

# Your Water, Your Say: our approach

August 2023

#### 1. Introduction

This document sets out our approach to our first 'Your water, your say' session and how we complied with Ofwat and CCW's guidance for open challenge sessions<sup>1</sup>. Section numbers correspond to those in Ofwat and CCW's guidance document. Please also see our written record of the session and the video recording of our company presentation on our website<sup>2</sup>.

#### 2. Purpose, use and organisation of 'Your water, your say' sessions

#### 2.1 Purpose of 'Your water, your say' session

We held our Phase 1 Your water, your say session on 19 May 2023 during the development of our PR24 business plan. It was a valuable opportunity for customers and other stakeholders to pose questions and provide feedback on key features of our plan, as well as local priorities or service issues they wanted to see addressed in our plans and ongoing delivery.

We have scheduled our Phase 2 Your water, your say session for 30 November 2023 following the submission of our business plan. The purpose will be to allow customers and stakeholders to question us on whether and how the issues previously raised have been addressed and to pose new questions.

#### 2.2 Use of evidence from 'Your water, your say' session

Requirement	What we did
The PR24 submission should explain the issues raised by customers and stakeholders and how they have been addressed by the company	Our TMS03 Customer Engagement document includes a summary of the concerns and queries raised by attendees of the first Your water, your say session and outlines how we plan to respond to and address these
The company's PR24 submission should also highlight any issues raised by customers and /or stakeholders that the company	issues in our plan. We have considered our customers', stakeholders' and communities' views and concerns as part of the
considers it cannot address and why	development of our PR24 plan and demonstrated our decisions through our Line of Sight.

#### 2.3 Independent Chair

No requirements for companies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Guidance for water companies: Planning, running and following up on phase 2 'Your water, your say', Ofwat and CCW – <u>https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FINAL-guidance-document-for-phase-2-Your-water-your-say.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Thames Water Your Water Your Say report, 19 May 2023 – <u>https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/your-water-your-say</u>

## 2.3.1 Company briefing

Ahead of our Phase 1 session we provided the Independent Chair with a written briefing.

Paguirament for company briefing	What we did
Requirement for company briefing	
The company's usual description of its business, and what it does	These requirements
The broad geographical areas covered by water and wastewater services	were covered in the briefing we shared
A description of the demographics of the company's customer base (and the population of people and business that it serves, where this differs)	with the Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat on 5 May 2023.
Key messages about the PR24 business plan and long-term delivery strategy	The document was
The company's view of which aspects of ongoing delivery are going well and not well (e.g., by reference to delivery of PR19 performance commitments and/or other publications about ongoing performance such as the 'Water company performance report');	reviewed by the Thames Water CCG in April 2023 and their feedback was addressed.
The company's view of key issues that customers or other stakeholders might raise at the 'Your water, your say session', including an indication of which issues could prompt multiple questions	
Reviewed by Thames Water's Independent Challenge Group. Thames Water named this their Customer Challenge Group (CCG)	
Shared with Independent Chair	

## 2.4 Implementation

nning session on 12 April 2023. neeting was held with Ofwat 0 May 2023.
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#### 3. Planning

#### 3.1 Notification of time and date choice

Requirement	What we did
Company to agree date and time with Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat at least two months in advance	To provide the greatest opportunity for customers, stakeholders and communities to participate we agreed to hold the session on
Company to choose a date and time that will facilitate the broadest range of potential attendees to participate in each session	the afternoon of Friday 19 May 2023 from 15:00 to 17:00. This was agreed with Ofwat, CCW and the Independent Chair on 20 February 2023.

