom to continue.

Credits to spend	100			
Summary of your choices				
	High	High	Medium	-
	140 cr	60 cr	200 cr	0 cr

Reducing leakage
▼

Keeping your water supply reliable
▼

Finding and replacing pipes made of lead
▲

Low: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2070. 140 cr

Medium: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2060. 200 cr

High: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2050. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 260 cr

Enhancing the local environment
▼

Please choose one option for each of the four choices by clicking on the drop down banners. You can change your choices until you're happy. Remember, any credits you have left means the average bill would be lower. When you're finished, scroll to the bottom to continue.

Credits to spend	80			
Summary of your choices				
	High	High	Medium	Medium
	140 cr	60 cr	200 cr	20 cr

Reducing leakage
▼

Keeping your water supply reliable
▼

Finding and replacing pipes made of lead
▲

Low: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2070. 140 cr

Medium: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2060. 200 cr

High: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2050. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 260 cr

Enhancing the local environment
▲

Low: Make sure biodiversity doesn't deteriorate at our key sites and no increase in our grants to enhance the environment 0 cr

Medium: Improve biodiversity at our key sites by 2030 but no increase in our grants to enhance the environment 20 cr

High: Improve biodiversity at our key sites by 2030 and double our grants to enhance the environment 40 cr

- × Some customers feel that information on lead pipes does not feel enough to make an informed decision on the issue (mainly BC1, vulnerable and some NHH).
- × Size of lead pipe icon decreasing for high option feels counterintuitive, and some are uncertain about the icon itself, feeling it is not very clear.
- ? Some customers wonder why references to "schools" are now missing from lead pipe plans.
- ? A few customers were uncertain about the reference to "grants" and had to remember that it is referring to farmers (relating to information presented earlier in the survey).

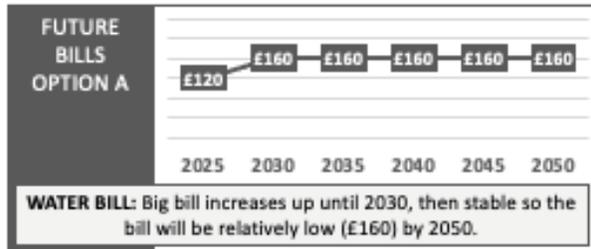
"Icons on the side don't make sense. The low one has a big pipe, and the high one has a small pipe."
(HH customer, BC1)

"There's not enough context for lead pipes. Can't make an informed decision without learning about the impact."
(NHH customer)

The summary slide is seen as a helpful conclusion to the survey, but it needs to be further simplified to make it easier to engage with

EXAMPLE (6) - Option A selected

Thank you. Here's a summary of your choices:



Reducing leakage

High: Reduce leakage by 50% by 2040. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 140 cr

Keeping your water supply reliable

High: The chance of supplies being interrupted is reduced to 0%. This is what Portsmouth Water would like to do. 60 cr

Finding and replacing pipes made of lead

Medium: All homes have access to water with no exposure to lead by 2060. 200 cr

Enhancing the local environment

Medium: Improve biodiversity at our key sites by 2030 but no increase in our grants to enhance the environment. 20 cr

You decided to save 80 credits. This means that the average annual household bill for 2025-29 would be reduced by 40 pence from the future bill option you chose.

If you'd now like to have another go and change either the future bill option you chose, or any of the choices that you made in the areas above, please indicate below:

1. I'm happy with my selection and choices
2. I'd like to go back and change the future bill option
3. I'd like to go back and change the choices I made, with the same future bill option as before

"40p? This was pointless then."
(HH customer, C2DE)

- ✓ **Customers appreciate having a summary slide and being presented with the option to change their responses, if they would like to.**
 - ✓ It is a good way of confirming completion, and allowing for flexibility.
- × **However, some C2DE customers feel it is presenting too much information in one place, making it overwhelming and hard to engage with.**
- × **The three options presented in the end are seen as too complex and unnecessary.**
 - × Instead, customers would prefer to have the option to go back and amend their responses.
- × **Some customers feel that the saving of 40 pence by saving 80 credits is too small, making the exercise feel meaningless (as it is the first time they are getting a sense of what credits stand for).**
- × **One customer (C2DE) mentioned that the phrase 'have another go' makes the survey sound like a game when it is not.**

"It doesn't need 1,2,3. can probably just split into 2. More like "Yes I'm happy / No I'd like to go back", would be good since this is the end of survey."
(NHH customer)





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64. PW Choices Survey Test CAP 3 Summary Report 270223

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 3 rd project for the CAP and was used to develop the materials for the plan choices consultation survey. 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