



Acceptability and Affordability Testing Stage One: Qualitative Work

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Agenda

1. Executive Summary

2. Research background

3. Research challenges and reflections

4. Contextual factors impacting on response to the Business Plans

5. Response to 'Proposed Plan'

6. Response to 'Must Do' and 'Alternative'

7. Summary and way forward

8. Appendices

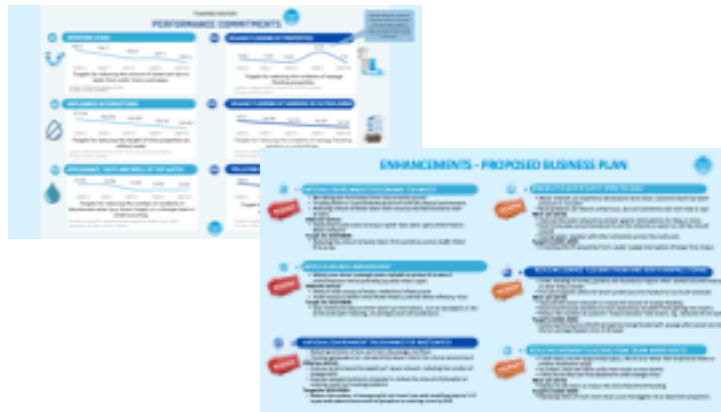
1. Executive Summary

Executive summary: Research background

- Thames Water commissioned Accent to undertake Acceptability and Affordability Testing research to comply with OFWAT and CCW requirements
- This insight is based on a comprehensive qualitative exercise which tightly followed the regulatory guidance and a quantitative study will follow
- The research exercise comprised extensive and robust deliberation of three potential Business Plans

Proposed Plan

(includes statutory and discretionary service enhancements)



Must Do Plan

(includes only statutory service enhancements)



Alternative Plan

(phasing of part of National Environment Programme wastewater but includes discretionary service enhancements)



Executive summary: Meaningful engagement


- Customers across the Thames Water region were represented and included households, micro non-households, large non-households, customers in vulnerable situations, low-income customers, customers on the Priority Services Register and future customers
- This qualitative research exercise has followed the prescribed methodology and content including building customer knowledge through a pre-task which educates about the industry, business Plan process, company and Proposed Plan investment areas and performance
- Deliberative roundtable discussions, facilitating strong engagement and robust dissection and rich deliberation of the Proposed Plan, and one to one interviews with other key customers groups ensured that insights are meaningful
- Discussion of the Must Do Plan and Alternative Plan allowed customers to make some improvement/cost trade-offs and judge overall acceptability and affordability of the different options
- There was an opportunity for response via post task which was a useful to anchor to assess final individual affordability and acceptability
- Overall customers accepted there is a trade off in terms of the amount of information that can be shown and understood within the time and appear to make informed decisions with good knowledge
- More context and data was often requested (historical 10-year data trends, previous levels of investment, other elements of the Business Plan or Business as Usual activity e.g. customer satisfaction metrics or Priority Services Register/support for the most vulnerable). There are also some challenges around the choice of Performance Commitments and specific metrics

The time went really quickly and the discussions were interesting
Reading, DE

This was actually much more interesting than I thought! I've learned so much about Thames Water and what their Plans are
NW London, AB

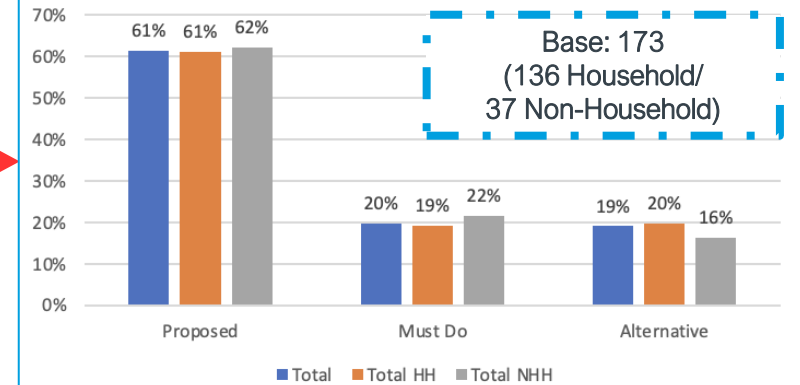
Executive summary: Key insights – Overall Preference

Comparison of all three plans

	Proposed plan	Must do plan	Alternative plan
Performance Commitments			
Enhancements (£ per year by 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£31.54) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£31.54) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£20.81) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32)
What is the bill impact? Average annual bill now = £417	<p>£659 by 2030 (up £242)</p> <p>£1,290 by 2050 (up £873)</p>	<p>£642 by 2030 (up £225)</p> <p>£1,047 by 2050 (up £630)</p>	<p>£646 by 2030 (up £229)</p> <p>£1,292 by 2050 (up £875)</p>

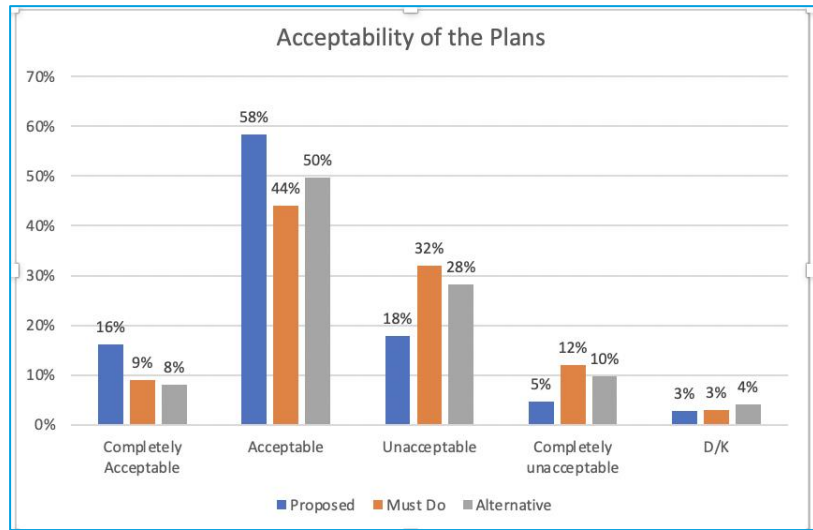
Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Overall which plan do you prefer?



- After long, interactive discussions, customers individually voted and the majority chose the Proposed Plan as their Preferred Plan
- Preference for the Proposed Plan is driven by strong support for a range of service enhancements that address spontaneous concerns around key environmental wastewater issues relating to combined sewer overflows and river pollution, as well as investment to address longer term water security challenges and leakage
- The Proposed Plan provides some reassurance that Thames Water will proactively invest to future proof core infrastructure and ensure longer term network resilience
- This narrative fits with the intergenerational discussion where the majority of customers preferred short term investment proposals that recognise the urgency and need to invest now

Executive summary: Key Insights – Acceptability

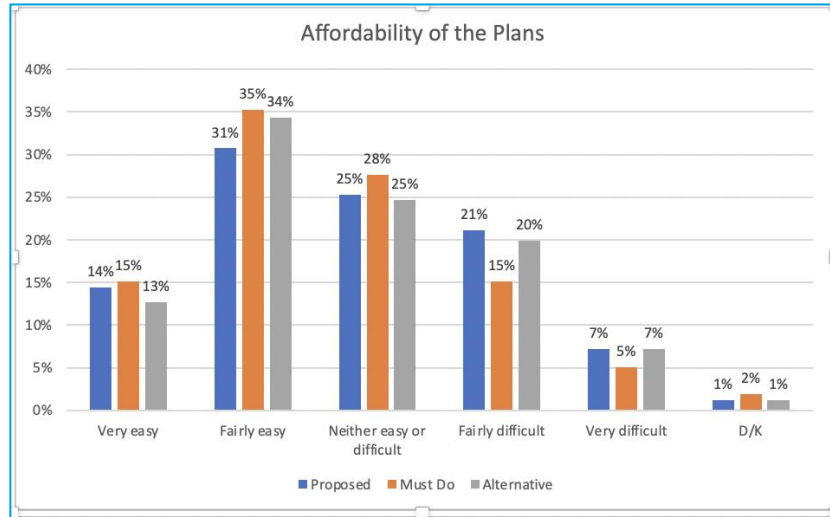


Base: 173
(136 Household/37 Non-Household)

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

- Each plan was reviewed and discussed independently for acceptability and affordability before overall comparisons and preferences were made
- Three quarters of Thames Water customers found the Proposed Plan acceptable which was significantly higher than the Must Do Plan or the Alternative Plan
 - All the plans address the spontaneous environmental priorities (addressing combined sewer overflows, river pollution, protecting wildlife and improving leakage) which was good
 - However, the Proposed Plan felt more proactive, ambitious and was seen to deliver MORE THAN just what's required
 - It was environmentally friendly, good for future generations and focused on the right things
 - It shows Thames Water voluntarily improving the sewer network and focusing on nature-based solutions that are seen as innovative
 - The proactivity provided some reassurance that Thames Water is focused on the long term and fits with the two thirds of customers who favour quicker bill increases to spread investment costs across generations

Executive summary: Key Insights – Affordability



Base: 166
(129 Household/37 Non-Household)

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

- The proportion and distribution of affordability levels is similar across the different plans which is driven by the limited cost differential between the plans by 2030 (£17 difference between Proposed Plan and Must Do Plan)
- Just under half of all customers found the Proposed Plan, which would see the average Household bill rise by £242 by 2030, affordable partly because the water bills are relatively low, it's a vital service and because investment to future proof the network is felt to be crucial
- Around 1 in 3 would find the Proposed Plan bill increase difficult to afford due to the general cost of living crisis, concerns over rising inflation or high water usage. This is especially true of the lower income and financially vulnerable customers
- Compared with the baseline pre-task, more stated this Proposed Plan bill would be fairly or very difficult to afford and want to know whether there will be bill caps to protect low income and 'just about managing' customers who would be adversely affected by the proposed bill increases
- Approximately one quarter of all customers state they would find the bill change neither easy or difficult to afford. This is not a simple measure of affordability and some customers claimed they could afford it but felt that investment should come out of Thames Water profits or cost efficiencies. Others found it too difficult to predict future income levels

Executive Summary: Considerations for the Proposed Plan

- Although the majority favour the Proposed Plan and three quarters feel it is acceptable, there are areas for consideration including where it was felt the Performance Commitments were not ambitious enough. For example, leakage and river pollution targets. However, no associated bill impact was discussed

PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS					
	Leakage	Supply Interruptions	Water Quality	Sewage In and Sewage Out	Pollution
Importance	High importance	Medium importance	Medium importance	High importance	High importance
Response to Target	More ambition wanted	Okay/about right	Okay/about right	Targets going in the right direction	More ambition wanted

- In terms of the service enhancements, there were questions over the validity of the basement flooding service enhancement given that the benefit was seen as quite niche. It was felt that the investment could be moved elsewhere for universal benefit

SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS						
	National Environment Programme Water c. £2 pa	Water Resources Management c. £12 pa	National Environment Programme Wastewater c. £32 pa	Reliable Supply c. £6 pa	Rare heavy storms c. £2.50 pa	Basement Flooding c.£2.50 pa
Importance	High	High	High	Medium	High	Low
Support Spend	Support	Support	Support even though high spend	Medium support	Support	Low support – move investment elsewhere

Executive Summary: Considerations for the Proposed Plan

There are some areas that were not included in the Proposed Plan that customers would want to be included:

Customer-service-related initiatives including:

Enhanced communications

Water efficiency measures - saving education/devices, real time smart meter monitoring

Protection of the most vulnerable customers

Water filters/softeners

Innovation including:

Ideas to deal with flooding at source and divert water out of sewers

More nature-based solutions

Collaboration including:

Farmers for river pollution

Developers to drive water recycling innovation,

Reassurance including:

Stronger sense of urgency to reassure customers of future proofing network e.g. start building vs only planning to build a reservoir

2. Research Background

Research objectives

- All water and wastewater companies are required to test the acceptability and affordability of their Business Plans with their customers before submitting their Plans for the upcoming Price Review (PR24) in October 2023
- To ensure a standardised approach is used across the industry, Ofwat and CC Water (CCW) have produced guidance on how this research should be undertaken
- This guidance has been designed to facilitate consistency and comparability between companies (e.g. question language, methodologies, approach taken to inflation, the degree to which participants are informed, clarity on least cost vs. proposed options, inclusion of vulnerabilities, different futures)



Overall Objective:

The research was commissioned to explore customer responses to the Proposed, Must Do and Alternative Business Plans and decide which Plan (or adaptation) will go forward to be tested in the quantitative work

All research followed the guidelines from OFWAT/CCW and was overseen by the Independent Challenge Group

(note that Thames Water's Independent Challenge Group is known as the Customer Challenge Group)

Business Plans tested

Thames Water has produced three potential Business Plans for the 2025-2030 Price Review period to be tested in line with the OFWAT and CCW guidance

The Plans do not include everything that Thames Water propose to do but, in line with the OFWAT and CCW guidance, they cover proposed targets against six key Performance Commitments and six Service Enhancements that represent the areas where there will be the most investment and where customers will have a point of view

Proposed Plan

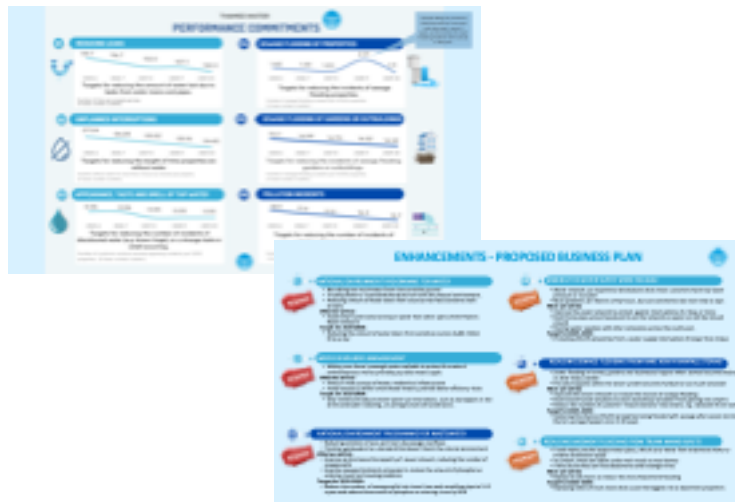
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Must Do Plan

(includes only statutory service enhancements)

Alternative Plan

(phasing part of National Environment Programme wastewater but includes discretionary service enhancements)



Comprehensive research methodology

5 x 4 ½ hour face to face deliberative events with household, non-household, future and low-income customers
16 large non-household online depths, 16 online depths with customers in vulnerable situations

Pre-task exercise

- Review of prescribed content (inc. industry structure, regulatory framework, company information, proposed Business Plan)
- Questions to ensure a baseline check of affordability of their water bill

Face to face/online engagement

- Contextual issues/baseline views
- Proposed Plan dissected to understand acceptability
- Must Do and Alternative Plans allows improvement/cost trade-offs and judge overall acceptability and affordability of the different options

Post-task questionnaire

- Tailored post task including personalised bill impacts
- Affordability and acceptability of each plan
- Trust and intergenerational fairness

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Research locations and sample framework

In line with the OFAT and CCW guidance, under the joint procurement option, Thames Water worked in collaboration with Affinity Water in Slough and Watford and tested a joint plan that included Thames Water's wastewater plan and Affinity Water's water plan

Location	Water/Waste	Date Undertaken
NW London	Materials covered Thames full Business Plan for water and wastewater	25 th April
Hammersmith		26 th April
Reading		3 rd May
Slough	Materials covered Thames wastewater plan and Affinity Water's water plan	4 th May & 16 th May
Watford		11 th May
Depth interviews (Zoom/Teams)	As appropriate	26 th April to 23 rd May

Research locations and sample framework

Minimum quotas were exceeded across the sub-groups

Diversity of social grade, income, age and ethnicity were all adhered to

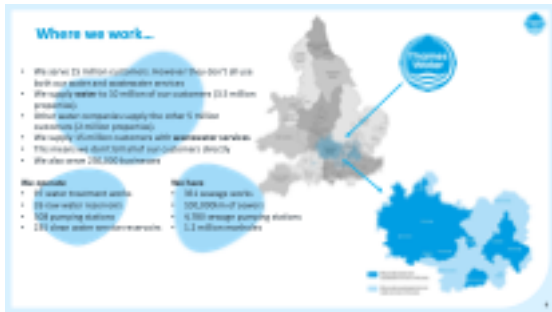
	Household (incl Social Tariff)	Non-household (Micro - Less than 10 employees)	Non-household (Large 10 or more employees)	Customers in vulnerable situations (PSR)	Future
Thames Dual	73 (31)	18	12	10	3
Thames Affinity	63 (33)	10	8	10	5
Total Achieved	136 (64)	28	20	20	8
Guidance Min.	64 (8)	16	8	8	8

Household customers (including PSR/vulnerable situations) were recruited from Thames Water customer lists using email and phone. Future and non-household customers were free-found by door-to-door and phone recruitment by Roots Recruitment.

Pre-task and group materials

All materials were designed in line with the OFWAT and CCW guidance, comprehensively cognitively tested and reviewed by Thames Water's Customer Challenge Group

Company information



Regulatory information

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies have to provide reliable services, and also for their services to be consistent in changing weather patterns and demand from consumers.

Companies set their own standards for service, but these are set by the regulator. For example, they have agreed to improve water pressure, and to be able to supply water to a certain level during the winter, and to be able to supply water to a certain level during the summer.

If water companies don't meet these standards, they will be fined. The regulator will also take action to help them improve.

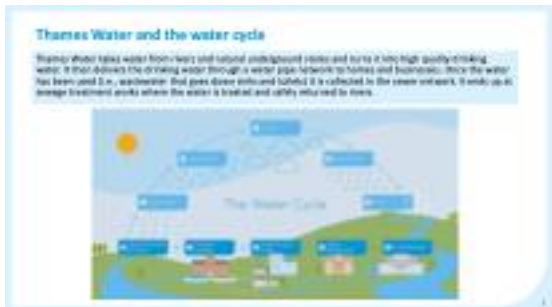
Performance information

How to read comparison information

We will later show you 8 pages, displaying water companies' performance. The blue boxes below show you how to read the data.

- The blue box at the top of each page shows the company's performance against its targets.
- The green box at the bottom of each page shows the company's performance against its targets.
- The red box at the bottom of each page shows the company's performance against its targets.

Business Plan information



How water company performance is monitored

Water companies currently carry out their five-year business plan for 2016 to 2020. They have set their own targets, called performance commitments, in their five-year business plan. These targets are based on what customers have previously told companies they would like them to do, and the regulator's proposed (what companies should deliver) those targets over the next five years.

Ofwat monitors water company performance against their performance commitments every year to see if they have met the targets in their business plan.

We are now going to show you how well your water and/or sewerage company is doing on some of their performance commitments compared to other water companies in England and Wales.

These performance commitments are a register of set of the wide range of services companies provide. We are showing these examples to customers here to see how well your water company is doing.



ENHANCEMENTS - PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN

- Investment in new water treatment works
- Investment in new sewerage treatment works
- Investment in new water supply infrastructure
- Investment in new sewerage supply infrastructure
- Investment in new water supply infrastructure
- Investment in new sewerage supply infrastructure

Face to Face event structure

Robust roundtable discussions during each breakout session moderated by a team of experts

- 4pm-4.15pm – Meet, Greet, Seat; Session Introduction
- 4.15pm-5.15pm – Session 1 (Warm-up, Recap, Long Term Context, Temperature Check)
- 5.15pm-5.45pm – Comfort/Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches
- 5.45pm-7.00pm – Session 2 ('Proposed Plan')
- 7.00pm-7.15pm – Tea/coffee break
- 7.15pm-8.15pm – Session 3 ('Must Do' and 'Alternative')
- 8.15pm-8.30pm – Final plenary session (Post task)

Online depth interviews (Customers in vulnerable situations and larger non-household) comprised a shortened discussion guide in line with the guidance

3. Research challenges and reflections

Observation of research challenges

Customers appear to make informed decisions with good knowledge BUT prescribed methodology does pose some challenges that need to be documented and reviewed at an industry level

1. Information provided was enough to cause curiosity but not quite enough to provide a holistic picture of Thames Water's proposals and investment Plans for 2025-2030
2. Customers were keen to see other elements of the Business Plan e.g. Priority Services Register/support for the most vulnerable or Business as Usual investment e.g. pipework programme
3. There was a lack of understanding as to why the six particular Performance Commitments were chosen as they were not necessarily the ones that customers wanted to know about e.g. customer satisfaction was missing
4. Specifically, more context and data was often requested to make sense of Performance Commitments and Service Enhancements
 - historical 10-year data trends or last two Business Plans
 - previous levels of investment and funding sources
5. Regulator prescribed engagement and 'Must Do' content causes customers to question whether their opinions matter
6. Target setting, variation in targets and Outcome Delivery Incentives rewards and penalties are all challenged
7. Concerns over why bill payers have to pay for investments – better cost efficiencies/lower salaries

Observation of research challenges

Customers ask a range of questions during the research sessions to make sense of the Business Planning process

Type of Questions

- Why is it a monopoly market?
- Why are bill increases needed to fund investments?
- Why doesn't investment come from profits?
- How do OFWAT make the price review decisions?
- Why do rewards equate to bill rises?
- Why are companies allowed to set their own targets?
- Why has the regulator let companies underinvest for so long?
- Why are leakage targets so loose?
- Why are some targets missing?
- Why is it just water companies that have to clean up rivers?

4. Contextual factors impacting on response to the Business Plans

Fieldwork undertaken in April/May 2023

At the time of the fieldwork, inflation headlines were dominant and the water industry was getting significant negative coverage - lots of customers had heard the combined sewer overflows/pollution stories. But still strong focus on energy companies and high food price hikes

EUROPE ECONOMY

UK inflation hits 41-year high of 11.1% as food and energy prices continue to soar

Source: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/11/16/uk-inflation-hits-new-41-year-high-as-food-and-energy-prices-continue-to-soar.html>

Grocery price inflation hits a record 16.7% high leaving cash-strapped families facing an extra £788 on their annual food shopping bill

- Food prices have leapt a 'staggering' 2.3 percentage points in just four weeks
- Analysts now fear year-on-year grocery bills will soar by almost £800 in 2023
- It comes amid warnings the UK will be the only G7 economy to slip backwards

Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11695785/UK-shoppers-hit-staggering-788-rise-grocery-bills.html>

Ofwat seeks new powers to force water companies to clean up rivers by blocking billions in investors payouts

The regulator is seeking powers to block the payment of dividends if water companies fail to tackle sewage and other issues requiring investment



Source: <https://inews.co.uk/news/ofwat-seeks-new-powers-to-force-water-companies-to-clean-up-rivers-by-blocking-billions-in-investors-payouts-2203369#:~:text=The%20water%20industry%20regulator%20Ofwat,environment%20improvements%2C%20i%20can%20reveal.>

Failures of regulators, water companies and Government leaving public and environment in the mire

22 March 2023



Under investment, insufficient government strategy, and inadequate co-ordination has resulted in a failure to "treat water with the care and importance it deserves", warns committee.

Source: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/517/industry-and-regulators-committee/news/194330/failures-of-regulators-water-companies-and-government-leaving-public-and-environment-in-the-mire/>

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Work to replace 70 miles of leaky water pipes begins



Works to replace Victorian pipes across the capital are under way

At a glance

- Thames Water is replacing 70 miles of leaky Victorian pipes in London and across the Home Counties

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5149y50ydn0>

Thames Water ordered to fix leaks before pumping millions of litres from rivers

Environment Agency tells supplier to rethink plans to tackle droughts by pumping water from Thames and Severn



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/28/thames-water-ordered-to-fix-leaks-before-pumping-millions-of-litres-from-rivers>

Spotlight on customers in vulnerable situations

Lots of overlap in vulnerabilities. For example, those with physical health issues sometimes had underlying mental health needs and these tended to cause financial pressure (not being able to work, etc)

Physical health issues

Osteoarthritis
Restricted mobility
Hearing issues
Diabetes
Arthritis/restricted movement

*The house is generally damp but I can't afford the heating bill to dry it out.
Water bill is okay but I spend all I earn and I'm lucky if I have enough money to get milk as my salary has increased by about 1% in the last 10 years*

Customers in vulnerable situations

Mental health issues

Depression
General anxiety disorder
Psychotic/manic episodes
Daily medication
Borderline personality disorder
Autism (family members)

Water is by far a lot less impact than council tax, electricity and gas

Customers in vulnerable situations

Financial issues
Manage part time work
Unemployment benefit
Receipt of benefits
Working tax credit

Important to understand that not all customers in vulnerable situations are financially struggling – some older customers retired early in sound financial position, some have young children but are financially secure and some have sought help to ensure bills are manageable

Customers in vulnerable situations case study

35, single mum of 4 children living in Camden borough

Living situation

Lives in London in maisonette with basement
Younger children live with her, older two live with grandmother
3 American bulldogs

Working status

Not working due to ill health
Suffers anxiety, depression, daily dizziness and sciatica
Takes anti-depressants and dizziness medication
Part way through uni course in health and social care (funding cut)
- would like to get back to that and start nursing

Financial situation

Struggles with all bills and worried about debt
Water is £140 PQ but not paid for 4 months
Not on a meter and has concerns about bill escalating
Made a grant application on Thames Water website
Several conversations inc. meter reading request/copy of bill but
nothing sorted and Thames Water keep chasing payment

'I wish they'd try and support costs...debt is mounting up'

Priority Services Register status

Proactively called Thames Water about health and they mentioned
Priority Services Register but no follow up information
If she calls then her call is prioritised which is 'good'

Response to Priority Services Register support offered in Business Plan

Positive response to water/comms during interruptions
Good to see inclusive communication formats
Tailored support for dementia – relevant for people she knows

Response to financial support offered in Business Plan

Very positive about financial support
Payment Plans to help spread payment is "fantastic" and discount
tariffs "really good to do"
Social tariffs need to cover more people as many are struggling

'Need better promotion of all this at support groups and community centres'

Spotlight on non-household customers

In line with the OFWAT and CCW guidance, a range of non-household customers were included – micros (Under 10 staff) and large (10 staff and over) with varying reliance on water

Everyday reliance

Media
Accountant
Interior design
Clock repair
Music studio
Property/Estate Agents
Computer repair
Construction
First aid studio
Retail
Photography studio
Logistics/distribution

Water usage =

Office use, tea/coffee, flushing toilets, washing hands, cleaning, health and safety

Medium/heavy reliance

Construction
Restaurant
Hotel and catering
AI business
Recreation (open water swimming)
Cab company (washing cars)
Community centre (water activities)
Washing/ironing business
Day nursery/education
Teaching
Beauty/Hair
Health and well being

Water usage =

Office use, tea/coffee/canteen, recreation, water activities, washing cars, mixing cement

Non-household challenges

Non-household customers outline a number of key challenges; cost is overriding concern (especially for micro businesses) which leads to some reluctance for bill increases and focus on survival and short-term business planning

Costs

- Lower sales
- Low customer confidence
- Rising material costs
- Rising bills/utilities
- Rising inflation
- Increased rent
- Rising cost of fuel
- Rising cost of food

People

- Recruitment of staff
- Rebuilding/building Client/Customer base
- Client retention
- Low customer footfall (Covid hangover/working at home)

Legislation/Regulation

- Health and safety regulation
- Increased insurance
- Environmental policies
- Electric vehicles

Consistently feel that water is cheaper than gas/electric but express a desire for more proactivity and incentives from Thames Water showing how non-household customers can save water and save money

Non-household customers – SMEs vs. large businesses

SMEs were inclined to choose the 'Proposed' plan more than larger businesses.

Although they had a few gripes about the affordability of the plan in the long run, they felt that it was the best option for the environment/climate.

Larger businesses preferred the 'Must do'/'Alternative' plans.

Whilst they agree that the 'Proposed' plan was more acceptable, the reasons for choosing the 'Must do' plan was purely from a financial point of view. Large businesses are still in covid recovery mode and therefore have to think longer picture about the affordability of the plan and the 'Alternative' plan felt like a better middle ground between the 'Proposed' and 'Must do', as "...you're doing a bit more and looks like better value"

Spotlight on future customers

Range of future customers who were service users not bill payers

Type of service user

- Students
- Young working adults
- Living at home
- Sharing flats/houses
- Contributing to bills

Overall observations

- Future customers are distant from Thames Water
- Unconscious usage
- Views are in line with 'service users' perspective
- No relationship or bill communication
- Growing up with technology has fuelled and enabled hyper present tense mindset and behaviours
 - Engage at the last minute
 - Life is about being in the moment
- Struggle to engage with immediate future
- Impossible to project to 2030-50

Water industry needs to find a more meaningful way to engage with future customers – need to consider longitudinal studies that track water/environmental media attitudes and behaviours

Pre-task provided some background and new information

Generally, customers know little about Thames Water. However, some hold strong views on **privatisation** with a perception that this has had a negative impact on historical investment due to high dividends/bonuses

For most, the pre-task information provided 'new news' on the regulatory framework, company scale and a snapshot of performance on some measures

Industry Specific

Breakdown of water/wastewater companies and how the splits are decided



Involved process of water and wastewater operations



Regulatory process of 5-year Business Plan cycle, targeting and penalties/rewards that impact customer bills and different agencies involved



Common targets for vastly different Water Companies (topography, demography)

Company Specific

Company size/operations
Thames Water is 'vast' e.g. no. of sewage plants, high number of customers
Renewable energy



Performance targets
Shocked/alarmed by sewage flooding
River pollution and sewerage flooding is poor



Bill breakdown
Where customer money goes
Shareholders have not received dividend/payout



Investment plans
Scale of the plans and consultation process
Plans to improve environment

Customer perspectives

Starting perceptions (positive or negative) depend on which perspective customers take

The OFWAT and CCW guidance encouraged research companies to ask customers to review the Business Plan from different perspectives

Customers were prompted to think about these different perspectives throughout the discussions and wear 'different hats'

- Customers naturally tended to adopt these different perspectives depending on a number of different factors:
 1. **Environmental position** – those with strong environmental views spontaneously thought about Thames Water performance and their environmental responsibilities
 2. **Personal service experience** – those who had experienced problems with Thames Water (interruptions, leakage, water quality, sewage in/out) automatically talked about their issues as a service user and how they had been affected
 3. **Level of altruism** – some thought about other people who might have service issues, who might not be able to afford bills, who might be in vulnerable circumstances
 4. **View on value for money/affordability of bill** - perspective changed dependent on the baseline affordability of the water bill



Perspectives model facilitated people to identify improvements at a household and societal level

Overview of perceptions of Thames Water

Bill payer and service user perspective = neutral-positive baseline perceptions with limited brand connection

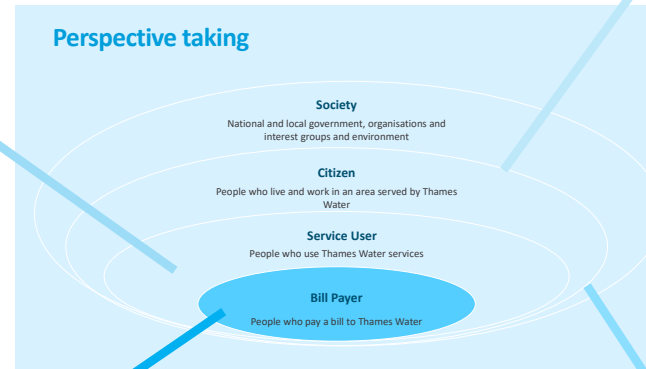
Society perspective = largely negative baseline perceptions driven by environmental concerns

Service user

- Most are neutral-positive
- Water quality = acceptable-good
- Service = uninterrupted, reliable
- Minority have experienced issues with service interruptions, pressure, new meters, etc with mixed resolution success
- High limescale content also a concern for some

Bill Payer

- Most are positive about Thames Water
- Vital service AND 'Cheapest utility bill'
- Not a huge cost
- Some customers not on a meter feel bill is disproportionately expensive



Citizen

- Low level concern for other customers e.g. keen for older people to be looked after, keen for Thames Water to support those who are in financial difficulty
- Mixed awareness of Priority Services Register or financial support schemes (Friends & family/referred/don't know)
- Those with good knowledge of financial support schemes are positive
- Super sewer = positive impact on London

Society

- Concerns about the environment
- Many are upset about negative press relating to river pollution/combined sewer overflows
- Spontaneous priority area and keen to see Thames Water's proposals

Customer perspectives: environmental position

General shift in awareness, belief and support of environmental issues amongst majority of household customers

Short term survival focus of non-household customers means not all support bill increases to address environmental issues

Climate believers

It's happening

- Hearing stories/headlines
- Personal experience = belief
- Droughts last summer
- Villages flooding
- Extreme rainfall

Climate engaged

It's happening and I want action

- Reading stories and range of media e.g. David Attenborough, mainstream news, social media)
- Climate anxiety
- Looking for positive change
- Support positive change and £££

Climate active

It's happening and I am doing something about it

- Seeking out stories/information
- Initiate and support change
- Looking to enact change in different aspects of life e.g. solar panels, water butts, reducing single use plastics, local food markets

You've only got to think about last year and the weather we had

Hammersmith, AB

I'd like to think that my grandchildren can swim in a river. I want no raw sewage in rivers. They should not be allowed to put it in

Slough, C1C2

I think as a company they are a shower of *!?!#...the wastewater that has been going back into our river....for a company whose business is water its absolutely disgraceful

Reading, DE

I've fitted a water recycling thing (like a butt) so that the rainwater irrigates the garden and plants. Thames Water should be doing this

Reading, AB

Customer perspectives: service user stories/examples

Majority of customers have limited/no conscious service interaction with Thames Water and feel quite neutral

Positive 'Moment of Truth'

- Identified leak on customer property, proactively contacted and waived fee
- Water efficiency visit to fit shower/tap aerator
- Proactive contact to inform about Watersure
- Informed in advance of interruptions
- Positive water meter installation
- Speedy response to social media query
- Supportive when bill is difficult to pay
- Priority Services Register support – bottled water

I've always had a positive experience. I was paying the full amount and they contacted me to let me know about Watersure

Reading, DE

Neutral/No Experience

- Running, decent water
- No service interruptions
- No blockages
- No reason to contact
- Accept issues with limescale

I didn't even know we had anything to do with them – the sewage isn't in my everyday thoughts!!

Watford, AB

Honestly, I don't really give them a 2nd thought. I'm a happy customer!

NW London, AB

I've had no problems with them and the taste is good so no need to drink bottled water

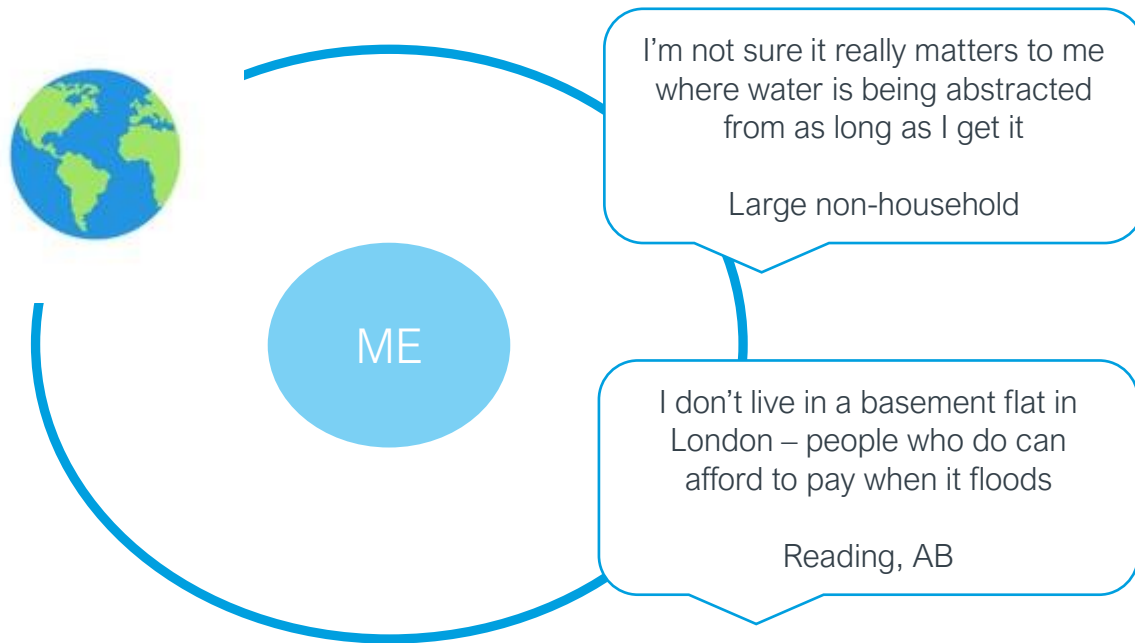
Hammersmith, C1C2

Less positive experience

- Water quality e.g. hard, cloudy, taste issues
- Bad smells around treatment Plants
- Water leaks on property boundary
- Road flooding (Thames Water or council)
- Sewage flooding in the villages (Chalfont)

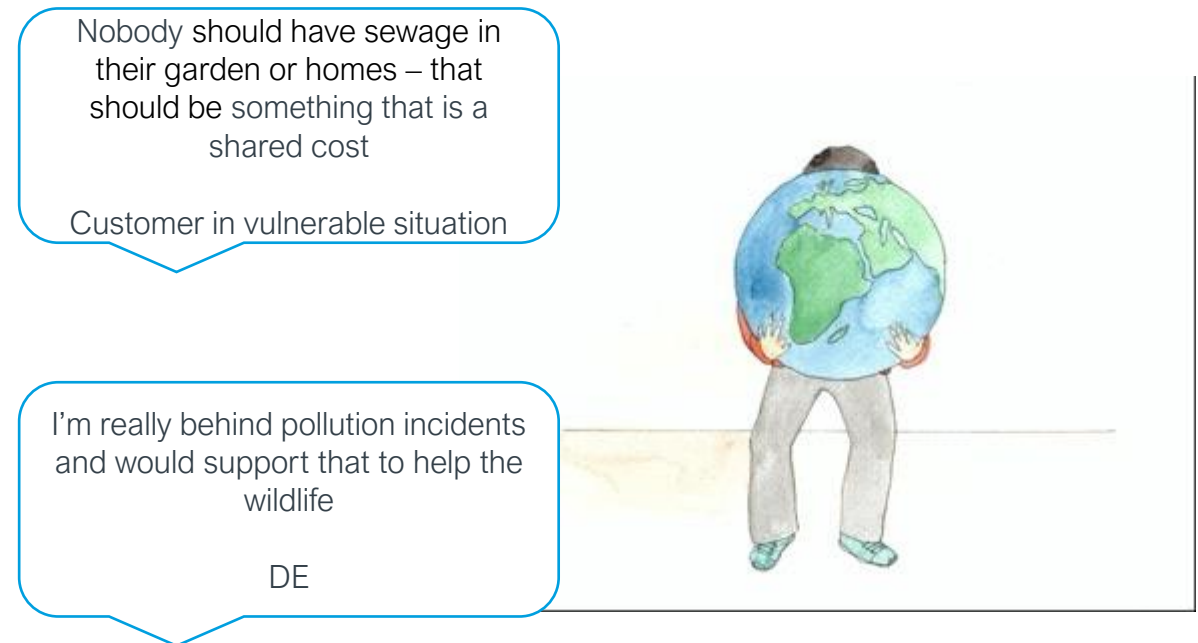
Customer perspective: level of altruism

Me/My Business – centre of the world



- Financially focused customers
- Many micro non-household customers here
- Focusing on business survival
- Concerns about raising bills to pay for others/ environment/ future

Me/My Business – conscious of others/world



- General mindset of 'helping others'
- Concerns about the environment/ wildlife/nature
- Concerns about people who can't afford bills (wanted reassurance that support schemes are in place)
- Large non-household with environmental, social and governance strategies

Customer perspective: Financial position and value for money

Cost of living crisis is felt across the sample to varying degrees (note this is a self assessment)

Swimming comfortably

- Managing well
- Income stable/rising
- Unaffected by cost of living crisis
- No changes to lifestyle
- 'Water is cheap'

Things are more expensive but it's not a problem at the moment and I'm not worried about 5 years time

Customer in vulnerable situation

Treading water

- Just about managing
- Income stable
- Conscious of rising prices
- Stripping back on luxuries
- Making changes to lifestyle
- 'I've started to.....'

The cost of living is not going to improve and we want to start a family soon so we are feeling it

Reading, AB

Rubber Ring reliant

Drowning

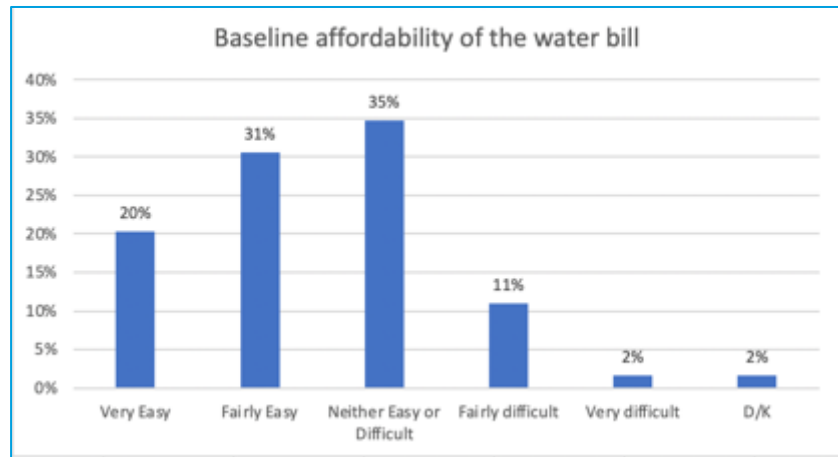
- DE/Low income (and some others)
- Actively looking for support
- Costs outstripping income
- Highly conscious of rising prices e.g. electricity, supermarket
- Stripping back necessities
- Food bank support

I'm lucky to have money to buy milk today – that's what it's like

Customer in vulnerable situation

Customer perspective: baseline affordability of water bill

Regardless of baseline affordability, customers keen to see investment come from Thames Water profits/reduction in dividends



Base: 120 (99 Household/21 Non-Household)

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

- Baseline affordability of the water bill showed half felt the water bill was very or fairly easy to afford (lower for customers in vulnerable situations)
- High value for money scores given:
 - Water bill is comparatively low
 - Running drinking water, 24/7
 - No issues with water/sewerage
 - Processes of delivery are involved (more than I thought)
- Low value for money scores given:
 - Water quality/issues with 'safety' of water
- Low-income customers customers getting some support from Thames Water
 - About one third had some degree of difficulty paying the water bill
 - Feel that the water bill is fairly difficult to afford
 - Water meters to control/reduce £
 - Water sure or 'capped tariffs'

Majority across sample find water bill least worrying of utilities

It's just another bill – it's the lowest and the least of my worries

Hammersmith, AB

It's difficult to compare but 7/10 for reliable service and amount paid

Reading, non-household

I would rate it a 9/10 in terms of value for money. It is cheaper than electricity and gas prices

NW London, non-household

It's more manageable than other utilities and it's gentler – they don't cut you off

Slough, DE

It's difficult to compare but I don't know why water is so cheap
Slough, AB

Water is probably the best value for money considering what I use
Slough, C1C2

Things are more expensive but it's not a problem at the moment and I'm not worried about 5 years time
Customers in vulnerable situations

If my water bill halved, it wouldn't make a difference – it's a fraction of the other bills

Watford, AB

All my bills have gone up but not water – it's halved since I had a meter. It's good value for money when I think about watering my plants, baths, showers

NW London, AB

I would say low value – I think my bill has gone up 22% in the last year!