## 3.2 Virtual meeting

Requirement	What we did
Each company to hold one 'Your water, your say' session covering	We held one session on 19 May 2023 for all customers, stakeholders, and communities in our region.
the whole of its activities and customer and stakeholder base	Our presenters were on camera throughout the event and the attendees were encouraged by the Independent Chair to have their cameras on if they were raising questions.
Speaking participants to be on camera Attendees encouraged	We encouraged attendees to submit written questions in advance through our promotion and registration process.
to submit written questions in advance and ask questions verbally during the meeting.	Join our 'Your water, your say' meeting Every five years, we set new provinces to best deliver our services and we'd love to hear your views on our proposal. Join us on <b>Friday 19 May 2023 from 15:00 to 17:00</b> BST and help us shape our plan. This online event is a great opportunity for you to ask questions. Your questions could cover the service we provide, our impact on the environment, what will happen to your water bill or any other topics that are important to you. Register now
incoung.	Well welcome quotifies to our panel of experts during the two session. If you're unable to altend the event, the Consumer Council for Water will raise your question on your behalf. Submit your questy prior to the meeting to yourvalencemers/gloculater.org.uk stating clearly that your question is for Thames Water. As we recognise not everyone will have IT access to join us online, we welcome multiple people to join from the same device. Please use this event as an opportunity to raise questions on behalf of your communities who may not have access to IT facilities. Make sure you have your say about your water service! <u>Book a place</u> .

# 3.2.1 Virtual platform choice

Requirement	What we did
Companies to run meetings over a virtual	Our Phase 1 session took place on Microsoft
platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom	Teams.
The platform needs to allow up to 100	Our meeting option allowed for more than
attendees to join the meeting	100 attendees to join the meeting.
Chosen platform to allow Independent Chair	We held a pre-session with the Independent
to 'co-host' privileges during the 'Your water,	Chair and our technical support to go
your say' session so they can manage the	through 'co-host' arrangements.
visibility and spoken contributions of	
attendees	

## 3.2.2 Questions

Verbal questions - A	What we did
that they want to ask a question using the 'raise hand' option in the virtual meetingVWritten questions (in advance) – Customers and stakeholders have an option to submit a question that CCW	Attendees were able to raise questions during the meeting using the Microsoft Teams raised hand functionality. We encouraged attendees to submit their questions in advance to CCW. Join our "Your water, your say' meeting Ency the year, we set new profiles to be deliver our services and we'd love to here your weeks on our proposal. Join us on Friday 19 May 2023 from 16:00 to 17:00 BST and help us shape our gins. The online week is a great opportunity for you to ask questions. Your questions could cover the services we provide, our impact on the environment, what will happen to your water bid or any other topics that are important to you. Register now We Weeksens to our parel of expects during the two session. If you're unable to attend the event, the Consume Council for Water will raise your question to no your behalf. Submit your query poir to the meeting to  your water and our ency meeting. Here we water meeting the intermeting water point to behalf our environment when the raise your question to no your behalf. Submit your query poir to the meeting to  your water and the council our point of the point water water one multiple acceled to point for the service we provide. The service we provide our parel of expect share for the meeting to  your advancement and the point of the point water our environment when we may a proceeduate to user communities whon my
	As we recognise not everyone will have IT access to join us online, we welcome multiple people to join from the same device. Please use this event as an opportunity to raise questions on behalf of your communities who may not have access to IT facilities.
an option to submit a question that CCW	We'll welcome questions to our panel of experts during the live session. If you're unable to attend the event, the Consumer Council for Water will raise your question on your behalf. Submit your query prior to the meeting to yourwateryoursyy@cowater.com_uk_stating clearly that your question is for Thames Water.

## 3.2.3 Technical test

Requirement	What we did
Companies are encouraged to test their	We held a pre-session with the Independent
technical set up including allowing the	Chair and our technical support to go through
Chair to 'co-host'	'co-host' arrangements.

