

## Portsmouth Water Customer Advisory Panel – Part 1

### Depth Discussion Guide

#### Section 1: Introduction & About the Customer Advisory Panel (5 mins – slides 2 & 3) – NHH version

**Reminder of self and Blue Marble** – independent market research company who run research on behalf of organisations.

**Reminder of data protection** – this session is being audio/video recorded but everything you say will remain confidential and we only use these for internal research purposes.

**Session duration:** 45 minutes in total, finishing promptly by [INSERT TIME].

**Introductions:** Let's start by you telling me a bit about yourself:

**Note for interviews with businesses:** Intro to focus on information about their business (where they are based, sector, size etc.) and throughout the conversation moderator to remind participants to share their views from a business perspective.

- Nature of business
- Nature of your role
- What are the main challenges facing your business
  - In the short term
  - In the longer term

I'd now like to share with you **some information** about this research programme and its aims.

Water companies are required to make **long-term (25 year+) and short-term plans** (5 year 'to do' list) that outline their priorities, how they will invest customers' money, and how they will aim to maintain or improve the service they provide.

You have been selected to **participate in Portsmouth Water's Customer Advisory Panel** of domestic, business and future customers, acting as a representative of Portsmouth Water's wider customer base. This is an important research programme as Portsmouth Water wants to get your **feedback and thoughts** on its strategy and plans as it works towards the future.

The panel will participate a **total of 4 times** over the course of this research programme; in May, October, November, and early stages of 2023.

During our sessions we will be looking at **Portsmouth Water's long term 25-year strategy** as well as its **short term 5-year business plans** for this period.

Before we talk about Portsmouth Water and its plans, I would like to show you a **quick diagram of the water cycle**, that explains **how water companies work** to provide you with water services.

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**.

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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.

### Section 2: Introduction to Portsmouth Water and the challenges it is facing (10 minutes – slides 4, 5, 6)

*I'd now like to hear your **thoughts** on Portsmouth Water.*

- What are your **overall thoughts** on Portsmouth Water as a company?
  - Describe any direct experiences you have had as a business
  - What, if anything, is Portsmouth Water good at? Why?
  - What, if anything, should it improve?
- ?
- What, if any, **challenges** do you think Portsmouth Water is facing?
  - Which, if any, of these challenges are long term?
  - And which, if any, are short term?
- Which, if any, challenges are most **concerning** from your point of view? Why?

*I'd like to share some **key information** about Portsmouth Water as a company.*

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.

Here is the most recent performance information for Portsmouth Water:

Ofwat controls the amount water companies charge customers. **PWs average bill** in 2022/23 will be around **£340 per year**.

The regulator also measures how **satisfied** customers are and each company receives a score. PW has **the highest levels of satisfaction** for the industry.

Events like **burst water mains** can put homes and businesses out of water from time to time. The regulator measures this for all companies giving **a score of average numbers of minutes lost per household** PW has the **best score** in the UK on this measure with an average of 2 minutes per household.

There is also a **league table for leakage** – it shows the progress companies are making in reducing leaks: PW displays again the **best performance** among water companies with **10.6%** reduction.

- How do you **feel** about Portsmouth Water now after seeing this information?

*I would also like to share further information about the **challenges** facing Portsmouth Water.*

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

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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.

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 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?
- How **concerning**, if at all, do you find them?
- What, if anything, do you think Portsmouth Water **should be doing** about these challenges?
- How do these challenges relate to your business?

### Section 3 - Getting your thoughts on Portsmouth Water's long term plans (20 minutes – slides 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

*In order to help us get a better understanding of Portsmouth Water's plans, I will be sharing some information **on the reasons behind Portsmouth Water's long term planning, how PW is going to achieve its plans, and what specifically it is going to do to achieve each of these plans.***

#### **Why**

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

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

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

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

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

- What are your **initial thoughts** on the information I just shared with you?
- As a business, which, if any, **words or phrases** do you **like** from this? Why?
- And, which, if any do you **dislike**? What?
- What are your thoughts on the phrase '**wholesome water**'?
  - What do you think it means?
- Overall, to what extent, if at all, do you find this plan **acceptable**?
- How, if at all, **ambitious** do you think this plan is?
- To what extent, if at all, does this plan feel **aligned** with your expectations and priorities for Portsmouth Water as a business? Why?
- Is there anything you feel **uncomfortable** with? If so, what?

### How and what

For each slide, moderator to repeat the following set of questions:

- What are your **initial thoughts** on the information I just shared with you?
  - Do you have any questions or concerns?
  - What aspects matter to you as a business?
  - Which would you want to see implemented soon (the short term to do list)? Which can be implemented later in the next 25 years? Why do you say this?
- Overall, to what extent, if at all, do you find this plan **acceptable**?
- How, if at all, **ambitious** do you think this plan is?
- To what extent, if at all, does this plan feel **aligned** with your expectations and priorities for Portsmouth Water as a business? Why?
- Is there anything you feel **uncomfortable** with? If so, what?
- (Slide 12) What are your thoughts on the phrase '**lowest cost**'?
  - What do you think it means?
  - What are your thoughts on Portsmouth Water talking about using their lowest costs?
- (Slide 11) What are your thoughts on the word '**innovation**'?
  - What do you think it means in the context of water?

### Moderator notes:

- Lead pipes: these were used in properties built before 1970. Very small traces of lead can seep into the water which would have health impacts (especially for infants) – but to reassure you, water companies mitigate the risk by treating the water with an additive. Portsmouth Water has replaced all lead pipes on the main network however it is estimated that most older houses in the Portsmouth region have lead pipes – these are pipes that belong to the home owner. As part of its plan it wants to work with residents to reduce lead pipes on private properties.
- Water poverty: this is defined as when a household needs to spend 5% of its income (after paying rent and other housing costs) on water. Vulnerable customers would include a much broader definition and might include people with disabilities, health

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conditions, those experiencing a sudden crisis such as bereavement or loss of income.

### Wrap up (5 minutes)

- Looking back at Portsmouth Water's **overarching plan and reasons for making long-term plans** (slide 8), to what extent, if at all, do you think PW will **achieve the aims** set out here, based on the information you have seen so far? Why?
- Are they considering businesses too in their long term plans?
- What **kind of information** will you be looking for/expecting to see in future sessions?
- Is there **anything else** you would like to say to Portsmouth Water before finishing?

### Thanks and close