NW London, C1C2

All costs seem to have gone up recently. It's lower than others but I'm not sure what I can do to reduce spend on water

NW, DE

In the grand scheme of all the bills it's not bad

Customers in vulnerable situations

I'm not struggling to pay my bill and compared to other utilities it's fine
Large non-household

My water bill is the only one that's been reduced this year. All the other bills have gone up, water's gone down

Watford, DE

Compared to other utility bills the water one is the only one at the moment that I think at least that's not going to sky rocket!

Reading, C1C2

The bills are reasonable compared to energy but it's difficult to access some of the support tariffs online

Reading, DE

The bills are very good value – compared to other areas and bills it's cheapest

Watford, DE

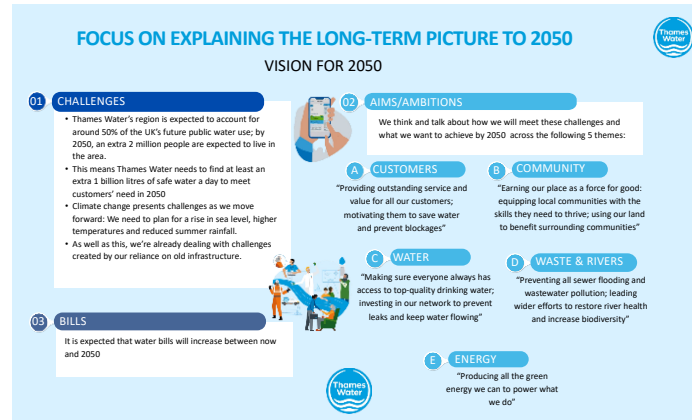
Response to long-term picture to 2050

Long term picture was used to frame discussion vs. providing a deep dive on different areas

Generally, feels right with emphasis on water security and environmental responsibilities

Challenges

- Broad agreement with challenges
- Old infrastructure felt to be the biggest concern
 - Needs to be fit for now and future purpose
 - Higher usage/population means long term asset health needs to be robust
 - Sense of historic underinvestment
- Surprised at the scale of Thames Water – 50% of UK's future public water use/2 million more people
- Climate change is recognised as a significant problem to be managed BUT not one that can be controlled



Aims/Ambitions

A. Customers

- Good service and value are important
- Demand management and incentives important but onus should not fall to customers

B. Community

- Confusing, airy and less important
- Need to focus on core elements vs. 'fluff'

C. Water

- Fundamental and core purpose vs. business aim

D. Wastewater and Rivers

- Important
- Environmentally responsible
- Surely not all Thames Water responsibility

E. Energy

- Good to see, innovative e.g. hydro/dams and clear purpose

What's missing - More detail on storage Plans, feasibility of new water sources like desalination Plans, conserving water, greywater harvesting, specific solutions to educate customers on water efficiency

Response to Long-term picture to 2050

Surely biodiversity is also the Environment Agency's responsibility

NW London, AB

1 billion litres of extra water needed – that sounds a lot

Customers in vulnerable situations

It's like Thames have so much to deal with in the long term – the number of new homes is frightening

Slough, DE

Yes climate change and droughts and population explosion so there need to be more education and what efficiency savings they will make

Reading, AB

It's like the responsibility is with us – you have to save water

Hammersmith, C1C2

It's a bit vague – and 2050 seems too far away with too many variables beyond their control

Hammersmith, C1C2

Why are communities in there? Why is that a priority - just take it out or think bigger picture e.g. reservoirs, wildlife etc.

NW London, non-household

Particularly important to conserve water with 2m more people, in a low rainfall area, and no space to build a reservoir or to access aquifers, it'll be a pressure on the infrastructure

Customers in vulnerable situations

I would like to know more about how we, as customers, can save water and how they will support that

NW London, C1C2

It's impressive that they already produce their own energy and looking to improve that

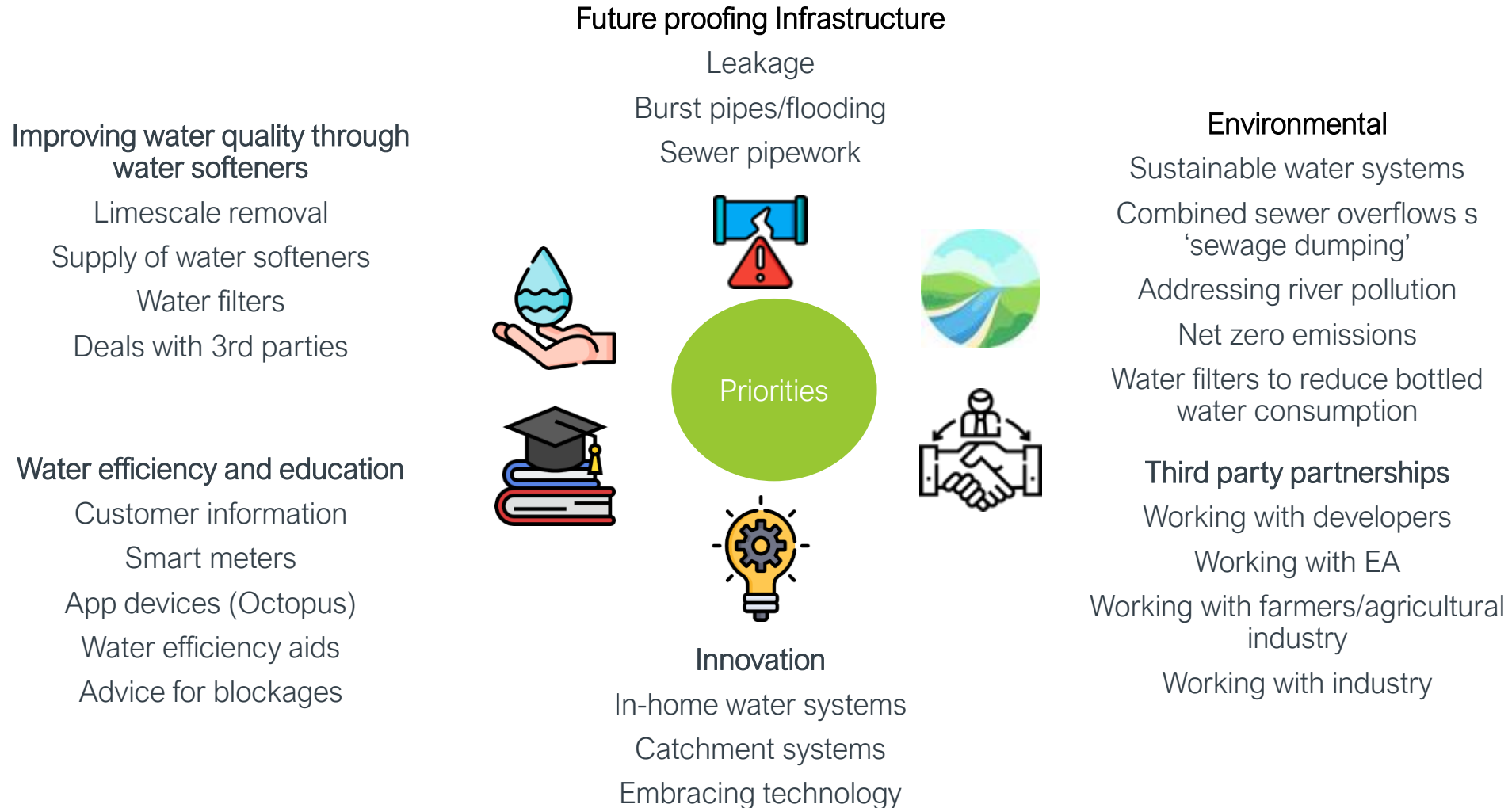
Watford, DE

They need something more about the environment and reducing plastics

Hammersmith, non-household

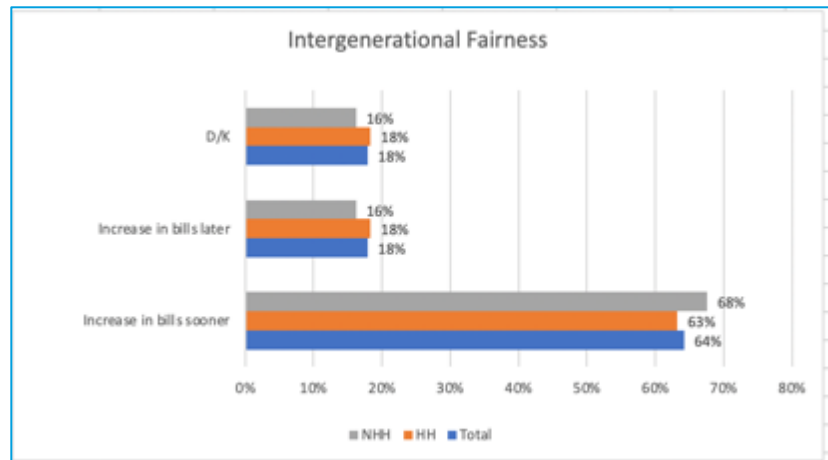
Spontaneous priorities – key themes

Customers identified a number of issues that they wanted Thames Water to include in next business Plan – some are for them as 'service users', some focus on resilience of network and wider environmental concerns



Principle of phasing and intergenerational fairness

Discussions around phasing and intergenerational fairness show that, despite the current cost of living crisis, majority of customers would rather see increase in bills sooner – this is driven largely by a sense of historic underinvestment and need for long term resilience of supply and guaranteed infrastructure investment



Base: 173 (136 Household/37 Non Household)

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Rational arguments for short-term investment

- Infrastructure NEEDS investment NOW
- Overdue, essential, urgent
- Irresponsible to wait
- Unpredictability of economy
- Fears over further increases in costs
- Cost of borrowing likely to spiral

Emotional arguments for short-term investment

- My children
- My grandchildren
- The next generation already have issues

Arguments for delaying bill increases

- Current cost of living crisis
- Impossible to afford bill rises
- Concerns about other people who will not be able to manage
- No need for improvements – my service is good enough!
- Lack of trust in the system
- Any increases should come out of water company profits

Increasing bills NOW relies on understanding that Thames Water will ringfence money for specific purposes, that they will be monitored AND that customers who are struggling with bills are protected with support schemes

Future customers find this abstract and difficult to project
Majority also favour an increase in bills sooner – however, like current household customers, some are concerned over current bills escalating

Principle of phasing and intergenerational fairness

Invest now

Stuff needs doing!! NOW. A LOT needs FIXING!

Slough, AB

I don't want to push the cart down the road and kids have it more difficult than ever now

Watford, DE

I would choose Option A as you don't know what is going to happen e.g. next pandemic. You can't forecast too much to do things later down the line

Large non-household

I think from an environmental perspective, irreparable damage might occur in another 5 years

NW London, DE

We haven't got the reservoirs, there is all those red lines on the graph so you've got to assume that they will spend the money well. It all needs doing yesterday

Reading, C1C2

Now short term pain for long term gain

Large non-household

If you do it now it feels more trustworthy of what's going to be done and a lot less damage in the meantime therefore you spend less in the long term

Future customer

It needs to be done now – it's like the NHS there has been huge underfunding and if it's not fixed there will be big problems later and service issues

Hammersmith, C1C2

If we pay less now, who knows what'll happen. May just be easier to pay more now and a steady amount for years

Customers in vulnerable situations

Invest later

The thing is service is already good now – I'm not having any problems and I can't afford things now

Reading, AB

Is there a half way point between Option A and Option B so that people can get back on their feet first. I'm not worried about future generations – the future is uncertain so we can deal with it then

Customers in vulnerable situations

We are in the worst cost of living crisis we've had in decades, and every single bill is so high...there's already so many people on the breadline, not coping....another bill increase.....

Customers in vulnerable situations

5. Response to Proposed Plan

Proposed Plan

In line with the OFWAT and CCW guidance, the Proposed Plan included six Performance Commitments targets and six Service Enhancements that represented the key investment areas – it was part of the pre-work and then part of a detailed discussion which gave customers more time to consider acceptability



ENHANCEMENTS - PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN

01 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FOR WATER



- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground
 - Treating water to a standard that does not harm the natural environment.
 - Reducing amount of water taken from sources that feed sensitive chalk streams
- What we will do**
- Install new trunk mains to bring in water from other parts of the Thames Water network
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Reducing the amount of water taken from sensitive sources by 80 million litres a day

02 WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



- Making sure there is enough water available to protect the natural environment as well as providing a public water supply
- What we will do**
- Invest in new sources of water, modernise infrastructure
 - Install around 1 million smart water meters, provide water efficiency visits
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Only need to introduce severe water use restrictions, such as standpipes in the street and water rationing, on average once every 100 years.

03 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FOR WASTEWATER



- Reducing pollution of seas and rivers by sewage overflows
 - Treating wastewater to a standard that doesn't harm the natural environment
- What we will do**
- Improve and increase the capacity of sewer network, reducing the number of sewage spills
 - Improve sewage treatment processes to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers and causing problems
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Reduce the number of sewage spills into rivers from each overflow pipe to 14.2 a year and reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers by 90%

04 MAKING THE WATER SUPPLY MORE RELIABLE



- Water network can experience breakdowns that mean customers have low water pressure or no water
 - Most problems are fixed in a few hours, but can sometimes last more than 2 days
- What we will do**
- Improve the water network to protect against interruptions of 2 days or more
 - Build more pipes around weak points on the network so water can still be moved around
 - Sharing water supplies with other companies across the south-east.
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Protecting 53,195 properties from a water supply interruption of longer than 2 days

05 REDUCING SEWAGE FLOODING FROM RARE HEAVY RAINFALL STORMS



- Sewer flooding in homes, gardens and businesses happen when sewers become blocked or after heavy rainfall
 - This also happens when the sewer system becomes full due to too much rainwater
- What we will do**
- Improve the sewer network to reduce the chance of sewage flooding
 - Build nature-based solutions to slow down/stop rainwater from getting into sewers
 - Reduce the number of customer 'misconnections' into sewers, e.g. rainwater from roofs
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Reducing the chance of 6,655 properties being flooded with sewage after rare heavy rainfall storms with a 1 in 50 chance of happening each year.

06 REDUCING BASEMENT FLOODING FROM TRUNK MAINS BURSTS



- Trunk mains are the largest water pipes, which carry water from treatment works to smaller distribution pipes
 - In London, these are often under main roads or near homes
 - If they burst they can flood basements and endanger lives
- What we will do**
- Replace trunk mains to reduce this risk of basement flooding
- Target for 2025-2030:**
- Replacing 16km of trunk mains that cause the biggest risk to basement properties

Proposed Plan – Overall acceptability

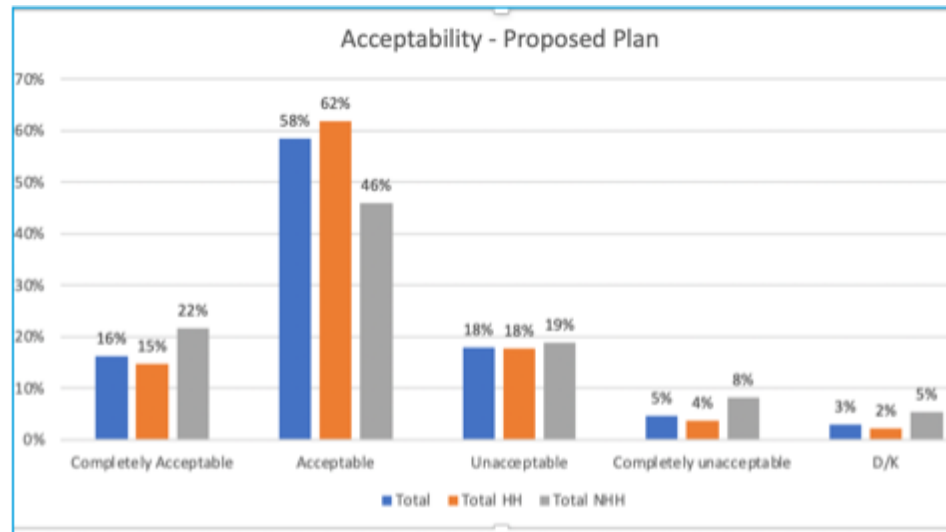
Three quarters found the Proposed Plan acceptable - significantly higher than the Must Do or Alternative plans. Felt to be more proactive, ambitious and was seen to deliver more than just what's required.

The proactivity provided some reassurance that Thames Water are focused on the long term and fits with the two thirds of customers who favour quicker bill increases to spread investment costs across generations

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Top Five – Acceptability reasons

- 1) Environmentally friendly
- 2) Good for future generations
- 3) Focuses on the right things
- 4) Affordable
- 5) Good value for money/Doing a lot



Base: 173
(136 Household//37 Non-Household)

Majority of non-household customers find the Proposed Plan acceptable but focus on costs and survival means some are less comfortable with 'voluntary' elements

Top Five – Unacceptability reasons

- 1) Should come out of profits
- 2) Not doing enough for cost
- 3) Unaffordable/too expensive
- 4) Lack of trust
- 5) Plan won't improve things enough

Overview of Performance Commitments

Performance Commitments generally heading in right direction but without considering costs, there is a strong desire to see more ambition/faster improvements for leakage, sewage and pollution

	Leakage	Supply Interruptions	Water Quality	Sewage Flooding Internal and External		Pollution
Importance	High importance	Medium importance	Medium importance	High importance		High importance
Performance	Performance feels unacceptable	Performance feels acceptable	Polarised, subjective and personal view	Performance feels unacceptable		Performance feels unacceptable
Headline	'Leakage is wastage'	'Not happened to me – surely people can cope'	'Best in the world vs. not safe to drink'	Internal – 'nothing worse than this even if it's not me'	External – 'better out than in'	'Unjustifiable practice'
Response to Target	More ambition wanted	Okay/about right	Okay/about right	Targets going in the right direction		More ambition wanted
Keen to understand/see	Long term pipework replacement Smart network More innovation	Long term pipework replacement Policy for those on Priority Services Register	Plans to work with filter or softener manufacturers	Proactive alerts/action Speedy response Customer education		Long term strategy that will eradicate this issue
Any Segment Differences	None	Higher for customers in vulnerable situations Higher for non-household customers e.g. cafes, hairdressers	Splits across segments Some non-household customers had concerns about hard water	None		Media driving this to be important for all Some non-household customers are more self focused

Leakage performance

Leakage performance is unacceptable and there is a push for a more ambitious target



Overall response to leakage

Spontaneous concern about current leakage performance – it’s visible *‘and aggravating’*
 Important area to address given old infrastructure and pipework
 Leakage is wastage – cost impact, environmental impact, water security impact
 Disingenuous to ask customers to preserve water usage
 Not everyone understands the leakage on network/customer boundary
 Leakage linked to supply interruptions/water security

Performance against target/other companies

Company performance is disappointing
 Leakage is high compared to other companies
‘How is it possible they are performing within target’ – targets weak
 Some allowances for unique infrastructure, Victorian pipes but majority are less forgiving

2025-2030 target

Target is positive and feels challenging but realistic
 Acknowledge that this is a 20% reduction
 100 litres per property per day is still too much
 However, majority want to see more ambitious target

Business Plan/Quant considerations

Review target
 Mention pipework replacement, how will smart meters be used, talk about smart network with sensors, proactive vs reactive strategy
 Would like to know % reduction and last 10 year performance

REDUCING LEAKS



What we will do and benefits to customers

- Continuing to find and fix leaks
- Use smart water meters to find and fix leaks
- Better manage pumps, valves and water pressure to reduce strain across the network

Leakage performance

That's an insane amount of water to lose

Hammersmith, C1C2

I expected a more intricate plan to fix as opposed to adding more boots on the ground

Reading, non-household

If you reduce the amount of leaks then you will stop the unplanned interruptions

Reading, C1C2

I've seen water pouring on to the road in Reading last year and the pumping station took 6 weeks to fix

Reading, DE

I don't have an issue myself but it's massive issues to fix at a community level

Reading, AB

Good to target this – especially if I'm paying for a lot of wasted water

Customers in vulnerable situations

Not much of a reduction – reduction of 20% in 5 years. Doesn't seem like much of a difference

Hammersmith, non-household

Isn't this caused by poor infrastructure in the first place

Future customer

I can't believe it – it's a waste of a precious resource and it's important it's fixed

Hammersmith, AB

I want them to aim higher – 100ml is a lot of bathtubs of water

Customers in vulnerable situations

Unplanned Interruptions performance

Overall unplanned interruptions feel acceptable; measure is confusing but target improvement seems okay



Overall response to unplanned interruptions

Limited experience of unplanned interruptions

Generally felt to be important especially for those in priority groups (new mums, elderly, water dependent) and non-household customers who are water dependent (lost time is money)

Linked to leakage and overall pipework

Proactive communication during an unplanned interruption is key

Performance against target/other companies

Company performance is okay

Only just over the industry target

Difficult measure to understand fully

Unplanned INTERRUPTIONS



2025-2030 target

Target is going in the right direction

Prefer to see number of properties over 3 hours coming down

Want to see more than just 'boots on the ground'

Business Plan/Quant considerations

Measure is very difficult to understand and worth thinking about in the quantitative work

Want to know % of properties affected and historical context

Potential to talk about communications, Priority Services Register policies, strategic pipework replacement, new materials that respond well to heat/freezes – these things matter to people

What we will do and benefits to customers

- Better manage pumps, valves and water pressure to reduce strain across the network
- Have more staff and equipment to fix problems

Unplanned Interruptions performance

I've got no experience of this – I'm empathetic but I think most people can manage for a while

Hammersmith, AB

I put my citizen hat on then this is important and if there is no investment then it could get worse

Hammersmith, C1C2

It takes time to go and find and fix broken pipes – I think extra average time is ok

Customers in vulnerable situations

It's honestly never happened to me or my family

Future customer

Everyone has the right to have water so no one should have to go without

Reading, AB

I want to know whether they will contact people – it all feels a bit vague how they will address this

NW London, DE

How can you mitigate against it? Is it something Thames won't be able to do because of old infrastructure

Hammersmith, non-household

It feels a bit of a postcode lottery as some areas might be more affected than others

NW London, AB

Targets seem okay but I've never had an interruption!

Reading, non-household

Need to ensure that properties aren't without water – I'm on Priority Services Register so they bring me bottled water which is good

Customers in vulnerable situations

Matters a lot for people with newborns etc but its going in the right direction

Customers in vulnerable situations

Water Quality performance

It's quite good (current performance) but a decade is a long time not to change anything

Reading, DE

Really do people actually call?

NW London, AB

I get bottled water when I'm out and we have a water filter at home

Future customer

We all use a water filter or have bottled water in the office so this isn't an issue for us

Large non-household

I think the water is good quality – best in the country and no need to filter at all!

Hammersmith, C1C2

It's not a problem – this is about the geology of where we live. First world problem

Hammersmith, AB

It doesn't feel like investing is worth it – they are already doing ok and it's not going to change that much

Large non-household

What a terrible way to measure this – should be based on purity and taking samples

Hammersmith, C1C2

I should complain about my appliances with all that limescale

Reading, AB

They are doing okay but important they don't keep their eye off of this

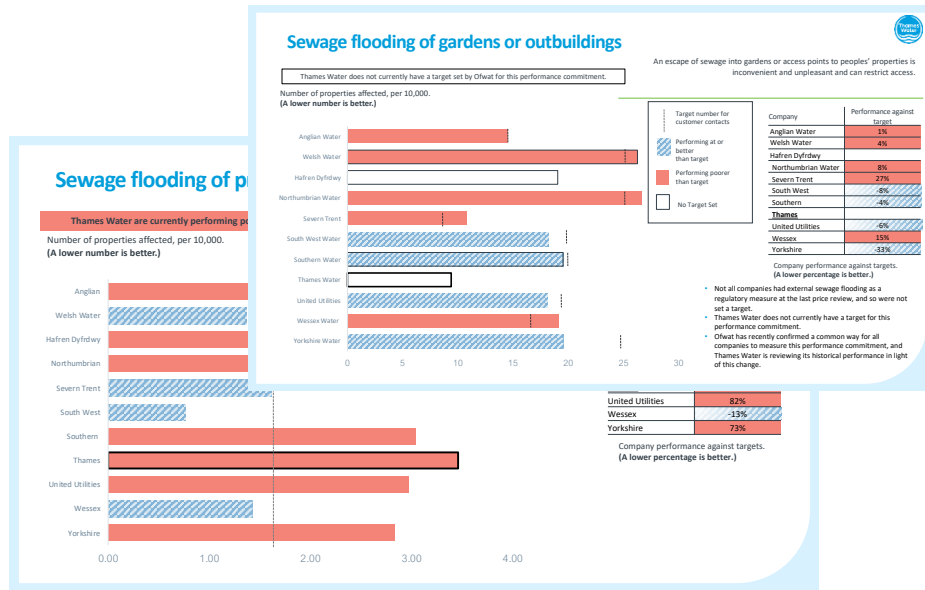
Customers in vulnerable situations

You can't satisfy everyone – this is about personal taste

Customers in vulnerable situations

Sewage Flooding performance (Internal and External)

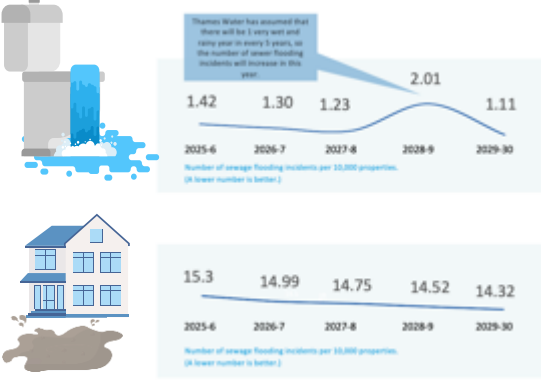
Response to sewage flooding measures is consistent; unacceptable practice but targets seem to be going in the right direction



Overall response to sewage flooding
Sewage flooding inside is worse than outside
However, both are felt to be unacceptable/inhumane/health risk/disgusting
Citizen perspective vs service user dominates – ‘do it for others’
Primary school recently flooded; excellent response but should have been prevented
Customers have sympathy with ‘Victorian sewers’ but sense of impatience
Want greater proactivity and ‘flushing’ communications

Performance against target/other companies
Poor performance (or no target) is unacceptable
Low numbers but multiplied up feel significant
Industry performance shows that some companies have addressed this
Current performance is helpful to see improvements but still not enough

SEWAGE flooding OF PROPERTIES



What we will do and benefits to customers

- Repair, reline or replace old and damaged sewers
- Add monitors/alarms to our sewers so we get early warning of blockages and potential flooding incidents.
- Continue to clean our sewers and educate our customers on what not to put down the drain to prevent blockages

2025-2030 target
Both targets are reducing which is positive
Not sure how feasible it is to do more – is this possible?

Business Plan/Quant considerations
Initiatives are interesting and feel significant e.g. physical changes, early warning signs, education to schools/families/non-households
Framing within problems of extreme rainfall helps understanding
Super sewer mentioned as positive investment; unsure as to how this fits with current investment plan
Keen to see plans for ‘structural change’ in the sewer network or something that diverts rainwater

Sewage Flooding performance (Internal and External)

It would help if we knew what % is caused by customer blockages – there must be people who are really trying and others who are flushing wet wipes everyday

Reading, DE

The customer education piece is critical to this – but you have to notice the comms

Hammersmith, C1C2

This has happened in my garden, right at the bottom. Thames Water were quick to come out and deal with it but it could happen again

Watford, AB

*Oh god – can you imagine that
Future customer*

EEEEWWWWW – do something about this. It's disgusting and should not be allowed in 2023

Hammersmith, AB

It's a massive jump and improvement so they must be doing something right

NW London, AB

I think it's good that they are anticipating that spike – the extreme rainfall but it should be on both targets?

Slough, DE

3 out of 10,000 isn't that bad – I think they are doing well and it's great that they are looking reduce it

NW London, DE

I think there is a difference between inside and outside – it's a giant health risk and not everyone has a garden

NW London, AB

This is going to happen more and more unless they address the structure of the sewers – I mean that external measure is astronomically higher so something needs to be done

Slough, AB

What more can they do if people aren't listening – it's then about response times and coming out quickly if it happens

Customers in vulnerable situations

Pollution Incidents performance

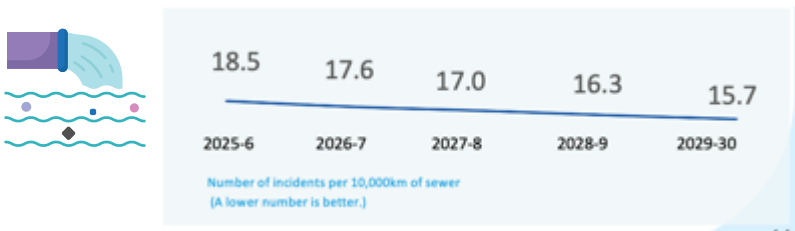
Response to pollution incidents is consistent and largely driven by media coverage; unacceptable practice and needs to be stopped so more ambitious target wanted



POLLUTION INCIDENTS

Overall response to pollution incidents
 Pollution incidents were spontaneously mentioned
 Even if customer is not an angler/open water swimmer or wildlife hobbyist, this feels important
 Some make the distinction between accidental spills and discharge (latter more unacceptable)
 However, there is a sense that quality of rivers is a shared responsibility – not just Thames Water issue and shouldn't just fall to Thames Water customers

Performance against target/other companies
 Poor performance but not as bad as others/on the cusp of target
 Current performance is helpful to see improvements but still not enough
 More ambitious 5-year target required



2025-2030 target
 Reduction is good but 'km' of sewer measure feels a bit meaningless
 How much KM of sewers overall
 Often calculated in % terms e.g. 15% reduction over 5 years

- What we will do and benefits to customers**
- Providing more storage on our sewer network
 - Repair, reline or replace old and damaged sewers
 - Add monitors/alarms to our sewers so we get early warning of potential pollution incidents.
 - Clean sewers and educate customers

Business Plan/Quant considerations
 Initiatives are good but similar to others
 Useful to see something specific that would address this particular issue
 More information about amount vs number of incidents/severity might be helpful

Pollution Incidents performance

I'm really behind that and would really support it. I'm not sure what the numbers really mean as I can't visualise that

NW London, DE

This is an odd KPI - It's quite difficult to comment unless you know how many sewer km there are

Large non-household

Feels like a lot of capital investment is needed to get a minimal improvement

Large non-household

It's just outside of the target and any reduction is good but this seems a little modest given the press conversation

Watford, AB

Don't they need an early warning system and something that lets people know that its not safe to swim in that part of the river

NW London, AB

This just isn't aggressive enough – I was listening to the today programme before I came out and it's really an issue

Slough, AB

Surely this should be about amount (litres of shxx) and not incidents km of river

Reading, DE

What is an incident and how is this monitored?

Hammersmith, C1C2

Any pollution incident is a big deal so it's really important to prevent these

Large non-household

Overview of service enhancements

Decent support for all elements (except basement flooding) and majority pleased to see combination of mandatory and discretionary investment areas

	National Environment Programme Water c. £2 pa	Water Resources Management c. £12 pa	National Environment Programme Waste c. £32 pa	Reliable Supply c. £6 pa	Rare heavy storms c. £2.50 pa	Basement Flooding c.£2.50 pa
Importance	High	High	High	Medium	High	Low
What's driving high/low importance	'Protecting the environment' is a good thing Chalk streams are rare	Fears over water security, population growth and impact of climate change	Media coverage of sewerage spills	Two-day outages unacceptable Can't function/operate	Outdated sewer infrastructure Long term resilience Nature-based solutions	Niche London focused
Cost	Cost seen to be very low Good value for money	Cost okay Good value for money	High cost	Cost okay But want to protect all properties	Cost okay But disappointing it's only 6k properties	Cost low But could be spent elsewhere
Any Segment Differences	Important for majority Some non-household customers less committed	None	Important for all but low-income customers /micro non-household customers question high costs	Higher for customers in vulnerable situations Higher for non-household customers	None	None

Mandatory service enhancements: National Environment Programme Water

Strong support for low cost, important service enhancement that protects the environment

Positive

- Very strong support for this
- Low bill impact
- Environmental story e.g. chalk streams, wildlife, river life
- Protecting sensitive sources to the tune of 80m litres a day sounds 'a lot'

01 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FOR WATER

- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground
- Treating water to a standard that does not harm the natural environment.
- Reducing amount of water taken from sources that feed sensitive chalk streams

REQUIRED

What we will do

- Install new trunk mains to bring in water from other parts of the Thames Water network

Target for 2025-2030:

- Reducing the amount of water taken from sensitive sources by 80 million litres a day

+£1.77/yr by 2030

Need to know: how much is coming from vulnerable sources now?

Negative

- 'Required' so unlikely to change
- Need bigger picture context e.g. also need to reduce demand
- Worried about environmental impact of installing new trunk mains
- Not everyone is concerned about sensitive sources
- 80 million litres is a big void when we are concerned about water security

*It's not a big price to pay
Customers in vulnerable situations*

*The ones under £5 are easier to swallow
NW London, DE*

*Good – it helps me reduce my guilt about the environment!
Hammersmith, C1C2*

*What's important about chalk streams? Ah okay
Reading, AB*

*Surely they should stop taking water full stop from these chalk streams
Reading, non-household*

*There's an overlap with leakage here – it should be more explicit
Large non-household*

Need to reduce demand that will also help Customers in vulnerable situations

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

Provide target context; explain trunk mains and carbon impact, explain positive impact on marine life, explain why chalk streams are important, include any 3rd party partners e.g. EA/farmers

Mandatory service enhancements: Water Resources Management

Strong support for essential enhancement that 1) provides water security and 2) protects the environment

Positive

- Very strong support for this
- Addresses core concerns about the future water supply – key after summer of TUBs
- Offers ‘new sources of water’ which feel urgent e.g. reservoir Planning? Desalination? National grid for water?
- Smart meters seen as critical pathway to customer usage control
- Cost is reasonable

Need to know: 1 in 100 meaning, practicalities of standpipes, collaboration across water companies (Water Resources South-East)

Negative

- ‘Required’ so unlikely to change
- Infrastructure can take years to plan/approve – ‘this is urgent – what have Thames Water been doing’
- Experience of water efficiency devices is not always effective
- Mindshift needed for water saving – better communication, education, ideas, tips needed to reduce demand

- This is a priority and I'm happy to pay for that NW London, C1C2*
- Maybe spend money on water meters, water butts Reading, DE*
- I can't get a meter and if people aren't on a meter then reduction just won't happen Customers in vulnerable situations*
- They need to visit homes more – they need to visit businesses more! Hammersmith, non-household*
- This is only going to get worse with global warming – invest now! Reading, AB*
- It's well worth the money for what you are getting here Customers in vulnerable situations*
- Not sure people try to save water like they do electricity Large non-household*

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

Would like examples of the new sources of water; would like to see more strategic ways for customers to save/capture water e.g. rainwater catchment, water butts

Explain the target better e.g. story of stand pipes, Plan for 1 in every 100 year event but may not happen, WRSE role

Mandatory service enhancements: National Environment Programme Waste

Strong support to eradicate pollution of seas/ivers – cost is noticeably high but majority feel it's worth it

Positive

- Very strong support for this
- Addresses spontaneous concerns over Combined sewer overflows/pollution
- Structural programme to change the sewer capacity is welcomed
- Improving 'phosphorus' and positive impact on fish/plants also welcomed (once understood)

03 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FOR WASTEWATER

REQUIRED

- Reducing pollution of seas and rivers by sewage overflows
- Treating wastewater to a standard that doesn't harm the natural environment

What we will do

- Improve and increase the capacity of sewer network, reducing the number of sewage spills
- Improve sewage treatment processes to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers and causing problems

Target for 2025-2030:

- Reduce the number of sewage spills into rivers from each overflow pipe to 14.2 a year and reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers by 90%

£31.54/yr by 2030

Need to know: Volume vs. number of sewage spills, phosphorus definition and impact

Negative

- 'Required' so unlikely to change
- Thames Water playing catch-up
- Lack of proactivity – doing what told to do vs. care about environment
- Question credibility of reducing anything by 90%

*Cost is less than a pint of beer every month and its great they are improving the sewer network
Customers in vulnerable situations*

*It's important for humans swimming and other species but how many spills, how big?
Hammersmith, C1C2*

*I would be happy to pay £30 a year for that one as I'd like to see improvements
NW London, DE*

*Now you've told us about Algae blooms - phosphorus thing feels important for fish
Reading, AB*

*People will accept if there are good intentions - we are nicer people than 50 years ago and care about the environment
Non-household*

*Phosphorus: Sounds impressive if it's that ambitious, its got to be necessary.
Watford, DE*

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

Need to understand phosphorus/algae bloom impact, more on how the capacity of the sewer will be improved e.g. diverting water away or new sewer

Explain the volume of spills

Discretionary service enhancements: Water supply reliability

Medium support – two-day interruptions unacceptable; low pressure less of a concern unless an ongoing issue

Positive

- Medium support for this
- 2 days without water is challenging (Customers in vulnerable situations/non-household customers voice concerns)
- Future proofing network
- Sharing water supplies – National/Local Grid

04 MAKING THE WATER SUPPLY MORE RELIABLE

VOLUNTARY

+£5.92/yr
by 2030

- Water network can experience breakdowns that mean customers have low water pressure or no water
- Most problems are fixed in a few hours, but can sometimes last more than 2 days

What we will do

- Improve the water network to protect against interruptions of 2 days or more
- Build more pipes around weak points on the network so water can still be moved around
- Sharing water supplies with other companies across the south-east.

Target for 2025-2030:

- Protecting 53,195 properties from a water supply interruption of longer than 2 days

Need to know: How many properties are at risk, how many fixed in a few hours/last more than 2 days?

Negative

- Only 53k properties ‘protected’
- Low water pressure is not a critical issue
- Most problems fixed within a few hours
- Relative cost - £ per property
- Want clarity that this is a targeted pipe replacement

*They have to do this because in high rise blocks the pressure can be a real problem
Customers in vulnerable situations*

*I'm putting my citizen hat on and saying yes because I'm not affected
Hammersmith, C1C2*

*I suppose even if I haven't had an interruption this could stop it happening
NW London, DE*

*This is about future proofing the network and reinforcing
Hammersmith, AB*

*My business community is not affected by some of these issues but I'm paying for things to stay that way
NW London, non-household*

*Two days without water is a real issue
Large non-household*

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

Use more innovative pipe materials to prevent future interruptions

Explain context around the 53k properties – how many are at risk, historic context

Discretionary service enhancements: Reduce sewer flooding

High support based on disgust of 'sewage flooding' and relatively low cost (it's less than a coffee)

Positive

- High support for this
- Weather patterns likely to worsen
- Consistent with desire to 'stop the s***t' tangible solutions
- Nature based solutions are interesting, innovative, environmentally friendly and get attention

05 **REDUCING SEWAGE FLOODING FROM RARE HEAVY RAINFALL STORMS**

VOLUNTARY

- Sewer flooding in homes, gardens and businesses happen when sewers become blocked or after heavy rainfall
- This also happens when the sewer system becomes full due to too much rainwater

What we will do

- Improve the sewer network to reduce the chance of sewage flooding
- Build nature-based solutions to slow down/stop rainwater from getting into sewers
- Reduce the number of customer 'misconnections' into sewers, e.g. rainwater from roofs

Target for 2025-2030:

- Reducing the chance of 6,655 properties being flooded with sewage after severe storms that on average happen once in 30 years

+ £2.36/yr by 2030

Need to know: How many properties are at risk, how this fits with inside/external sewer flooding Performance Commitments?

Negative

- Target tricky to understand
- Low number of properties

*Making big roads into the target which is good
Non-household*

*Have they been asleep on the job and now these need doing
Watford, AB*

*Isn't this the same as the performance target sewage reduction
Slough, C1C2*

*Do they need to work with councils or third parties here who also manage the drains
NW London, DE*

*I'll be honest, it's only benefiting 6k properties so it's less of a priority for me
Hammersmith, C1C2*

*This should be statutory because it feels like a health issue
Slough, non-household*

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

Provide more information about the nature-based solutions

Explain context around the 6k properties – how many are at risk in total

Discretionary service enhancements: Basement flooding

Low support given that it feels a 'niche' improvement and 16km sounds minimal

Positive

- Low support for this
- Good that Thames Water are being proactive
- Good to see pipe replacement programme
- Protecting against loss of life

06 REDUCING BASEMENT FLOODING FROM TRUNK MAINS BURSTS

VOLUNTARY

- Trunk mains are the largest water pipes, which carry water from treatment works to smaller distribution pipes
- In London, these are often under main roads or near homes
- If they burst they can flood basements and endanger lives

What we will do

- Replace trunk mains to reduce this risk of basement flooding

Target for 2025-2030:

- Replacing 16km of trunk mains that cause the biggest risk to basement properties

+£2.32/yr by 2030

Need to know: How many basements are at risk, what proportion is 16km of pipework?

Negative

- Not affected personally (even with citizen hat many display little empathy)
- 'London' problem
- 'Posh' problem 'sounds a bit Chelsea to me'

*Good to do as it's infrastructure improvement
Customers in vulnerable situations*

*I think this is an amazing project that tries to legitimise the business Plan
Hammersmith, non-household*

*Surely those with basements should pay a bit more
NW London, DE*

*People living in basements are a it stuck I suppose
Hammersmith, C1C2*

*Surely the rich people who live in London and can afford basements should get some insurance
Reading, AB*

*Why should I pay for rich peoples basements
Customers in vulnerable situations*

Considerations for Business Plan content and presentation in the quantitative work:

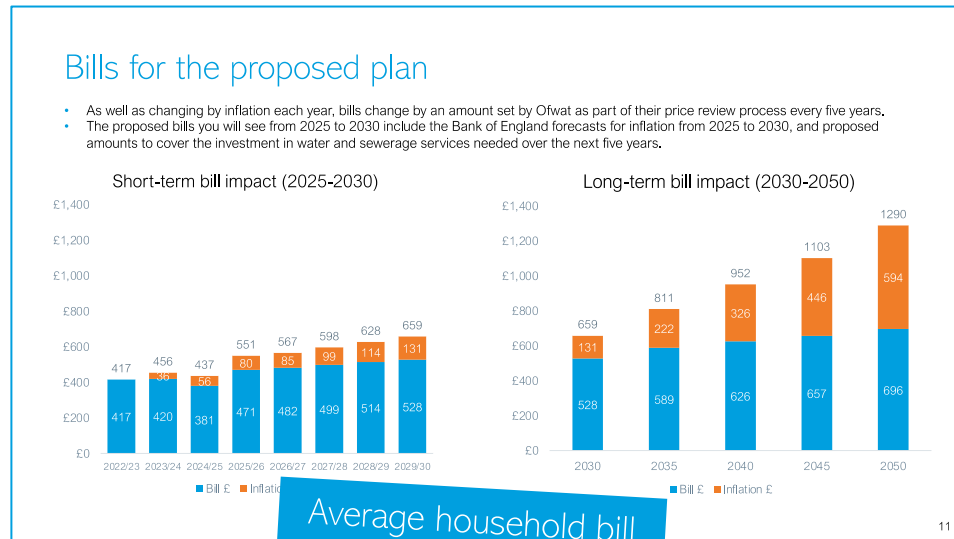
Potential to reword/reframe to make this feel less niche/London

Provide more context to understand how good 16km

Proposed Plan – Overall affordability

All customers were shown the bill impacts in £ (Household) or % (Non-household) based on the average household or non-household bill

In line with the guidance, in the post task the bill impacts were based on on the bills of the individual participants



Average household bill increase of £417-£528 without inflation and £659 with inflation (Non-household expressed as %)

Note about interpretation of responses:

- Customers find it difficult to predict next 5-7 years
- Personal changes e.g. starting a family, changing job, moving house, retiring, business growth
- Unsure about income, cost of living and inflation predictions
- Impossible to engage with long term bill impacts
- Focus is on short term bill increases without inflation

That is really difficult to look at – the one on the right hand side. It such a big jump but doesn't really mean anything. Its 2050!