#### 3.3 Promotion

Requirement	What we did
Promotion to start at least 6 weeks before event	Our promotional activities ran from 5 April 2023 – 19 May 2023.
Session to be promoted to a broad and representative customer base and to a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the activities of the water company and its customers	We promoted our Your water, your say session to as broad and representative audience as possible via a number of channels, including press releases, social media, our website, direct mailing to our stakeholders and communities and direct mailing to our online research community (more than 1,000 household customers, representative of our customer base).
Promotional activities should target participation by the most vulnerable and hard to reach customers. As some interested parties may wish to attend but may not have internet access or the ability to join the session, companies should promote the sessions to community groups and/or organisations that may represent the interests of people who cannot join virtually. These groups and organisations may be able to raise questions on their members' behalf	To reach the most vulnerable and most under- represented customers we used our established partnerships with organisations who represent that segment, including our vulnerability network and our network of front line colleagues who directly support vulnerable and under-represented customers. We also contacted relevant representatives of the top 10 local authorities which we identified had the highest risk of digital exclusion, to help us reach vulnerable and under-represented customers with invitations to attend, or the offer to represent them at the Your water, your say session. This was in addition to our general invitation to local authorities in our region to join the session.
Beyond this, we expect each company's wider customer engagement activities during business plan development to allow people with no access to IT to contribute their views.	During our plan development we engaged with a wide network of stakeholders and communities who represent the full range of our customers, including those who are digitally excluded. We also made sure that digitally excluded customers were represented within our PR24 customer engagement programme using offline methodologies such as phone, face to face and postal research. Please see our TMS03 Customer Engagement document for details.
It would be beneficial to promote the Phase 2 session to people and organisations who attended the Phase 1 session but not limited to them.	As a part of our registration process we asked whether attendees would be interested in our future session so we can promote it to them. This will be actioned as part of the promotional activities for our second Your water, your say session on 30 November 2023

	This will be actioned as a part of promotional activities for the 30 November 2023 session
promote each meeting including company emails, website, social media and mailings to key	We promoted Your water, your say using all of the specified wording and imagery, via a number of channels including press release, social media, website, direct mailing with our stakeholders and communities and direct mailing our online research community.
Eich dŵr, eich llais' logo alongside	Our invites, communications and registration page included the prescribed text. For example:
Provide links to the CCW and Ofwat 'Your water, your say'	Join our 'Your water, your say' meeting Every he year, we set new profiles to bed deleter our services and we'd love to hear your views on our proposal. Join us on Friday 19 May 2022 hear 15:00 to 17:00 BST and help us shape <u>our plan</u> . This colline event is a great opportunity for you to ask questions. Your questions could cover the service we provide, our impact on the environment, what will happen to your water bill or any other tapics that an important to in-
webpages, with the wording: "You can find out more about the	Register now We'll velcame questions to our panel of experts during the live session. If you're unable to attend the event, the Consumer Council for Water will noise your question on your behalf. Submit your query prior to the meeting to
meeting from CCW and Ofwat". CCW and Ofwat will make	yconvelenceusegic coater or gut, stating clearly that your question is for Thames Water. As we nooppose net everyone will be well access to jain us online, we vectorine multiple people to jain than the same device. Please use this event is an opportunity to raise questions on behalf of your communities who may not have access to IT facilities.
available information that is	Thames Water • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
common to all 'Your water, your say' sessions on their websites Use the following wording when	to 2030, Join our virtual event to hear all about the plan and ask us questions about it. Your questions could cover the service we provide, our impact on the environment, what will happen to your water bill or any other topics that are important to you. Sign up
describing the purpose of the meeting: "We are currently preparing our detailed plan for 2025 to 2030. The 'Your water, your say' meeting will allow	here: https://bit.ly/3UIHPWq
you to hear about the plan and	
ask us questions about it. Your questions could cover the service	courtes Dewrolder Deporting Buelitytes - Home CCG working space. Dr Customer Statehol. Dr Stategy & Regulati Events We are currently preparing our detailed plan for 2025 to 2030. The Your water, your say, 'meeting will allow you to have about the plan and ask us questions about it.
we provide, our impact on the	Event ended         Your questions could over the services we provide, our impact on the environment, what will happen to your water bill or whatever other topic is important to you.           four water, your say         This event is a great opportunity to learn about our investment plans for 2025 to 2030 to 2030 to 2030.
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	ri, May 19, 2023, 3:00 PM  Our customer service priorities iew your event 12 Our longer-term delivery strategies How we are addressing affordability
topic is important to you."	Basic Info     Basic Info     Members from our Executive team and Board will be on hand to share what's in our     darfulpan, the hollenges we are faining, and the ways in which we are working
Use the hashtag	Details Details denvironment.
#yourwateryoursay on related	Online Event Page You're welcome to put your questions to our panel of experts during the live session. In case you're unable to attend the event or if you'd prefer, CCW will raise your questions ser in advance.
social content and tag CCW and	Tickets You can submit your questions prior to the meeting to yeurwatery analytic questions and the second seco
Ofwat so that we can share your	Publish Thames Water, and whether you're unable to attend or you're attending but would prefer CCW to ask your question on your behalf. Questions won't be shared with us
content.	sabboard in advance of the meeting. There will also be a chance to attend a follow-up session later this year when we've