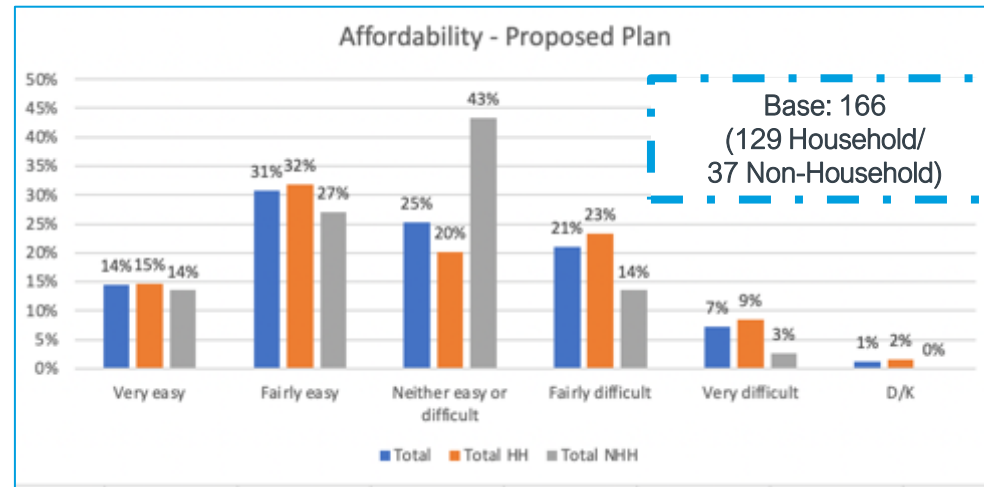
Customers in vulnerable situations

How does anyone really know about the next few years with inflation and interest rates at the moment

Hammersmith, AB

Proposed Plan – Overall affordability

Just under half found the Proposed Plan affordable, and around 1 in 3 say they found the Proposed Plan difficult to afford. Compared with baseline pre-task – more find this Proposed Bill fairly/very difficult to afford and want to know whether there will be bill caps or exclusions to protect those who need support



Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Affordable because:

- Not much extra on monthly basis
- Water bill starting point is low
- Investment is crucial
- Investment is being justified and is transparent
- Issues are important
- No real choice
- Water is vital
- Challenges are real e.g. climate change, population growth, old infrastructure

Neither/Nor:

- Can't predict future income/outgoings
- Can afford but don't agree with customer rises to fund investment (company profits)
- Increases to help Thames Water play catch up
- Should come from cost efficiencies
- Want more information to make a decision
- Begrudgingly affordable
- Issues don't affect me/my business

Unaffordable because:

- Money is tight/cost of living crisis
- Inflation
- High water usage
- Financially vulnerable/customers in vulnerable situations/low-income customers in Thames/Thames areas state fairly/very difficult to afford these changes
- Important to know that there are support schemes in place for customers in vulnerable situations/small businesses (capped bills, efficient measures)

Proposed Plan – Overall affordability

Affordable

It looks scary but it's actually a more gradual increase

NW London, DE

Yes this is one round of drinks a month but there needs to be a safety net for others

NW London, AB

In light of how much other bills have gone up with no improvement whatsoever – this will impact our pockets but feels like more of an investment than expense

Reading, DE

The numbers are small and at least they are being transparent – but what about other people, can they afford it

Hammersmith, AB

Yes absolutely it's only 22% by 2030 and it would be selfish not to do this

Large non-household

Honestly I am happy to pay for the improvements

Slough AB

Not sure

This is a hard question as I haven't got a crystal ball and I want to see them make efficiencies

Reading, AB

I can't look that far ahead – it nearly double over that time

Customers in vulnerable situations

It feels okay but I'm saying that begrudgingly because I feel like it has to be done even if I don't really want to pay it

Slough, DE

If income hasn't gone up you couldn't manage. People are only just managing to get food

Customers in vulnerable situations

Unaffordable

It's difficult – all bills are already high. We can afford it but would pass the cost onto customers to maintain margins

Large non-household

It will be painful but it depends on inflation – I wonder if they can get other funding from other sources

Customers in vulnerable situations

It feels a bit unfair if you are a big family and using a lot of water – why haven't they done this before

Hammersmith, C1C2

It's a bit high for the average family

Customers in vulnerable situations

Summary of Proposed Plan and improvements

Overall majority find Proposed Plan is acceptable and well focused on the right areas (environment, infrastructure, water security) with a balance of mandatory and discretionary elements

Just under half say Proposed Plan is affordable; increase in those who think bill is difficult to afford vs current bills

	Leakage	Supply Interruptions	Water Quality	Sewage In and Sewage Out	Pollution
Importance	High importance	Medium importance	Medium importance	High importance	High importance
Response to Target	More ambition wanted	Okay/about right	Okay/about right	Targets going in the right direction	More ambition wanted

	National Environment Programme Water c. £2 pa	Water Resources Management c. £12 pa	National Environment Programme Waste c. £32 pa	Reliable Supply c. £6 pa	Rare heavy storms c. £2.50 pa	Basement flooding c.£2.50 pa
Importance	High	High	High	Medium	High	Low
Support Spend	Support	Support	Support even though high spend	Medium support	Support	Low support

What's Missing

More customer service related initiatives including enhanced communications, water saving education/devices, real time smart meter monitoring, protection of most vulnerable, water filters/softeners, innovative ideas to divert water out of sewers

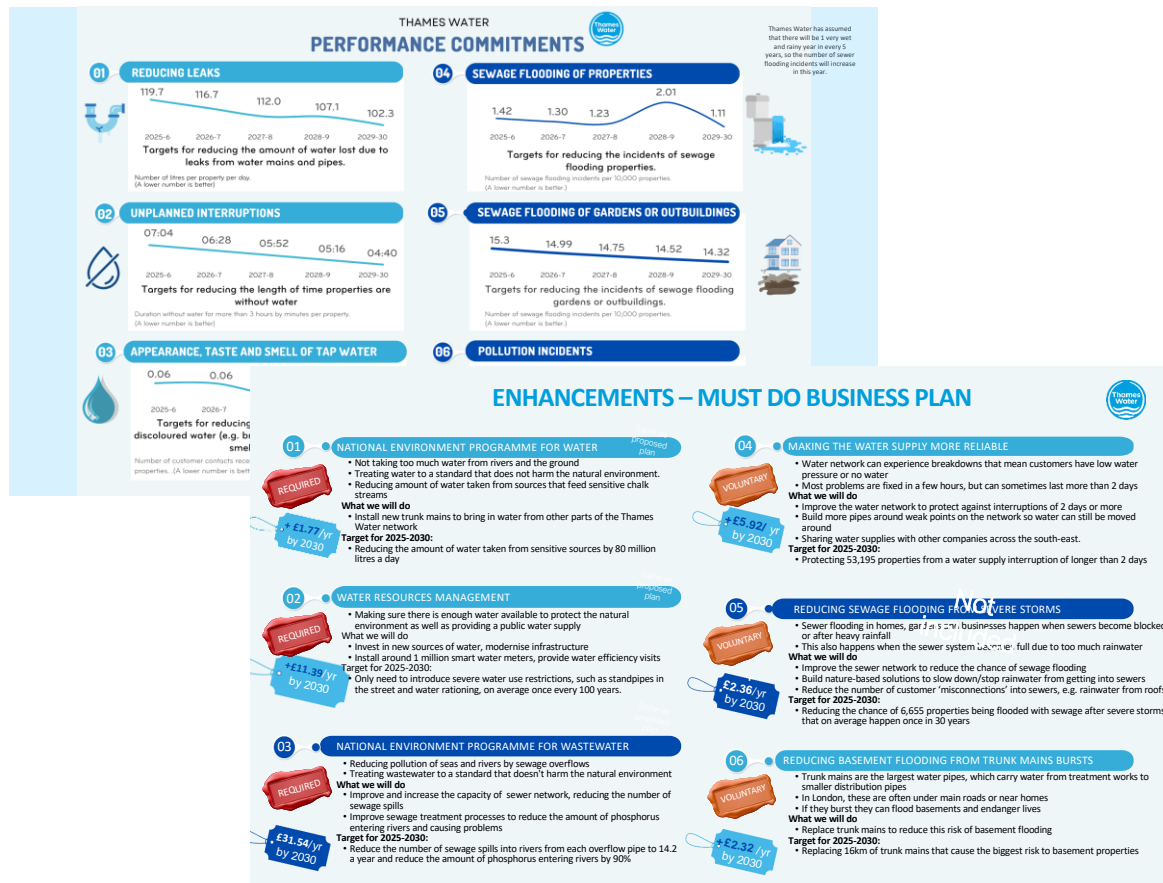
Working with partners e.g. farmers for river pollution, developers to drive water recycling innovation, more nature-based solutions

Stronger sense of urgency to reassure customers of future proofing network e.g. start building vs only planning to build a reservoir

6. Response to Must Do and Alternative Plans

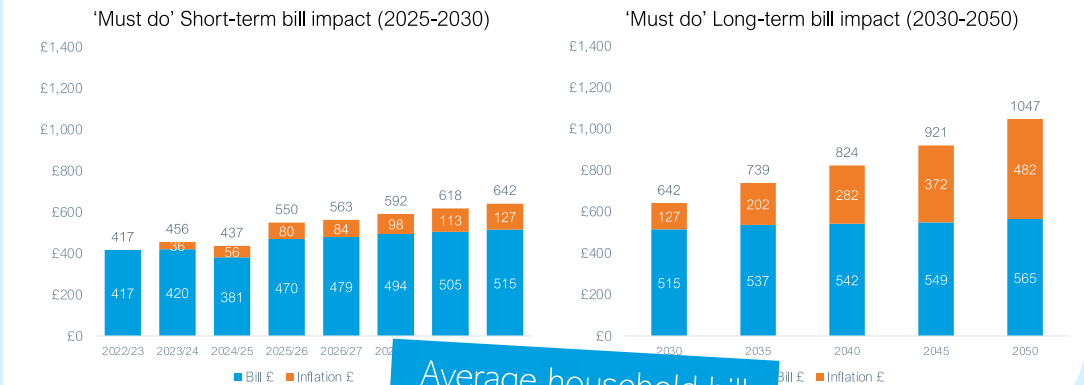
Must Do Plan

In line with the guidance, the Must Do Plan included the same six Performance Commitments targets and only the mandatory Service Enhancements



Bills for the 'Must do' plan

By not doing some of the voluntary programmes of work, the 'must do' plan is cheaper than the proposed plan both now and in the longer term



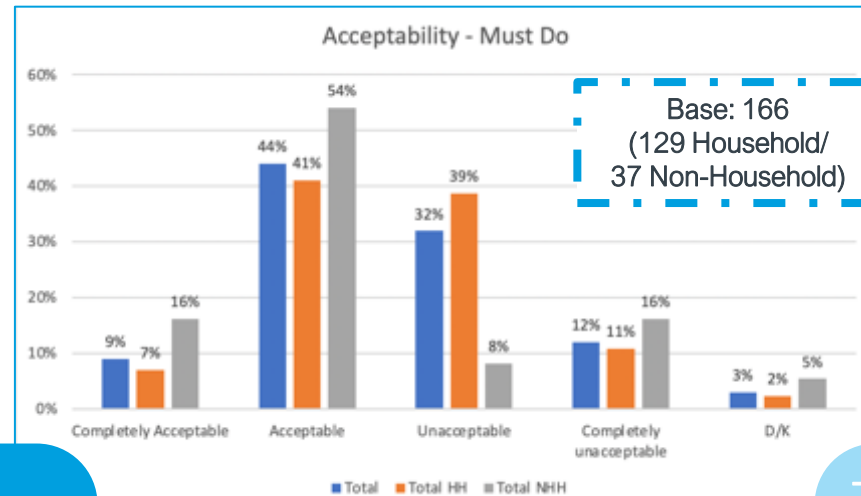
Average household bill increase of £417-£515 without inflation and £642 with inflation (Non-household expressed as %)

Must Do Plan – Overall acceptability

Just over half found the Must Do Plan acceptable – this was significantly lower than the Proposed Plan

Lower acceptability driven by perceived lack of proactivity with Thames Water only focusing on what is mandatory which feels shortsighted for some – minimal cost reduction does not justify losing investment in three discretionary areas

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base



70% of non-household customers find the Must Do Plan acceptable (same acceptability as Proposed Plan)

Top Five – Acceptability reasons

- 1) Focuses on right things
- 2) Will make some improvements
- 3) It's not too expensive
- 4) Environmentally friendly
- 5) Good for future generations

Top Five – Unacceptability reasons

- 1) Not good enough for future generations
- 2) Plan won't improve things enough
- 3) Water companies should pay out of profits
- 4) Doesn't focus on the right things
- 5) Isn't environmentally friendly enough

Must Do Plan – Overall acceptability

I think the benefits of the Proposed far outweigh the cost savings of this one

NW London, DE

It smells like this is them doing the square root of bugger all – it's the lazy option

Slough, AB

This feels like it's short sighted and a big miss for Thames Water – I'm disappointed, we live in a civilized society

Hammersmith, AB

I'm comfortable with this one because it's still got the three biggest thing – I know you are saying you don't just want the minimum, regulatory stuff

Reading, AB

It's only £10 less and you've taken everything we want!

Slough, C1C2

I think it's a lot to put on people (the other cost) it might be stuff that's important (voluntary enhancements) but it's whether we trust them to deliver

Future customer

It still focuses on the key things but with my citizen hat it doesn't serve people who are affected by interruptions or sewage

Hammersmith, C1C2

There are no advantages to this other than cost – the population is increasing and sewage is getting worse so those voluntary things are important

Non-household

*I would choose the must do plan as it is more rock solid
It's the cost element for me*

Slough, non-household

The thing is the voluntary elements were the things that Thames said were important so it's difficult to see that they are not here

Reading, DE

I think if it was a bigger price difference I'd be going for this one

Reading, DE

I would have to go with the 'must do' plan as it is easier to justify. Ask me again when inflation is lower, and my income is higher

NW London, non-household

With this Must Do Plan – I don't have anything to complain about

Hammersmith, non-household

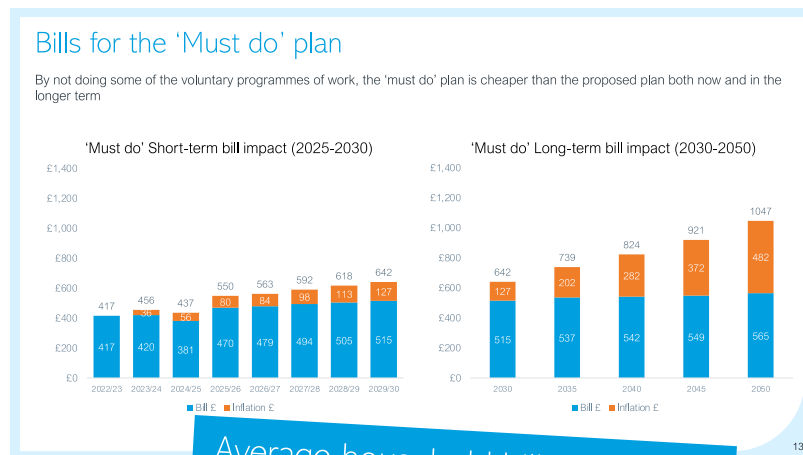
Must Do Plan – Overall affordability

Half found the Must Do Plan affordable (same as Proposed Plan)

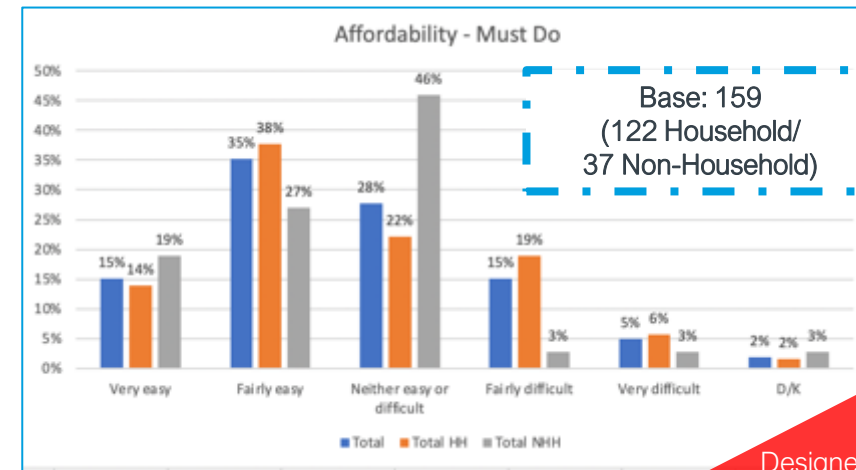
2 in 10 say found the Must Do Plan difficult to afford (lower than Proposed Plan – not significant and indicative only)

Minimal difference in costs

The proportion and distribution of affordability is not different for the Proposed or Must Do



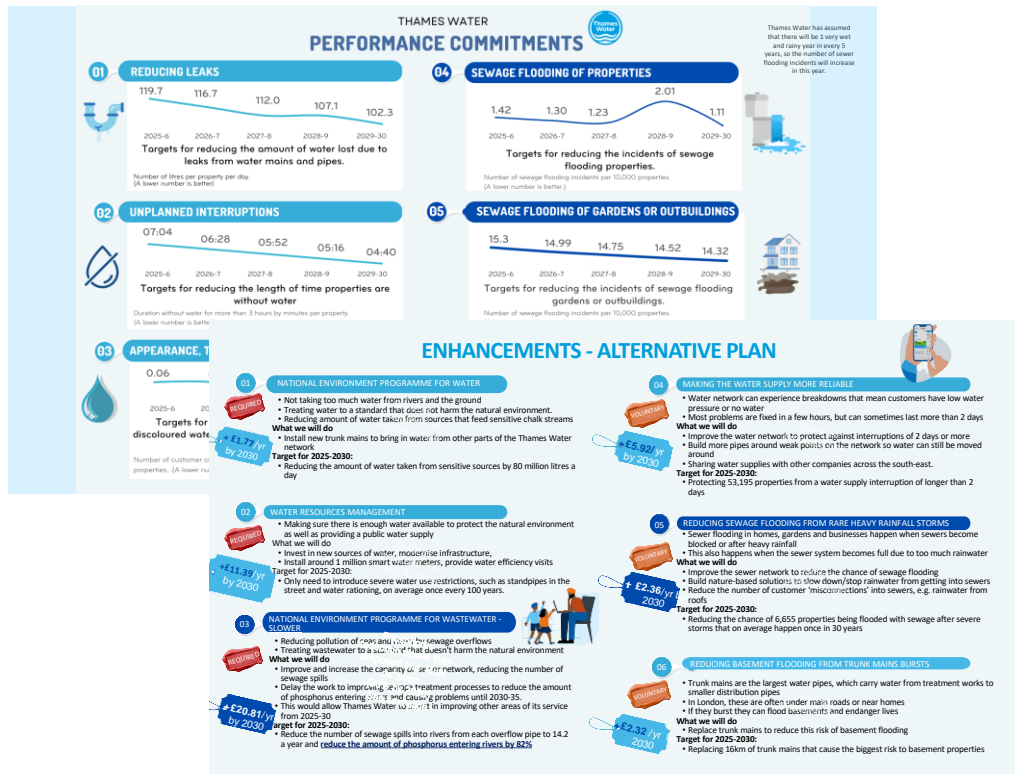
Average household bill increase of £417-£515 without inflation and £642 with inflation (Non-household expressed as %)



Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Alternative Plan

In line with the guidance, an Alternative Plan was shared within the timeframe of the deliberative sessions. It covered the same six Performance Commitments targets and all the same service enhancements as the Proposed Plan but the National Environment Programme – wastewater included a slower reduction of phosphorus (90% to 82%) which was a departure from the mandatory requirements.

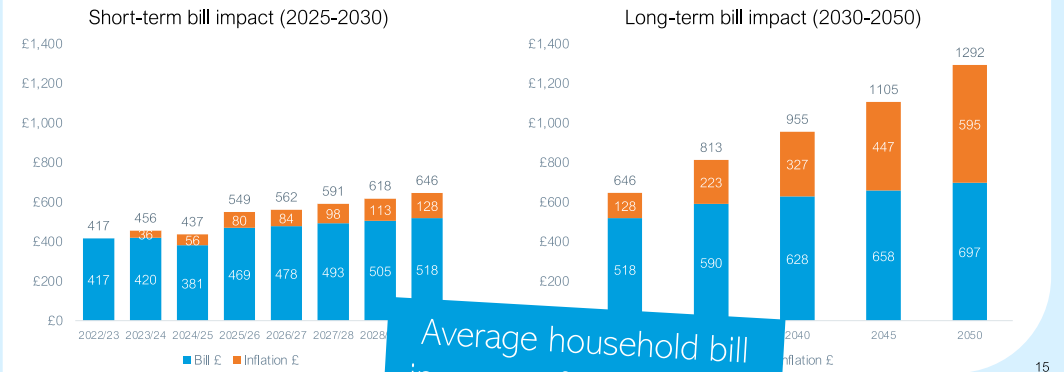


Bills for the alternative plan

The alternative plan slows down improvements to wastewater treatment, which saves enough money to:

1. Offer all of the other improvements of the proposed plan (= more than the 'must do' plan),
2. Keep bills closer to those of the 'must do' plan, until 2030....

... *but then* costs more in the medium to long term, as meeting the REQUIRED element (alongside the voluntary enhancements also delivered) is eventually achieved.



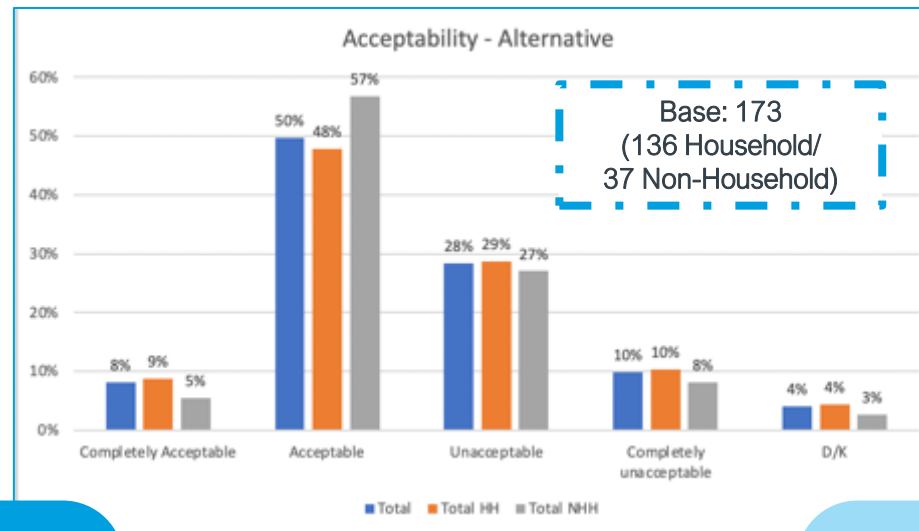
Average household bill increase of £417-£518 without inflation and £646 with inflation (Non-household expressed as %)

Alternative Plan – Overall acceptability

Around 6 in 10 found the Alternative Plan acceptable (slightly higher than the Must Do but significantly lower than the Proposed Plan)

Customers who valued this Plan tended to be less environmentally focused

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base



No sub group differences but alternative Plan was acceptable because it offered similar investment territories, that the slower reduction in phosphorus was minimal and it was a little bit cheaper in the short term

Top Five – Acceptability reasons

- 1) Good value for money
- 2) Focuses on the right things
- 3) Environmentally friendly
- 4) Good for future generations
- 5) Plan will make good improvements

Top Five – Unacceptability reasons

- 1) Not environmentally friendly enough
- 2) Plan won't improve things enough
- 3) Poor value for money
- 4) Not good for future generations
- 5) Lack of trust/not focusing on right things

Alternative Plan – Overall acceptability

It's really hard to justify going against the EA and I trust them to know what's safer for rivers

NW London, AB

The difference is so minimal that it's a no brainer for me

Hammersmith, AB

I know the other one is cheaper but in reality I would prefer to get the phosphorous reduced more quickly as it's better for the environment

Customers in vulnerable situations

I reject it – addressing the build up of algae is important

Slough, non-household

I'm surprised that this is the trade off – I don't like them actively not doing the pollution (or lower)

NW London, AB

I don't want my kids paying for the sake of me paying a little more now...I have a responsibility to provide for my children

Large non-household

The cost savings just aren't enough to justify lowering the target

NW London, DE

Is this cheaper – if so then I'd rather feed my kids than feed the fish!

Slough, DE

I don't think this phasing is worth it

Hammersmith, non-household

I would need to know more about the impact of that phosphorus reduction but this just might be leaving things too late

Slough, DE

I don't mind the alternative Plan but would do the Must Do

Large non-household

They are not doing their job properly with an 82% reduction

Slough, AB

I can't make a decision without knowing the impact on the fish so I'm saying no to this

Hammersmith, C1C2

Alternative Plan – Overall affordability

Around half found the Alternative Plan affordable (same as Proposed/Must Do Plan)

Focused on short term bill impact despite displaying long term impact

The proportion and distribution of affordability is similar across Proposed, Must do and Alternative Plans indicating that customers did not find the price differences vs. service enhancements different enough

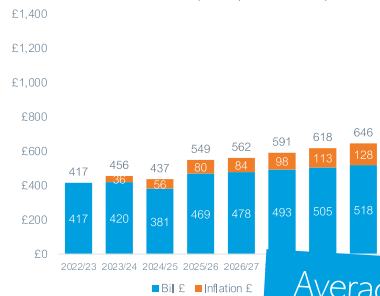
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The alternative plan slows down improvements to wastewater treatment, which saves enough money to:

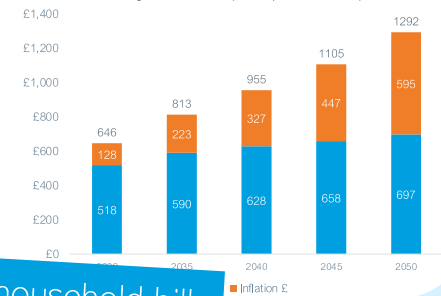
1. Offer all of the other improvements of the proposed plan (= more than the 'must do' plan)
2. Keep bills closer to those of the 'must do' plan, until 2030,

... *but then* costs more in the medium to long term, as meeting the REQUIRED element (alongside the voluntary enhancements also delivered) is eventually achieved.

Short-term bill impact (2025-2030)

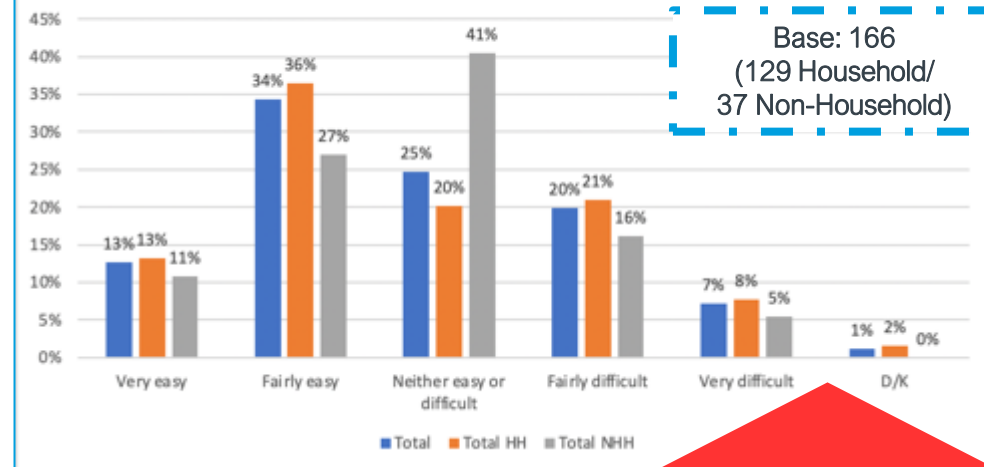


Long-term bill impact (2030-2050)



Average household bill increase of £417-£518 without inflation and £646 with inflation (Non-household expressed as %)

Affordability - Alternative



Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base

Response to customers in vulnerable situations specific issues

Customers in Vulnerable Situations customers were shown specific proposals that would be in place

Proposals for vulnerable customers

Extra support for those living in vulnerable circumstances: Thames Water can provide:

- Alternative water and communications during a supply interruption
- Inclusive communication formats such as braille, BSL translation
- Taking your situation into account with tailored behaviours from our people

Thames Water does this by holding details on its Priority Services Register (PSR). Awareness is low so it promotes through its channels, with specific partners (eg Sense, Age UK) and through data sharing (London Fire Brigade and Energy)

Thames Water's people are trained to spot signs of vulnerability, tailor their approach and register for services.

Over the next 5 years Thames Water plans to grow its PSR from 350,000 households (7% of its customer base) to 1,000,000 (18% of its customer base)

Thames Water will increase the number of inclusive service propositions by 30% (to over 30), for example tailored support for those living with Dementia.

Thames Water has a broad range of support for customers who are struggling to pay their water bill, including:

- Switching to metered basis and water efficiency support
- Payment plans to spread payment
- Income and Expenditure reviews to establish sustainable payment
- Discount tariffs for those on low income, a medical dependency on water or have a high ratio of water bill to net income
- Income maximisation advice and referrals to debt advisors
- Matching payments and grants to support with debt
- Hardship Fund for those in crisis situations

Thames Water's Social Tariff currently delivers £40m of support to 300,000 households and by 2030 will be providing £80m of support to over 400,000 households.

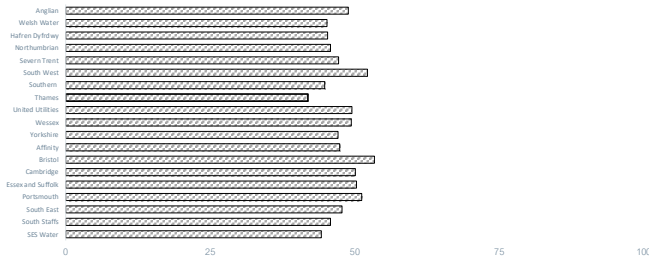
Thames Water will continue to innovate over the AMP8 period and work to engage customers who are hard to reach, to ensure they don't miss out on the support – for example through data sharing relationships with trusted partners.

18

Awareness of Priority Services

Participants were asked if they were aware of any additional services provided by their water company, such as: large print or Braille bills for people who need them, passwords to check that company callers are genuine, liaison with customers on dialysis who need a constant supply of water, and records of households which may need bottled water delivered in the event of disruption to water supplies.

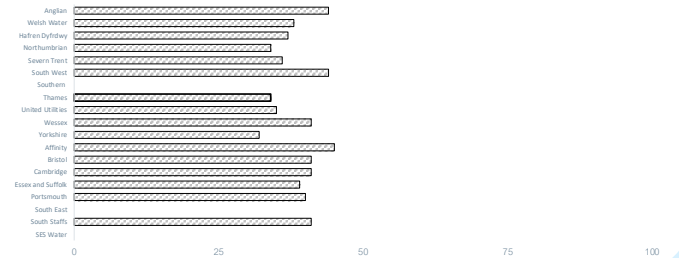
Awareness of Priority Services (%) (A higher number is better.)



Awareness of Reduced Bills

Participants were asked "Are you aware that your water company offers reduced bills to some households who, due to their financial circumstances, would sometimes struggle to pay their bills?"

Awareness of Priority Services (%) (A higher number is better.)



Welcome all Priority Services Register and Financial Support Services but strongly feel that Thames Water need to communicate these services in a more meaningful way to raise awareness

Even those who are on the Priority Services Register, or who know about it, are unaware of what they are entitled to


Key requirements are for Thames Water to treat customers as individuals and respectful of customers' needs – BSL and braille recognised as an attempt to do this

Looking for card or sticker with easy to access phone number, bottled water if supply is interrupted, readily available grants/bill support and wider water related support e.g. changing taps for customers with arthritis, etc

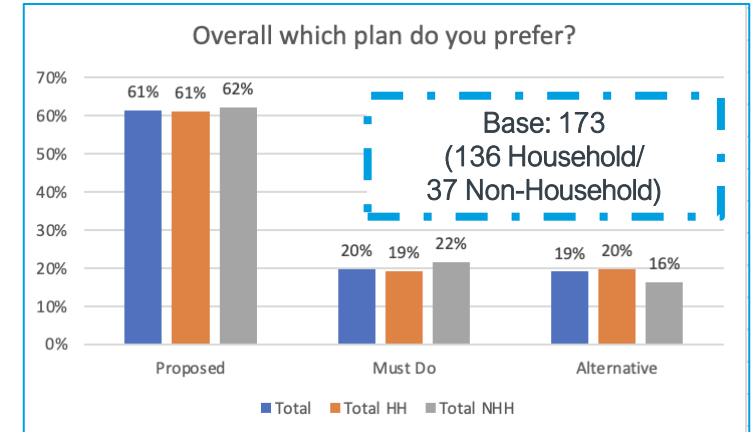
7. Overall Summary and Way Forward

Overall summary

Comparison of all three plans

	Proposed plan	Must do plan	Alternative plan
Performance Commitments			
Enhancements (£ per year by 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£31.64) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£31.64) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Environment Programme for Water (£1.77) Water Resources Management (£11.39) National Environment Programme for Wastewater (£20.81) Making the Water Supply More Reliable (£5.92) Reducing Sewage Flooding from Rare Heavy Rainfall Storms (£2.36) Reducing Basement Flooding from Trunk Mains Bursts (£2.32)
What is the bill impact? Average annual bill now = £417	<p>£659 by 2030 (up £242)</p> <p>£1,290 by 2050 (up £873)</p>	<p>£642 by 2030 (up £225)</p> <p>£1,047 by 2050 (up £630)</p>	<p>£646 by 2030 (up £229)</p> <p>£1,292 by 2050 (up £875)</p>

Designed to provide some 'numbers' to understand weights of opinion but is indicative and not representative of Thames Water customer base



- After long, interactive discussions, customers individually voted and the majority chose the Proposed Plan as their Preferred Plan
- Preference for the Proposed Plan is driven by strong support for service enhancements that address spontaneous concerns around key environmental wastewater issues relating to combined sewer overflows and river pollution, as well as investment to address longer term water security challenges and leakage
- The Proposed Plan provides some reassurance that Thames Water will proactively invest to future proof core infrastructure and ensure longer term network resilience
- This narrative fits with the intergenerational discussion where the majority of customers preferred short term investment proposals that recognise the urgency and need to invest now
- Limited cost differential between the different Plans so affordability levels and patterns are similar – given that around 30% would find the Proposed Plan difficult to afford, support will be needed for some low-income customers and 'just about managing' customers who will be adversely affected by the proposed bill increases

Response to performance targets & service enhancements

- There are areas for consideration including where it was felt the Performance Commitments were not ambitious enough – leakage and river pollution

PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS					
	Leakage	Supply Interruptions	Water Quality	Sewage In and Sewage Out	Pollution
Importance	High importance	Medium importance	Medium importance	High importance	High importance
Response to Target	More ambition wanted	Okay/about right	Okay/about right	Targets going in the right direction	More ambition wanted

- In terms of the service enhancements, there were questions over the validity of the basement flooding service enhancement given that the benefit was seen as niche– it was felt that the investment could be moved elsewhere for universal benefit

SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS						
	National Environment Programme Water c. £2 pa	Water Resources Management c. £12 pa	National Environment Programme Wastewater c. £32 pa	Reliable Supply c. £6 pa	Rare heavy storms c. £2.50 pa	Basement Flooding c.£2.50 pa
Importance	High	High	High	Medium	High	Low
Support Spend	Support	Support	Support even though high spend	Medium support	Support	Low support – move investment elsewhere

Considerations for the Proposed Plan

WHATS MISSING

Customer-service-related initiatives including:

Enhanced communications

Water efficiency measures - saving education/devices, real time smart meter monitoring

Protection of the most vulnerable customers

Water filters/softeners,

Innovation including:

Ideas to deal with flooding at source and divert water out of sewers

More nature-based solutions

Collaboration including:

Farmers for river pollution

Developers to drive water recycling innovation,

Reassurance including:

Stronger sense of urgency to reassure customers of future proofing network e.g. start building vs only planning to build a reservoir

7. Appendices

Appendices: Research limitations & lessons learned

Duration of events was (necessarily, to get through the required material) very long, which (a) made recruitment difficult, and (b) forced a start during business hours (albeit marginally) whilst still finishing quite late in the evening. This potentially affected attendance, although this is difficult to quantify. It may also have contributed towards recruiting fewer retirement age participants than might have otherwise been achievable.

The choice of including future customers in the workshops was in retrospect a mistake. Attendance was very poor (well under 50%), and with less to say than customers the added time a workshop affords (vs a depth or Zoom group) was not required. In other similar work done since, inclusion in shorter online sessions has worked much better.

Recruitment and attendance for lower social grades was a challenge (as it frequently is for events of this type).

Separating customers in vulnerable circumstances due to health into depths was sensible – recruitment was easier, and more sensitive to the needs of participants with mobility issues.

Appendices: Questions asked of water company representatives during the sessions (& responses given)

Participant Question	Thames Water response
Where are these benchmarks coming from?	All benchmarks set are from the previous business plan commitments.
Why do some of the numbers steady after 2040 e.g. slide 35 and slide 37 of the pack?	It requires a big investment in the beginning and steady maintenance towards the end of the term, but the costs to customers are spread across the 20 years. Also, especially with reference to the 1 in 500 figure (slide 37), this is the best it'll ever get.
What is the difference between a Smart Water meter, and a normal (old style) water meter? Moderator asked if a smart water meter had an in home display.	No, but you could log into the website and look at your usage in detail, which isn't possible with the older style
Participants collectively asked for more information about for more clarity on how the quality of the water in rivers will be improved, and the difference between 82% and 90% (phosphorous). They didn't understand how the amount of stretches of rivers could be so vastly different.	No further information available
Why do customers have to pay for bill increases - how do Thames Water fund investments?	Combination of increases in Customer bills as per price review process, borrowing and shareholder investment
Why can't we use sea water we're on an island after all?	Not a lot of access to sea water but we have a desalination plant in Beckton which takes salty river water from the Thames and treats it to make it safe to drink and mixes it with water suppliers from treatment works but we're only allowed to use it in a drought and if a hose pipe ban has been in place and other drought measures need to be in place and it's very energy intensive
Can a business change their water supplier?	Yes since 2017 businesses can change their retail supplier but it's exactly the same water pipes same people who fix problems eg leaks and floods but different company that handles the bills depending on the retailer and the agreement they have with terms who are the wholesaler
Does the Beckton treatment have preventative measures in place to ensure the polio incident last year does not happen again?	Unable to provide an answer
why are we looking so far ahead to 2050 when the five year plan hasn't been implemented?	We are required to provide a 25 year plan in addition to a 5 year plan
Do businesses or household customers pay more to Thames Water?	The large majority of Thames water customers are households
Where did the target of 80ML come from?	I haven't been able to find the number of total million litres lost but I have found that since 1995 we have reduced the amount we take from vulnerable sources by 133 million litres a day so that 80 million [target] is a big reduction.
why is there a big jump in the first 5 years?	The reason why there is a big jump is that we can't do everything all at once because customers' bills will be really impacted. So depending on the targets on the slide, it might require a big effort in the beginning but the cost of that work is spread to over a 5-year/25 year period.
why does the 1 in 500 target level out?	That is likely because it is the best that it can get for now

Appendices: Declaration that the research meets the OFWAT and CCW guidance

We have complied with Ofwat and CCW requirements

- Research has followed the prescribed Acceptability and Affordability Testing methodology and content
- Customer knowledge has been built through a pre-task which educates about the industry, business Plan process, company and Proposed Plan investment areas and performance
- Deliberative roundtable discussions facilitating strong engagement and robust deliberation of Proposed, Must Do and Alternative Plans
- Successful recruitment of all sub-groups exceeding the minimum quotas across all critical audiences (Household, low-income, non-household customers, customers in vulnerable situations, future customers)
- Post task that captures individual responses on acceptability and personalised bill impacts

Appendices: Declaration that the research meets the OFWAT high quality criteria

Useful and contextualised	Neutrally designed	Fit for Purpose	Inclusive	Additional Areas
Mandatory research driven by Ofwat/CCW, vital to the PR24 process	Research materials followed OFWAT and CCW guidance to ensure they were neutral	Strict compliance with OFWAT and CCW guidance	Voices of all customer groups included to ensure response to the Business Plan from all customer sub groups	Independently Assured All research conducted by Accent team who are an independent research agency and reviewed at every step of the process by the Customer Challenge Group
Conducted in such a way (through adherence the mandatory guidance) as to be comparable with Affordability & Acceptability Testing carried out by each of the water companies.	Independent moderating team who explore three different Business Plans dissecting the Proposed Plan and then exploring comparisons and trade-offs of Must Do and Alternative Plans	All key customers groups included and quotas exceeded in a number of areas	Methodologies adapted to reach different customers groups Non-Household customers undertake separately to Household customers to ensure response was from a business perspective Customers in Vulnerable Situations interviewed for shorter lengths and face to face sessions offered	Shared in full with others Thames Water will publish on their website Continual Thames Water's research programme is continuous Lessons from previous research were considered and changes to recruitment adapted
Picks up on many of the other strands of research being conducted in the context of the PR24 preparations, and Long Term Delivery Strategy programmes. Findings will be used to help determine the plan that Thames Water will test in their quantitative phase of Acceptability and Affordability Testing	Accent designed the deliberative sessions to allow sufficient opportunity to discuss customer-centred issues spontaneously before exploring the Proposed Plan	Best research practice adopted at all junctures	Additional quotas imposed to reflect some of the unique Thames Water customer characteristics in terms of reflecting the ethnic diversity of the region and boosting the low income/financially struggling categories to reflect the current cost of living crisis	Ethical Research sessions were long but Accent built in comfort breaks and provided refreshments to ensure customers were comfortable and looked after Accent abides by the Market Research code of conduct which protects individuals and ensures responses are anonymized

Appendices: Household Recruitment Questionnaire

Accent

3598 Thames Water and Affinity Water A&T
Face-to-Face Deliberative Workshops (3-hour/4.5-hour) AND Depths (health)
HH Recruitment Questionnaire

RQ NUMBER (ON PARTICIPANT LIST): URN:

Interviewer name: Interviewer no: Date: Time:

Checked (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Quality controlled by on RECRUIT RESERVE

Added to participant list/log on by Are you sure? Y / N

If depth, executive informed by email on by Acknowledged by exec? Y / N

Confirmation letter/email (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Confirmation sent via by on by (initials)

IF CONFIRMATION SENT BY EMAIL, PHONE & CHECK IF RECEIVED A FEW MINUTES AFTER EMAIL SENT:

Has email been received? Call made on by (initials)

Confirmation call (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

IF 24 HRS AHEAD OF GROUPS/DEPTHS – THEN UPDATE STATUS ON LIST OR LOG OF PARTICIPANTS FOR MODERATOR/EXEC

Confirmation call made on (date and time): on by

PRE TASK STATUS (IF APPLICABLE): **OUTCOME:**

I hereby confirm that I have read again the date, time and all other venue details needed for the participant to attend the group/take part in the depth interview and ensured that they had all this information available and diarised. Signed:

Contact details for F2F Events – INTERVIEWER SECTION

PARTICIPANT NAME	
ADDRESS (INC POSTCODE) (only if postal confirmation needed OR RECRUIT IS TO TAKE PART IN A F2F INTERVIEW)	
LANDLINE TELEPHONE NUMBER	MOBILE
EMAIL ADDRESS (read back and double-check)	
Anything else? (taxi, parking to reimburse, dietary requirements, probs, misc.)	

RECRUIT **RESERVE** **IF RESERVE, DON'T PUT THROUGH AS "L. CONTINUE" ON ACCS – EXPLAIN WHY IN RESERVE BELOW PLEASE:**

Call back by: at (time)

IF RESERVE TO BE CALLED BACK BY A CERTAIN TIME, PLEASE SCHEDULE AS DEFINITE APPOINTMENT ON ACCS

Quotas/group structure – INTERVIEWER SECTION

Main HH sample (current billpayers)

- All must be Thames Water or Affinity Water customers
- All must be current billpayers (joint or solely)

Source:

- Water company-supplied samples
- Free-find (if supplied sample doesn't yield sufficient recruits)

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6
Location (recruitment geography)	NW London	SW London	Reading	Slough-Windsor	Colchester-Braintree	Hemel/St Albans/Watford
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Affinity-Thames	Affinity-Anglia	Affinity-Thames
Date	25 April 2023	26 April 2023	03 May 2023	04 May 2023	10 May 2023	11 May 2023
Time	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 1900	1600 – 2030
Venue location	Royal National Hotel, 38-51 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0DG	Novotel London West 1 Shortlands, W6 8DR, London	Novotel Reading Centre 258 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1DP	Copthorne Hotel Slough-Windsor, Cippenhams Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2YE	TBC	TBC
Total sample	24	24	24	24	16	24
Gender	Min 40% M Min 40% F	Min 40% M Min 40% F	Min 40% M Min 40% F	Min 40% M Min 40% F	Min 40% M Min 40% F	Min 40% M Min 40% F
Age	Min 3 from each age band	Min 3 from each age band	Min 3 from each age band	Min 3 from each age band	Min 2 from each age band	Min 3 from each age band
SEG	8 x AB 8 x C1C2 8 x DE	8 x AB 8 x C1C2 8 x DE	8 x AB 8 x C1C2 8 x DE	8 x AB 8 x C1C2 8 x DE	8 x ABC1 8 x C2DE 8 x DE	8 x AB 8 x C1C2 8 x DE
Ethnicity	Min 40% BAME	Min 40% BAME	Min 15% BAME	Min 15% BAME	Min 15% BAME	Min 15% BAME
Water meter	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix
PSR/Eligible	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those with health conditions for IDI
Bill affordability	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment	Recruit a mix, but prioritise those 'financially vulnerable' for recruitment into that segment
Social tariff customers	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this	Prioritise for the 'financially vulnerable' segment and once full recruit for this

	segment in line with above quotas	segment in line with above quotas	segment in line with above quotas	segment in line with above quotas	segment in line with above quotas	in line with above quotas
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Future customers

- Must not currently have responsibility for paying water bills

Source:

- Free-find only

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6
Location (recruitment geography)	NW London	SW London	Reading	Slough-Windsor	Colchester-Braintree	Hemel/St Albans/Watford
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Affinity-Thames	Affinity-Anglia	Affinity-Thames
Date	25 April 2023	26 April 2023	03 May 2023	04 May 2023	10 May 2023	11 May 2023
Time	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 1900	1600 – 2030
Venue location	Royal National Hotel, 38-51 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0DG	Novotel London West 1 Shortlands, W6 8DR, London	Novotel Reading Centre 258 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1DP	Copthorne Hotel Slough-Windsor, Cippenhams Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2YE	TBC	TBC
Total sample	8	0	0	8	1	1
Gender	Min 3 M Min 3 F			Min 3 M Min 3 F		Min 2 M Min 2 F
Age	Recruit a mix			Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix
Ethnicity	Recruit a mix			Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix
Current life circumstances (Q9)	Recruit a mix			Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix
Current water situation (Q10)	Recruit a mix			Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix

Financially vulnerable customers

- Must be on a social tariff or self-categorise as financially vulnerable (Q17)

Source:

- Water company-supplied samples (social tariff flag)
- Free-find (if supplied sample doesn't yield sufficient recruits)

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6
Location (recruitment geography)	NW London	SW London	Reading	Slough-Windsor	Colchester-Braintree	Hemel/St Albans/Watford
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Affinity-Thames	Affinity-Anglia	Affinity-Thames
Date	25 April 2023	26 April 2023	03 May 2023	04 May 2023	10 May 2023	11 May 2023
Time	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 1900	1600 – 2030
Venue location	Royal National Hotel	Novotel London West	Novotel Reading Centre	Copthorne Hotel Slough-Windsor	TBC	TBC

	38-51 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0DG	1 Shortlands, London	258 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1DP	Cippenhams Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2YE		
Total sample	0	8	8	0	1	1
Gender		Min 3 M Min 3 F	Min 3 M Min 3 F		Min 3 M Min 3 F	
Age		Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix	
Bill affordability/Social tariff customers		Must be a social tariff customer according to the sample, or according to Q19 or self-categorise as 'financially vulnerable' at Q17	Must be a social tariff customer according to the sample, or according to Q19 or self-categorise as 'financially vulnerable' at Q17		Must be a social tariff customer according to the sample, or according to Q19 or self-categorise as 'financially vulnerable' at Q17	
Water meter	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix

Health vulnerable customers (In-depth interviews, IDIs)

Source:

- Water company-supplied samples (target PSR flag as potential indicator of health condition/disability)
- Free-find (if supplied sample doesn't yield sufficient recruits)

Location (recruitment geography)	NW London and SW London	Reading	Slough-Windsor	Colchester-Braintree	Hemel/St Albans/Watford
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Affinity-Thames	Affinity-Anglia	Affinity-Thames
Fieldwork dates	See Karen's availability – to follow				
Total sample	8	4	8	1	1
Gender	Min 3 M Min 3 F	Min 1 M Min 1 F	Min 3 M Min 3 F		Min 1 M Min 1 F
Age	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix		Recruit a mix
SEG	Min 3 x ABC1 Min 3 x C2DE	Min 1 x ABC1 Min 1 x C2DE	Min 3 x ABC1 Min 3 x C2DE		Min 1 x ABC1 Min 1 x C2DE
Nature of disability/health condition	Recruit a range of disabilities/health conditions (see Q16)	Recruit a range of disabilities/health conditions (see Q16)	Recruit a range of disabilities/health conditions (see Q16)		Recruit a range of disabilities/health conditions (see Q16)
Water meter	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix

- All billpayers must be **Thames Water (Affinity Water)** customers, depending on the geography.
- Recruited billpayer participants should be named on the water bill and thus solely or jointly responsible for the HH's water bill.
- Future Customers must be aged 18+ and must not a bill payer.

Appendices: Household Recruitment Questionnaire

Introduction

Q1. Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Roots, on behalf of Thames Water (Affinity Water) and Accent. Please could I speak to #name on sample#?

- IF "NO" TRY AND PERSUADE ELSE THANK & CLOSE
- IF "CALL BACK" PLEASE RECORD DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT ON ACCIS, THANK AND CLOSE
- IF "YES" PLEASE PROCEED TO SCREENING SECTION

WHEN SPEAKING TO APPROPRIATE CONTACT CONTINUE WITH SCREENING

Screening

Please may I speak to #name on sample#?

WHEN SPEAKING TO THE CORRECT PARTICIPANT REPEAT TEXT ABOVE & CONTINUE:

The research is being conducted under the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that any answers you give will be treated in confidence.

Thames Water (Affinity Water) is wanting to understand customers' views on their proposed plans – now and in the future. This is an exciting opportunity for you to help the company shape their short- and long-term plans to meet the needs of all types of customers.

We're looking for customers to help us in this research project which will consist of two phases:

- **First stage:** a 20-minute homework exercise, to be completed before taking part
- **Second stage:** participation at an in-person discussion group, to be held locally, together with other Thames Water (Affinity Water) customers. This will last for [THAMES-THAMES 4.5 / THAMES-AFFINITY 4.5 / AFFINITY 3] hours and will be held in an accessible venue in #location of venue#. The time includes time for comfort breaks and refreshments (which will be provided).

As a thank you for your time and contribution to the research, you will receive a total of {3h: £120 / 4.5h: £160}, including completing both the first and second stages.

Alternatively, we may ask you to take part in a one-to-one interview of (THAMES-THAMES: 90 minutes/THAMES-AFFINITY: 90 minutes/AFFINITY-ANGLIAN: 60 minutes), rather than participate in a group discussion, at our discretion. If so, a thank you payment of (THAMES-THAMES: £75/THAMES-AFFINITY: £75/AFFINITY-ANGLIAN: £60) will be offered to those eligible and able to take part in the interview. (INTERVIEWER NOTE: THIS APPLIES TO THOSE RECRUITS WHO HAVE A DISABILITY OR LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION AND SHOULD BE PRIORITISED FOR THE 'HEALTH VULNERABLE' SEGMENT AND OFFERED AN IDI IN THE FIRST INSTANCE)

This call may be recorded for quality control purposes.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: SAMPLE SOURCE IS: #client-supplied sample for current billpayers#

INTCHECK. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ADVISED THE PARTICIPANT OF:

MRS Code of Conduct
Calls being recorded

INTCHECK2. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ASKED AND CHECKED THAT THE PARTICIPANT IS NOT TAKING THE INTERVIEW ON A MOBILE DEVICE AND/OR WHILE DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Yes, it is safe for the participant to proceed
No, it isn't safe – we need to call back later GO TO APPT SCREEN

Q2. Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party not involved in the research, unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes
No THANK AND CLOSE

Q3. Do you or any of your close family work, or have worked, in the recent past in the water sector, including for Thames Water (Affinity Water), or in the Market Research profession?

Yes THANK AND CLOSE
No

Q4. Have you ever participated in a market research group discussion? IF YES, PROBE WHEN

Yes, in last six months THANK AND CLOSE
Yes, between 6 months and 2 years ago GO TO Q5
over 2 years ago GO TO Q7
no GO TO Q7

ONE THIRD OF RECRUITS MUST HAVE NEVER BEEN TO A GROUP DISCUSSION BEFORE

Q5. How many groups have you been to in that period?

1
2-3
More than 3 THANK & CLOSE

Q6. What was the subject matter of the groups you attended? PROBE AND WRITE DOWN

IF WATER THANK & CLOSE

Q7. Are you responsible, either jointly or solely, for paying your household's water bill?

Yes, solely PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR CURRENT HH CUSTOMER SEGMENTS
Yes, jointly PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR CURRENT HH CUSTOMER SEGMENTS
No PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT

Q7b. IF YES AT Q7, ONLY IF FREE-FIND (OTHERWISE REFER TO SAMPLE FILE): Who is your water company? This is the company you pay your water bill to.

Thames Water RECRUIT FOR THAMES/THAMES
Affinity Water RECRUIT FOR AFFINITY/THAMES AND AFFINITY/AMGLIAN
Another water company THANK AND CLOSE

Q7c. What is your postcode? We are looking for participants in specific areas to take part in this research, and your postcode will be used to ensure you are in scope for this research.

Capture postcode

CHECK POSTCODE TO ENSURE THAT PARTICIPANT IS IN THE CORRECT GEOGRAPHY FOR THE EVENT BEING RECRUITED TO

Q8. How old are you? CODE AGE GROUP BELOW

1. Under 18 THANK & CLOSE
2. 18-25
3. 26-29
4. 30-34
5. 35-44
6. 45-54
7. 65 or older
8. Refused THANK & CLOSE

FUTURE CUSTOMERS: Q7= NO AND Q8= ANY AGE. GO TO Q3
CURRENT BILL PAYER: Q7= YES AND Q8= ANY AGE. GO TO Q11

CHECK QUOTAS

Q9. FUTURE CUSTOMERS ONLY: Which of the following most closely matches your current study/work situation?

1. In an apprenticeship PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT
2. At university (undergraduate or post graduate studies) PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT
3. Working full- or part-time PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT
4. Not currently working (unemployed, taking a break from education (gap year, etc.) PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT
5. Other, write in: PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR FUTURE CUSTOMER SEGMENT
6. Prefer not to answer THANK AND CLOSE

AIM TO RECRUIT A MIX ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES

Q10. FUTURE CUSTOMERS ONLY: Which of the following best describes your situation?

1. I live in student accommodation and water bills are included within my payments
2. I am a student and a parent/guardian pays my water bill
3. I live with parent(s)/guardian(s) and they are responsible for paying the water bill
4. I live in shared accommodation and someone else is responsible for paying the water bill
5. I live in rented accommodation and water bills are included within my rent
6. Other, write in:
7. Prefer not to say THANK AND CLOSE

AIM TO RECRUIT A MIX ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES

Q11. BILL PAYERS ONLY: What is your job title?

- IF SELF-EMPLOYED: ASK IF MANUAL/NON-MANUAL, SKILLED/QUALIFIED OR NOT, NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES – THEN LOOK UP SELF-EMPLOYED TABLE
- IF MANAGER/EXECUTIVE: ASK FOR INDUSTRY SECTOR, NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN COMPANY AND MANAGEMENT STATUS

- IF RANK/GRADE (CIVIL SERVANT, NURSING, MILITARY, NAVY, POLICE ETC.) RECORD RANK/GRADE SPECIFICALLY
- IF RECEIVING PENSION: ASK IF STATE ONLY (GRADE "E") OR PRIVATE/OCCUPATIONAL PENSION (GRADE ON PREVIOUS OCCUPATION)
- IF UNEMPLOYED: IF MORE THAN 6 MONTHS AGO (GRADE "E"), IF LESS THAN 6 MONTHS AGO (GRADE ON PREVIOUS OCCUPATION)

CODE SEG

A
B
C1
C2
D
E
Not stated THANK AND CLOSE

CHECK QUOTAS

Q12. Are you...

1. Male
2. Female
3. Prefer to self-identify/ describe my gender differently
4. Prefer not to say

CHECK QUOTAS, ASSIGN THOSE WITH CODES 3 AND 4 AS APPROPRIATE

Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong to?

WHITE

1. British
2. Irish
3. Any other White background

MIXED

4. White and Black Caribbean
5. White and Black African
6. White and Asian
7. Any other Mixed background

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

8. Indian
9. Pakistani
10. Bangladeshi
11. Any other Asian background

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

12. Caribbean
13. African
14. Any other Black background

CHINESE OR OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

15. Chinese
16. Any other ethnic group
17. Prefer not to say.

Appendices: Household Recruitment Questionnaire

CHECK QUOTAS

Q14. **BILL PAYERS ONLY:** Do you currently have a water meter at your home?

Yes **MEASURED**
No **UNMEASURED**
Don't know

RECORD AND AIM TO RECRUIT A MIX OF YES/NO

Q15. **BILL PAYERS, ONLY IF FREE-FIND (OTHERWISE REFER TO SAMPLE FILE):** Are you registered on the Priority Services Register with Thames Water (Affinity Water)?

The Priority Services Register is for water customers who may need extra support or additional services - e.g. braille bills, or bottled water deliveries in the event of the water supply being interrupted.

Yes
No
Don't know

Q16. **BILL PAYERS ONLY (SAMPLE AND FREE-FIND):** Do any of the following apply to you or anyone else in your household? **MULTICODE**

- Chronic/serious illness **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Dependant on medical equipment **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Physical impairment **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Unable to answer the door **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Restricted hand movement **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Pensionable age **PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**
- Young children aged 5 or under **PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**
- Blind **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Partially sighted **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Hearing/speech difficulties (including deaf) **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Non-native English speaker **PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**
- Living with dementia **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Developmental condition **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Mental health problem or condition **ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH VULNERABLE IDI – PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT INTO THIS SEGMENT**
- Low or unstable income **PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS) AND CONSIDER FOR FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE SEGMENT**
- Temporary life change – for example post hospital recovery, unemployment, infant in the house, etc **PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**
- None of the above **EXCLUSIVE, PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**
- Prefer not to say **EXCLUSIVE, PROCEED WITH RECRUITMENT FOR STANDARD HOUSEHOLD SSEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)**

IF YES AT Q15 OR YES TO ANY CODE AT Q16 CODE AS "PSR/PSR ELIGIBLE" AND RECORD FOR INFORMATION OFFER THOSE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS [YES AT CODES 1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10,12,13,14] AT Q16 THE OPTION OF AN IDI (SEE Q23)

Q17. **BILL PAYERS ONLY:** Many people have told us that their income and/or expenditure has been adversely affected by the pandemic and, more recently, the cost-of-living crisis and this means that they may struggle to pay some household bills.

Which of the following best describes how affordable you find your water and sewerage bill and other household bills? Please remember, this research is entirely confidential and that it is only by talking to people in debt, or struggling to pay their bills, that change can be influenced.

SINGLE CODE

1	I can always afford to pay my water bill, and other household bills, on time and do not need to conserve my water/energy use or go without other things to do so	
2	I can always afford to pay my water bill, and other household bills, on time but only because I conserve my water/energy use or go without other things to do so	FEELING SOME FINANCIAL PRESSURE
3	I can always afford to pay my water bill on time, but sometimes struggle, or am late, paying other bills	'PINCHED MIDDLE'
4	I sometimes pay my water bill late because I am struggling financially	'PINCHED MIDDLE'
5	I am often unable to afford to pay my water bill on time	FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE
6	I am rarely, or never, able to afford to pay my water bill on time	FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE
7	Prefer not to say	

AIM TO RECRUIT A MIX OF AFFORDABILITY, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE (5,6), THE PINCHED MIDDLE (3,4), THOSE MANAGING THEIR HOUSEHOLD BILLS WITHOUT ISSUE (1) AND THOSE FEELING SOME FINANCIAL PRESSURE (2)

Q18. Is English your first language and the first language of everyone else in your household?

Yes – English is my first language and the first language of all household members
No – My first language is one other than English
No – English is not the first language of someone else/others in the household

RECORD FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Q19. **BILL PAYERS, ONLY IF FREE-FIND (OTHERWISE REFER TO SAMPLE FILE)** Are you registered on any of the following water affordability schemes?

Waterhelp for households on a low income (Thames considers households earning below £17,005, or below £21,749 in London boroughs, to be on a low income. If the customer qualifies for this scheme, Thames currently offers a 50% discount on the whole bill).

WaterSure a bill capping scheme (Thames/Anglian – if the customer is on a water meter but finding it hard to save water because they have a large family or water-dependent medical condition, the bill may be able to be capped through ~~WaterSure~~ **WaterSure**).

Low-income Fixed Tariff, LIFT (Affinity – Available to customers who are earning less than £17,005 a year, or who are currently claiming certain benefits such as Universal Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance).

AwayCare Plus (Anglian – If your home's on a meter and you're struggling to pay your water bill, then our **AwayCare Plus** tariff could be for you. It has a higher fixed rate than our standard household tariff, but charges less for the water you use.)

LITE/Extra LITE (Anglian – If you have a low disposable income and you're struggling to pay your water bill. Based on your individual situation you could get a discount of up to 50% on your water and sewerage charges by switching to one of these tariffs).

None of these

IF CLIENT SAMPLE FILE INDICATES THAT PARTICIPANT IS A SOCIAL TARIFF CUSTOMER OR RECRUIT INDICATES AT THIS QUESTION THAT THEY ARE ON A SOCIAL TARIFF PLEASE ASSIGN TO THE 'FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE' SEGMENT AND PRIORITISE RECRUITMENT FOR THIS SEGMENT (F2F EVENTS)

Q20. **BILL PAYERS, ONLY IF FREE-FIND (OTHERWISE REFER TO SAMPLE FILE)** How much is your water bill?

£ ____ Per year **CAPTURE FOR INFORMATION**
£ ____ Per month

Q21. **IF BILL AMOUNT EXPRESSED PER MONTH AT Q20** How many monthly payments do you make for your water bill each year?

10
12
Other (please specify)

CALCULATE ANNUAL WATER BILL BY MULTIPLYING MONTHLY BILL BY NUMBER OF MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Q22. **Provide customer's annual water bill (from sample file or as provided by customer as monthly/annual amount).**

£ ____ per year

Q23. **IF HEALTH CONDITION IDENTIFIED AT Q16** You previously said that you have, or someone in your household has, a disability or health condition. Rather than ask you to attend a face-to-face discussion group, we are offering you the opportunity to contribute to the research by participating in a (THAMES-THAMES: 90 minute/THAMES-AFFINITY: 90 minute/AFFINITY-ANGLIAN: 60 minute) interview, which is simply a one-to-one discussion with one of our experienced and friendly interviewers. This can be done online, on Zoom, or in-person at your home. Would you be interested in taking part in an interview?

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW AND RECRUIT FOR INTERVIEW**

No **TRY TO PERSUADE OR CONTINUE TO RECRUIT TO F2F EVENT IF HEALTH VULNERABLE QUOTAS ARE FULL. OTHERWISE THANK AND CLOSE**

Thank you. As I have said, the research will consist of:

- First stage:** a homework exercise which should take no more than 20 minutes to complete
- Second stage:** taking part in a (THAMES-THAMES: 90 minute/THAMES-AFFINITY: 90 minute/AFFINITY-ANGLIAN: 60 minute) interview, either online or in person at your home.

You will receive a total of (90-minute £75 / 60-minute £60) including completing both the first and second stages of the research.

Would you be willing to commit yourself to both stages of the process to help inform **Thames Water's (Affinity Water's)** future plans?

Yes **PROCEED TO 'PRE-TASK' SECTION**
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Invitation: Group F2F Event

Thank you for answering those questions. Would you be interested in participating in this research project on behalf of **Thames Water (Affinity Water)**? All research will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW**
No **TRY TO PERSUADE/THANK AND CLOSE**

Thank you. As I mentioned earlier the research will consist of:

- First stage:** a homework exercise which should take no more than 20 minutes to complete
- Second stage:** participation at an in-person discussion group together with other Thames Water (Affinity Water) customers. This will last for 3/4.5 hours and will be held in an accessible venue in #location of venue#. The time includes time for comfort breaks and refreshments (which will be provided).

Again, you will receive a total of (3h: £120 / 4.5h: £160), including completing both the first and second stages of the research.

Would you be willing to commit yourself to both stages of the process to help inform Thames Water's (Affinity Water's) future plans?

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW**
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

There will be up to 30 other people at the research event. Like you, they will be sharing views on the water company's short- and long-term plans. That said, much of the discussion will take place in smaller groups of around 8 people.

ASK ALL: PRE-TASK

ADVISE PARTICIPANT ABOUT PRE-TASKS: We will email details outlining the Stage 1 homework exercises. These **must** be completed before you attend the group sessions, but they shouldn't take too long to complete and hopefully you will find them interesting and informative.

We will be asking you to download an app onto your mobile device for completion of the homework exercises. The app is quick and fun to use and you will be incentivised fully for your commitment to each part.

If you would rather receive a paper copy of the homework exercise please note that we will need these returning by post before you attend the event. **INTERVIEWER TO CAPTURE IF PAPER TASK REQUIRED AND CAPTURE POSTAL ADDRESS FOR DISPATCH OF REMINDER TASK IF ORIGINAL NOT RETURNED.**

VERY IMPORTANT. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU HAVE EXPLAINED ALL ABOUT THE PRE-TASK.

Q24. IS THE PARTICIPANT CLEAR ABOUT THE PRE-TASKS?

Yes
No **THEN RE-EXPLAIN**

Q25. DID THE PARTICIPANT SAY THEY WOULD DO THE PRE-TASKS?

Yes
No **THEN PERSUADE POLITELY AND REITERATE REQUIREMENTS**

Q26. WILL THE PRE-TASK BE COMPLETED VIA THE APP OR ON A PAPER COPY?

Appendices: Household Recruitment Questionnaire

Email/App COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS
Paper HAND OVER COPY TOGETHER WITH SAE

ASK ALL: DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING CONSENT

DATA COLLECTION & SHARING CONSENT

The face-to-face discussion may be joined by representatives of Thames Water (Affinity Water) and/or their independent customer challenge group, so they can watch the discussion and learn as much from it as possible. They will not participate in the discussion directly but will be on hand to answer any technical questions about their future plans, if required. In addition, members of Ofwat and CCW, who regulate the water sector and are the voice of water customers, may be present to observe the discussions.

The discussion will be audio recorded for analysis purposes and to ensure accuracy. All recordings will be securely stored for a period of 12 months (for reference purposes) before being destroyed.

In our reporting of the findings from this research everything that you say will remain confidential and will be reported in grouped format only.

Please confirm that is OK.

Yes CONTINUE
No HOLD IN RESERVE OR THANK AND CLOSE

F2F DISCUSSION GROUP RECRUITS: GO TO Q27
IDI RECRUITS: GO TO Q 28

FOR F2F DISCUSSION GROUP RECRUITS

Q27. The face-to-face discussion group will take place on:

Date	Time	Place
SEE ABOVE	SEE ABOVE	SEE ABOVE

Would you be able to attend? REASSURE & PERSUADE
IF PARTICIPANT AGREES, CONFIRM DATE, TIME, LOCATION then continue:

Great, thanks. I'll just take a few details and will let you get on with your day. We will send you more information by email shortly with details of the next steps and arrangements for the discussion group.

If for any reason you find you are unable to attend, please could you let me know as soon as possible so that we can invite someone else to take your place?

Please contact us on [REDACTED] if you have any queries about your incentive. Thank you.

RECRUITER: Please ensure you have filled in the cover page of the RQ, including email address and mobile number of participant, then complete the following confirmations.

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

FOR IDI RECRUITS

Q28. Most people find it is easier and more convenient to take part in their research interview online, using the Zoom meeting platform. Would you like to take part in a Zoom interview, or would you rather be interviewed in person, at your home?

Online, via Zoom GO TO Q29
At home, in person GO TO Q31

Q29. How proficient would you say you are at using Zoom?

I feel very confident about using Zoom GO TO Q30
I feel quite confident about Zoom GO TO Q30
I don't feel confident about using Zoom. SUGGEST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW OR THANK AND CLOSE: Go To Q31 IF F2F
I would rather not Zoom if I didn't have to SUGGEST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW OR THANK AND CLOSE: Go To Q31 IF F2F

Q30. Do you have access to a desktop or laptop computer, or a large-format tablet (such as an iPad with a large screen), which is connected to a reliable and stable internet connection, on which you could take part in a Zoom interview?
Please note that you will NOT be permitted to take part in the research on Zoom using a smartphone. Taking part in the research will involve reviewing materials onscreen and a smartphone is simply too small to do this properly.
Yes PROCEED TO RECRUIT FOR ZOOM: PROCEED TO RECRUITER CONFIRMATIONS
No SUGGEST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW OR THANK AND CLOSE: Go To Q31 IF F2F
Unsure SUGGEST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW OR THANK AND CLOSE: Go To Q31 IF F2F

Q31. Thank you. I am happy to arrange for a date and time for your interview. I'll just take a few details and will let you get on with your day. We will send you more information by email shortly with details of the next steps and details of your homework and interview.

- RECRUITER TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW SLOT USING INTERVIEWER AVAILABILITY
- CAPTURE ALL NECESSARY PARTICIPANT INFORMATION IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE RECRUIT REGARDING THE INTERVIEW, ENSURING TO COLLECT AN ADDRESS AND ACCESS DETAILS FOR ANYONE REQUESTING AN IN-HOME INTERVIEW.

If for any reason you find you are unable to attend, please could you let me know as soon as possible so that we can invite someone else to take your place?

Please contact us on [REDACTED] if you have any queries about your incentive. Thank you.

RECRUITER: Please ensure you have filled in the cover page of the RQ, including email address and mobile number of participant, AS WELL AS ADDRESS FOR F2F INTERVIEWS, then complete the following confirmations.

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

Recruiter Confirmations

RECRUITER – VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU FULLY READ OUT THE DATA SHARING AND CONSENT QUESTION, AND THAT IT MADE SENSE TO BOTH YOU AND THE PARTICIPANT.

Yes

Q32. IS THE PARTICIPANT CLEAR ABOUT THE PRE-TASK & DID THEY SAY THEY WOULD COMPLETE IT?

Clear
Will complete

MRS DECLARATION

Q33. I confirm that this interview was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct and is completely confidential

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE ENSURE YOU REMOVE THIS PAGE BEFORE RETURNING THIS RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE TO ACCENT

PROPERTY NAME OR NUMBER	
2 ND LINE OF ADDRESS	
TOWN/VILLAGE	
POSTCODE	


Appendices: Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task One

On the first slide there is a map of England and Wales that shows Thames Water's operating area:

Background to water industry

There are a number of different companies in the water industry who serve water customers to ensure their water is safe, reliable and environmentally friendly



England and Wales are served by 17 different water companies; some provide just drinking water, others take away sewage as well. Companies in the same area work together to plan for the future in their region, and work with the other regional groups across England to make sure there is enough water for everyone.

Unlike with gas and electricity, customers cannot 'switch' water company, because your water company is dictated by the area you live in, and is therefore a monopoly. This is why Ofwat regulate all water companies; to ensure fairness for all customers.

Businesses don't pay their bills directly to the water companies – they are billed by "Retailers"


3

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Two

Next you will see some key facts about the customers that Thames Water serves and the infrastructure that it manages:

Where we work...



- We serve 15 million customers. However they don't all use both our water and wastewater services
- We supply **water** to 10 million of our customers (3.5 million properties).
- Other water companies supply the other 5 million customers (2 million properties).
- We supply 15 million customers with **wastewater services**
- This means we don't bill all of our customers directly
- We also serve 250,000 businesses

We operate

- 97 water treatment works
- 26 raw water reservoirs
- 308 pumping stations
- 235 clean water service reservoirs

We have

- 351 sewage works
- 100,000km of sewers
- 4,780 sewage pumping stations
- 1.2 million manholes

4

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Three

This provides a bit of background on why Affinity Water and Thames Water want to hear from you:

The role of research

Ofwat & business plan

- Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department.
- They are responsible for making sure that water companies are regulated to provide consumers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price.
- Every five years, water companies develop a 'business plan' that sets out how they want to develop their services, and the proposed cost to customers.
- As customers are not able to choose their water company, water companies must give them a say about what they want from their services and the price they pay.

Customer's priorities

- Talking to customers also helps water companies prioritise what to do first or what to do most of – because they are not able to fund everything they would like to do or do all of the things that customers might want them to do.
- The business plan and prices are then finalised by Ofwat in a process known as the Price Review.
- There is more information about this here: 'All about the price review'. Available at: <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/what-is-cvwm/cvwm2/>

Research matters

- One of the ways that people have their say is through this research, which will explain what the plans are for where you live, and ask what you think – whether the plans are 'acceptable' to you and whether you can afford the proposed bills from 2025-2030.
- Companies also have to show to Ofwat that their plans reflect what their customers want – that means refining the plans based on what customers tell them.

The water industry today

<h4>Water companies</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take water from the environment (e.g. rivers), treat it so it's safe to drink, and return it safely to the environment after use. Build and maintain infrastructure (like pipes) to supply water to homes and businesses. 	<h4>Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes sure the water supplied in England and Wales is safe and that drinking water quality is acceptable for customers. 	<h4>Consumer Council for Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent customers on matters relating to water. Investigate complaints and provide advice to ensure water services remain fair for customers.
<h4>Environment Agency</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects and enhances the environment. Works with water companies to ensure operations and plans develop in a sustainable way. 	<h4>Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government department responsible for protecting the environment and countryside, including water. 	<h4>Office of Water Services (Ofwat)</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regulator that makes sure water companies do their job properly, including fair pricing for customers and ensuring there is always a reliable water supply.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Four

The next slide shows you what Affinity Water and Thames water do and the service they provide:

Affinity Water and the water cycle

Affinity Water takes water from rivers and natural underground stores and turns it into high quality drinking water. It then delivers the drinking water through a water pipe network to homes and businesses. Once the water has been used (i.e., wastewater that goes down sinks and toilets) it is collected in the sewer network. It ends up at sewage treatment works where the water is treated and safely returned to rivers.

What do Affinity Water and Thames Water do?

<h4>Affinity Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract water from rivers and aquifers. Deliver water to household and business taps. Help customers to conserve water. 	<h4>Affinity Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check water so it is safe to use. Fix leaks on pipes. Make sure there is enough water in future. 	<h4>Thames Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and send bills to customers. Meet every bill customer to contact Thames Water. Provide customers with helpful information. 	<h4>Thames Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read water meters to produce accurate bills. Deal with requests, queries and complaints. Support customers that need extra help. 	<h4>Thames Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take wastewater away from sewage. Reform water to rivers. Prevent pollution from sewers and sewage works. 	<h4>Thames Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat and recycle wastewater. Clean up sewage floods and blockages. Produce and use renewable energy.
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If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Five

The next slides give you some information about how water company performance is monitored by OFWAT, the independent regulator, and how to read the graphs you will see in the following slides:

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies have to provide reliable services, and plan for their services to be resilient to changing weather patterns and demand from consumers.

Companies can miss or exceed performance commitment targets for a number of reasons. For example, leaks from pipes happen more often after very cold weather, which can contribute to a company not meeting the target, and flooding from sewers is less likely in dry weather, which can lead to higher performance for sewer flooding service targets.

If a water company **misses a target** then they receive a penalty which can translate to a **small decrease in customer bills** to reflect the **poorer service** that customers have received.

If the water company **meets or exceeds a target** then they can receive a reward which translates to a **small increase in customer bills** to reflect the **improvement in service**.

In Ofwat's most recent assessment of penalties and rewards, Thames Water had to return £51m to customers because of missed targets on water treatment works compliance, pollution incidents and internal sewer flooding across 2022/23. This will reduce the average household customer's annual bill by £15.50, and business bills by 1.4%.

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies are currently part way through their five-year business plan for 2020 to 2025. They have service level targets, called 'performance commitments', in every five-year business plan. These targets are based on what customers have previously told companies they would like them to do, and on Ofwat's assessment of what companies should deliver. These targets cover a wide range of the different services that water companies provide.

Ofwat monitors water company performance against each performance commitment every year to see if they have met the service level in their business plan.

We are now going to show you how well your water and/or sewerage company is doing on some of their performance commitments, compared to other water companies in England and Wales.

These performance commitments are a snapshot of out of the wide range of services companies provide. We are showing these examples as customers have told us they are particularly important to them.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Six

We will now show you how Thames Water has performed against some of the key targets, and a comparison to other water and wastewater companies.

An explanation on what's contained on these slides is shown below:

How to read comparison information

We will later show you 6 pages displaying water companies' performance. The blue boxes below show you how to read the data.

This title tells you the type of performance commitment

This summarises how well Thames Water did on meeting the target

The chart shows how well each company performs.
Blue = at or better than target.
Pink = poorer than target.
Shorter bar = better.
Dashed line = target.

More information on what is being measured and how

The table shows performance against the target and how far from the target.
Blue = at or better than target.
Pink = poorer / below target.
Smaller number = better (which means -52% is better than -20%).

We know that graphs can sometimes be difficult to read. Please be assured that this information is provided for background only. Don't worry if you don't understand everything - we are happy to explain when we meet.

11

This first slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water supply interruptions**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of the **appearance, taste and smell of tap water**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding inside properties**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding of gardens and outbuildings**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water leakage from their network**:

The last one in this section shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **causing pollution of rivers and streams**:

That's all the graphs and tables for now.

Please write in whether you have any questions or comments about the Thames Water's performance on those key measures:

Introduction to Task Seven

Please take a look at this slide. It tells you about your water bill and how every £1 of your bill is spent across, for example, water and wastewater running costs, and investment to improve infrastructure for the future:

Breakdown of every £1 we spend

46p – infrastructure
This includes 3p for the Thames Tideway tunnel, which will divert millions of tonnes of sewage from the river Thames when it goes into operation.

19p – essential services
We deliver and recycle billions of litres of water everyday.

15p – our team
From engineers to scientists, we invest in over 7,000 people who help keep our water flowing.

8p – lenders
To invest in our network, we borrow money at efficient rates while keeping our bills as low as we can.

7p – powering our sites
We currently generate more than 20% of our own energy to help protect the environment.

5p – the government
In 2021/2022 we paid over £88 million in business rates and for employers' national insurance contribution.

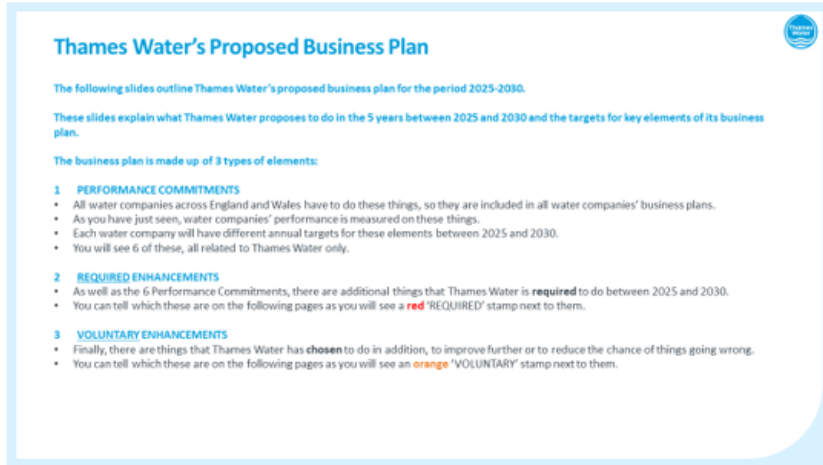
If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Eight

The next two slides will introduce you to Thames Water's proposed Business Plan. We will discuss this at the face to face session but this gives you some information before we meet.

The first one shows broadly how the plan is presented.



The slide is titled "Thames Water's Proposed Business Plan" and features the Thames Water logo in the top right corner. The text on the slide reads: "The following slides outline Thames Water's proposed business plan for the period 2025-2030. These slides explain what Thames Water proposes to do in the 5 years between 2025 and 2030 and the targets for key elements of its business plan. The business plan is made up of 3 types of elements: 1 PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS • All water companies across England and Wales have to do these things, so they are included in all water companies' business plans. • As you have just seen, water companies' performance is measured on these things. • Each water company will have different annual targets for these elements between 2025 and 2030. • You will see 6 of these, all related to Thames Water only. 2 REQUIRED ENHANCEMENTS • As well as the 6 Performance Commitments, there are additional things that Thames Water is required to do between 2025 and 2030. • You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see a red 'REQUIRED' stamp next to them. 3 VOLUNTARY ENHANCEMENTS • Finally, there are things that Thames Water has chosen to do in addition, to improve further or to reduce the chance of things going wrong. • You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see an orange 'VOLUNTARY' stamp next to them."

The second looks at the performance levels that Thames Water intends to meet across the six different measures we looked at before. All elements of this part of this business plan are mandatory – Thames Water and all water companies have been told by the legal and environmental regulators that they must perform at certain levels (their 'targets'):

This next slide outlines six of the biggest investment areas where Thames Water intends to deliver improvements and upgrades over the period 2025-2030. For example, you will see that it shows that there will be investment in the 'Reducing Basement Flooding' measure.

We will discuss these plans in the face to face sessions but please write in whether you have any questions or comments about Thames Water's intended performance on those key measures or the proposed investment schemes.

Introduction to Task Nine

Before we get together, please answer the question below about the affordability of your current water and sewerage bill.

Question 1: Your current water and sewerage services bill is **FROM SAMPLE**. How easy or difficult is it for you to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill?

Please answer one only:

1. Very easy
2. Fairly easy
3. Neither easy nor difficult
4. Fairly difficult
5. Very difficult
6. Don't know

As we mentioned at the beginning of this pre-task, we will start the session discussing your reactions to the information you have just seen. As you've read through it, please list the 3 or 4 things that are new / interesting / surprising to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Please have these to hand during the research group discussion

We are looking forward to meeting you. If you have any questions before the session please contact us at: omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

See you very soon.

Nancy and the rest of the research team
Accent Research Team

Appendices: Household Deliberative Discussion Guide

3598 Thames/Thames A&AT (4 ½ Hours) Draft Deliberative Structure – HH Sessions



Event 1: 25th April – Thames/Thames – NW London (Islington/Hackney – 24 Bill Payers/8 Futures)

Event 2: 26th April – Thames/Thames – SW London (Hammersmith/Merton – 24 Bill Payers/8 Low income)

Event 3: 3rd May – Thames/Thames – Thames Valley (Reading – 24 Bill Payers/8 Low income)

Event	1	2	3
Location (recruitment geography)	NW London	SW London	Reading
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames
Date	25 April 2023	26 April 2023	03 May 2023
Time	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030	1600 – 2030
Venue location	Royal National Hotel, 38-51 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0DG	Novotel London West 1 Shortlands, W6 8DR, London	Novotel Reading Centre 25B Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1DP
Room/Suite	Galleon A	Bordeaux Suite	Meeting Room 7
HH customers (main sample)	24	24	24
Futures	8	0	0
£ vulnerable	0	8	8

Event Timetable

- 4pm-4.15pm – Meet, Greet, Seat; Session Introduction
- 4.15pm-5.00pm – Session 1 (Warm-up, Recap, Long Term Context, Temperature Check)
- 5.00pm-5.15pm – Comfort/Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches
- 5.15pm-6.45pm – Session 2 (PROPOSED Plan)
- 6.45pm-7.15pm – Comfort/Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches
- 7.15pm-8.15pm Session 3 (MUST DO Plan – THEN ALTERNATIVE – Phasing of WINEP)
- 8.15pm-8.30pm – Individual task (post task)

Meet, Greet, Seat and Session Introduction

4pm-4.15pm

- Sign everyone in
- Name badge and allocation to dedicated Moderator Group who will introduce themselves
 - Group 1 – AB (8 People)
 - Group 2 – C1C2 (8 People)
 - Group 3 – DE (8 People)
 - Group 4 – Future or Low income Social Tariff/Eligible
- Offer Teas and Coffee and seat at relevant tables
- Show the agenda for the sessions on the screen (Showcard 21)
- Introduce the Moderating Team
 - explain that we are an independent, impartial research agency

- Explain that we are here tonight on behalf of Thames Water who are looking for their view and input into the Business Plan - Remember that Thames Water are the provider of your clean and wastewater
 - we will break out into smaller groups so that we get a chance to discuss the plan properly
 - we are looking for everyone's views this evening and looking for everyone to contribute
 - no comments are attributed to you by name
 - no right or wrong answers to any of the questions we will ask – it's your opinion that matters. Of course, your views might be different from those of others, and that's natural – in fact it helps to stimulate discussion, which is really useful for us as researchers
 - please remain respectful of others' opinions and experiences if they are different from your own
 - we are aiming to have a discussion and at the end of the session, you will have a chance to fill-in a short questionnaire individually
- Tell everyone how long we will be here and session structure (break out groups/comfort breaks)
- Explain fire drills/exits
- Introduce the Client Representatives and any ICG
 - explain that these individuals are here to view the process and not take part
 - they are not here to answer questions and want to listen as they are very interested in their views
 - they shouldn't influence the discussions in any way so please be honest and don't let them affect your responses
 - **Moderator Note: if there are any specific questions then we can ask the Thames observer but try to minimise this and avoid it becoming a Q&A for the observer – there is a lot of discussion to cover and we will not reach a point of perfect information**

Session 1 – Warm-Up, Pre-Task, £ Temp Check, LTP

4.15pm-5pm

This breakout group will focus on warm-up to ensure participants are comfortable, recap the pre-task materials, provide baseline views on the company, provide a financial temperature check and include the long term plan review

- Settle everyone in break out space
- Thank everyone for doing their pre-task exercises
- Introduce yourself ice breaker
 - Name
 - Where you live
 - Your favourite drink
 - **MODERATOR NOTE – REITERATE SAFE SPACE AND WE WELCOME DIFFERENT VIEWS AND ENSURE EVERYONE COMFORTABLE AND HAPPY TO CONTINUE**
- Remind that we are here to discuss the Business Plan for Thames Water but first we want to find out a bit about their thoughts on the pre-task
- Think back to the pre-task you read through (PRE-TASK SHOWCARDS PRINTED FOR REFERENCE)
 - Baseline Comprehension:
 - Was there anything in the material you read which you felt was difficult to understand?