#### 3.4 Attendees

Requirement	What we did
Each company should promote the sessions to all customer groups and its full range of stakeholders as far as possible, covering: • household and non-household customers; • different geographical areas;	We used a wide range of promotional activities to reach all customer groups and our full range of stakeholders and communities including direct invitations to our stakeholders and community representatives, press release, social media, as well as

<ul> <li>customers that receive water only or wastewater only services;</li> <li>all socio-economic groups, and a rural/urban mix;</li> <li>representative organisations for customers, communities and wider stakeholders; and</li> <li>stakeholders who have an interest in water issues but might not have engaged with PR24 to date.</li> </ul>	spreading the information about the event through our employees.
We expect water companies to be represented by senior staff members and/or directors making decisions in their organisation that affect customers, other stakeholders or the environment, including at least one Board member	Thames Water attendees: Sarah Bentley, Chief Executive Officer Hannah Nixon, Thames Water Board member David Bird, Retail Director Richard Aylard, Sustainability Director Cathryn Ross, Director of Strategy and Regulatory Affairs (Job titles correct as at 19 May 2023 when the first Your water, your say session took place)
We suggest that each company limits its attendees to a total of six, including speaking attendees to four, with a supporting team of two who would not be 'on camera'.	We opted for four key presenters: Sarah Bentley, Chief Executive Officer Hannah Nixon, Thames Water Board member David Bird, Retail Director Richard Aylard, Sustainability Director With an additional speaker to assist with Q&As: Cathryn Ross, Director of Strategy and Regulatory Affairs. (Job titles correct as at 19 May 2023 when the first Your water, your say session took place)
Each company is expected to target people that can represent the interests of hard-to- reach and vulnerable customers, and make efforts to enable the involvement of people without access to appropriate IT.	To reach the most vulnerable and most under-represented customers we used our established partnerships with organisations who represent that segment, including our vulnerability network and our network of front line colleagues who directly support vulnerable and under-represented customers. We also contacted relevant representatives of the top 10 local authorities which we identified had the highest risk of digital exclusion, to help us reach vulnerable and under-represented customers with invitations to attend, or the offer to represent them at the Your water, your say session. Furthermore, as part of the registration we encouraged attendees to invite family, friends and communities who don't have access to IT to join them.

We expect each company to invite	Our entire CCG was invited to our Your
representatives of its independent customer challenge arrangements to each of the 'Your water, your say' sessions.	water, your say session and a number of our CCG members including our Chair attended.