- We showed you information that compared Thames Water's performance with other water companies' performance on 6 factors; water interruptions, sewage flooding, leaks etc. How easy or difficult was it to understand this information?
- Baseline Awareness:
 - What did you know about Thames Water before you read through the materials?
 - What surprised you most out of the things you have read?
 - What would you most like to find out more about?
- Baseline Perceptions:
 - How do you feel about Thames Water – scale -ve 1-10 +ve
 - Reasons for scores
- Baseline Priorities:
 - Where do you think they should focus improvements/investment?
 - Has any of the information you have seen changed your opinion Thames Water in any way?
- Baseline Value (Bill Payers):
 - Before we start talking about the Business Plan, we want to find out about how everyone is feeling about current finances.
 - How do you feel at the moment about your household finances (Future customers ask about personal finances – they may be paying mobile bills, transport, etc)?
 - And how do you think that might change in the next 5 years?
 - For Bill Payers
 - ◆ how do you feel about your water bill?
 - ◆ How would you rate Thames Water on value for money 'for your water / wastewater services'?
- Okay now we want to talk about the long term picture
 - All water companies need to plan for the longer term future to ensure that the services will be appropriate for future generations of service users, bill payers, wider society and the environment.
 - Before we begin looking at the Business Plan for 2025-2030, we want to share with you some of Thames Water's longer term plans and goals. These go as far as 2050 – these plans and goals will give you a sense of what they are planning and where they see their priorities.
 - When you look at this longer term plan, we want you to think about it from a range of different perspectives:
 - SHOWCARD 24 - 1) service users 2) bill payers. 3) citizen 4) society – please note that these overlap so if you are a bill payer, you are probably a service user and a citizen and member of society
 - SHOWCARD 25 – Long term plan (Thames Water)
 - Overall views on the challenges
 - From what you have seen about the ambitions and aims, do you feel the long term plan focuses on the right areas
 - What makes you think this?
 - What do others think – agree/disagree?

Appendices: Household Deliberative Discussion Guide

- Is there any difference from our Future Customers who are service users but not bill payers?
Is there any difference if you think about this as a Bill Payers, Service Users, Citizens, Society?
(Please note – change of emphasis above as we can't ask whether it goes far enough, too far or just right as these ambitions/aims are not measurable)

- SHOWCARD 27 - Phasing – Explain concept of phasing
 - Before we have a break, we want to talk to you about some of the choices a water company has to make when they are putting together their Business Plans
 - Water companies can choose to improve performance or invest in service enhancements at different times depending on customer priorities and depending on their funding, and we will be asking you for your view on this later on.
 - After the break we are going to be focusing on the shorter term Business Plan for 2025-2030 that we shared with you in the pre-task.
 - We are interested to see whether there are things in there that you would say could be done later – this means that investment would not be made now but made between 2030-2050
 - What do you think about the different options presented here
 - Option A – pay more now, get more now
 - Option B – pay less now, get less now but catch up later
 - Which do you prefer and why
 - How do you feel about Option B where investment gets made later which might mean that future generations would need to contribute more

Tea, Coffee, Sandwiches, Stretch, Comfort

5pm-5.15pm

Session 2 – Response to PROPOSED Plan

5.15pm-6.45pm

This session will focus on the PROPOSED Plan

10 MINS

- Welcome everyone back to the table.
- SHOWCARDS 30-33 PROPOSED PLAN SHOWING DISTINCTION BETWEEN REQUIRED AND VOLUNTARY WITH BILL CHANGE BASED ON AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
- Explain that this session will be focusing on the PROPOSED Business Plan that is on these two slides on the screen (toggle between slide 30-33 as a reminder). This is the information that we shared during the pre-task and we want to understand more about how you all feel about it.
- Before we get in to the nitty gritty – we need to explain that Thames Water have undertaken customer research, stakeholder research and that this plan reflects their priorities as well as where the business feel they need to invest to ensure a resilient water and wastewater service to meet the demand of Thames Water customers.
- We do need to be clear that what we are sharing with you does not include the full Business Plan as this would take too long to go through – instead Ofwat and Thames Water have selected the elements of day-to-day service that are most important to customers, as well as the investments in improvements that will have the biggest impact on your bills.
- It includes elements that Thames Water must do in the 2025-2030 period – these are on Slide 33 as a red flag and say REQUIRED - these include things like making sure there is enough water in future and not polluting rivers.
- It also includes VOLUNTARY service enhancements that Thames Water feels are important and these have orange flags e.g. Making the water supply more reliable
- Later on you will see the bill impact based on your own household bill but during this part of the discussion, we are going to look at the average bill. This includes some predictions for inflation which we will share at the end.

- SHOWCARDS 30-33 - Brief initial response to the overall plan
 - What did you feel was good about the plan?
 - What did you feel was not good about the plan?
 - What would you want to change?
- Let's now break the plan down into different sections and get your views on each part.

30 MINS (5 mins per PC)

- SHOWCARD 30 - OVERALL PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
- Explain that we are going to focus on the six performance commitments in more detail.
- You will see here that this slide reflects their actual performance now and how they are looking for that to improve
 - Any comments or observations before we break these down further
 - **MODERATOR NOTE THAT THESE GO TO 2050**
- SHOWCARD 31 and 32 - RESPONSE TO 6 CORE PERFORMANCE TARGETS (3 waste and 3 water)

- How do you feel about this target?
- Do you feel they go far enough/too far/just right?
- How far do the approaches reflect how you would like Thames Water to do about this?
- **MODERATOR NOTE – IF HELPFUL AND ASSISTS THE DISCUSSION THEN REFER TO PHYSICAL SHOWCARD WITH PRE-TASK COMPARATIVE INFORMATION AND WHETHER THAMES IS CURRENTLY MEETING THE TARGET**

30 MINS (5 mins per Service Enhancement)

- SHOWCARD 33 - OVERALL SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
- Explain that we are going to focus on the six service enhancements in more detail.
- Response to the six service enhancements (3 waste and 3 water; 3 REQUIRED and 3 VOLUNTARY)
 - SHOWCARDS 34-39 - Explore each segment
 - How do you feel about this service enhancement?
 - What is good about it?
 - What is not good about it?

20 MINS

- Now we have discussed the PROPOSED Business Plan, overall when you think about what we have discussed with the six performance targets and six service enhancements, how acceptable is it to you
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability
 - Water or wastewater elements?
 - Performance targets – ambitious enough or not?
 - Service enhancements – ambitious enough or not?
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?
- Now we want to look at what this plan would cost to get your views on that
- SHOWCARD 40 – explain about inflation
- SHOWCARD 41 – SHOW PROPOSED BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION
- If you look at the graph on the left hand side it shows what impact the 2025-2030 plan would have on your bills and how that changes from now until 2030
 - Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this to you (Bill Payers)
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
 - Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?
- The longer term bill impact is on the right hand side. This is relevant to the phasing slide we discussed at the top of the discussion. It will be relevant when we look at different versions of the Business Plan where Thames Water could choose to do less now and more in the longer term

Tea, Coffee, Sandwiches, Stretch, Comfort

6.30pm-7pm

Appendices: Household Deliberative Discussion Guide

Session 3: Response to MUST DO AND ALTERNATIVE 7pm-8.15pm

This session will focus on the two other plans that Thames Water are thinking about – we don't need to go through everything again as some elements are the same as the first plan so we can be a bit quicker exploring these

25 MINS

- Welcome everyone back to the table
- Explain that in this session, we will focus on some different plans to get their views on how Thames Water could do things differently.

■ MUST DO PLAN INTRODUCTION

- The plan we will discuss now only includes the Required elements that Thames Water must do to fulfil their legal and environmental commitments so it's cheaper than the first plan we looked at now and in the longer term
- SHOWCARD 43 - Explain that the first part of the plan 'the Performance Commitments/targets' are the same as what you saw previously so we won't be discussing those again. With this plan Thames Water would keep the same targets and ensure that the performance was the same across those six elements
- SHOWCARD 44 - What we want to focus on and discuss with you is the Service Enhancements because they would be different. As mentioned, in this plan, you will see that there are no voluntary service enhancements and so the overall bill impact is lower.
 - What is good about this?
 - What is not good about it?
 - How do you feel that there are no optional service enhancements now?
 - How comfortable are you with this?

10 MINS

- Now we have discussed the 'MUST DO' Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it to you
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability?
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?

■ SHOWCARDS 45 and 46 – SHOW MUST DO BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION

- Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this to you (Bill Payers)
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
- Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?

20 Mins

■ ALTERNATIVE PLAN INTRODUCTION

- The plan we will discuss now only includes everything that you saw in the first Proposed plan but it will be delivered at a lower cost – let's explain how
 - SHOWCARD 48 – just a reminder that the first part of the plan 'the Performance Commitments/Targets' are the same as what you saw previously so we won't be discussing those again
 - SHOWCARD 49 - the service enhancements are also all still included but the third required measure would be slower to achieve under this Alternative plan
 - Remember we talked about phasing at the end of the first session. Thames Water needs to balance the amount of investment in improvements with the amount of money it gets from customer bills
 - SHOWCARD 50 - With this ALTERNATIVE plan, they would reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 82% instead of 90% in the other plans
 - For this service enhancement, it would mean adding cost £20.81 to the average bill rather than £31.54
 - ◆ How do you feel about this?
 - SHOWCARD 51 – What we need to explain with this option is that the slowing down the phosphorus removal saves money in the shorter term but will cost more later

10 MINS

- Now we have discussed the ALTERNATIVE Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it to you
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability?
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?
- SHOWCARD 52 – SHOW ALTERNATIVE BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION
- Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this to you (Bill Payers)
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
- Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?

- Thank everyone for coming
- Invite any final questions
- Close

Key Moderator Notes:

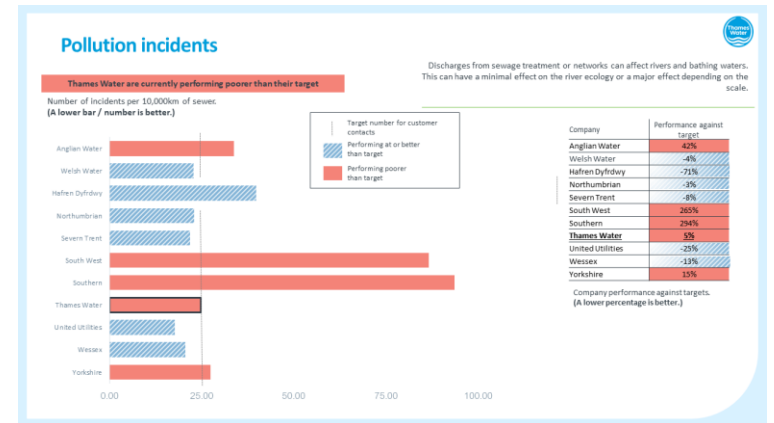
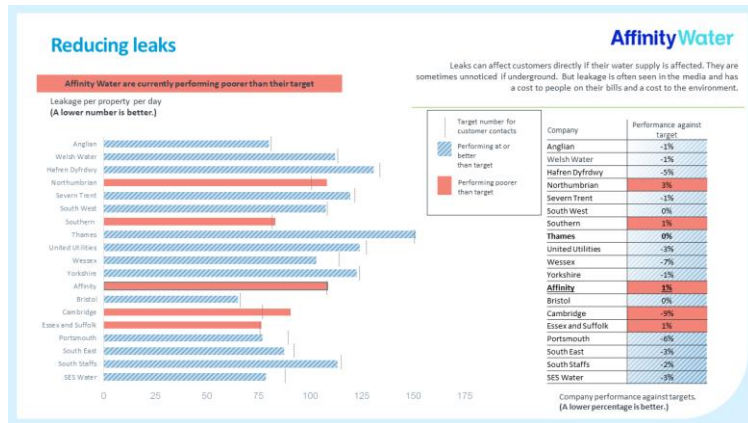
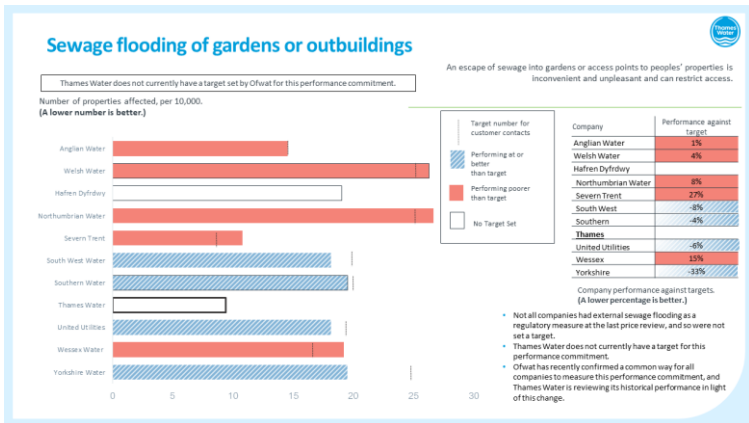
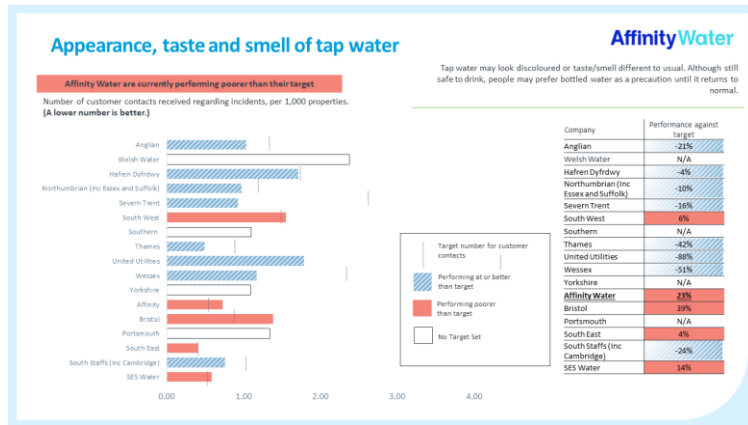
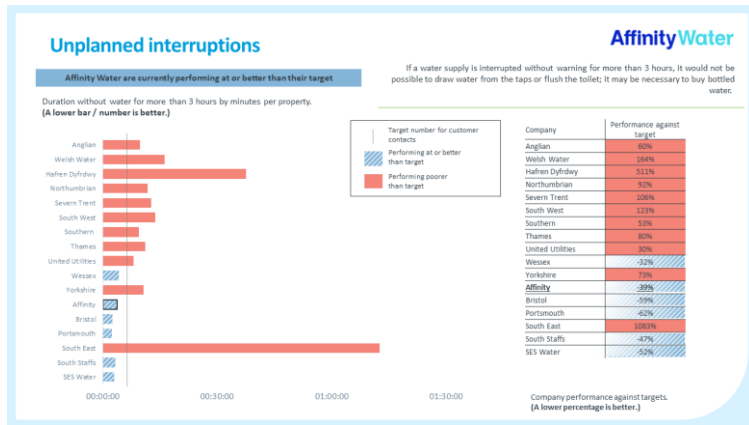
Make note of any questions asked by customers that are answered by the company
Add to subsequent sessions and/or run by ICG

Final Comparison and Individual Task

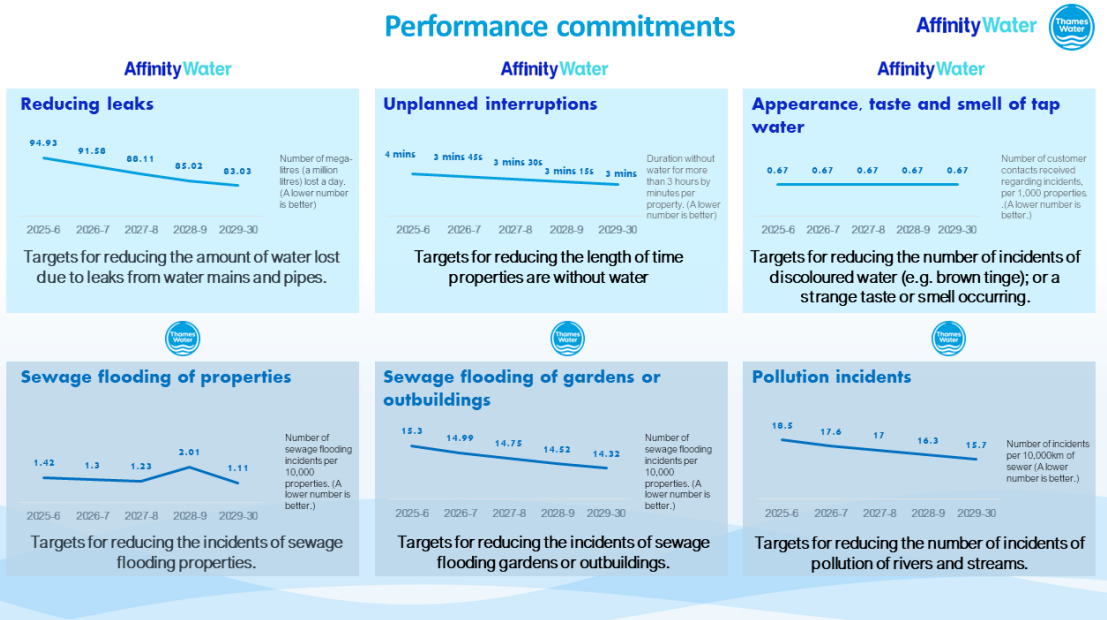
8.15pm-8.30pm

- SHOWCARD 53 and 54 – Take a look at an overview of those three plans that we have discussed tonight
 - Which would you vote for and why
- Explain that for this final session, we will be asking them to fill in a questionnaire individually which should take around 5 minutes.
- Completion of POST TASK (affordability only for bill payers)
- Ensure that inflation description is included within the post task

Appendices: Household Deliberative Stimulus Materials



Appendices: Household Deliberative Stimulus Materials



National Environment Programme for Water

- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground
- Treating water to avoid harm to the natural environment
- Reducing amount of water taken from sources that feed sensitive chalk streams

What we will do

- We are stopping using or reducing the amount of water we take from these sources, so we then need to look for alternative ways to supply water to customers

Target for 2025-2030:

- Affinity Water has a target of reducing abstraction by 22 million litres in its business plan for 2025-2030

REQUIRED

Water Resources Management

- Making sure there is enough water available in the future

What we will do

- Help customers reduce their usage
- Reduce leakage
- Bring in new supply sources like storing more water or transferring water from outside the region.

Target for 2025-2030:

- Affinity Water has a target in its plan to halve the chance of standpipes/rota cuts in a drought – likelihood 1in 100 years for 2025-2030

REQUIRED

National Environment Programme for Wastewater

- Reducing pollution of seas and rivers by sewage overflows
- Treating wastewater to a standard that doesn't harm the natural environment

What we will do

- Improve and increase the capacity of sewer network, reducing the number of sewage spills
- Improve sewage treatment processes to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers and causing problems

Target for 2025-2030:

- Reduce the number of sewage spills into rivers from each overflow pipe to 14.2 a year and reduce the amount of phosphorus entering rivers by 90%

REQUIRED

Improving water treatment

- Water companies must meet legal requirements for the quality and safety of drinking water
- This includes improving water treatment works to remove things such as nitrates and chemicals (eg PFAS*)

What we will do

- Upgrade water treatment works, increasing our ability to remove the contaminants from the water that we are now required to

Target for 2025-2030:

- Affinity Water has identified these activities in their 'must do' business plan for 2025-2030
- In addition, in this 'proposed' business plan, Affinity will also be investing to protect treatment works from increased flooding risk as well as enhancing the physical and cyber security of sites

VOLUNTARY

Reducing sewage flooding from severe storms

- Sewer flooding in homes, gardens and businesses happen when sewers become blocked or after heavy rainfall
- This also happens when the sewer system becomes full due to too much rainwater

What we will do

- Improve the sewer network to reduce the chance of sewage flooding
- Build nature-based solutions to slow down/stop rainwater from getting into sewers
- Reduce the number of customer 'misconnections' into sewers, e.g. rainwater from roofs

Target for 2025-2030:

- Reducing the chance of 6,655 properties being flooded with sewage after severe storms that on average happen once in 30 years

VOLUNTARY

*PFAS are chemicals that have been widely used since the 1940s that do not break down in the environment.

Appendices: Household And Non-Household Post-Task Questionnaire



3598
Affinity Water A&T Post-task

PROJECT MANAGER: [Click here for guidance on what to put in this section](#)
 Pls tick methodology, and where applicable nominate "back checking questions" (AKA "BCQs"). These must include the demographic questions.

Online only
 CATI only (DP: add QAX)
 CAPI/Tablet (If yes PM Nominate 3* Backchecking Questions:)QAZ2 Paper showcard? Y N
 CATI recruit for online/field (PM pls. Nominate BCQs:)QAZ3
 Field recruit for online/CATI (PM pls. Nominate BCQs:)QAZ1
 Recruit only (ie for quat)

Acceptability and Affordability Testing (Post-task)

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this research and complete this post-task, which is being conducted by Accent, an independent research agency.

Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the UK Market Research Society. If you would like to confirm Accent's credentials type Accent in the search box at: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide>.

IF MOBILE DEVICE SHOW: This survey is best undertaken on a tablet or a PC. If you do use a smartphone you can switch between desktop mode and mobile mode at any time by clicking the button at the bottom of the screen.

QA **ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY** Please can you confirm that your bill size is £#QSBILL#?

Yes
 No.....please specify

ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Affordability – Proposed Plan

SHOW TO CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY

Water bills change each year in line with inflation.

Inflation is the increase in prices paid for goods and services over time. Household incomes also change over time.

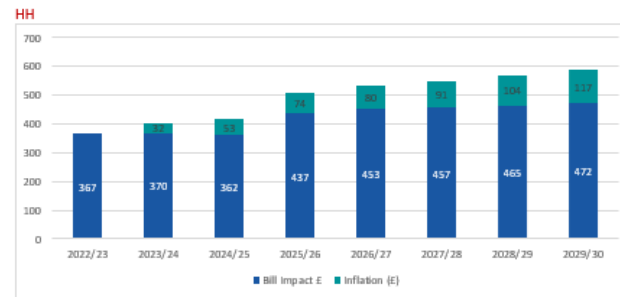
- If your household income keeps up with inflation (i. increases at the same rate), then you are likely to notice little difference in what you are paying for things.
- If inflation increases by a faster rate than your household income, then you are likely to have less money to go around.
- If your household income increases by a faster rate than inflation, then you are likely to have more money to go around.

The Bank of England aims to keep inflation at 2%, but it has recently been much higher than this. As well as changing by inflation each year, bills change by an amount set by Ofwat as part of their price review process every five years.

The proposed bills you will see from 2025 to 2030 include the Bank of England forecasts for inflation from 2025 to 2030, and proposed amounts to cover the investment in water and sewerage services needed over the next few years.

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart below shows these changes, as related to the proposed plan.

It also shows how inflation may impact on your bill, based on the Bank of England's inflation forecasts.



Q1. **ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY** Thinking about how HH your income/NHH your organisation's income may change in the future, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water and sewerage bills?

- Very easy
 Fairly easy
 Neither easy nor difficult
 Fairly difficult
 Very difficult
 Don't know

Q2. **ASK ALL** Based on everything you have heard and read about the Affinity Water and Thames Water's proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?

- Completely acceptable **GO TO Q4**
 Acceptable **GO TO Q4**
 Unacceptable **GO TO Q3**
 Completely unacceptable **GO TO Q3**
 Don't know/can't say

Q3. **IF Q2 = 3 OR 4** Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be unacceptable or completely unacceptable:

- Too expensive
- Water company profits too high
- The plan won't improve things enough/improvements too small
- Water companies should pay for more of these service improvements out of their profits
- The plan is poor value for money – it's not doing enough for the cost
- The plan doesn't focus on the right things
- HH /NHH My organisation won't be able to afford this
- I don't trust them to make these service improvements
- Plan isn't good enough for future generations
- I don't trust them to do what's best for their customers
- Plan is not environmentally friendly enough
- Other 1 – (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
- Other 2 – (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

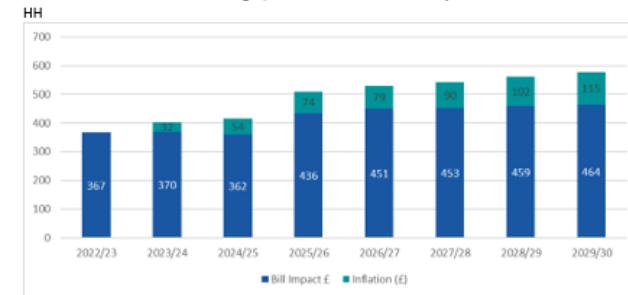
Q4. **IF Q2 = 1 OR 2** Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be acceptable or completely acceptable:

- It's not too expensive
- The plan is good value for money - it's doing a lot for the cost
- Their plan focuses on the right things
- I trust them to do what's best for their customers
- The plan will make big/good improvements to things
- I trust them to make these service improvements
- Plan is environmentally friendly
- HH /NHH My organisation will be able to afford this
- Plan is good for future generations
- Other 1 – (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
- Other 2 – (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Affordability – 'Must do' plan

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart below shows these changes, as related to the 'Must do' plan.



Appendices: Household And Non-Household Post-Task Questionnaire

Q5. ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Thinking about how HH your income/NHH your organisation's income may change in the future, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water and sewerage bills?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q6. ASK ALL. Based on everything you have heard and read about the Affinity Water & Thames Water's 'must do' business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?

- Completely acceptable **GO TO Q8**
- Acceptable **GO TO Q8**
- Unacceptable **GO TO Q7**
- Completely unacceptable **GO TO Q7**
- Don't know/can't say

Q7. IF Q6 = 3 OR 4 Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be unacceptable or completely unacceptable:

- Too expensive
- Water company profits too high
- The plan won't improve things enough/improvements too small
- Water companies should pay for more of these service improvements out of their profits
- The plan is poor value for money - it's not doing enough for the cost
- The plan doesn't focus on the right things
- HH /NHH My organisation won't be able to afford this
- I don't trust them to make these service improvements
- Plan isn't good enough for future generations
- I don't trust them to do what's best for their customers
- Plan is not environmentally friendly enough
- Other 1 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
- Other 2 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

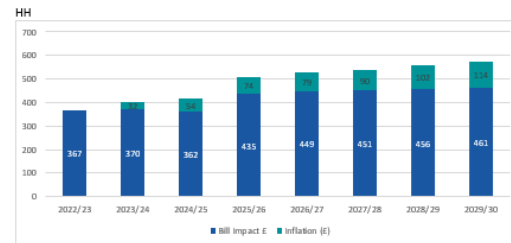
Q8. IF Q6 = 1 OR 2 Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be acceptable or completely acceptable:

- It's not too expensive
- The plan is good value for money - it's doing a lot for the cost
- Their plan focuses on the right things
- I trust them to do what's best for their customers
- The plan will make big/good improvements to things
- I trust them to make these service improvements
- Plan is environmentally friendly
- HH /NHH My organisation will be able to afford this
- Plan is good for future generations
- Other 1 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
- Other 2 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Affordability – Alternative/Slowed plan

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart below shows these changes, as related to the Alternative/Slowed plan.



Q9. ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Thinking about how HH your income/NHH your organisation's income may change in the future, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water and sewerage bills?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q10. ASK ALL. Based on everything you have heard and read about the Affinity Water & Thames Water's alternative/slowed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?

- Completely acceptable **GO TO Q8**
- Acceptable **GO TO Q8**
- Unacceptable **GO TO Q7**
- Completely unacceptable **GO TO Q7**
- Don't know/can't say

Q11. IF Q6 = 3 OR 4 Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be unacceptable or completely unacceptable:

- Too expensive
- Water company profits too high
- The plan won't improve things enough/improvements too small
- Water companies should pay for more of these service improvements out of their profits

The plan is poor value for money - it's not doing enough for the cost
 The plan doesn't focus on the right things
 HH /NHH My organisation won't be able to afford this
 I don't trust them to make these service improvements
 Plan isn't good enough for future generations
 I don't trust them to do what's best for their customers
 Plan is not environmentally friendly enough
 Other 1 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
 Other 2 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

Q12. IF Q6 = 1 OR 2 Why do you say that? Please select the TWO main reasons from the list below or write in your own reason(s) if not on the list: **ROTATE EXCEPT FOR OTHER 1 AND OTHER 2**

Reasons for why it might be acceptable or completely acceptable:

- It's not too expensive
- The plan is good value for money - it's doing a lot for the cost
- Their plan focuses on the right things
- I trust them to do what's best for their customers
- The plan will make big/good improvements to things
- I trust them to make these service improvements
- Plan is environmentally friendly
- HH /NHH My organisation will be able to afford this
- Plan is good for future generations
- Other 1 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**
- Other 2 - (please specify) **DP ADD TEXT BOX**

Your Preferences

Q13. ASK ALL Of the business plans you have seen today, which one do you prefer overall?

- Proposed business plan
- 'Must do' business plan
- Alternative/slowed business plan

Q14. ASK ALL Why do you say that?

[OPEN-ENDED] - DP ADD TEXT BOX

Q15. ASK ALL Long term investment by Affinity Water & Thames Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. For example, there could be increases now for current bill payers, or bigger increases in the long term for future generations. Which one of the following options would you prefer?

- An increase in bills starting sooner, spreading increases across different generations of bill-payers
- An increase in bills starting later, putting more of the increases onto younger and future bill-payers
- I don't know enough at the moment to give an answer

Q16. ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY To what extent, if at all, do you trust Affinity Water and Thames Water to deliver their proposed plan by 2030?

- Trust them to deliver it all
- Trust them to deliver some of it
- Trust them to deliver a little of it
- Don't trust them to deliver it

Q17. ASK CURRENT HH AND NON-HH ONLY Why do you say that? **SELECT TWO, RANDOMISE**

Please select two answers.

- Their give me a good service
- Their services are good value for money
- They keep their service promises to their customers
- They don't update their customers on how they are delivering
- They don't give me a good service
- Their services are poor value for money
- Shareholders are more important to them than customers
- They will want to put their bills up by more than this
- Their customers are their top priority

Q18. ASK ALL How easy, or otherwise, was it for you to decide which plan you preferred?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

Classification Questions

Q19. Thank you. Would you be willing to be contacted again if we need to clarify any of the answers you have given today? And would you be willing to be invited to take part in other research for Affinity Water and Thames Water?

- Yes, for both clarification and further research
- Yes, for clarification only
- Yes, for further research only
- No

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential. We will securely store the data given in this interview for a period of 12 months (for reference purposes) before securely destroying it.

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Recruitment Questionnaire



3598 Thames Water and Affinity Water A&T Face-to-Face Deliberative Workshops (3.5-hour) NHH (micro) Recruitment Questionnaire

RQ NUMBER (ON PARTICIPANT LIST): URN:
Interviewer name: Interviewer no:
Date: Time:

Checked (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Quality controlled by on . RECRUIT RESERVE
Added to participant list/log on by Are you sure? Y / N
If depth, executive informed by email on by Acknowledged by exec? Y / N

Confirmation letter/email (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Confirmation sent via by on by (initials)

IF CONFIRMATION SENT BY EMAIL, PHONE & CHECK IF RECEIVED A FEW MINUTES AFTER EMAIL SENT:

Has email been received? Call made on by (initials)

Confirmation call (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

IF 24 HRS AHEAD OF GROUPS/DEPTHS – THEN UPDATE STATUS ON LIST OR LOG OF PARTICIPANTS FOR MODERATOR/EXEC

Confirmation call made on (date and time): on by

PRE TASK STATUS (IF APPLICABLE): OUTCOME:

I hereby confirm that I have read again the date, time and all other venue details needed for the participant to attend the group/take part in the depth interview and ensured that they had all this information available and diarised. Signed:

Contact details for F2F Events – INTERVIEWER SECTION

PARTICIPANT NAME	
BUSINESS/ORGANISATION NAME	
PARTICIPANT ROLE/JOB TITLE	
ADDRESS (only if postal confirmation needed)	
LANDLINE TELEPHONE NUMBER	MOBILE
EMAIL ADDRESS (read back and double-check)	
Anything else? (taxi, parking to reimburse, dietary requirements, probs, misc.)	

RECRUIT RESERVE IF RESERVE, DON'T PUT THROUGH AS "1. CONTINUE" ON ACCIS – EXPLAIN WHY IN RESERVE BELOW PLEASE:

Call back by: at (time)

IF RESERVE TO BE CALLED BACK BY A CERTAIN TIME, PLEASE SCHEDULE AS DEFINITE APPOINTMENT ON ACCIS

Quotas/group structure – INTERVIEWER SECTION

NHH micro organisations:

- 0-9 employees

- All must be Thames Water or Affinity Water customers
- All must be current billpayers (joint or solely)

Source:

- Water company-supplied samples
- Free-find (if supplied sample doesn't yield sufficient recruits)

Event	4
Location (recruitment geography)	Slough-Windsor
Water company	Thames-Affinity
Date	16 May 2023
Time	18:00 – 21:30
Venue location	Holiday Inn Slough - Windsor Church Street, Slough, SL1 2NH
Total sample	6
Number of employees	Min 3 sole traders Min 3 1-9 employees
Operating industry (Q13)	Recruit a mix
Degree of reliance on water (QQ10)	Recruit a mix
Number of sites (Q9)	

- All NHH participants must be Thames Water & Affinity Water customers, regardless of who issues their bills.
- NHH participants should have senior responsibility for water and wastewater services (or other issues related to water) within the business.

Introduction

Q1. Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Scout, on behalf of Thames Water (Affinity Water) and Accent. Please could I speak to #name on database#/the person responsible for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

- IF "NO" TRY AND PERSUADE ELSE THANK & CLOSE
- IF "CALL BACK" PLEASE RECORD DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT ON ACCIS, THANK AND CLOSE
- IF "YES" PLEASE PROCEED TO SCREENING SECTION

WHEN SPEAKING TO APPROPRIATE CONTACT CONTINUE WITH SCREENING

Screening

Please may I speak to #name on database#/the person responsible for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

WHEN SPEAKING TO THE CORRECT CONTACT REPEAT TEXT ABOVE & CONTINUE:

The research is being conducted under the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that any answers you give will be treated in confidence.

Thames Water & Affinity Water are wanting to understand business customers' views on their proposed plans – now and in the future. This is an exciting opportunity for you to help the company shape their short- and long-term plans to meet the needs of all types of customers, including business customers of all sizes.

We're looking for business customers to help us in this research project which will consist of two phases:

- First stage: a 20-minute homework exercise, to be completed before taking part
- Second stage: participation at an in-person discussion group together with other Thames & Affinity Water customers. This will last for 3.5 hours and will be held in an accessible venue in #location of venue#. The time includes time for comfort breaks and refreshments (which will be provided).

As a thank you for your time and contribution to the research, you will receive a total of £250, including completing both the first and second stages. Alternatively, we can make a donation of the same amount to the charity WaterAid, if you would prefer.

This call may be recorded for quality control purposes.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: SAMPLE SOURCE IS: #recruiter database/free-find#

INTCHECK. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ADVISED THE PARTICIPANT OF:

MRS Code of Conduct
Calls being recorded

INTCHECK2. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ASKED AND CHECKED THAT THE PARTICIPANT IS NOT TAKING THE INTERVIEW ON A MOBILE DEVICE AND/OR WHILE DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Yes, it is safe for the participant to proceed
No, it isn't safe – we need to call back later GO TO APPT SCREEN

Q2. Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party not involved in the research, unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes
No THANK AND CLOSE

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Recruitment Questionnaire

Q3. Do you or any of your close family work, or have worked, in the recent past in the water sector, including for Thames/Affinity Water, or in the Market Research profession?

Yes **THANK AND CLOSE**
No

Q4. Have you ever participated in a market research group discussion? **IF YES, PROBE WHEN**

Yes, in last six months **THANK AND CLOSE**
Yes, between 6 months and 2 years ago **GO TO Q5**
over 2 years ago **GO TO Q7**
No **GO TO Q7**

ONE THIRD OF RECRUITS MUST HAVE NEVER BEEN TO A GROUP DISCUSSION BEFORE

Q5. How many groups have you been to in that period?

1
2-3
More than 3 **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q6. What was the subject matter of the groups you attended? **PROBE AND WRITE DOWN**

IF WATER THANK AND CLOSE

Q7. Can I just check, do you have decision making responsibility, either solely or jointly, for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

Yes
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q8. Does your business operate from a separate commercial premises (ie: office/workshop/factory/retail space) or from a residential premises?

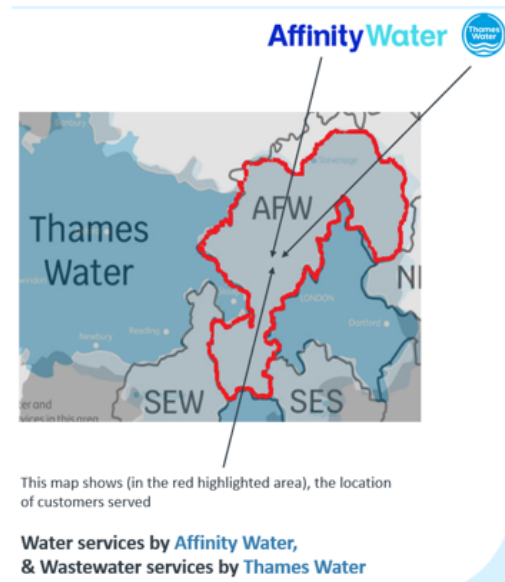
Separate commercial premises
Residential premises **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q8b. What is the postcode of the business? If you have more than one business premises, answer for the main site or the site you work at most often. We are looking for participants in specific areas to take part in this research, and your postcode will be used to ensure you are in scope for this research.

Capture postcode

CHECK POSTCODE TO ENSURE THAT PARTICIPANT IS IN THE CORRECT GEOGRAPHY FOR THE EVENT BEING RECRUITED TO AND HAS THE CORRECT WATER/WASTEWATER COMPANY

Q9. Please look at the following map. How many sites does your business operate within the Thames/Affinity Water supply area?



This map shows (in the red highlighted area), the location of customers served

**Water services by Affinity Water,
& Wastewater services by Thames Water**

Zero **THANK AND CLOSE**

1
2
3 or more

RECRUIT A MIX ACROSS WHOLE SAMPLE

Q10. How much do you agree or disagree that on a day-to-day basis, your business depends on its water supply in order to operate?

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

RECRUIT A MIX

Q10b. How much is your business's water bill?

£___ Per year **CAPTURE FOR INFORMATION**

£___ Per month

Q10c. IF BILL AMOUNT EXPRESSED PER MONTH AT Q10b How many monthly payments do you make for your water bill each year?

10
12
Other (please specify)

CALCULATE ANNUAL WATER BILL BY MULTIPLYING MONTHLY BILL BY NUMBER OF MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Q10c. Provide customer's annual water bill (from sample file or as provided by customer as monthly/annual amount).

£___ per year

Q11. Is your business billed directly by your water company for the service they supply or is it included in your business rent?

Billed directly
Included in rent **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q12. Is your business billed directly by your water company for the service they supply or is it included in your business rent?

Billed directly
Included in rent **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q13. How many employees does your organisation have?

None, sole trader **ELIGIBLE FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT (MINIMUM 3 PER EVENT)**
1-9 employees **ELIGIBLE FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT (MINIMUM 3 PER EVENT)**
10 to 49 employees **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT, BUT CONSIDER FOR S/M/L BUSINESS DEPTHS: SEE RQ**
50 to 249 employees **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT, BUT CONSIDER FOR S/M/L BUSINESS DEPTHS: SEE RQ**
250+ employees **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT, BUT CONSIDER FOR S/M/L BUSINESS DEPTHS: SEE RQ**

Q14. Which of the following best defines the core activity of your organisation?

Agriculture, forestry and fishing
Mining and quarrying
Energy or water service & supply
Manufacturing
Construction
Wholesale and retail trade (including motor vehicles repair)
Transport and storage
Hotels & catering
IT and Communication
Finance and insurance activities
Real estate activities
Professional, scientific and technical activities
Administrative and Support Service Activities
Public administration and defence

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Recruitment Questionnaire

Education
Human health and social work activities
Arts, entertainment and recreation
Other service activities
Other (please specify)
Prefer not to say **THANK AND CLOSE**

RECRUIT A MIX

Q15. What is your job title?

Q16. Finally, can I please take the name of the business?

Invitation: Group F2F Event

Thank you for answering those questions. Would you be interested in participating in this research project on behalf of Thames & Affinity Water? All research will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW**
No **TRY TO PERSUADE/THANK AND CLOSE**

Thank you. As I mentioned earlier the research will consist of:

- **First stage:** a 20-minute homework exercise, to be completed before taking part
- **Second stage:** participation at an in-person discussion group together with other **Thames & Affinity Water** customers. This will last for 4.5 hours and will be held in an accessible venue in **#location of venue#**. The time includes time for comfort breaks and refreshments (which will be provided).

Again, you will receive a total of **£250**, including completing both the first and second stages of the research. Alternatively, we can make a donation of the same amount to the charity WaterAid, if you would prefer.

Would you be willing to commit yourself to both stages of the process to help inform Thames & Affinity Water's future plans?

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW**
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

There will be up to 8 other people at the research event. Like you, they will be sharing views on the water company's short- and long-term plans on behalf of their business.

PRE-TASK

ADVISE PARTICIPANT ABOUT PRE-TASKS: We will email details outlining the Stage 1 homework exercises. These **must** be completed before you attend the group sessions, but they shouldn't take too long to complete and hopefully you will find them interesting and informative.

We will be asking you to download an app onto your mobile device for completion of the homework exercises. The app is quick and fun to use and you will be incentivised fully for your commitment to each part.

If you would rather receive a paper copy of the homework exercise please note that we will need these returning by post before you attend the event. **INTERVIEWER TO CAPTURE IF PAPER TASK REQUIRED AND CAPTURE POSTAL ADDRESS FOR DISPATCH OF REMINDER TASK IF ORIGINAL NOT RETURNED.**

VERY IMPORTANT. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU HAVE EXPLAINED ALL ABOUT THE PRE-TASK.

Q17. Is the participant clear about the pre-tasks?

Yes
No **THEN RE-EXPLAIN**

Q18. Did the participant say they would do the pre-tasks?

Yes
No **THEN PERSUADE POLITELY AND REITERATE REQUIREMENTS**

Q19. Will the pre-task be completed via the app or on a paper copy?

Email/App **COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS**
Paper **HAND OVER COPY TOGETHER WITH SAE**

ASK ALL: DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING CONSENT

DATA COLLECTION & SHARING CONSENT

The face-to-face discussion may be joined by representatives of Thames & Affinity Water and/or their independent customer challenge group, so they can watch the discussion and learn as much from it as possible. They will not participate in the discussion directly but will be on hand to answer any technical questions about their future plans, if required. In addition, members of Ofwat and CCW, who regulate the water sector and are the voice of water customers, may be present to observe the discussions.

The discussion will be audio recorded for analysis purposes and to ensure accuracy. All recordings will be securely stored for a period of 12 months (for reference purposes) before being destroyed.

In our reporting of the findings from this research everything that you say will remain confidential and will be reported in grouped format only.

Please confirm that is OK.

Yes **CONTINUE**

No **HOLD IN RESERVE OR THANK AND CLOSE**

Q20. The face-to-face discussion group will take place on:

Date	Time	Place
See above	See above	See above

Would you be able to attend? **REASSURE & PERSUADE**
IF PARTICIPANT AGREES, CONFIRM DATE, TIME, LOCATION then continue:

Great, thanks. I'll just take a few details and will let you get on with your day. We will send you more information by email shortly with details of the next steps and arrangements for the discussion group.

If for any reason you find you are unable to attend, please could you let me know as soon as possible so that we can invite someone else to take your place?

Please contact us on **xxxxxxx** if you have any queries about your incentive. Thank you.

RECRUITER: Please ensure you have filled in the cover page of the RQ, including email address and mobile number of participant, then complete the following confirmations.

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

Recruiter Confirmations

RECRUITER – VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU FULLY READ OUT THE DATA SHARING AND CONSENT QUESTION, AND THAT IT MADE SENSE TO BOTH YOU AND THE PARTICIPANT.

Yes

Q21. **IS THE PARTICIPANT CLEAR ABOUT THE PRE-TASK & DID THEY SAY THEY WOULD COMPLETE IT?**

Clear
Will complete

MRS DECLARATION

Q22. I confirm that this interview was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct and is completely confidential

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE ENSURE YOU REMOVE THIS PAGE BEFORE RETURNING THIS RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE TO ACCENT

PROPERTY NAME OR NUMBER	
2 ND LINE OF ADDRESS	
TOWN/VILLAGE	
POSTCODE	


Appendices: Non-Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task One

On the first slide there is a map of England and Wales that shows Thames Water's operating area:

Background to water industry

There are a number of different companies in the water industry who serve water customers to ensure their water is safe, reliable and environmentally friendly



England and Wales are served by 17 different water companies; some provide just drinking water, others take-away sewage as well. Companies in the same area work together to plan for the future in their region, and work with the other regional groups across England to make sure there is enough water for everyone.

Unlike with gas and electricity, customers cannot 'switch' water company, because your water company is dictated by the area you live in, and is therefore a monopoly. This is why Ofwat regulate all water companies; to ensure fairness for all customers.

Businesses don't pay their bills directly to the water companies – they are billed by "retailers"

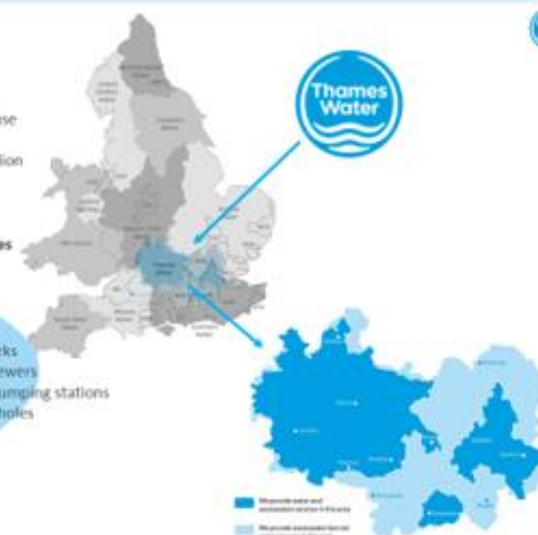
3

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Two

Next you will see some key facts about the customers that Thames Water serves and the infrastructure that it manages:

Where we work...



- We serve 15 million customers. However they don't all use both our water and wastewater services
- We supply **water** to 10 million of our customers (3.5 million properties).
- Other water companies supply the other 5 million customers (2 million properties).
- We supply 15 million customers with **wastewater services**
- This means we don't bill all of our customers directly
- We also serve 250,000 businesses

We operate

- 97 water treatment works
- 26 raw water reservoirs
- 308 pumping stations
- 235 clean water service reservoirs

We have

- 351 sewage works
- 100,000km of sewers
- 4,780 sewage pumping stations
- 1.2 million manholes

4

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Non-Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Three

This provides a bit of background on why Thames Water wants to hear from you:

The role of research

Ofwat & business plan

- Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department.
- They are responsible for making sure that water companies are regulated to provide consumers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price.
- Every five years, water companies develop a 'business plan' that sets out how they want to develop their services, and the proposed cost to customers.
- As customers are not able to choose their water company, water companies must give them a say about what they want from their services and the price they pay.

Customer's priorities

- Talking to customers also helps water companies prioritise what to do first or what to do most of – because they are not able to fund everything they would like to do or do all of the things that customers might want them to do.
- The business plan and prices are then finalised by Ofwat in a process known as the Price Review.
- There is more information about this here: 'All about the price review'. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWmivC3A8g>

Research matters

- One of the ways that people have their say is through this research, which will explain what the plans are for where you live, and ask what you think – whether the plans are 'acceptable' to you and whether you can afford the proposed bills from 2025-2030.
- Companies also have to show to Ofwat that their plans reflect what their customers want – that means refining the plans based on what customers tell them.

The water industry today

<h4>Water companies</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take water from the environment (e.g. rivers), treat it so it's safe to drink, and return it safely to the environment after use Build and maintain infrastructure (like pipes) to supply water to homes and businesses 	<h4>dwi Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes sure the water supplied in England and Wales is safe and that drinking water quality is acceptable for customers 	<h4>CCW Consumer Council for Water</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent customers on matters relating to water Investigate complaints and provide advice to ensure water services remain fair for customers
<h4>Environment Agency</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects and enhances the environment Works with water companies to ensure operations and plans develop in a sustainable way 	<h4>Defra Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government department responsible for protecting the environment and countryside, including water 	<h4>Ofwat Office of Water Services (Ofwat)</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regulator that makes sure water companies do their job properly, including fair pricing for customers and ensuring there is always a reliable water supply

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Four

The next slide shows you what Thames Water does and the service it provides:

Thames Water and the water cycle

Thames Water takes water from rivers and natural underground stores and turns it into high quality drinking water. It then delivers the drinking water through a water pipe network to homes and businesses. Once the water has been used (i.e., wastewater that goes down sinks and toilets) it is collected in the sewer network. It ends up at sewage treatment works where the water is treated and safely returned to rivers.

What does Thames Water do?

Extract water from rivers and aquifers	Clean water so it is safe to use	Take wastewater away (i.e. sewage)	Treat and recycle wastewater	Produce and send bills to customers	Read water meters to produce accurate bills
Deliver water to household and business taps	Fix leaks on pipes	Return water to rivers	Clean up sewage floods and blockages	Make it easy for customers to contact Thames Water	Deal with requests, queries and complaints
Help customers to use less water	Make sure there is enough water in future	Prevent pollution from sewers and sewage works	Produce and use renewable energy	Provide customers with helpful information	Support customers that need extra help
Water		Wastewater and rivers		Customer Service	

Household only

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Five

The next slides give you some information about how Thames Water's performance is monitored by OFWAT, the independent regulator, and how to read the graphs you will see in the following slides:

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies have to provide reliable services, and plan for their services to be resilient to changing weather patterns and demand from consumers.

Companies can miss or exceed performance commitment targets for a number of reasons. For example, leaks from pipes happen more often after very cold weather, which can contribute to a company not meeting the target, and flooding from sewers is less likely in dry weather, which can lead to higher performance for sewer flooding service targets.

If a water company **misses a target** then they receive a penalty which can translate to a **small decrease in customer bills** to reflect the **poorer service** that customers have received.

If the water company meets or **exceeds a target** then they can receive a reward which translates to a **small increase in customer bills** to reflect the **improvement in service**.

In Ofwat's most recent assessment of penalties and rewards, Thames Water had to return £5.1m to customers because of missed targets on water treatment works compliance, pollution incidents and internal sewer flooding across 2021-22. This will reduce the average Household customer's annual bill by £13.50, and business bills by 1.6%.

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies are currently part way through their five-year business plan for 2020 to 2025. They have service level targets, called 'performance commitments', in every five-year business plan. These targets are based on what customers have previously told companies they would like them to do, and on Ofwat's assessment of what companies should deliver. These targets cover a wide range of the different services that water companies provide.

Ofwat monitors water company performance against each performance commitment every year to see if they have met the service level in their business plan.

We are now going to show you how well your water and/or sewerage company is doing on some of their performance commitments, compared to other water companies in England and Wales.

These performance commitments are a snapshot of out of the wide range of services companies provide. We are showing these examples as customers have told us they are particularly important to them.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Non-Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Six

We will now show you how Thames Water has performed against some of the key targets, and a comparison to other water and wastewater companies.

An explanation on what's contained on these slides is shown below:

How to read comparison information

We will later show you 6 pages displaying water companies' performance. The blue boxes below show you how to read the data.

This slide tells you the type of performance commitment.

This summarises how well Thames Water did on meeting the target.

The chart shows how well each company performs. Blue = at or better than target. Pink = poorer than target. Shorter bar = better. Dashed line = target.

More information on what is being measured and how.

The table shows performance against the target and how far from the target. Blue = at or better than target. Pink = poorer/below target. Smaller number = better (which means -52% is better than -20%).

We know that graphs can sometimes be difficult to read. Please be assured that this information is provided for background only. Don't worry if you don't understand everything - we are happy to explain when we meet.

This first slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water supply interruptions**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of the **appearance, taste and smell of tap water**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding inside properties**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding of gardens and outbuildings**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water leakage from their network**:

The last one in this section shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **causing pollution of rivers and streams**:

That's all the graphs and tables for now.

Please write in whether you have any questions or comments about the Thames Water's performance on those key measures:

Introduction to Task Seven

Please take a look at this slide. It tells you about your water bill and how every £1 of your bill is spent across, for example, water and wastewater running costs, and investment to improve infrastructure for the future:

Breakdown of every £1 we spend

46p – infrastructure
This includes 3p for the Thames Tideway tunnel, which will divert millions of tonnes of sewage from the river Thames when it goes into operation.

19p – essential services
We deliver and recycle billions of litres of water everyday.

15p – our team
From engineers to scientists, we invest in over 7,000 people who help keep our water flowing.

8p – lenders
To invest in our network, we borrow money at efficient rates while keeping our bills as low as we can.

7p – powering our sites
We currently generate more than 20% of our own energy to help protect the environment.

5p – the government
In 2021/2022 we paid over £88 million in business rates and for employers' national insurance contribution.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Eight

The next two slides will introduce you to Thames Water's proposed Business Plan. We will discuss this at the face to face session but this gives you some information before we meet.

The first one shows broadly how the plan is presented.

Thames Water's Proposed Business Plan

The following slides outline Thames Water's proposed business plan for the period 2025-2030.

These slides explain what Thames Water proposes to do in the 5 years between 2025 and 2030 and the targets for key elements of its business plan.

The business plan is made up of 3 types of elements:

- 1 PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS**
 - All water companies across England and Wales have to do these things, so they are included in all water companies' business plans.
 - As you have just seen, water companies' performance is measured on these things.
 - Each water company will have different annual targets for these elements between 2025 and 2030.
 - You will see 6 of these, all related to Thames Water only.
- 2 REQUIRED ENHANCEMENTS**
 - As well as the 6 Performance Commitments, there are additional things that Thames Water is **required** to do between 2025 and 2030.
 - You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see a **red** 'REQUIRED' stamp next to them.
- 3 VOLUNTARY ENHANCEMENTS**
 - Finally, there are things that Thames Water has **chosen** to do in addition, to improve further or to reduce the chance of things going wrong.
 - You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see an **orange** 'VOLUNTARY' stamp next to them.

Appendices: Non-Household Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Nine

Before we get together, please answer the question below about the affordability of your current water and sewerage bill.

NHH customers only: Question: Please write in your organisation's current water and sewerage services bill for the most recent 12 months, including site area (surface water) drainage where relevant: £

NHH customers only: Question: How easy or difficult is it for your organisation to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill?

Please answer one only:

1. Very easy
2. Fairly easy
3. Neither easy nor difficult
4. Fairly difficult
5. Very difficult
6. Don't know

NHH customers only: Question: Which of the following aspects of service is most important for the day-to-day operation of your business?

Please rank in order of importance with 1 being most important. Equal ranking are allowed.

1. A reliable water supply service – not prone to interruptions
2. Consistent water pressure
3. Reliable and consistent water supply quality (taste, smell, appearance of water)
4. Responsive customer service when there is a problem
5. Accurate bills
6. Reliable removal and treatment of water used at the business premises
7. Reliable removal of rainwater from the site
8. Other – specify:

NHH customers only: Question: What are your business's expectations for future water and sewerage services – what would you most like to see improved?

1. A reliable water supply service – not prone to interruptions
2. Consistent water pressure
3. Reliable and consistent water supply quality (taste, smell, appearance of water)
4. Responsive customer service when there is a problem
5. Accurate bills
6. Reliable removal and treatment of water used at the business premises
7. Reliable removal of rainwater from the site

All customers: Question: As we mentioned at the beginning of this pre-task, we will start the session discussing your reactions to the information you have just seen. As you've read through it, please list the 3 or 4 things that are new / interesting / surprising to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Please have these to hand during the research group discussion

We are looking forward to meeting you. If you have any questions before the session please contact us at: omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

See you very soon.

Nancy and the rest of the research team
Accent Research Team

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Deliberative Discussion Guide

3598 Thames/Thames A&AT (4 ½ Hours)
Draft Deliberative Structure – NHH Sessions



Event Timetable

- 4pm-4.15pm – Meet, Greet, Seat; Session Introduction
- 4.15pm-5.00pm – Session 1 (Warm-up, Recap, Long Term Context, Temperature Check)
- 5.00pm-5.15pm – Comfort/Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches
- 5.15pm-6.45pm – Session 2 (PROPOSED Plan)
- 6.45pm-7.15pm – Comfort/Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches
- 7.15pm-8.15pm Session 3 (MUST DO Plan – THEN ALTERNATIVE – Phasing of WINEP)
- 8.15pm-8.30pm – Individual task (post task)

Meet, Greet, Seat and Session Introduction

4pm-4.15pm

- Show the agenda for the sessions on the each screen
- Explain that we are an independent, impartial research agency
- Explain that we are here tonight on behalf of Thames Water who are looking for their view and input into the Business Plan - Remember that Thames Water are the provider of your clean and wastewater
- Remind customers that we are focusing on the Wholesale part of the water company operations and now billing/customer service, etc
- We are looking for everyone's views this evening and looking for everyone to contribute
- No comments are attributed to you by name
- No right or wrong answers to any of the questions we will ask – it's your opinion that matters. Of course, your views might be different from those of others, and that's natural – in fact it helps to stimulate discussion, which is really useful for us as researchers
- Please remain respectful of others' opinions and experiences if they are different from your own
- We are aiming to have a discussion and at the end of the session, you will have a chance to fill-in a short questionnaire individually
- Tell everyone how long we will be here and session structure (comfort breaks)
- Explain fire drills/exits
- Introduce the Client Representatives and any ICG
 - explain that these individuals are here to view the process and not take part
 - they are not here to answer questions and want to listen as they are very interested in their views
 - they shouldn't influence the discussions in any way so please be honest and don't let them affect your responses
 - **Moderator Note: if there are any specific questions then we can ask the Thames observer but try to minimise this and avoid it becoming a Q&A for the observer – there is a lot of discussion to cover and we will not reach a point of perfect information**

Session 1 – Warm-Up, Pre-Task, £ Temp Check, LTP

4.15pm-5pm

This breakout group will focus on warm-up to ensure participants are comfortable, recap the pre-task materials, provide baseline views on the company, provide a financial temperature check and include the long term plan review

- Settle everyone in break out space
- Thank everyone for doing their pre-task exercises
- Introduce yourself ice breaker
 - Name
 - Business they work for
 - How big is the company (staff/t/o)
 - What does the Business do
 - Operating context - How much does the Business rely on water, in what ways e.g. manufacturing process, etc, how much does the business use water, any demand management strategies
 - Job title and responsibilities
 - Any key challenges facing the business
- **MODERATOR NOTE – REITERATE SAFE SPACE AND WE WELCOME DIFFERENT VIEWS AND ENSURE EVERYONE COMFORTABLE AND HAPPY TO CONTINUE**
- Remind that we are here to discuss the Business Plan for Thames Water but first we want to find out a bit about their thoughts on the pre-task
- Think back to the pre-task you read through (PRE-TASK SHOWCARDS PRINTED FOR REFERENCE)
 - Baseline Comprehension:
 - Was there anything in the material you read which you felt was difficult to understand?
 - We showed you information that compared Thames Water's performance with other water companies' performance on 6 factors; water interruptions, sewage flooding, leaks etc. How easy or difficult was it to understand this information?
 - Baseline Awareness:
 - What did you know about Thames Water before you read through the materials?
 - What surprised you most out of the things you have read?
 - What would you most like to find out more about?
 - Baseline Perceptions:
 - How does the business feel about Thames Water – scale -ve 1-10 +ve
 - Reasons for scores
 - Has any of the information you have seen changed your opinion Thames Water in any way?
 - Baseline Priorities:
 - Think about your business needs and particular circumstances, where do you think Thames Water should focus improvements/investment

- Before we start talking about the Business Plan, we want to find out about how the company feels about current economic situation
 - How do you feel at the moment about business finances, levels of confidence, etc
 - And how do you think that might change in the next 5 years
 - How do you feel about your water bill
 - How would you rate Thames Water on value for money 'for your water / wastewater services'
- Okay now we want to talk about the long term picture
 - All water companies need to plan for the longer term future to ensure that the services will be appropriate for future generations of service users, bill payers, wider society and the environment.
 - Before we begin looking at the Business Plan for 2025-2030, we want to share with you some of Thames Water's longer term plans and goals. These go as far as 2050 – these plans and goals will give you a sense of what they are planning and where they see their priorities.
 - When you look at this longer term plan, we want you to think about it from a range of different perspectives:
 - SHOWCARD 24 - 1) service users 2) bill payers. 3) citizen 4) society – please note that these overlap so if you are a bill payer, you are probably a service user and a citizen and member of society
 - SHOWCARD 25 – Long term plan (Thames Water)
 - Overall views on the challenges
 - From what you have seen about the ambitions and aims, do you feel the long term plan focuses on the right areas
 - What makes you think this?
 - What do others think – agree/disagree?
 - Is there any difference if you think about this as a Bill Payers, Service Users, Citizens, Society? (Please note – change of emphasis above as we can't ask whether it goes far enough, too far or just right as these ambitions/aims are not measurable)
- SHOWCARD 27 - Phasing – Explain concept of phasing
 - Before we have a break, we want to talk to you about some of the choices a water company has to make when they are putting together their Business Plans
 - Water companies can choose to improve performance or invest in service enhancements at different times depending on customer priorities and depending on their funding, and we will be asking you for your view on this later on.
 - After the break we are going to be focusing on the shorter term Business Plan for 2025-2030 that we shared with you in the pre-task.
 - We are interested to see whether there are things in there that you would say could be done later – this means that investment would not be made now but made between 2030-2050
 - What do you think about the different options presented here

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Deliberative Discussion Guide

- Option A – pay more now, get more now
- Option B – pay less now, get less now but catch up later
- Which do you prefer and why
- How do you feel about Option B where investment gets made later which might mean that future generations would need to contribute more

Tea, Coffee, Sandwiches, Stretch, Comfort

5pm-5.15pm

Session 2 – Response to PROPOSED Plan

5.15pm-6.45pm

This session will focus on the PROPOSED Plan

10 MINS

- Welcome everyone back to the table.
- SHOWCARDS 30 and 32 PROPOSED PLAN SHOWING DISTINCTION BETWEEN REQUIRED AND VOLUNTARY WITH BILL CHANGE BASED ON AVERAGE % INCREASE
- Explain that this session will be focusing on the PROPOSED Business Plan that is on these two slides on the screen (toggle between slide 30 and 33 as a reminder). This is the information that we shared during the pre-task and we want to understand more about how you all feel about it.
- Before we get in to the nitty gritty – we need to explain that Thames Water have undertaken customer research, stakeholder research and that this plan reflects their priorities as well as where the business feel they need to invest to ensure a resilient water and wastewater service to meet the demand of Thames Water customers.
- We do need to be clear that what we are sharing with you does not include the full Business Plan as this would take too long to go through – instead Ofwat and Thames Water have selected the elements of day-to-day service that are most important to customers, as well as the investments in improvements that will have the biggest impact on your bills.
- It includes elements that Thames Water must do in the 2025-2030 period – these are on Slide 33 as a red flag and say REQUIRED - these include things like making sure there is enough water in future and not polluting rivers.
- It also includes VOLUNTARY service enhancements that Thames Water feels are important and these have orange flags e.g. Making the water supply more reliable
- Later on you will see the bill impact based on your own company bill but during this part of the discussion, we are going to look at the average % increase. This includes some predictions for inflation which we will share at the end.
- SHOWCARDS 30 and 33 - Brief initial response to the overall plan
 - What did you feel was good about the plan?
 - What did you feel was not good about the plan?
 - What would you want to change?
- Let's now break the plan down into different sections and get your views on each part.

30 MINS (5 mins per PC)

- SHOWCARD 30 - OVERALL PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
- Explain that we are going to focus on the six performance commitments in more detail.
- You will see here that this slide reflects their actual performance now and how they are looking for that to improve
 - Any comments or observations before we break these down further
 - **MODERATOR NOTE THAT THESE GO TO 2050**
- SHOWCARD 31 and 32 - RESPONSE TO 6 CORE PERFORMANCE TARGETS (3 waste and 3 water)

- How do you feel about this target?
- Do you feel they go far enough/too far/just right?
- How far do the approaches reflect how you would like Thames Water to go about this?
- **MODERATOR NOTE – IF HELPFUL AND ASSISTS THE DISCUSSION THEN REFER TO PHYSICAL SHOWCARD WITH PRE-TASK COMPARATIVE INFORMATION AND WHETHER THAMES IS CURRENTLY MEETING THE TARGET**

30 MINS (5 mins per Service Enhancement)

- SHOWCARD 33 - OVERALL SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
- Explain that we are going to focus on the six service enhancements in more detail.
- Response to the six service enhancements (3 waste and 3 water; 3 REQUIRED and 3 VOLUNTARY)
 - SHOWCARDS 34-39 - Explore each segment
 - How do you feel about this service enhancement?
 - What is good about it?
 - What is not good about it?

20 MINS

- Now we have discussed the PROPOSED Business Plan, overall when you think about what we have discussed with the six performance targets and six service enhancements, how acceptable is it for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability
 - Water or wastewater elements?
 - Performance targets – ambitious enough or not?
 - Service enhancements – ambitious enough or not?
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?
- Now we want to look at what this plan would cost to get your views on that
- SHOWCARD 40 – explain about inflation
- SHOWCARD 42 – SHOW PROPOSED BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION
- If you look at the graph on the left hand side it shows what impact the 2025-2030 plan would have on your bills and how that changes from now until 2030
 - Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
 - Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?
- The longer term bill impact is on the right hand side. This is relevant to the phasing slide we discussed at the top of the discussion. It will be relevant when we look at different versions of the Business Plan where Thames Water could choose to do less now and more in the longer term

Appendices: Non-Household (Micro) Deliberative Discussion Guide

Tea, Coffee, Sandwiches, Stretch, Comfort

6.30pm-7pm

Session 3: Response to MUST DO AND ALTERNATIVE

7pm-8.15pm

This session will focus on the two other plans that Thames Water are thinking about – we don't need to go through everything again as some elements are the same as the first plan so we can be a bit quicker exploring these

25 MINS

- Welcome everyone back to the table
- Explain that in this session, we will focus on some different plans to get their views on how Thames Water could do things differently.

■ MUST DO PLAN INTRODUCTION

- The plan we will discuss now only includes the Required elements that Thames Water must do to fulfil their legal and environmental commitments so it's cheaper than the first plan we looked at now and in the longer term
- SHOWCARD 43 - Explain that the first part of the plan 'the Performance Commitments/targets' are the same as what you saw previously so we won't be discussing those again. With this plan Thames Water would keep the same targets and ensure that the performance was the same across those six elements
- SHOWCARD 44 - What we want to focus on and discuss with you is the Service Enhancements because they would be different. As mentioned, in this plan, you will see that there are no voluntary service enhancements and so the overall bill impact is lower.
 - What is good about this?
 - What is not good about it?
 - How do you feel that there are no optional service enhancements now?
 - How comfortable are you with this?

10 MINS

- Now we have discussed the 'MUST DO' Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability?
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?

■ SHOWCARDS 45 and 46 – SHOW MUST DO BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION

- Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
- Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?

20 Mins

■ ALTERNATIVE PLAN INTRODUCTION

- The plan we will discuss now only includes everything that you saw in the first Proposed plan but it will be delivered at a lower cost – let's explain how
 - SHOWCARD 48 – just a reminder that the first part of the plan 'the Performance Commitments/Targets' are the same as what you saw previously so we won't be discussing those again
 - SHOWCARD 49 - the service enhancements are also all still included but the third required measure would be slower to achieve under this Alternative plan
 - Remember we talked about phasing at the end of the first session. Thames Water needs to balance the amount of investment in improvements with the amount of money it gets from customer bills
 - SHOWCARD 50 - With this ALTERNATIVE plan, they would reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 82% instead of 90% in the other plans
 - For this service enhancement, it would mean by 2030 an additional 4.8% of your current bill amount would be added to your bill to pay for this, rather than 7.8% with the proposed & must-do.
 - ◆ How do you feel about this?
 - SHOWCARD 51 – What we need to explain with this option is that the slowing down the phosphorus removal saves money in the shorter term but will cost more later

10 MINS

- Now we have discussed the ALTERNATIVE Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability
 - How could this be more acceptable?
 - What would you change?
- SHOWCARD 52 – SHOW ALTERNATIVE BILL IMPACT GRAPH WITH INFLATION PREDICTION
- Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?
- Any difference if you put your hats back on – bill payers, service users, citizens, society?

Final Comparison and Individual Task

8.15pm-8.30pm

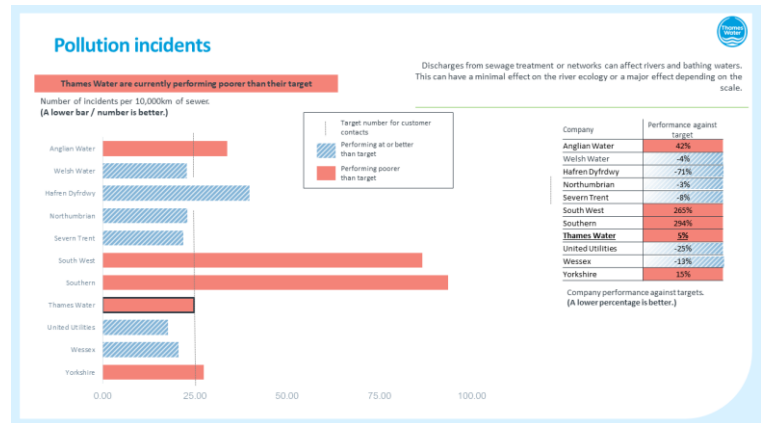
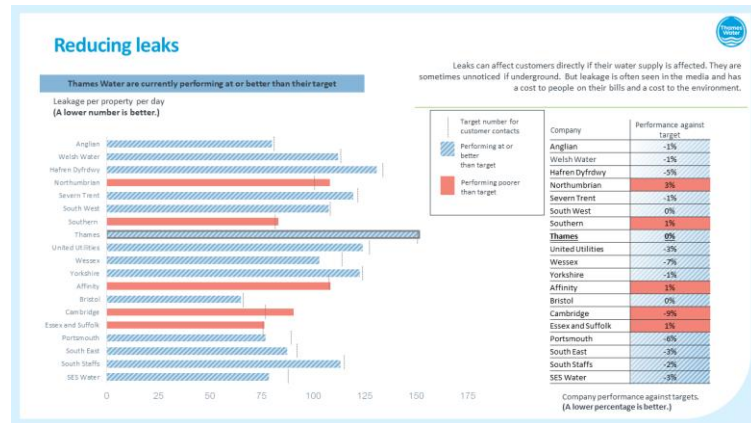
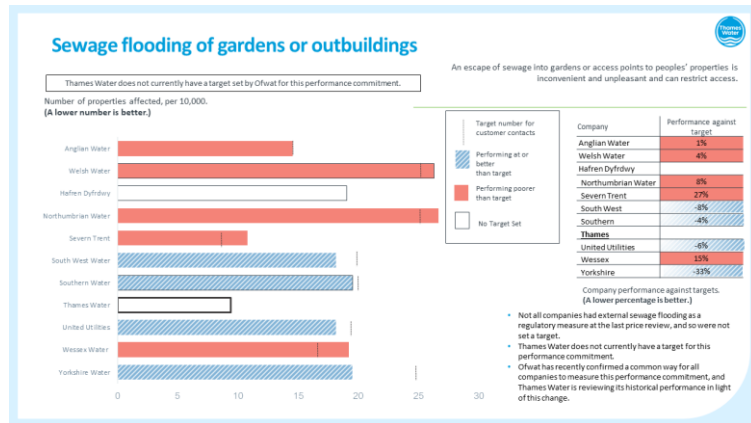
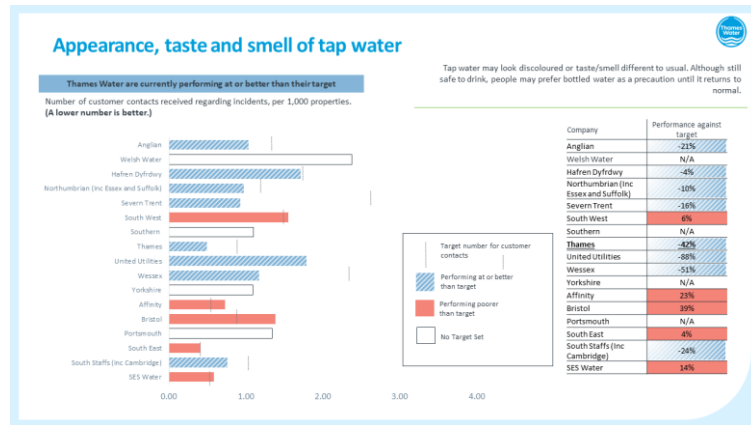
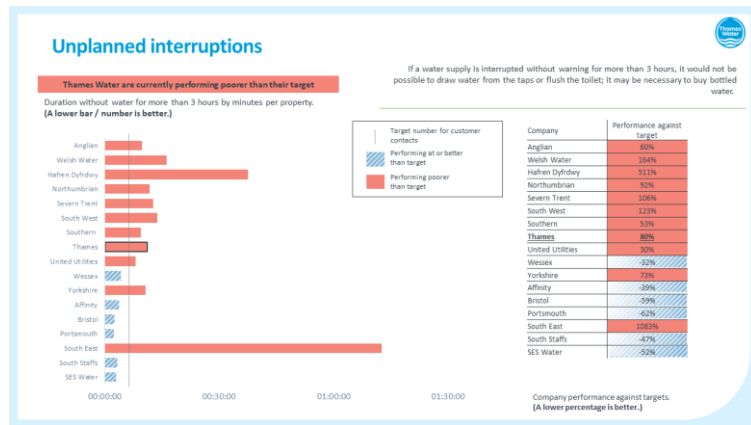
- SHOWCARD 53 and 54 – Take a look at an overview of those three plans that we have discussed tonight
 - Which would you vote for and why
- Explain that for this final session, we will be asking them to fill in a questionnaire for their business which should take around 5 minutes.
- Completion of POST TASK (affordability only for bill payers)

- Ensure that inflation description is included within the post task
- Thank everyone for coming
- Invite any final questions
- Close

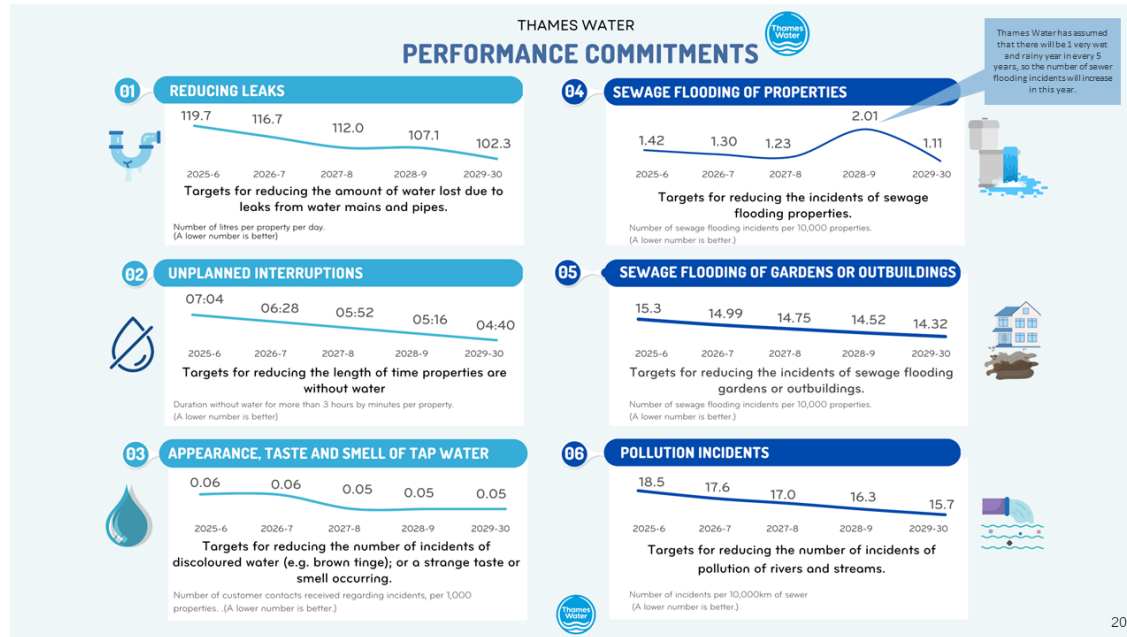
Key Moderator Notes:

Make note of any questions asked by customers that are answered by the company
Add to subsequent sessions and/or run by ICG

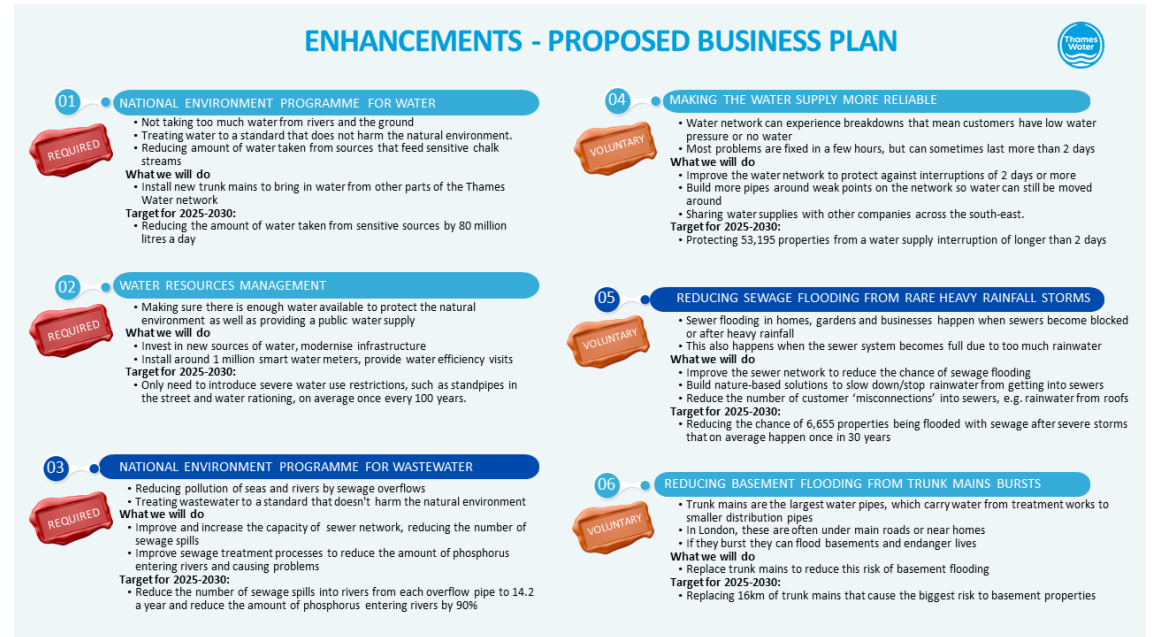
Appendices: Non-Household Deliberative Stimulus Materials



Appendices: Non-Household Deliberative Stimulus Materials



20



Appendices: Non-Household (Larger) Recruitment Questionnaire



3598 Thames Water and Affinity Water A&T IDs
NHH (SML) Recruitment Questionnaire

RQ NUMBER (ON PARTICIPANT LIST): URN:

Interviewer name: Interviewer no: Date: Time:

Checked (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Quality controlled by on .

Added to participant list/log on by Are you sure? Y / N

If depth, executive informed by email on by Acknowledged by exec? Y / N

Confirmation letter/email (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

Confirmation sent via by on by (initials)

IF CONFIRMATION SENT BY EMAIL, PHONE & CHECK IF RECEIVED A FEW MINUTES AFTER EMAIL SENT:

Has email been received? Call made on by (initials) .

Confirmation call (SUPERVISOR ONLY – USE RED TO FILL IN)

IF 24 HRS AHEAD OF GROUPS/DEPTHS – THEN UPDATE STATUS ON LIST OR LOG OF PARTICIPANTS FOR MODERATOR/EXEC

Confirmation call made on (date and time): on by

PRE TASK STATUS (IF APPLICABLE): OUTCOME:

I hereby confirm that I have read again the date, time and all other venue details needed for the participant to attend the group/take part in the depth interview and ensured that they had all this information available and diarised. Signed:

Contact details for Zoom Depths – INTERVIEWER SECTION

PARTICIPANT NAME		JOB TITLE	
COMPANY NAME		EMAIL	
TELEPHONE NUMBER		MOBILE	
PREFERRED INTERVIEW DATE		TIME	
EXECUTIVE ASSIGNED	CHOICE A	CHOICE B	
EXTRA COMMENTS			
ADDRESS DETAILS FOR ANY INCENTIVE TO BE SENT (IF APPLICABLE)			

Quotas INTERVIEWER SECTION

Location (recruitment geography)	NW London and SW London	Reading	Slough/Windsor	Colchester-Braintree	Hemel/St Albans/Watford
Suggested postcodes	E, N, NW, WC, EC, W, SW	RG	SL, UB, HA		
Water company	Thames-Thames	Thames-Thames	Affinity-Thames	Affinity-Anglian	Affinity-Thames
Fieldwork dates	See interviewer availability – to follow				
Total sample	8	4	8	0	0
Number of employees	Min 2 x 10-49 employees Min 2 x 50-249 employees Min 1 x 250+ employees	Min 1 x 10-49 employees Min 1 x 50-249 employees Min 1 x 250+ employees	Min 2 x 10-49 employees Min 2 x 50-249 employees Min 1 x 250+ employees		
Operating industry (Q13)	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix	Recruit a mix		
Degree of reliance on water (Q10)	Recruit a mix				
Number of sites (Q9)	Recruit a mix				

- All NHH participants must be **Thames Water (Affinity Water)** customers, regardless of who issues their bills.
- NHH participants should have senior responsibility for water and wastewater services (or other issues related to water) within the business.

Introduction

Q1. Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Accent/Agency, on behalf of **Thames Water (Affinity Water)** and Accent. Please could I speak to #name on database#/the person responsible for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

- IF "NO" TRY AND PERSUADE ELSE THANK & CLOSE
- IF "CALL BACK" PLEASE RECORD DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT ON ACCIS, THANK AND CLOSE
- IF "YES" PLEASE PROCEED TO SCREENING SECTION

WHEN SPEAKING TO APPROPRIATE CONTACT CONTINUE WITH SCREENING

Screening

Please may I speak to #name on database#/the person responsible for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

WHEN SPEAKING TO THE CORRECT CONTACT REPEAT TEXT ABOVE & CONTINUE:

The research is being conducted under the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that any answers you give will be treated in confidence.

Thames Water (Affinity Water) is wanting to understand business customers' views on their proposed plans – now and in the future. This is an exciting opportunity for you to help the company shape their

short- and long-term plans to meet the needs of all types of customers, including business customers of all sizes.

We're looking for business customers to help us in this research project which will consist of two phases:

- First stage:** a 20-minute homework exercise in advance of a one-to-one discussion.
- Second stage:** participation in an online video interview. The discussion will last 90 minutes.

As a thank you for your time and contribution to the research, you will receive a total of **£150**, including completing both the first and second stages. Alternatively, we can make a donation of the same amount to the charity WaterAid, if you would prefer.

This call may be recorded for quality control purposes.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: SAMPLE SOURCE IS: #recruiter database/free-find#

INTCHECK. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ADVISED THE PARTICIPANT OF:

MRS Code of Conduct
Calls being recorded

INTCHECK2. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ASKED AND CHECKED THAT THE PARTICIPANT IS NOT TAKING THE INTERVIEW ON A MOBILE DEVICE AND/OR WHILE DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Yes, it is safe for the participant to proceed
No, it isn't safe – we need to call back later GO TO APPT SCREEN

Q2. Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party not involved in the research, unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q3. Do you or any of your close family work, or have worked, in the recent past in the water sector, including for Thames Water (Affinity Water), or in the Market Research profession?

Yes **THANK AND CLOSE**
No

Q4. Have you ever participated in a market research interview? **IF YES, PROBE WHEN**

Yes, in last six months **THANK AND CLOSE**
Yes, between 6 months and 2 years ago **GO TO Q5**
over 2 years ago **GO TO Q7**
No **GO TO Q7**

ONE THIRD OF RECRUITS MUST HAVE NEVER TAKEN PART IN AN INTERVIEW BEFORE

Appendices: Non-Household (Larger) Recruitment Questionnaire

Q5. How many interviews have you been in in that period?

- 1
- 2-3
- More than 3 **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q6. What was the subject matter of the interview(s)? **PROBE AND WRITE DOWN**

IF WATER THANK AND CLOSE

Q7. Can I just check, do you have decision making responsibility, either solely or jointly, for matters relating to water and wastewater services within the business?

- Yes
- No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q8. Does your business operate from a separate commercial premises (ie: office/workshop/factory/retail space) or from a residential premises?

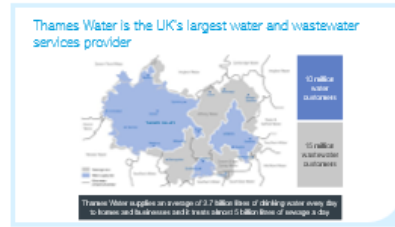
- Commercial
- Residential premises **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q8b. What is the postcode of the business? If you have more than one business premises, answer for the main site or the site you work at most often. We are looking for participants in specific areas to take part in this research, and your postcode will be used to ensure you are in scope for this research.

Capture postcode

CHECK POSTCODE TO ENSURE THAT PARTICIPANT IS IN THE CORRECT GEOGRAPHY FOR INTERVIEW BEING RECRUITED TO AND HAS THE CORRECT WATER/WASTEWATER COMPANY

Q9. Please look at the following map. How many sites does your business operate within the **Thames Water (Affinity Water)** supply area?



- Zero **THANK AND CLOSE**
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

RECRUIT A MIX ACROSS THE FULL SAMPLE

Q10. How much do you agree or disagree that on a day-to-day basis, your business depends on its water supply in order to operate?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

RECRUIT A MIX ACROSS THE FULL SAMPLE

Q10b. How much is your business's water bill?

- £ ____ Per year CAPTURE FOR INFORMATION
- £ ____ Per month

Q10c. IF BILL AMOUNT EXPRESSED PER MONTH AT Q10b How many monthly payments do you make for your water bill each year?

- 10
- 12
- Other (please specify)

CALCULATE ANNUAL WATER BILL BY MULTIPLYING MONTHLY BILL BY NUMBER OF MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Q10c. Provide customer's annual water bill (from sample file or as provided by customer as monthly/annual amount).

£ ____ per year

Q11. Is your business billed directly by your water company for the service they supply or is it included in your business rent?

- Billed directly
- Included in rent **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q12. How many employees does your organisation have?

- None, sole trader **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR S/M/L RECRUITMENT, BUT CONSIDER FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT; SEE RQ**
- 1-9 employees **NOT ELIGIBLE FOR S/M/L RECRUITMENT, BUT CONSIDER FOR NHH MICRO RECRUITMENT; SEE RQ**
- 10 to 49 employees **ELIGIBLE FOR S/M/L IDI RECRUITMENT (small): minimum 2 per area (1 in Thames Valley)**
- 50 to 249 employees **ELIGIBLE FOR S/M/L IDI RECRUITMENT (medium): minimum 2 per area (1 in Thames Valley)**
- 250+ employees **ELIGIBLE FOR S/M/L IDI RECRUITMENT (large): minimum 1 per area (1 in Thames Valley)**

Q13. Which of the following best defines the core activity of your organisation?