# 3.4.1 Registration of attendees

Requirement	What we did
We expect each company to determine its preferred approach to registration of attendees in advance of the session or at the actual meeting, taking into account the need for appropriate handling of personal data and the process to be as easy as possible for attendees	We used the Eventbrite platform for registration.
That the registration process asks each attendee to submit the following information, for sharing with the Independent Chair and CCW in advance to assist with management of the meeting: full name; organisation or interest group (if representing); the general theme for their question, or area of interest.	Our registration process asked attendees to submit all relevant details as requested, including their areas of interest for the session.
That the confirmation email the attendee receives in return includes CCW's dedicated email address (Yourwateryoursay@ccwater.org.uk) and explains that this may be used to submit questions in advance.	We shared the CCW email address as a part of the registration process and encouraged attendees to submit their questions if they couldn't attende to submit their questions if they couldn't attend or if they would prefer for the question to be asked on their behalf. Join our Your water, your say' meeting. Meters and a property would prefer for the submit the second of the secon

# 3.4.2 Pre-reading for attendees

Requirement	What we did		
We suggest that each company makes its own decision about the provision and nature of pre- reading. If it is decided to develop materials for attendees to read in advance of the meeting, then: we suggest that the company invites a representative of the independent customer challenge arrangements	for our first Your wa provided links to do page on our websit Other water companies e	ocuments on the Yc te. For example:	on, however we our water, your say
to review the materials and provide comments in advance of publication; and we ask that the pre-reading material is shared with	What we do • Who we are • Performance • Besponsibility	Supporting our customers   Extra care  Customer Challenge Group  Customer research  Where your money goes	Protecting the environment <ul> <li>Riverhealth</li> <li>Every-strop counts</li> <li>Investing in sur, region</li> </ul>

the Independent Chair, CCW and	
Ofwat.	

## 3.4.3 How the meeting will work

Requirement	What we did
We expect the 'etiquette' for the meeting to include:	The expected
<ul> <li>attendees speak when invited to by the Independent Chair;</li> </ul>	'etiquette' was
<ul> <li>questions should be focused on the company;</li> </ul>	enabled and
• all attendees will speak, and treat each other courteously;	reiterated during
• the company should answer each question directed to them by the	the meeting,
Independent Chair, either in the meeting or as follow up in the record of	however it was
the discussion;	beyond our control
• attendees should use 'Raise Hand' function and wait until invited to	whether attendees
speak by the Independent Chair or put their question in Chat during the	stayed for the full
session;	session.
• the Independent Chair will encourage all attendees to participate in	
the meeting rather than carry on parallel conversations with other	
attendees using Chat; and	
all participants should stay for the whole meeting	

# 3.5 Company presentation

Requirement	What we did
<ul> <li>15 min limit to provide a high-level outline of what is in the PR24 business plan and long-term delivery strategy, focussing on areas that are likely to be of greatest interest to customers, communities and other stakeholders.</li> <li>Companies should clearly set out the issues that the business plan and long-term delivery strategy</li> </ul>	We included all required information in our 15 minutes presentation which was delivered by members of our senior management team, Executive directors, and member of Thames Water Board. Slides for the presentation were shared with the
will address, the actions the company proposes to take, the outcome that should be achieved and the bill impact for customers.	Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat ahead of the session and a recording of the presentation and the slides can
We expect the presentation to address: customer service priorities; long-term outcomes and how the five-year plan delivers the first part of the long-term delivery strategy; environmental outcomes; affordability.	be found on our website: <u>Your water</u> <u>your say   Regulation   About us  </u> <u>Thames Water</u>

## 4. Running

# 4.1 Agenda and time allocation

Requirement	What we did
10 min: Independent Chair's introduction and	The Independent Chair delivered
explanation of how the meeting	the introduction to the meeting
will work	and explained the ground rules for
	the session.

15 min: Company introductory presentation.	The company presentation can be viewed here: <u>Your water your say</u> <u>Regulation   About us   Thames</u> <u>Water</u>
60 min: Questions in themes, such as: Customer service priorities; Long-term outcomes and how the five- year plan delivers the first part of the long-term delivery strategy questions; Environmental outcomes; Affordability; Issues not covered already.	The Independent Chair facilitated Q&As to these themes.
5 min: Independent Chair's next steps and close	The Independent Chair closed the meeting and shared next steps.