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Mining and quarrying
- Energy or water service & supply
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Wholesale and retail trade (including motor vehicles repair)
- Transport and storage
- Hotels & catering
- IT and Communication
- Finance and insurance activities
- Real estate activities
- Professional, scientific and technical activities
- Administrative and Support Service Activities
- Public administration and defence
- Education
- Human health and social work activities
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Other service activities
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say **THANK AND CLOSE**

RECRUIT A MIX

Q14. What is your job title?

Q15. Finally, can I please take the name of the business?

Appendices: Non-Household (Larger) Recruitment Questionnaire

Invitation: Depth (Telephone/Zoom)

Thank you for answering those questions. Would you be interested in participating in this research project on behalf of Thames Water (Affinity Water)? All research will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.

Yes **PROCEED TO PRE-TASK AND/OR DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING CONSENT**
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Thank you. As I mentioned earlier the research will consist of:

- **First stage:** a 20-minute homework exercise in advance of a one-to-one discussion.
- **Second stage:** participation in an online video interview. The discussion will last 90 minutes.

As I said, you will receive a total of £150, including completing both the first and second stages. Alternatively, we can make a donation of the same amount to the charity WaterAid, if you would prefer.

Would you be willing to commit yourself to both stages of the process to help inform Thames Water's (Affinity Water's) future plans?

Yes **PROCEED TO TEXT BELOW**
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

PRE-TASK

ADVISE PARTICIPANT ABOUT PRE-TASKS: We will email details outlining the Stage 1 homework exercises. These **must be** completed before you attend the interview, but they shouldn't take too long to complete and hopefully you will find them interesting and informative (estimated 20 minutes).

We will be asking you to download an app onto your mobile device for completion of the homework exercises. The app is quick and fun to use and you will be incentivised fully for your commitment to each part.

If you would rather receive a paper copy of the homework exercise please note that we will need these returning by post before you attend the event. **INTERVIEWER TO CAPTURE IF PAPER TASK REQUIRED AND CAPTURE POSTAL ADDRESS FOR DISPATCH OF REMINDER TASK IF ORIGINAL NOT RETURNED.**

VERY IMPORTANT. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU HAVE EXPLAINED ALL ABOUT THE PRE-TASK.

Q16. Is the participant clear about the pre-tasks?

Yes
No **THEN RE-EXPLAIN**

Q17. Did the participant say they would do the pre-tasks?

Yes
No **THEN PERSUADE POLITELY AND REITERATE REQUIREMENTS**

Q18. Will the pre-task be completed via the app or on a paper copy?

Email/App **COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS**
Paper **HAND OVER COPY TOGETHER WITH SAE**

ASK ALL: DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING CONSENT

The interview will be video recorded, to ensure accuracy and for analysis purposes. All recordings will be securely stored for a period of 12 months (for reference purposes) before being destroyed.

The interview will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society and any views you express during the discussion will be treated with complete confidence and will not be attributed to you personally.

Please confirm that is OK

Yes **CONTINUE WITH DETAILS**
No **[Click here and type HOLD IN RESERVE or THANK AND CLOSE]**

Q19. Interviewer to arrange a date/time for the interview in accordance with the interviewer availability.

Great, thanks. I'll just take a few details and will let you get on with your day. We will send you more information by email shortly with details of the next steps and homework task.

If for any reason you find you are unable to attend, please could you let me know as soon as possible so that we can invite someone else to take your place?

Please contact us on **xxxxxxx** if you have any queries about your incentive. Thank you.

RECRUITER: Please ensure you have filled in the cover page of the RQ, including email address and mobile number of participant, then complete the following confirmations.

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

Recruiter Confirmations

RECRUITER – VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU FULLY READ OUT THE DATA SHARING AND CONSENT QUESTION, AND THAT IT MADE SENSE TO BOTH YOU AND THE PARTICIPANT.

Yes

Q20. **IS THE PARTICIPANT CLEAR ABOUT THE PRE-TASK & DID THEY SAY THEY WOULD COMPLETE IT?**

Clear
Will complete

MRS DECLARATION

Q21. I confirm that this interview was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct and is completely confidential

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR HELP IN THIS RESEARCH

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE ENSURE YOU REMOVE THIS PAGE BEFORE RETURNING THIS RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE TO ACCENT

PROPERTY NAME OR NUMBER	
2 ND LINE OF ADDRESS	
TOWN/VILLAGE	
POSTCODE	

Appendices: Non-Household (Larger) Discussion Guide

3598 Thames Water A&AT
Large NHH – Depth Interviews



Introductions and Warm Up

5 Mins (5 Mins)

- Introductions
 - explain that we are an independent, impartial research agency
 - no right or wrong answers
 - no comments are attributed to you by name
 - reassure that some subjects/content might be new to them/okay if they don't understand everything
- Explain that we have up to 90 minutes together but we will pause after 45 minutes, if required
- Explain that we are here today/tonight on behalf of Thames Water who are looking for their views and input into their Business Plan for 2025/2030
- Remind customers that we are focusing on the Wholesale part of the water company operations and now billing/customer service, etc
- Thank participant for doing the pre-task exercises – we are going to review this first and then talk about the Business Plans
- Ask participant to introduce themselves:
 - Name
 - Business they work for
 - How big is the company (staff/t/o)
 - What does the Business do
 - Operating context - How much does the Business rely on water, in what ways e.g. manufacturing process, etc, how much does the business use water, any demand management strategies
 - Job title and responsibilities
 - Any key challenges facing the business

Response to Pre-Task and Your Service Needs

25 Mins (30 Mins)

- We are keen to get your baseline views on Thames Water and your business needs
- We are going to briefly talk about the pre-task that you read through (SHOWCARDS PRE-TASK FOR REFERENCE ONLY)
 - Baseline Comprehension:
 - Was there anything in the material you read which you felt was difficult to understand?
 - We showed you information that compared Thames Water's performance with other water companies' performance on 6 factors; water interruptions, sewage flooding, leaks etc. How easy or difficult was it to understand this information?
 - Baseline Awareness:

- What did you know about Thames Water before you read through the materials?
- What surprised you most out of the things you have read?
- What would you most like to find out more about?
- Baseline Perceptions:
 - How does the business feel about Thames Water – scale -ve 1-10 +ve
 - Reasons for scores
 - Has any of the information you have seen changed your opinion of your Thames Water in any way?
- Baseline Priorities:
 - Think about your business needs and particular circumstances, where do you think Thames Water should focus improvements/investment
- Baseline Value:
 - Before we start talking about the Business Plan, we want to find out about how the company feels about current economic situation
 - How do you feel at the moment about business finances, levels of confidence, etc
 - And how do you think that might change in the next 5 years
 - How do you feel about your water bill
 - How would you rate Thames Water on value for money 'for your water / wastewater services'
- Long term picture and different perspectives
 - All water companies need to plan for the longer term future to ensure that the services will be appropriate for future generations of service users, bill payers, wider society and the environment
 - Before we begin looking at the Business Plan for 2025-2030, we want to share with you some of the company's longer term plans and goals. These go as far as 2050 – these plans and goals will give you a sense of what Thames Water are planning and where they see their priorities
 - SHOWCARD TITLE – VISION FOR 2050
 - Overall views
 - What makes you think this
 - From what you have seen, do you feel the long term plan covers the right areas or are there areas missing that you would like to see
 - How do you feel this covers your individual circumstances
- SHOWCARD TITLE – DIFFERENT WAYS OF PHASING
 - Water companies can choose to improve performance or invest in service enhancements at different times depending on customer priorities and depending on their funding, and we will be asking you for your view on this later on.
 - What do you think about the different options presented here
 - Option A – pay more now, get more now

- Option B – pay less now, get less now but catch up later
- Which do you prefer and why
- How do you feel about Option B where investment gets made later which might mean that future generations would need to contribute more

Proposed & Must do Plans

30 Mins (60 Mins)

- SHOWCARD TITLE - PROPOSED PLAN SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
- This is the PROPOSED Business Plan that you saw in the pre-task and this is on these two slides on the screen (toggle between slides as a reminder). This is the information that we shared during the pre-task and we want to understand more about how you all feel about it.
- Before we get in to the nitty gritty – we need to explain that Thames Water have undertaken customer research, stakeholder research and that this plan reflects their priorities as well as where the business feel they need to invest to ensure a resilient water and wastewater service to meet the demand of Thames Water customers.
- We do need to be clear that what we are sharing with you does not include the full Business Plan as this would take too long to go through – instead Ofwat and Thames Water have selected the elements of day-to-day service that are most important to customers, as well as the investments in improvements that will have the biggest impact on your bills.
- It includes statutory elements that Thames Water must do in the 2025-2030 period – these are on shown as a red flag and say REQUIRED - these include things like reducing leaks and polluting rivers.
- It also includes VOLUNTARY service enhancements that Thames Water feels are important and these have orange flags e.g. Making the water supply more reliable
- Later on you will see the bill impact based on your own company bill but during this part of the discussion, we are going to look at the average % increase. This includes some predictions for inflation which we will share at the end.
- Initial response to the overall plan
 - What did you feel was good about the plan
 - What did you feel was not good about the plan
 - What would you want to change
- Let's now break the plan down into different sections and get your views on each part
- OVERALL PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
SHOWCARD TITLE – PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
- Response to the six core performance targets
 - For each:
 - How do you feel about this target
 - Do you feel they go far enough/too far/just right
 - How far do the approaches reflect how you would like Thames Water to do about this?

Appendices: Non-Household (Larger) Discussion Guide

OVERALL SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

SHOWCARD TITLE – SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Response to the six service enhancements

- Explore each segment
 - How do you feel about this service enhancement
 - What is good about it
 - What is not good about it

Now we have discussed the Proposed Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it to you and your business

- Why do you say this
- How could this be more acceptable
- What would you change

SHOWCARD TITLE – INFLATION AND IMPACT / BILLS FOR THE PROPOSED PLAN

If you look at the graph on the left hand side it shows what impact the 2025-2030 plan would have on your bills and how that changes from now until 2030

Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this to your business?

- Why do you say this
- If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out

The longer term bill impact is on the right hand side. This is relevant to the phasing slide we discussed at the top of the discussion. It will be relevant when we look at different versions of the Business Plan where Thames Water could choose to do less now and more in the longer term

MUST DO PLAN INTRODUCTION

The plan we will discuss now only includes the Required elements that Thames Water must do to fulfil their environmental commitments so it's cheaper than the first plan we looked at now and in the longer term

Explain that the first part of the plan 'the Performance Commitments/targets' are the same as what you saw previously so we won't be discussing those again. With this plan Thames Water would keep the same targets and ensure that the performance was the same across those six elements

SHOWCARD TITLE – ENHANCEMENTS MUST DO PLAN - What we want to focus on and discuss with you is the Service Enhancements because they would be different. As mentioned, in this plan, you will see that there are no voluntary service enhancements and so the overall bill impact is lower.

- What is good about this?
- What is not good about it?
- How do you feel that there are no optional service enhancements now?
- How comfortable are you with this?
- Overall how acceptable is this for your business?
 - Why do you say this?
 - What is driving acceptability/non acceptability?
 - How could this be more acceptable?

- What would you change?

SHOWCARD TITLE – BILLS FOR THE MUST DO PLAN

Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this for your business?

- Why do you say this?
- If not affordable, what would you advise Thames Water to take out?

Proposed Plan with Phasing

15 Mins (75 Mins)

SHOWCARD TITLE – A DIFFERENT WAY OF PHASING THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROGRAMME

- Remember we talked about phasing at the end of the first session. Thames Water needs to balance the amount of investment in improvements with the amount of money it gets from customer bills
- Thames Water could choose to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 82% instead of 90% in the other plan – so it would be slower but cheaper for customers
- For this service enhancement, it would mean adding 4.8% to the average business bill rather than 7.3%
 - How do you feel about this?
- SHOWCARD – BILLS FOR PHASING - What we need to explain with this option is that the slowing down the phosphorus removal saves money in the shorter term but will cost more later
 - How do you feel about this?

Now if we step back and think about the Proposed Plan we looked at which reduced the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 90% but had a higher bill impact in the short term

OR

This alternative phasing where they still reduce the amount of phosphorus in the rivers but not as quickly (82%). It's not as high bill impact in the short term but will cost more later

- Which of these options do you prefer
- Why do you say this
- Which would you want Thames Water to do

Final thanks and close

10 Mins (85 Mins)

- Completion of POST TASK
- Ensure that inflation description is included within the post task
- Invite any final questions
- Close

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Exercise

3598 Thames A&T
PRE-TASK SCRIPT: HCIVS CUSTOMERS



Introduction to Task One

On the first slide there is a map of England and Wales that shows Thames Water's operating area:

Hello and thank you very much for agreeing to be part of our exciting research project for Thames Water.

As part of this important project, we will be talking to Thames Water customers all over their supply region. We're delighted that you will be coming along to one of these sessions where we will present and discuss Thames Water's business plan for 2025-2030.

Before you come along, we need you to read through this pre-task which is all laid out on the following screens. It has been designed to take no longer than 20 minutes of your time and you will receive a separate incentive for doing this.

The pack includes nine tasks for you to read through and then a few questions to answer at the end. Some of the information about your water company may be new to you but please be reassured that you don't need to understand everything. If you have questions then please type them in as you go along in the space provided. We will collate any questions/responses and we can recap at the beginning of the session.

If you have any technological issues related to this platform then please contact omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

We are really looking forward to meeting you.

Nancy & the rest of the research team

Background to water industry

There are a number of different companies in the water industry who serve water customers to ensure their water is safe, reliable and environmentally friendly

England and Wales are served by 17 different water companies: some provide just drinking water, others take away sewage as well. Companies in the same area work together to plan for the future in their region, and work with the other regional groups across England to make sure there is enough water for everyone.

Unlike with gas and electricity, customers cannot 'switch' water company, because your water company is dictated by the area you live in, and is therefore a monopoly. This is why Ofwat regulate all water companies; to ensure fairness for all customers.

Businesses don't pay their bills directly to the water companies - they are billed by "retailers"

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Two

Next you will see some key facts about the customers that Thames Water serves and the infrastructure that it manages:

Where we work...

- We serve 15 million customers. However they don't all use both our water and wastewater services
- We supply water to 10 million of our customers (3.5 million properties).
- Other water companies supply the other 5 million customers (2 million properties).
- We supply 15 million customers with wastewater services
- This means we don't bill all of our customers directly
- We also serve 250,000 businesses

We operate

- 97 water treatment works
- 26 raw water reservoirs
- 308 pumping stations
- 235 clean water service reservoirs

We have

- 351 sewage works
- 100,000km of sewers
- 4,780 sewage pumping stations
- 1.2 million manholes

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Three

This provides a bit of background on why Thames Water wants to hear from you:

The role of research

Ofwat & business plan	Customer's priorities	Research matters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department. They are responsible for making sure that water companies are regulated to provide consumers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price. Every five years, water companies develop a 'business plan' that sets out how they want to develop their services, and the proposed cost to customers. As customers are not able to choose their water company, water companies must give them a say about what they want from their services and the price they pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking to customers also helps water companies prioritise what to do first or what to do most of – because they are not able to fund everything they would like to do or do all of the things that customers might want them to do. The business plan and prices are then finalised by Ofwat in a process known as the Price Review. There is more information about this here: 'All about the price review', Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWmivC3JAE8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the ways that people have their say is through this research, which will explain what the plans are for where you live, and ask what you think – whether the plans are 'acceptable' to you and whether you can afford the proposed bills from 2025-2030. Companies also have to show to Ofwat that their plans reflect what their customers want – that means refining the plans based on what customers tell them.

The water industry today

Water companies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take water from the environment (e.g. rivers), treat it so it's safe to drink, and return it safely to the environment after use. Build and maintain infrastructure (like pipes) to supply water to homes and businesses. 	Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes sure the water supplied in England and Wales is safe and that drinking water quality is acceptable for customers. 	CCW Consumer Council for Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent customers on matters relating to water. Investigate complaints and provide advice to ensure water services remain fair for customers.
Environment Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects and enhances the environment. Works with water companies to ensure operations and plans develop in a sustainable way. 	Defra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government department responsible for protecting the environment and countryside, including water. 	Ofwat Office of Water Services (Ofwat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regulator that makes sure water companies do their job properly, including fair pricing for customers and ensuring there is always a reliable water supply.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Four

The next slide shows you what Thames Water does and the service it provides:

Thames Water and the water cycle

Thames Water takes water from rivers and natural underground stores and turns it into high quality drinking water. It then delivers the drinking water through a water pipe network to homes and businesses. Once the water has been used (i.e., wastewater that goes down sinks and toilets) it is collected in the sewer network. It ends up at sewage treatment works where the water is treated and safely returned to rivers.

What does Thames Water do?

Water	Wastewater and rivers	Customer Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract water from rivers and aquifers Clean water so it is safe to use Deliver water to household and business taps Help customers to use less water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take wastewater away (i.e. sewage) Return water to rivers Prevent pollution from sewers and sewage works Treat and recycle wastewater Clean up sewage floods and blockages Produce and use renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and send bills to customers Read water meters to produce accurate bills Make it easy for customers to contact Thames Water Provide customers with helpful information Support customers that need extra help

Household only

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Five

The next slides give you some information about how Thames Water's performance is monitored by Ofwat, the independent regulator, and how to read the graphs you will see in the following slides:

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies have to provide reliable services, and plan for their services to be resilient to changing weather patterns and demand from consumers.

Companies can miss or exceed performance commitment targets for a number of reasons. For example, leaks from pipes happen more often after very cold weather, which can contribute to a company not meeting the target, and flooding from sewers is less likely in dry weather, which can lead to higher performance for sewer flooding service targets.

If a water company **misses a target** then they receive a penalty which can translate to a **small decrease in customer bills** to reflect the **poorer service** that customers have received.

If the water company **meets or exceeds a target** then they can receive a reward which translates to a **small increase in customer bills** to reflect the **improvement in service**.

In Ofwat's most recent assessment of penalties and rewards, Thames Water had to return £5.1m to customers because of missed targets on water treatment works compliance, pollution incidents and internal sewer flooding across 2021-22. This will reduce the average Household customer's annual bill by £13.59, and business bills by 1.6%.

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies are currently part way through their five-year business plan for 2020 to 2025. They have service level targets, called 'performance commitments', in every five-year business plan. These targets are based on what customers have previously told companies they would like them to do, and on Ofwat's assessment of what companies should deliver. These targets cover a wide range of the different services that water companies provide.

Ofwat monitors water company performance against each performance commitment every year to see if they have met the service level in their business plan.

We are now going to show you how well your water and/or sewerage company is doing on some of their performance commitments, compared to other water companies in England and Wales.

These performance commitments are a snapshot of out of the wide range of services companies provide. We are showing these examples as customers have told us they are particularly important to them.

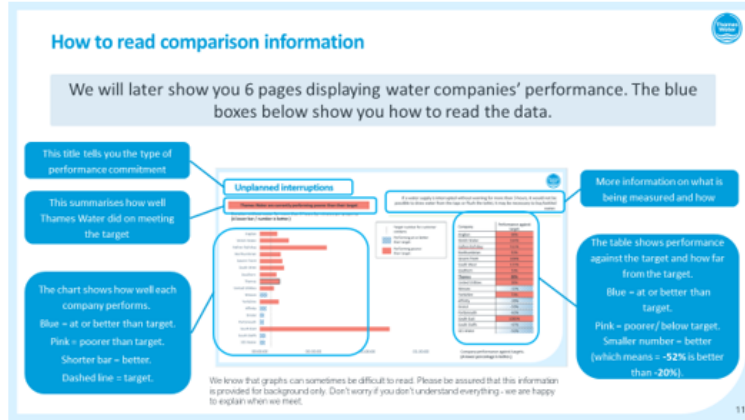
If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Six

We will now show you how Thames Water has performed against some of the key targets, and a comparison to other water and wastewater companies.

An explanation on what's contained on these slides is shown below:



This first slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water supply interruptions**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of the **appearance, taste and smell of tap water**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding inside properties**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding of gardens and outbuildings**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water leakage from their network**:

The last one in this section shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **causing pollution of rivers and streams**:

Please write in whether you have any questions or comments about the Thames Water's performance on those key measures:

Introduction to Task Seven

Please take a look at this slide. It tells you about the proposals for customers in vulnerable circumstances:



If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Then we have just two more graphs, showing how Affinity & Thames perform as far as awareness of these schemes go:

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Eight

Please take a look at this slide. It tells you about your water bill and how every £1 of your bill is spent across, for example, water and wastewater running costs, and investment to improve infrastructure for the future:



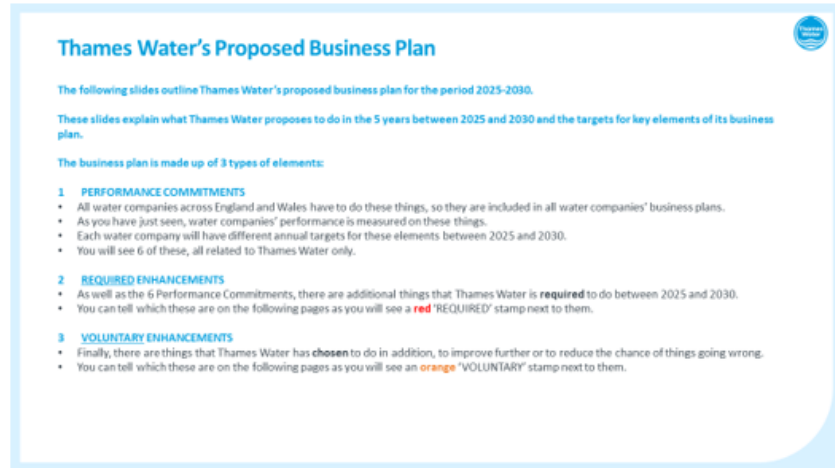
If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Exercise

Introduction to Task Nine

The next two slides will introduce you to Thames Water's proposed Business Plan. We will discuss this at the face to face session but this gives you some information before we meet.

The first one shows broadly how the plan is presented.



The screenshot shows a slide with the following content:

Thames Water's Proposed Business Plan

The following slides outline Thames Water's proposed business plan for the period 2025-2030.

These slides explain what Thames Water proposes to do in the 5 years between 2025 and 2030 and the targets for key elements of its business plan.

The business plan is made up of 3 types of elements:

- 1 PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS**
 - All water companies across England and Wales have to do these things, so they are included in all water companies' business plans.
 - As you have just seen, water companies' performance is measured on these things.
 - Each water company will have different annual targets for these elements between 2025 and 2030.
 - You will see 6 of these, all related to Thames Water only.
- 2 REQUIRED ENHANCEMENTS**
 - As well as the 6 Performance Commitments, there are additional things that Thames Water is **required** to do between 2025 and 2030.
 - You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see a **red** 'REQUIRED' stamp next to them.
- 3 VOLUNTARY ENHANCEMENTS**
 - Finally, there are things that Thames Water has **chosen** to do in addition, to improve further or to reduce the chance of things going wrong.
 - You can tell which these are on the following pages as you will see an **orange** 'VOLUNTARY' stamp next to them.

The second looks at the performance levels that Thames Water intends to meet across the six different measures we looked at before. All elements of this part of this business plan are mandatory – Thames Water and all water companies have been told by the legal and environmental regulators that they must perform at certain levels (their 'targets'):

This next slide outlines six of the biggest investment areas where Thames Water intends to deliver improvements and upgrades over the period 2025-2030. For example, you will see that it shows that there will be investment in the 'Reducing Basement Flooding' measure.

We will discuss these plans in the face to face sessions but please write in whether you have any questions or comments about Thames Water's intended performance on those key measures or the proposed investment schemes.

Introduction to Task Ten

Before we get together, please answer the question below about the affordability of your current water and sewerage bill.

Q1: Your current water and sewerage services bill is **FROM SAMPLE**. How easy or difficult is it for you to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill?

Please answer one only:

1. Very easy
2. Fairly easy
3. Neither easy nor difficult
4. Fairly difficult
5. Very difficult
6. Don't know

As we mentioned at the beginning of this pre-task, we will start the session discussing your reactions to the information you have just seen. As you've read through it, please list the 3 or 4 things that are new / interesting / surprising to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Please have these to hand during the research group discussion

We are looking forward to meeting you. If you have any questions before the session please contact us at: omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

See you very soon.

Nancy and the rest of the research team
Accent Research Team

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Discussion Guide

3598 Affinity Thames Water A&AT
Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances



Introductions and Warm Up

5 Mins (5 Mins)

Warm-up to ensure participant is comfortable, recap the pre-task materials, provide baseline views on the company, provide a financial temperature check and include the long term plan review

- Introductions
 - explain that we are an independent, impartial research agency
 - no right or wrong answers
 - no comments are attributed to you by name
 - reassure that some subjects/content might be new to them/okay if they don't understand everything
- Explain that we have up to 90 minutes together but we will pause after 45 minutes so that they can get a cup of tea/have a stretch, if required
- Explain that we are here tonight on behalf of Affinity Water and Thames Water who are looking for their views and input into their Business Plan for 2025/2030
- Thank participant for doing the pre-task exercises – we are going to review this first and then talk about the Business Plan
- Ask participant to introduce themselves:
 - Name
 - Where you live
 - Who do you live with (family/pets/friends)
 - You have been recruited because we know that you (insert particular vulnerability from recruitment sheet e.g. health), can you tell me a little bit about how this affects your everyday life at the moment

Response to Pre-Task and Your Service Needs

30 Mins (35 Mins)

- We are keen to get your baseline views on Affinity Water and Thames Water AND understand more about your service needs and experiences of Priority Services and/or social tariffs
- We are going to briefly talk about the pre-task that you read through (SHOWCARDS PRE-TASK FOR REFERENCE ONLY)
 - Baseline Comprehension:
 - Was there anything in the material you read which you felt was difficult to understand?
 - We showed you information that compared Affinity Water and Thames Water's performance with other water companies' performance on 8 factors; priority services register, social tariffs, water interruptions, sewage flooding, leaks etc. How easy or difficult was it to understand this information?
 - Baseline Awareness:

- What did you know about Affinity Water and Thames Water before you read through the materials?
- What surprised you most out of the things you have read?
- What would you most like to find out more about?
- What services or support do they offer for customers in your situation (health/financial/social tariff)?
 - A bill in your preferred format:
 - ◆ Braille/Large print/A talking bill
 - Password used by meter readers and other water company staff who may visit
 - Delivery of bottled water to your home if your water supply is disrupted for more than a few hours
 - A reduced water bill as your household is on a low income
- What do you know about the Priority Services register?
 - Is this something that you are part of
 - What is your experience of being on this
 - ◆ +/-
 - ◆ What is driving this
 - How does being on the PSR support you and your family

- Baseline Perceptions:
 - How do you feel about Affinity Water and Thames Water – scale -ve 1-10 +ve
 - Reasons for scores
- Baseline Priorities:
 - Where do you think they should focus improvements/investment
 - Think about the service you are currently offered and your particular circumstances
 - Has any of the information you have seen changed your opinion of your Affinity Water and Thames Water in any way?
- Baseline Value (Bill Payers):
 - Before we start talking about the Business Plan, we want to find out about how the bill payers are feeling about current household finances
 - How do you feel at the moment about your household finances
 - And how do you think that might change in the next 5 years
 - How do you feel about your water bill
 - How would you rate Affinity Water and Thames Water on value for money 'for your water / wastewater services'
- Long term picture and different perspectives
 - All water companies need to plan for the longer term future to ensure that the services will be appropriate for future generations of service users, bill payers, wider society and the environment

- Before we begin looking at the Business Plan for 2025-2030, we want to share with you some of the company's longer term plans and goals. These go as far as 2050 – these plans and goals will give you a sense of what Affinity Water and Thames Water are planning and where they see their priorities
- SHOWCARD TITLE – VISION FOR 2050
 - Overall views
 - What makes you think this
 - From what you have seen, do you feel the long term plan covers the right areas or are there areas missing that you would like to see
 - How do you feel this covers your individual circumstances

- In the next Business Plan period 2025-2030, Affinity Water and Thames Water will continue to support customers who are in vulnerable circumstances e.g. health and/or financial
SHOWCARD TITLE - PROPOSALS FOR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS
 - How do you feel about this support
 - What is good about it
 - What is not good about it
 - Does it go far enough or too far
 - Is there anything else you would be looking for Affinity Water and Thames Water to do to support your needs
 - Is there anything that other utilities companies are doing that you would want Affinity Water and Thames Water to do

SHOWCARD TITLE – DIFFERENT WAYS OF PHASING

- Water companies can choose to improve performance or invest in service enhancements at different times depending on customer priorities and depending on their funding, and we will be asking you for your view on this later on.
- What do you think about the different options presented here
 - Option A – pay more now, get more now
 - Option B – pay less now, get less now but catch up later
 - Which do you prefer and why
 - How do you feel about Option B where investment gets made later which might mean that future generations would need to contribute more

Proposed Plan

25 Mins (60 Mins)

- SHOWCARD TITLE - PROPOSED PLAN SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS

Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Discussion Guide

- This is the PROPOSED Business Plan that you saw in the pre-task and this is on these two slides on the screen (toggle between slides as a reminder). This is the information that we shared during the pre-task and we want to understand more about how you all feel about it.
- Before we get in to the nitty gritty – we need to explain that Affinity Water and Thames Water have undertaken customer research, stakeholder research and that this plan reflects their priorities as well as where the business feel they need to invest to ensure a resilient water and wastewater service to meet the demand of Affinity Water and Thames Water customers.
- We do need to be clear that what we are sharing with you does not include the full Business Plan as this would take too long to go through – instead Ofwat and Affinity Water and Thames Water have selected the elements of day-to-day service that are most important to customers, as well as the investments in improvements that will have the biggest impact on your bills.
- It includes statutory elements that Affinity Water and Thames Water must do in the 2025-2030 period – these are on shown as a red flag and say REQUIRED - these include things like reducing leaks and polluting rivers.
- It also includes VOLUNTARY service enhancements that Affinity Water and Thames Water feels are important and these have orange flags e.g. Making the water supply more reliable
- Later on you will see the bill impact based on your own household bill but during this part of the discussion, we are going to look at the average bill. This includes some predictions for inflation which we will share at the end.

- Initial response to the overall plan
 - What did you feel was good about the plan
 - What did you feel was not good about the plan
 - What would you want to change
- Let's now break the plan down into different sections and get your views on each part

- OVERALL PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
SHOWCARD TITLE – PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS
- Response to the six core performance targets
 - For each:
 - How do you feel about this target
 - Do you feel they go far enough/too far/just right
 - How far do the approaches reflect how you would like Affinity Water and Thames Water to do about this?

- OVERALL SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
SHOWCARD TITLE – SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
- Response to the six service enhancements
 - Explore each segment
 - How do you feel about this service enhancement
 - What is good about it

- What is not good about it
- Now we have discussed the Proposed Business Plan, overall when you look at this plan, how acceptable is it to you
 - Why do you say this
 - How could this be more acceptable
 - What would you change
- SHOWCARD TITLE – INFLATION AND IMPACT / BILLS FOR THE PROPOSED PLAN
- If you look at the graph on the left hand side it shows what impact the 2025-2030 plan would have on your bills and how that changes from now until 2030
- Overall when you look at this plan, how affordable is this to you
 - Why do you say this
 - If not affordable, what would you advise Affinity Water and Thames Water to take out
- The longer term bill impact is on the right hand side. This is relevant to the phasing slide we discussed at the top of the discussion. It will be relevant when we look at a different way of phasing a part of the Business Plan where Affinity Water and Thames Water could choose to do less now and more in the longer term.

Proposed Plan with Phasing

15 Mins (75 Mins)

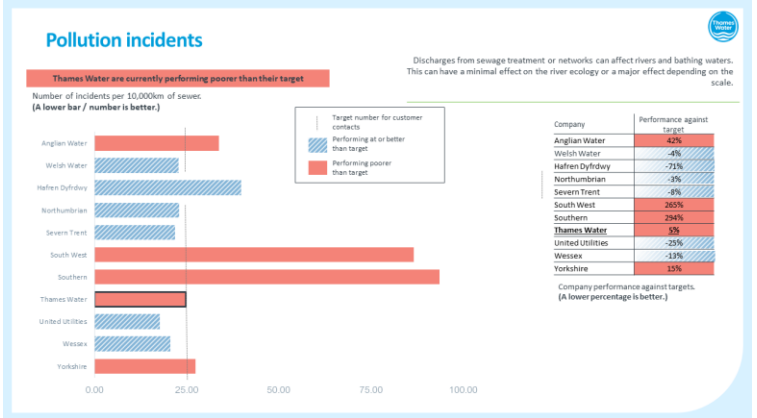
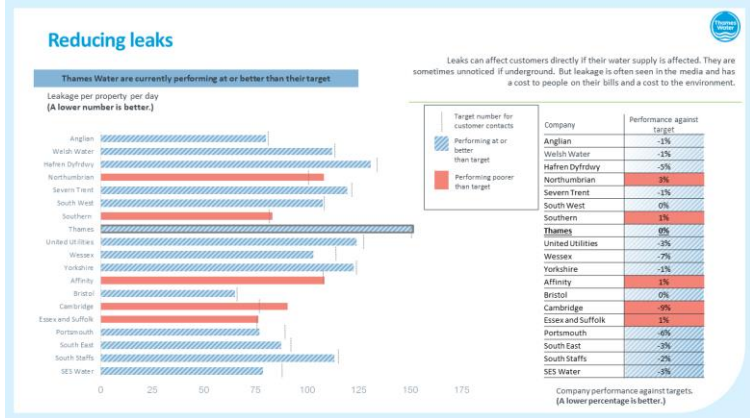
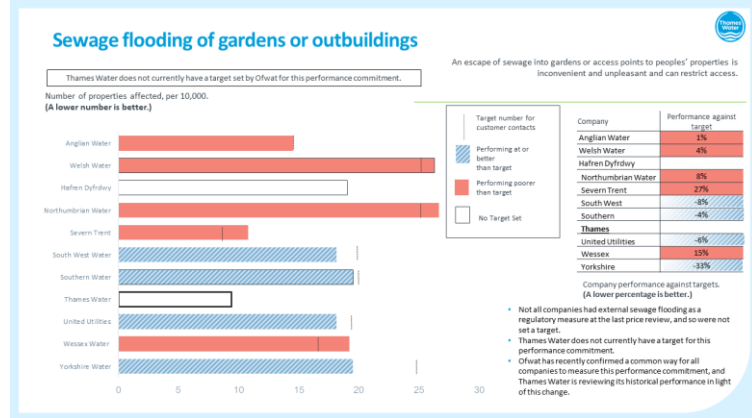
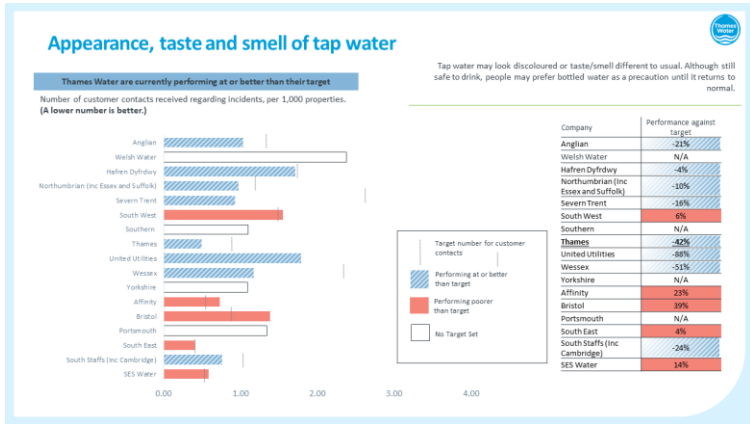
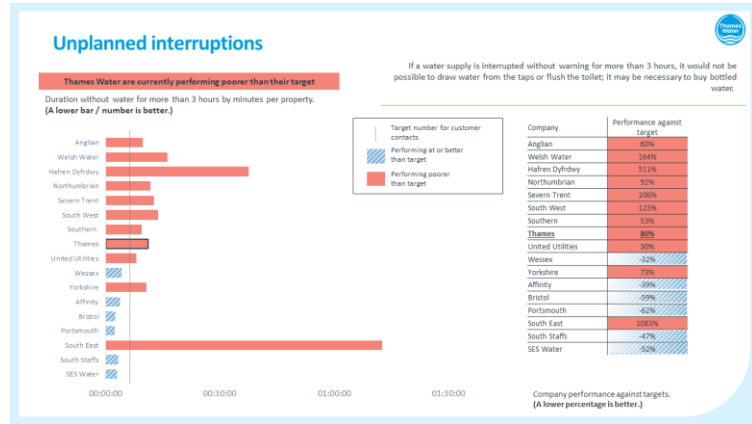
- SHOWCARD TITLE – A DIFFERENT WAY OF PHASING THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROGRAMME
 - Remember we talked about phasing at the end of the first session. Thames Water needs to balance the amount of investment in improvements with the amount of money it gets from customer bills
 - Thames Water could choose to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 82% instead of 90% in the other plan – so it would be slower but cheaper for customers
 - For this service enhancement, it would mean adding cost £20.81 to the average bill rather than £31.54
 - How do you feel about this?
 - SHOWCARD – BILLS FOR PHASING - What we need to explain with this option is that the slowing down the phosphorus removal saves money in the shorter term but will cost more later
 - How do you feel about this?
- Now if we step back and think about the Proposed Plan we looked at which reduced the amount of phosphorus entering the rivers by 90% but had a higher bill impact in the short term
- OR
- This alternative phasing where they still reduce the amount of phosphorus in the rivers but not as quickly (82%). It's not as high bill impact in the short term but will cost more later
 - Which of these options do you prefer
 - Why do you say this
 - Which would you want Thames Water to do

Final thank and close

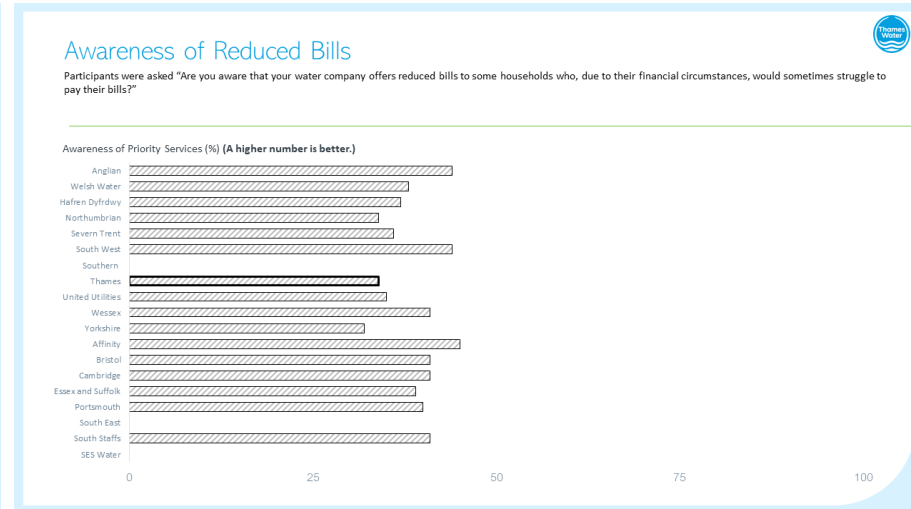
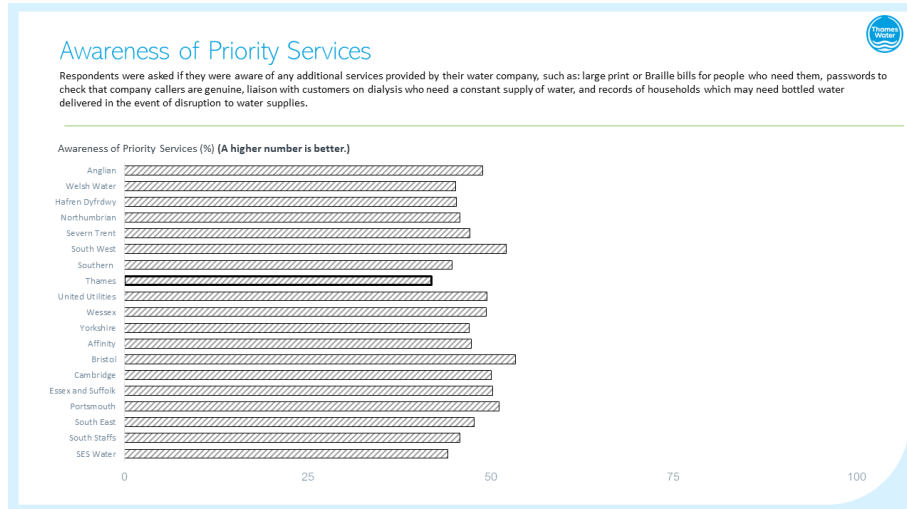
10 Mins (85 Mins)

- Completion of POST TASK
- Ensure that inflation description is included within the post task
- Invite any final questions
- Close

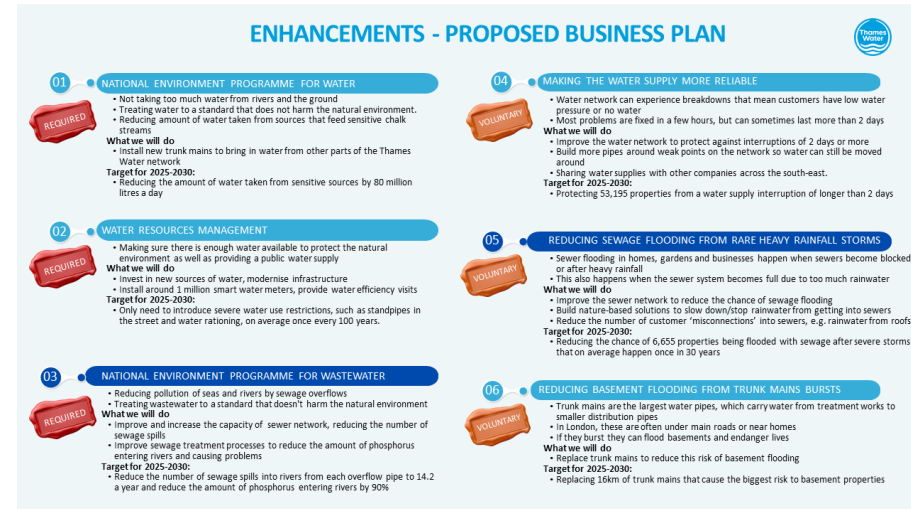
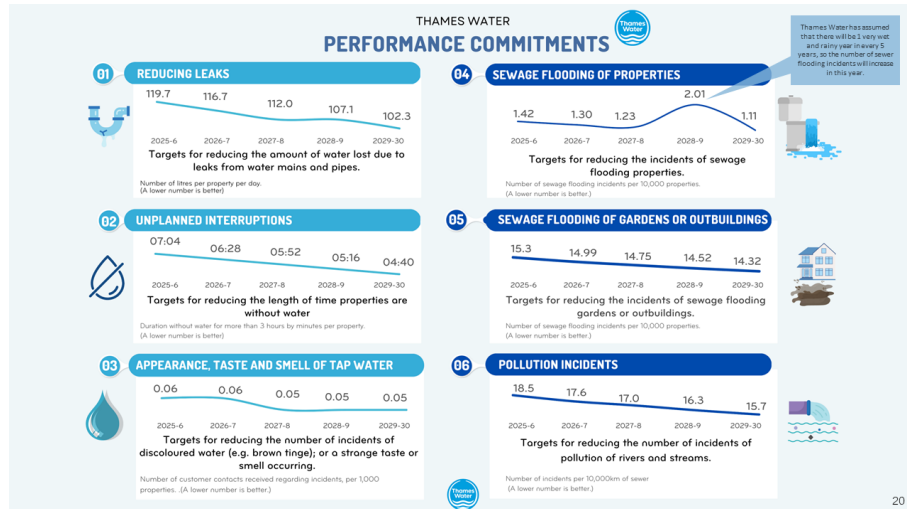
Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Stimulus Materials



Appendices: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Stimulus Materials



Stimulus materials for Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Task Six



Stimulus materials for Customers in Vulnerable Situations Pre-Task Task Nine

Appendices: Future Customers Recruitment Questionnaire

3598 Thames A&T
PRE-TASK SCRIPT: **Future HH CUSTOMERS**



Introduction to Task One

On the first slide there is a map of England and Wales that shows Affinity Water's and Thames Water's respective operating areas:

Background to water industry

There are a number of different companies in the water industry who serve water customers to ensure their water is safe, reliable and environmentally friendly

England and Wales are served by 17 different water companies: some provide just drinking water, others take away sewage as well. Companies in the same area work together to plan for the future in their region, and work with the other regional groups across England to make sure there is enough water for everyone.