## 4.1.1 Questions

Requirement	What we did
CCW's website content promoting 'Your water, your say', will offer members of the public or stakeholders who are interested in the sessions, but are unable to attend, the opportunity to email their question(s) to CCW in advance, using Yourwateryoursay@ccwater.org.uk . The CCW representative at the 'Your water, your say' session will then raise the question on their behalf.	Where relevant, questions were submitted to CCW in advance by customers, stakeholders and representatives of our communities.
Any unanswered questions should be noted (via input to the 'Chat' function or submitted to Yourwateryoursay@ccwater.org.uk within 24 hours of the session ending), so attendees can receive a written response from the company later.	Any questions submitted during the Your water, your say
If a customer raises a specific complaint about the company which may not necessarily be an issue related to the PR24 business plan, the customer will receive contact from CCW after the 'Your water, your say' session to address the complaint. CCW will liaise with the company to ensure the customer receives a response.	session or submitted to CCW were included for response, either during or after the session.

## 4.2 Recording

Requirement	What we did
To help with creating a written record of the 'Your water, your say' session, we want the virtual meeting to be recorded. We expect that the company's choice of	The meeting was recorded on MS Teams, attendees were advised of this in advance and reminded at
virtual platform of the meeting will have this functionality. Attendees of the meeting will need to be told in advance	the start of the session. The recording was made available to
that the meeting will be recorded, and the Independent Chair will remind all attendees at the start of the	the Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat. The recording (apart from
The recording should be available to the Independent	the company presentation segment) was then deleted once
Chair, CCW and Ofwat until the written record of the session is agreed. It should then be deleted.	the minutes/report write-up from the meeting had been approved.

# 5. Follow up

## 5.1 Written record

Requirement	What we did
<ul> <li>We expect each company to create and publish a written record of the discussion at each 'Your water, your say' session. We expect the written record to meet the following requirements.</li> <li>It should include a record of each of the questions posed at the 'Your water, your say' session, and the company's response to each question;</li> </ul>	The timings for publication of our written report were observed. It was published on Thames Water's website on 9
Customers' or individual's names should not be included; A draft version should be produced within 5 working days of the date of the session, for review by the Independent Chair, CCW, Ofwat and attendees in the next 7 working days;	June 2023 with approval from the Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat.
The final draft version should be created by the company in the next 3 working days; The final draft should be approved by the Independent Chair in 5 working days; and	The final report can be found on our website: <u>your-water-your-say-</u>
The final version should be published on the company's website within 21 working days of the meeting	<u>meeting-report.pdf</u> (thameswater.co.uk)

## 5.2 "You said, we did"

Requirement	What we did
Section 1 of this document sets out how we expect companies to use	Within our TMS03
evidence from 'Your water, your say' sessions, and how evidence	Customer
from the sessions will inform Ofwat's assessment of PR24	Engagement
submissions and determinations.	document (table 4.3)
We think it would be a good idea for each company to create a 'You	we include a
said, we did' outline of the challenges raised at the first 'Your water,	summary of the
your say' sessions so that customers and other stakeholders can	concerns and
easily recognise the company's response to each question posed.	queries raised by
This approach will also reveal where a company does not make a	attendees of the first
change to its plans in response to an issue raised at the first 'Your	Your water, your say
water, your say' session.	session and we
The 'You said, we did' outline could form part of the company's PR24	outline how we plan
submissions to Ofwat.	to respond to and
	address these issues
	in our plan.

#### 5.3 Lessons learnt

Requirement	What we did
CCW and Ofwat will continue to engage with all companies, and	We contributed
individual companies, as necessary, as we carry on developing and	observations to
implementing 'Your water, your say' sessions. If there are significant	Ofwat and CCW
lessons learnt during the planning and running of the early 'Your water,	based on our
your say' sessions, we will share these with all companies. If we	experiences of the
consider it to be helpful, we will update this guidance document.	Phase 1 session.