Unlike with gas and electricity, customers cannot 'switch' water company, because your water company is dictated by the area you live in, and is therefore a monopoly. This is why Ofwat regulate all water companies, to ensure fairness for all customers.

AFW = Affinity Water
Businesses don't pay their bills directly to the water companies - they are billed by "retailers"

Affinity Water logo

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Two

Next you will see some key facts about the customers that Affinity Water and Thames Water jointly serve, and the infrastructure that they manage:

Where we work...

Affinity Water are the largest water-only supply company in the United Kingdom, owning and managing the water assets and network in an area of approximately 4,500km across three supply regions in the South East of England.

Affinity supply on average 936 millions litres/day to over 3.8 million people and a wide range of business customers. Affinity operate 91 water treatment works to ensure that our water is of the highest quality, distributing our water through a network of over 16,900km of mains pipes.

Thames Water serve 15 million customers with wastewater services. Affinity Water supplies around 3.5 million of those customers with water services. Thames Water does not bill these customers directly.

Thames Water have

- 351 sewage works
- 160,000km of sewers
- 4,780 sewage pumping stations
- 1.2 million manholes

Water services by Affinity Water, & Wastewater services by Thames Water

This map shows (in the red highlighted area), the location of customers served

Affinity Water logo

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Hello and thank you very much for agreeing to be part of our exciting research project for Affinity Water and Thames Water.

As part of this important project, we will be talking to customers who are supplied by Affinity Water for their water services, and Thames Water for their wastewater services, all over their joint supply region. We're delighted that you will be coming along to one of these sessions where we will present and discuss Affinity and Thames Waters' business plan for 2025-2030.

Before you come along, we need you to read through this pre-task which is all laid out on the following screens. It has been designed to take no longer than 20 minutes of your time and you will receive a separate incentive for doing this.

The pack includes nine tasks for you to read through and then a few questions to answer at the end. Some of the information about your water company may be new to you but please be reassured that you don't need to understand everything. If you have questions then please type them in as you go along in the space provided. We will collate any questions/responses and we can recap at the beginning of the session.

If you have any technological issues related to this platform then please contact omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

We are really looking forward to meeting you.

Nancy & the rest of the research team

Appendices: Future Customers Recruitment Questionnaire

Introduction to Task Three

This provides a bit of background on why Thames Water wants to hear from you:

The role of research

Ofwat & business plan	Customer's priorities	Research matters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department. They are responsible for making sure that water companies are regulated to provide consumers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price. Every five years, water companies develop a 'business plan' that sets out how they want to develop their services, and the proposed cost to customers. As customers are not able to choose their water company, water companies must give them a say about what they want from their services and the price they pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking to customers also helps water companies prioritise what to do first or what to do most of – because they are not able to fund everything they would like to do or do all of the things that customers might want them to do. The business plan and prices are then finalised by Ofwat in a process known as the Price Review. There is more information about this here: 'All about the price review'. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWmivC93AE8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the ways that people have their say is through this research, which will explain what the plans are for where you live, and ask what you think – whether the plans are 'acceptable' to you and whether you can afford the proposed bills from 2025-2030. Companies also have to show to Ofwat that their plans reflect what their customers want – that means refining the plans based on what customers tell them.

The water industry today

Water companies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take water from the environment (e.g. rivers), treat it so it's safe to drink, and return it safely to the environment after use Build and maintain infrastructure (like pipes) to supply water to homes and businesses 	Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes sure the water supplied in England and Wales is safe and that drinking water quality is acceptable for customers 	Consumer Council for Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent customers on matters relating to water Investigate complaints and provide advice to ensure water services remain fair for customers
Environment Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects and enhances the environment Works with water companies to ensure operations and plans develop in a sustainable way 	Defra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government department responsible for protecting the environment and countryside, including water 	Ofwat Office of Water Services (Ofwat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regulator that makes sure water companies do their job properly, including fair pricing for customers and ensuring there is always a reliable water supply

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Four

The next slide shows you what Thames Water does and the service it provides:

Thames Water and the water cycle

Thames Water takes water from rivers and natural underground stores and turns it into high quality drinking water. It then delivers the drinking water through a water pipe network to homes and businesses. Once the water has been used (i.e., wastewater that goes down sinks and toilets) it is collected in the sewer network. It ends up at sewage treatment works where the water is treated and safely returned to rivers.

What does Thames Water do?

Water	Wastewater and rivers	Household only	Customer Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract water from rivers and aquifers Deliver water to household and business taps Help customers to use less water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean water so it is safe to use Fix leaks on pipes Make sure there is enough water in future Take wastewater away (i.e. sewage) Return water to rivers Prevent pollution from sewers and sewage works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat and recycle wastewater Clean up sewage floods and blockages Produce and use renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and send bills to customers Read water meters to produce accurate bills Make it easy for customers to contact Thames Water Provide customers with helpful information Support customers that need extra help Deal with requests, queries and complaints

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Introduction to Task Five

The next slides give you some information about how Thames Water's performance is monitored by OFWAT, the independent regulator, and how to read the graphs you will see in the following slides:

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies have to provide reliable services, and plan for their services to be resilient to changing weather patterns and demand from consumers.

Companies can miss or exceed performance commitment targets for a number of reasons. For example, leaks from pipes happen more often after very cold weather, which can contribute to a company not meeting the target, and flooding from sewers is less likely in dry weather, which can lead to higher performance for sewer flooding service targets.

If a water company **misses a target** then they receive a penalty which can translate to a **small decrease in customer bills** to reflect the **poorer service** that customers have received.

If the water company **meets or exceeds a target** then they can receive a reward which translates to a **small increase in customer bills** to reflect the **improvement in service**.

In Ofwat's most recent assessment of penalties and rewards, Thames Water had to return £51m to customers because of missed targets on water treatment works compliance, pollution incidents and internal sewer flooding across 2023-24. This will reduce the average Household customer's annual bill by £13.59, and business bills by 1.6%.

How water company performance is monitored

Water companies are currently part way through their five-year business plan for 2020 to 2025. They have service level targets, called 'performance commitments', in every five-year business plan. These targets are based on what customers have previously told companies they would like them to do, and on Ofwat's assessment of what companies should deliver. These targets cover a wide range of the different services that water companies provide.

Ofwat monitors water company performance against each performance commitment every year to see if they have met the service level in their business plan.

We are now going to show you how well your water and/or sewerage company is doing on some of their performance commitments, compared to other water companies in England and Wales.

These performance commitments are a snapshot of out of the wide range of services companies provide. We are showing these examples as customers have told us they are particularly important to them.

If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Future Customers Recruitment Questionnaire

Introduction to Task Six

We will now show you how Thames Water has performed against some of the key targets, and a comparison to other water and wastewater companies.

An explanation on what's contained on these slides is shown below:

How to read comparison information

We will later show you 6 pages displaying water companies' performance. The blue boxes below show you how to read the data.

This title tells you the type of performance commitment

This summarises how well Thames Water did on meeting the target

The chart shows how well each company performs.
Blue – at or better than target.
Pink – poorer than target.
Shorter bar – better.
Dashed line – target.

More information on what is being measured and how

The table shows performance against the target and how far from the target.
Blue – at or better than target.
Pink – poorer/below target.
Smaller number – better (which means –52% is better than -20%).

We know that graphs can sometimes be difficult to read. Please be assured that this information is provided for background only. Don't worry if you don't understand everything - we are happy to explain when we meet.

This first slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water supply interruptions**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of the **appearance, taste and smell of tap water**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding inside properties**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **sewage flooding of gardens and outbuildings**:

This next slide shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **water leakage from their network**:

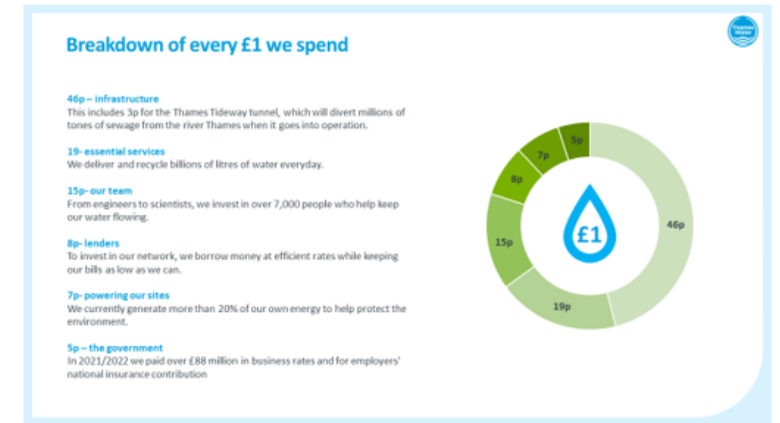
The last one in this section shows you how Thames Water is performing on the measure of **causing pollution of rivers and streams**:

That's all the graphs and tables for now.

Please write in whether you have any questions or comments about the Thames Water's performance on those key measures:

Introduction to Task Seven

Please take a look at this slide. It tells you about your water bill and how every £1 of your bill is spent across, for example, water and wastewater running costs, and investment to improve infrastructure for the future:



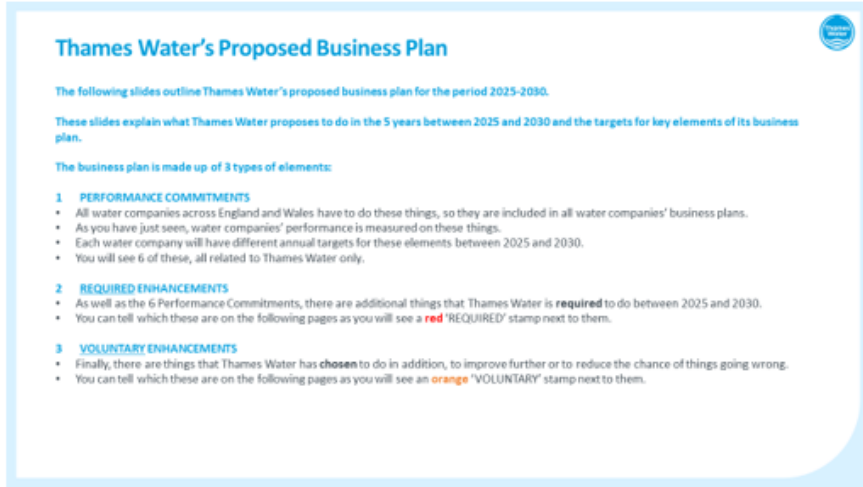
If you have any questions then please write in the space below.

Appendices: Future Customers Recruitment Questionnaire

Introduction to Task Eight

The next two slides will introduce you to Thames Water's proposed Business Plan. We will discuss this at the face to face session but this gives you some information before we meet.

The first one shows broadly how the plan is presented.



The second looks at the performance levels that Thames Water intends to meet across the six different measures we looked at before. All elements of this part of this business plan are mandatory – Thames Water and all water companies have been told by the legal and environmental regulators that they must perform at certain levels (their 'targets'):

This next slide outlines six of the biggest investment areas where Thames Water intends to deliver improvements and upgrades over the period 2025-2030. For example, you will see that it shows that there will be investment in the 'Reducing Basement Flooding' measure.

We will discuss these plans in the face to face sessions but please write in whether you have any questions or comments about Thames Water's intended performance on those key measures or the proposed investment schemes.

Introduction to Task Nine

Before we get together, please answer the question below about the affordability of your current water and sewerage bill.

Future customers only: Question: The information has probably given you an impression of the water company operating in your area to supply water and/or to manage the removal of wastewater. If 10 is 'very interesting' and 0 is 'very unimpressed', how are you feeling about your water company. Please write a sentence or two explaining your view:

All customers: Question: As we mentioned at the beginning of this pre-task, we will start the session discussing your reactions to the information you have just seen. As you've read through it, please list the 3 or 4 things that are new / interesting / surprising to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

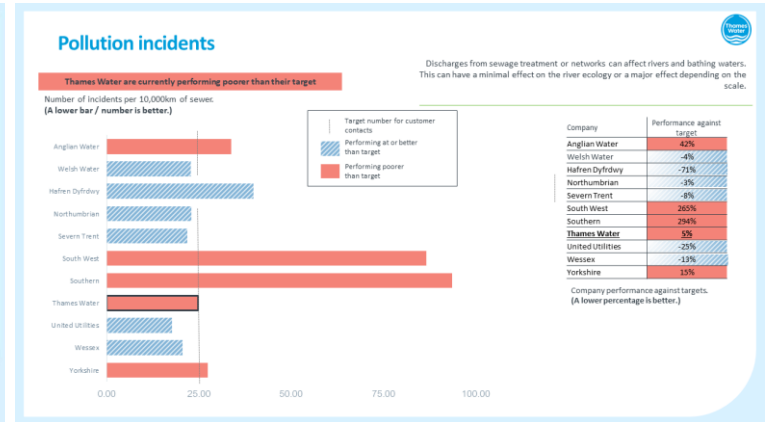
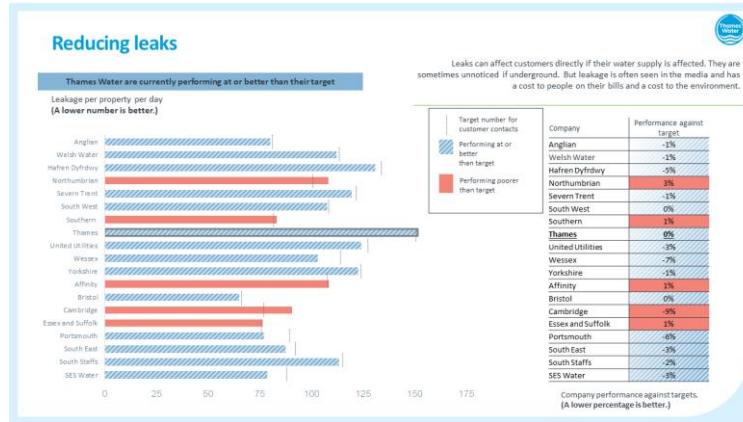
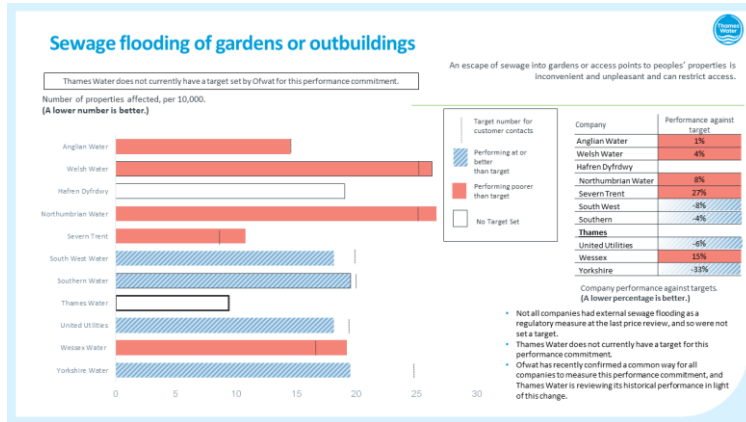
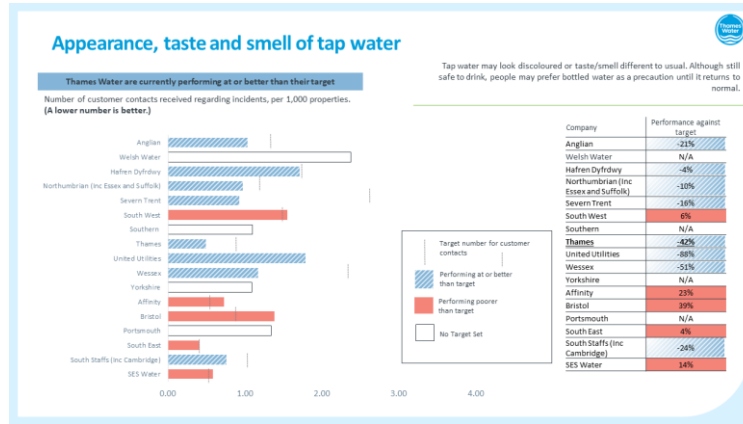
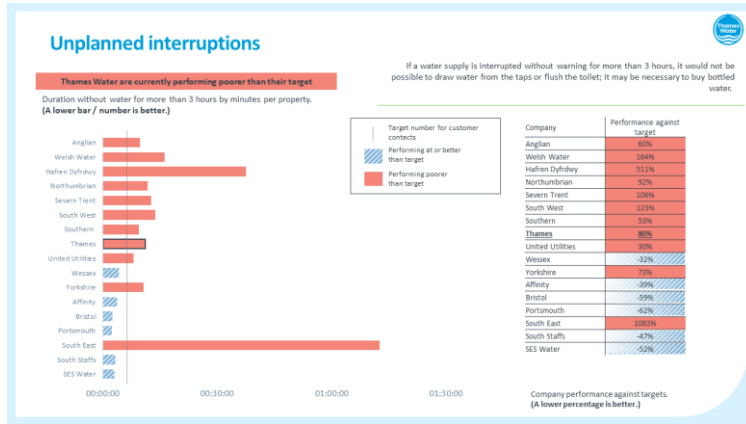
Please have these to hand during the research group discussion

We are looking forward to meeting you. If you have any questions before the session please contact us at: omar.shareef@accent-mr.com.

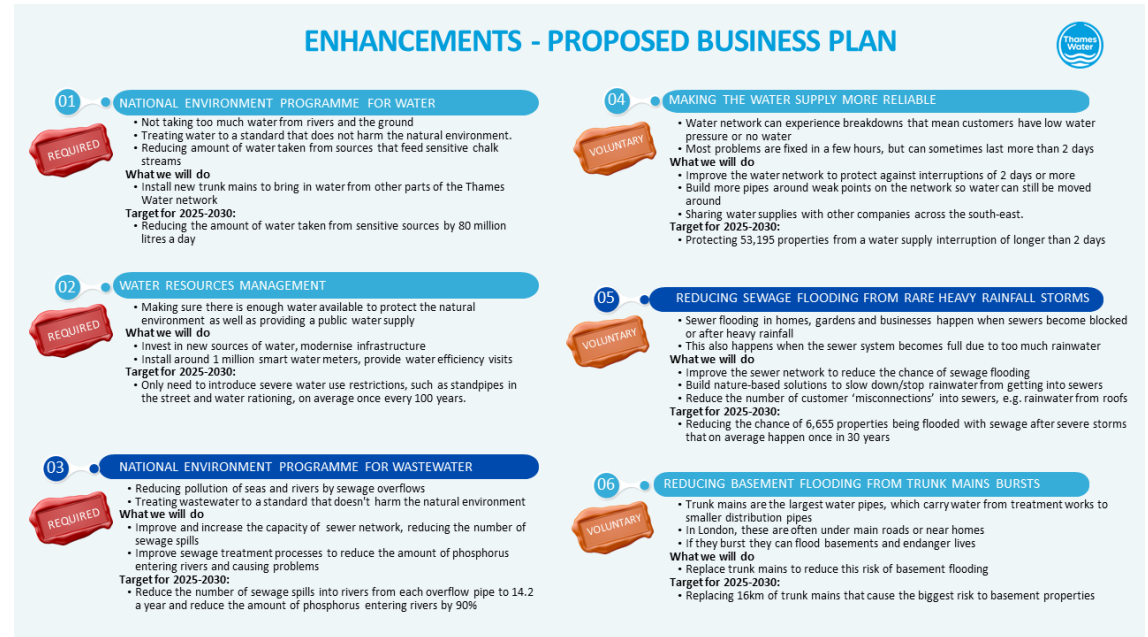
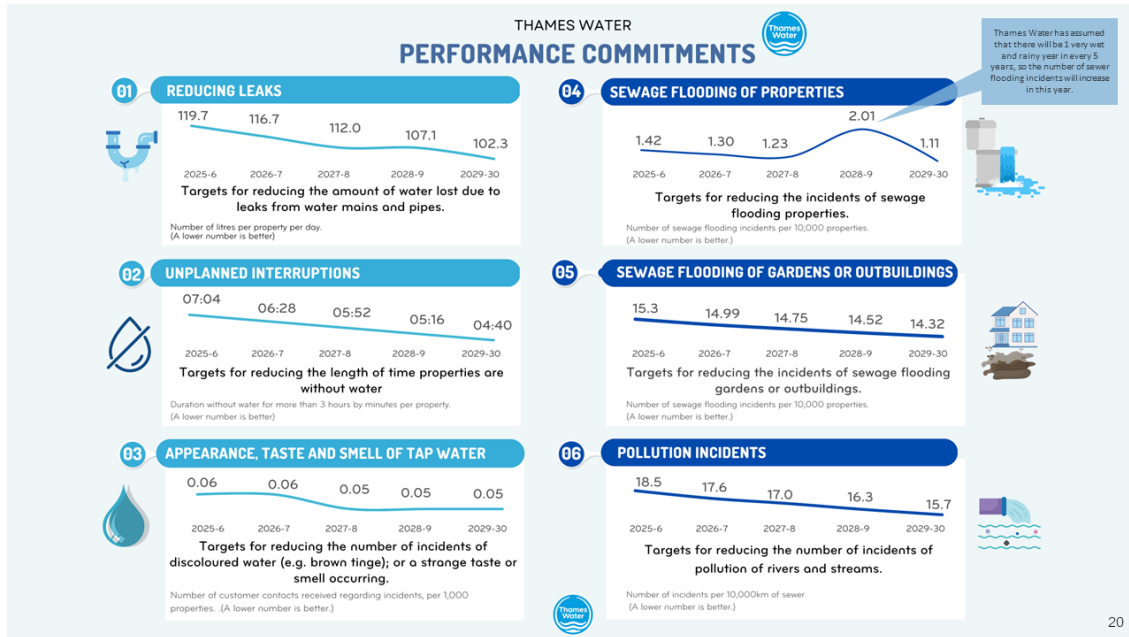
See you very soon.

Nancy and the rest of the research team
Accent Research Team

Appendices: Future Customers Deliberative Stimulus Materials



Appendices: Future Customers Deliberative Stimulus Materials



Appendices: Cognitive Report



PR24 Acceptability and Affordability Testing:

Summary of cognitive testing findings for Thames Water and Affinity Water: Qualitative pre-task and stimuli slides

Pre-task slides

On the whole, materials included in the pre-task were well-understood. Maps, and the information provided alongside, were said to be informative, furnishing participants with a good understanding of the context of the water industry. The same was true of slides concerning water companies' activity, roles and responsibilities. The slide explaining the various entities involved in the water industry was said to be enlightening, with many participants not understanding the complexity of this industry.

The role of the research was felt to be well explained in the pre-task pack. Participants felt they had a good understanding of the rationale for the research, and its objectives. Information concerning how water companies' performance is managed was a little more difficult to access. Participants are not used to processing data presented in graphs and tables, and this caused some difficulties, particularly for the household segment. Lower numbers and percentages being positive was found to be counter-intuitive by many, and this required effort to understand. Water company spending was very much felt to be well represented with the use of graphics.

Business plans, on the whole, were also well understood. It was clear to most participants that the performance commitments they had previously reviewed comparatively formed core elements of each water company's business plan. Again, for most, line graphs depicting water companies' ambitions for performance commitments over the five-year period of the proposed business plan were clear. However, difficulty was experienced by a number of both household and non-household participants when it came to interpreting statutory and discretionary enhancements. There was poor understanding of the meaning of the terms 'statutory' and 'discretionary'. The cognitive testing has found that these two distinct elements of the business plan should be better explained before mainstage fieldwork is undertaken.

Maps

Household participants	Non-household participants
Feedback from HH participants on the introductory maps was generally positive. Participants told us that the information was accessible, attractively presented, easy to process and understand, informative, with many commenting that the information was new to them and set the context for the following slides.	Like HH customers, NHH participants told us that information was clear, concise and easy to follow and understand, setting the scene successfully. NHH participants would benefit from an expansion of the information about retailers and their role in the industry.
Information was presented succinctly and concisely (in short blocks) and the use of bullets (for Thames) was welcomed.	

Household customers commented that they did not realise businesses were billed by retailers.	
Affinity water is labelled AFW on the map, but there is no legend to identify this as Affinity. Further, the Affinity map was found to be low-resolution and hard to read, even when zoomed in.	
Affinity-Thames: Unclear to one how Thames Water and Affinity Water work together to deliver services.	
Some commented on the number of maps included in the Affinity-Thames pre-task: Is the map for the groups of water companies necessary?	
Affinity: Why are directors excluded from employee count? Their omission caused suspicion for one participant	

Recommendations:

- Replace Affinity map with a high resolution version
- Ensure 'AFW' on maps is defined as Affinity Water in a legend
- Expand text on the role of retailers in the provision of water services to NHH customers
- Consider revising Affinity's text to include directors (or otherwise revise the reference to directors)

The role of the research

Household participants	Non-household participants
Whilst this slide was seen as 'text heavy' by some, the information was easy to read and understand, and it described the purpose of the upcoming research clearly.	NHH participants said that the process is clearly explained and the reasons for the research are made evident. The text was said to be easy to understand.
Some participants asked exactly how the research would be used to refine business plans and pricing, but it was felt that there was adequate information presented in order to initially engage in the research.	Shorter bullets may benefit some readers.
A number of participants remarked that it was reassuring that water companies engage with customers in this process.	One participant commented that it was good to see a co-development approach with customers 'front and centre'.

Recommendations:

- Consider breaking the information down into shorter bullet points to improve accessibility

What the water company does

Household participants	Non-household participants
On the whole, HH participants felt that the information was visually appealing, clear, informative and thus gave useful background and context. We heard that this was 'useful information and communicated well'.	As HH participants, NHH participants told us that the information was informative, interesting and useful.
The water cycle diagram (Thames) was familiar to many but offered useful context for the research.	Further, it was said to be clear and simple to understand; concise, and offered the right level of detail.
Further, participants were previously unaware of the role of the numerous agencies and government departments involved in the water industry and appreciated water companies being placed in this broader context.	Positive feedback was received on the layout, presentation and volume of text.
Affinity: One participant felt this information contained a number of unfamiliar terms that were not adequately explained: ground water; surface water; chalk streams. The participant felt that the slide assumed knowledge on the art of the reader.	In a similar way to HH participants, commented on the complexity of the industry but most agreed that this broader industry information was useful to know.

Recommendations:

- Consider revising Affinity text to remove or explain any unfamiliar language

How water company performance is monitored

Household participants	Non-household participants
This section was said to be clear and easy to understand, albeit text-heavy for some.	NHH participants said the information was straightforward and concise and that graphics helped to support understanding. Penalties and rewards were clearly explained.
The notion of performance targets (and the resulting bill impacts) was new to some, so these slides were informative. Some commented that it was reassuring that these targets are in place while others commented that it was insightful to see some of the challenges faced by water companies. These comments indicate that participants read and understood the information being presented.	Some commented that this section was dense with text.
Participants commented that it would be useful to understand how the penalty translated to bill impacts at a customer level.	"If a company misses a target...": It needs to be made clear that this is a water company.

One participant felt that the performance information would be presented on a mobile phone, given the accompanying image.	
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Recommendations:

- Consider breaking down text sections into shorter blocks
- Provide penalty information at a customer level in order to make this information more meaningful
- Revise/remove mobile phone icon to avoid confusion
- Clarify that the targets apply to water companies, not companies in general

How to read comparison information

Household participants	Non-household participants
HH participants told us that this introductory slide was clear and helpful in explaining later slides on performance.	Again, NHH participants told us that the information was clear, detailed and useful in interpreting later slides. NHH participants valued having an introduction to the later slides.
Some participants told us they referred back to this slide when reviewing comparative performance when completing the pre-task.	One participant suggested the use of a 'traffic light' system to indicate 'at a glance' water companies' performance against their targets.
Text on this slide refers to pink bars and green bars, but bars in later slides are pink and blue.	

Recommendations:

- Revise text to refer to pink and blue bars, rather than green

Performance commitments (comparative performance)

Household participants	Non-household participants
These slides received a mixed response from HH participants, with some able to interpret the data easily, while others struggled with the volume and presentation of information.	NHH participants found it easier to digest and understand this information compared with HH participants. Some took time to review and understand the content of these slides, however, remarking that there was a volume of information being shared.
Graphs The fact that lower numbers indicate a better performance is hard for people to understand – participants assumed that this meant that companies were failing to meet their target requirements; a higher percentage usually means a better performance. That said, the legend was very helpful in allowing readers to understand performance above/below target and colour differentiation between good and poor performance is useful.	The brief summary of the water company's performance at the top of the slide was helpful in 'guiding' interpretation of the slide overall. These slides may benefit from further emphasising that a smaller number/percentage indicates a better performance.
	Graphs Colour coding was welcomed (pink/blue) and aided interpretation of performance levels.

Appendices: Cognitive Report

Some suggested that the water company of interest could be highlighted in order to direct the reader's attention.	Tables Participants suggested that the tables might be more valuable if water companies' performances were ranked (in the style of a league table).
Tables Like the graphs, the fact that lower percentages are preferable is difficult for some participants to understand.	
This information was helpful where performance targets varied between water companies.	
Participants noted that some data points are missing.	

For those not used to reviewing and interpreting data in this format, difficulties understanding the information in these graphs and tables were evident. However, the summary of performance for the water company of interest at the top of the slide was helpful in guiding interpretation, even if it meant that participants gained only a superficial understanding of all of the information being presented. Further, the colour coding of above- and below-target performance in the graphs was valuable and the legend describing this was beneficial.

Recommendations:

- Further emphasise the summary of the water company's performance in the summary box, drawing the reader's attention
- Consider highlighting the water company of interest in the graphs and tables
- Consider ranking water companies in the table according to performance against target
- Further emphasise that a smaller number/percentage constitutes a better performance
- Replace any missing data

£1 spend

Household participants This slide received positive feedback. It was clear, nicely presented and the breakdown was said to be clear. The format was familiar to participants, and it was clear that the penny values were equal to percentages to most.	Non-household participants Like HH participants, NHH participants in testing provided positive feedback. One commented that percentages would be easier to understand than expressing spend in pennies.
Participants commented and remarked on various parts of the spend, evidencing that they were engaged and interested in the content.	
Affinity: What are 'our assets'? What or who are bondholders?	
Thames/Affinity: The fact that spends are illustrated in different ways makes it more difficult to compare the two companies' spends.	

Recommendations:

- Explain what is meant by assets and bondholders (Affinity)
- Consider harmonising presentation format for Thames/Affinity slides (although we note that the expenditure categories are different in any case, making it difficult to undertake any comparison)

Introduction to business plan

Household participants It was clear to HH participants that this was a plan for a 5-year period. For some, the distinction between the 3 elements was clear, but not for others. There was good understanding on the whole that the performance commitments to be presented would be the same as those reviewed earlier and that these were common to all water companies, but it was not clear that these would not compare performance between water companies in the upcoming business plan. Participants would benefit from a greater distinction between statutory and discretionary enhancements, and the meaning of each	Non-household participants NHH participants were able to process the information on this slide easier than HH participants. For this group, the distinction between the 3 elements was clear on the whole, but a clearer distinction between statutory and discretionary enhancements would be welcomed by some, with these terms being unfamiliar. Participants suggested that 'mandatory' and 'voluntary' or 'optional' may be better here. Whilst the distinction between statutory and discretionary enhancements was clear, not all participants understood what was meant by these two categories. Some participants queried how targets were decided upon.
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Recommendations:

- Make clear that upcoming performance commitments in the business plan will not compare performance between companies but rather will express commitments over the 5-year period of the business plan for the water company in question
- Make the distinction between statutory and discretionary enhancements clear, leaning on alternative language to clarify which are mandated and which are enhancements of the water company's own choosing.

Proposed business plan - Performance commitments (2025 – 2030)

Household participants Participants understood that these graphs illustrated targets over the period of the proposed business plan, generally showing increasing ambition over time. Some commented that the graphs were small and may benefit from being presented one per slide. Further, participants noted that graphs may benefit from labelled axes (and the addition of gridlines).	Non-household participants NHH feedback generally mirrored HH participants' views on this slide outlining the performance commitments that form part of the business plan, with participants showing good levels of comprehension. Suggestions included: to label x and y axes; to present graphs one per slide; to identify the reason for the spike in sewage flooding of properties in 2028/9 (Thames only).
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One participant commented that graphs get easier to read the more they are presented, and some expressed a preference for bar charts.	
Thames: Participants noted the increase in sewer flooding of properties in 2028/9.	

Recommendations:

- Consider the addition of axis labels and gridlines
- For Thames, highlight the reason for the increase in sewer flooding incidents in 2028/9
- Consider showing one performance commitment graph per slide

Proposed business plan – Enhancements

Household participants HH participants shared that this slide detailing enhancements was text heavy, however, that the information was easy to understand and free from jargon. The aims and ambitions were said to be clear. It was suggested that we might consider splitting statutory and discretionary enhancements over 2 slides to draw the distinction out more clearly and reduce the volume of information on this slide. Affinity: WRMP: Is there a typo? Should the target be to 'halve' the chance of standpipes/rota cuts?	Non-household participants NHH participants noted that there was a lot of text, and information, on this slide. Some suggested that these targets could be expressed more concisely. One participant felt that the enhancement descriptions each offered different levels of detail and that this should be more consistent across all statutory and discretionary enhancements. Whilst the distinction between statutory and discretionary enhancements was clear, not all participants understood what was meant by these two categories. Some participants queried how targets were decided upon.
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Recommendations:

- Consider whether enhancements can be expressed more concisely without losing meaning
- Consider splitting statutory and discretionary enhancements out into 2 slides for greater distinction
- Revisit enhancements to ensure they all offer a comparable level of detail
- Offer greater clarity on the meaning of 'statutory' and 'discretionary' (see earlier recommendation)

Research event slides

In addition to testing pre-task slides, cognitive testing of qualitative research materials also included seeking feedback on the slide decks that are proposed for use during face-to-face deliberative events, focus groups with micro businesses, and in-depth interviews with all other customer segments. These slides introduced new additional information for participants, including presenting water companies' long term visions, a further level of detail on proposed business plans, and included must do (and alternative) business plans.

The long-term vision was well received, with participants noting that this had, on the whole, been communicated clearly. Equally, the conceptual interruption of phasing was also well understood. However, phasing was introduced in concept early in the discussion, in line with the CCW/Ofwat research guidance, but stood on its own with no broader context or value. It may be beneficial to only introduce the concept of phasing when introducing Thames Water and Affinity Water's alternative business plans, where phasing options are used to disambiguate proposed from alternative business plans.

Performance commitments remain consistent throughout all versions of the business plan. Whilst slides have been included in these decks to provide additional information on performance commitments, over the period 2021/2 - 2050, these became repetitive when discussing the various versions of the business plan. Further, there was poor recognition for the fact that these additional slides described these performance commitments over the longer term.

Participants found it difficult to detect the difference in statutory/discretionary enhancements across the various versions of the business plans. It is evident that moderators and interviewers will need to explicitly draw participants' attention to the differences between these elements across the various versions of the business plans during research events.

Bill impacts were found to be difficult for participants to understand. However, a number of suggestions for improvement of these slides have been made in the relevant section below.

Phasing that differentiates the proposed business plans from the alternatives was also difficult for participants to grasp. It is recommended that the conceptual introduction to phasing options be presented only in the section of the discussion pertaining to the alternative business plans, where it is immediately relevant and meaningful. This may improve participants' understanding of the phasing options, and help differentiate the alternative plans from the proposed plans.

Long-term vision

Household participants HH customers found these slides to be clear, easy to understand and comprehensive, providing a 'good overview'.	Non-household participants Easy to understand and self-explanatory, meaningfully broken down. Concise and easy to read.
We received positive comments on the 'future-thinking' nature of these long-term plans and vision, demonstrating comprehension.	Positive that plans considered climate change.
However, a number of participants commented that the phrase 'direction of travel' was unfamiliar to them.	An 'upwards direction of travel' was confusing for many. One participant suggested the simpler, "bills will increase". Mixed viewpoints were evident on the numbering (and decimal numbering for Affinity).
Affinity: Typo in first challenges paragraph: 'as we move forward'.	

Recommendations:

- These slides were generally well-received and need little revision
- 'Direction of travel' wording needs to be revised and replaced with simpler language. We suggest, "It is expected that water bills will increase between now and 2050"
- Correct typo (Affinity)

Appendices: Cognitive Report

Conceptual explanation of phasing (Thames and Thames-Affinity)

Household participants	Non-household participants
This was generally well understood by most HH participants, with participants using both the line graph and text together to understand the concept of phasing.	Participants generally understood that there are options for how and when improvements are rolled out and that there is a cost implication for each option. Most NHH participants grasped the concept of phasing reading this slide.
It was said that it might aid comprehension to explain why a customer might choose each of the options.	However, it was not clear at this stage who would take the decision over the respective options. Was this for water companies to decide, or for customers to comment on?
"Do all of the work required" has little meaning as the opening line; what does this refer to? What work? It is not clear at this stage that this relates to performance commitments and enhancements.	Participants suggested labelling the Y axis. One participant queried the scale and magnitude of changes – pounds or pence?
The Option A line is occluded by the yellow Option B line from 2035 and thus it is unclear that these continue in parallel from this date.	

Recommendations:

- Add preamble to explain that phasing refers to different options for how to deliver 'work' relating to performance commitments and statutory and discretionary enhancements
- Improve the line graph to show that both bill impacts (thus both lines) progress in parallel from 2035
- Label axes

Performance commitments (2021/22 – 2050): Proposed, Must-Do and Alternative business plans

Household participants	Non-household participants
It was not always immediately clear that these were the same performance commitments presented in the proposed business plan in the pre-task and in the earlier slide(s).	Some noted that the Y axis labels were missing on these slides.
However, the additional level of information provided by the text was welcomed by those who did understand that these were the PCs provided earlier and wanted more information.	Changing timescales led to confusion for some, with these participants asking why targets are being shown over varying periods when the business plan under question runs from 2025 – 2030.
Further, it was not always clear that these charts showed the commitments over a different timescale (2021/2 – 2050). This was confused further by the fact that the detailed commentary provided information only for the period 2025 – 2030.	Labelling slides 'short term' and 'long term' may help participants to make the distinction.
It was not readily evident that Performance Commitments remain consistent across all	Additional clarity that these are the same performance commitments as previously discussed would be beneficial.
	Participants welcomed the additional text information alongside the graphs, helping them

versions of the business plan (despite this being in bold, underlined text on the slides). However, for those that noted the consistency, the fact that the performance commitments remained stable across all versions of the business plan became repetitive over the various versions of the business plan.

to understand the performance commitments in more detail.

Recommendations:

- Highlight that these slides present further detail on the same performance commitments discussed previously
- Make clear that these show performance commitment targets over the longer period 2021/2 – 2050 rather than the period 2025 – 2030 seen previously
- If we are to retain graphs showing PCs over the 2021/2 – 2050 period, then the accompanying commentary needs to relate to the same time period
- Moderators/interviewers will need to make clear that performance commitments and their targets remain consistent for all versions of the business plan (proposed/must-do/alternative) during discussions/interviews
- Consider the value of presenting identical performance commitment slides for all versions of the business plan

Enhancements 2030 – 2050: Proposed, Must-Do and Alternative business plans

Household participants	Non-household participants
Broadly, the same comments apply here as apply to the performance commitments for the period 2021/2 – 2050:	As per findings for the performance commitments for the period 2021/2 – 2050.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity on shift in time period • Text describes business plan 2025 – 2030 while graph depicts the period 2030 – 2050 	
It was not easy for participants to identify how the enhancements changed between the proposed, must-do and alternative versions of the business plan.	
Some noticed the addition of bill impacts in the event slides, when compared with slides included in the pre-task pack.	
WINEP Water: Graphs are illustrating a decrease in the amount of water being taken from sensitive sources (Thames)/a reduction in abstraction (Affinity), yet the graphs increase as they re illustrating the planned reduction, but this is counterintuitive for participants.	

Recommendations:

- Highlight that these slides present further detail on the same enhancements discussed previously
- Make clear that these show enhancement targets over the longer period 2030 – 2050 rather than the period 2025 – 2030 seen previously
- If we are to retain graphs showing enhancements over the 2021/2 – 2050 period, then the accompanying commentary needs to relate to the same time period
- Consider presenting WINEP Water targets differently in order to avoid confusion
- Moderators/interviewers will need to make clear how enhancements change between the different versions of the business plan (proposed/must-do/alternative) during discussions/interviews as this is not evident to all from the slides alone

Bill impacts: Proposed, Must-Do and Alternative business plans

Household participants	Non-household participants
The bill impact slides received a mixed response. Some were able to interpret and understand with relative ease, while others struggled.	Participants questioned how accurately inflation could be estimated/projected over the coming 25+ years.
Explanatory text focuses almost exclusively on inflation as a concept, and its impact on finances; there is very little to explain that these bill impacts relate to the performance commitments and enhancements being proposed as part of the business plan as well as inflation.	Lack of clarity between the short-term and long-term impacts. These need to be better (and more consistently) labelled throughout.
Blue and orange distinction was generally clear (bill increase itself and the impact of inflation). Some commented that they were only interested in the overall cost, and not in the relative contribution of the business plan and inflation separately. Others assumed that the blue bar represented the cost of water now and the orange highlighted the overall increase over time.	Participants suggested using a consistent scale on the Y axis to allow for better interpretation.
Participants commented that the y axis would benefit from a label.	Participants were left to assume that these graphs show annual water bills.
	One participant was confused as to whether the orange element demonstrated the different phasing options introduced, in concept, earlier.

Recommendations:

- Make explicit (and early in the slide) that these impacts are related to the business plan being presented and discussed as well as inflation
- Label clearly the short- and long-term bill trajectories, and ensure labelling of short- and long-term plans (graphs, targets, etc.) is clear and consistent throughout to add clarity and aid understanding
- Label X and Y axes clearly
- Use consistent Y axes for both short- and long-term bill impacts
- A side-by-side comparison of all versions of the business plan may be beneficial, but care will need to be taken to clearly and consistently label these and to distinguish clearly between short- and long-term impacts

Phasing options for WINEP Wastewater (differentiating between the proposed and alternative plans; Thames and Affinity-Thames)

Household participants	Non-household participants
HH participants struggled to understand these slides and the line graphs they contained, however, it is noted that fatigue was evident at this point in most interviews.	There was a greater level of understanding among NHH participants of this concept of phasing and how it differentiated the proposed and alternative business plans.
Participants were confused as to what phasing graphs were depicting and were showing signs of confusion over the three versions of the plan that had been discussed up to this point.	Bill impact differences were easier to detect than the variation in phosphorous targets (target lines run in parallel for much of the timeframe depicted).
Not immediately clear that the line graphs refer to the differing targets and the corresponding bill impacts.	
Differentiating targets between the two plans was challenging for participants.	

Recommendations:

- Cognitive interviewers questioned the value of covering different phasing options conceptually early in the slide deck, mooting that introducing the concept where relevant (in the alternative plan section to differentiate between the proposed and alternative plan) may make it more meaningful and impactful
- The conceptual illustration of phasing options is more complex than the actual phasing options that differentiate between proposed and alternative business plans; this may be adding confusion