Report of the Your water, your say

Ms Teams
On 30 November 2023, 5pm – 7pm

Present:

Kevin Johnson	Independent Chair
Kay Greenbank	Ofwat
Hayley Stanford	CCW
James Mackenzie	CCW
Cathryn Ross	Interim Co-CEO
David Bird	Retail Director
Richard Aylard	Sustainability Director
Catherine Lynn	Independent Non-Executive Board Member

A cross section of customers and other stakeholder representatives also attended the session online.

Agenda Item No.	
1.	**Independent Chair Introduction**
	The Chair advised that the "Your Water Your Say" ("YWYS") session had been constituted by Ofwat as part of the price review process for the period 2025 to 2030 ("PR24"). The Chair confirmed that he had been appointed by both Ofwat and the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) to act as the independent chair for the YWYS sessions across the sector. Thames Water, Ofwat and CCW were keen for customers and their stakeholder representatives to pose questions about Thames Water (the Company) and the issues which were important to them. The Chair was keen for participants to offer constructive challenge to the Company during the session.
2.	**Thames Water Presentation**
	Cathryn Ross, Interim Co-CEO, opened the session by referencing Thames Water's purpose: providing life's essential service so that our customers, communities and the environment can thrive. Delivery of the presentation was shared by Cathryn Ross, Catherine Lynn, Richard Aylard and David Bird. The start of the presentation focused on the services Thames Water provide across London, Thames Valley and the Home Counties, highlighting key information around the company assets. The average age of our assets is 79 years, compared to the industry average of 56 years. In London, 50% of the pipes are over 100 years old – the highest proportion in the industry.[1]

[1] TMS01 PR24 Business plan (thameswater.co.uk), p141 - Figure 11.9: Weighted age of network assets, Average age of network assets in years

	3,700km of our London network, including 485km of our largest trunk mains, will be over 150 years old by 2030. The next section of the presentation focused on company performance, noting that many services such as water quality or prevention of sewer collapses are in line or leading in the water industry. However, some very important areas like leakage, pollution incidents and customer service are not good enough, and require significant focus and investment. Moving on, the presentation focused on the company's proposed plan for 2025 – 2030 and how it had focussed on customer and stakeholder priorities, recognising that the company needs to make tough choices: we cannot deliver everything at a pace and price everyone would wish to see, but we're ambitious about delivering the best possible plan for our customers, communities, and the environment. The presentation concluded with the 'Acceptability and Affordability' of our plan to customers, and what it means for customers' bills – recognising that to deliver the proposed plan, bills will need to increase with an average monthly bill rising by £14.55 by 2030, with the company looking for options to smooth price increases, and support for an additional 1/4m customers who need it. *A copy of the presentation is available online: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/your-water-your-say
3.	Questions and Answers
	The Chair advised that he would be seeking questions on the following areas: 1. Safe, high quality drinking water 2. Wastewater services and storm overflows 3. Environment and Net Zero 4. Fair and affordable bills Participants could ask questions via the chat function in Teams, by submitting a question in advance to CCW or indicating they wished to ask a question live by using the hand raise gesture.
	Opening questions
	Question 1 Cathryn, you've talked in your PR24 proposal about asset health deficit, you of course touch upon the fact that the assets need renewing and they've not had the repair and maintenance and upgrade that they probably should have done. You touch, of course, on whether extreme weather events and changing climate are even more rapidly changing climate than many perhaps predicted. And of course, you've touched on that the performance has been "mixed" as one of the phrases that has been used in your PR24 paperwork. It's not so much an asset deficit. It's been a leadership and management deficit that has been going on at Thames Water. Isn't that the root cause of where you are today? *Answer 1* I think the root cause of a lot of where we are today is our assets are not in as good as condition as we would like them to be.

	We've got a complex asset base, and have a relatively old asset base. If you look at the history of Thames Water, notwithstanding the fact that even at the time of privatisation we had an old and complex asset base, however since privatisation our bills have been below the industry average. I think one of the issues is under investment in the asset base, but I think that's in part because we've sought to keep bills down, and not because we've collected lots of customers' money that we should have been spending on improving and maintaining our assets but which has been sucked out to pay off our shareholders. We do have an asset problem and there has been under-investment in the assets. It's important that we rectify that now, but I don't believe that it was the case that customers have paid for that and not received that investment in the past. And that's why there's £1.9 billion of our £18.7 billion plan that we're proposing we should use to actually start to reverse the asset deficit. It's the asset deficit, that is to say the difference between where our assets are and where they ought to be, that's probably the biggest single contribution we make towards improving performance on the things that customers really care about and things like driving down leakage, driving down supply interruptions and reducing pollutions. *Question 2* But clearly there have been leadership and management issues. This is, as you know, Cathryn, the last of Your water, your say sessions that has been run by the water companies. You're the only company that doesn't have the chief executive in that seat that was in the first session of Your water, your say. People can see it quite clearly in front of them that some elements of leadership and management have changed. Shouldn't there be more changes to the way that the company is not only governed but also led? Isn't that management a big deficit? Not just assets. *Answer 2* I think if you look back over the history of Thames Water, you could certainly say that decisions were taken in the past that we wouldn't repeat if we were taking them today. On leadership, our chief executive resigned back at the end of June, but there is more to the leadership of the company than a single person and we have a broadly based executive team. Most of us [on the Executive Team] have been in the business for around three years. We're all completely committed to turning Thames Water around. That's what we came here to do. We've also had quite a lot of continuity in our board as well, but we do have a new chairman replacing Ian Marchant who stepped down earlier on this year following his eight year term. What's important is that we embed the purpose and the values and the behaviours that this company needs. Right the way through the entire organisation. The leadership can jump up and down and say "you want to do this, you want to do that". But what really matters is why everybody across the business gets out of bed in the morning and comes to work. That's what determines what experience on customers and communities and the environment actually gets. And frankly,

you can stop anybody you like from Thames Water, and I know some of our customers do in fact do this and asked them about why they work for this company and you will find absolutely, unequivocally, a shining commitment to deliver on this company's purpose. So that leadership comes from within every single one of our people.

Question 3

Am I right to interpret that you're not going to be able to deliver all of your current plan that we are currently in, ending in 2025? Some of that is going to move on into the next period, the period we're talking about tonight, 2025 to 2030 and even then, you're probably not going to be able to deliver everything that you possibly should be delivering by 2030.

That's going to knock on to the next five year period. Is that the case? When is this domino of delay going to end and that Thames is going to catch up with itself.

Answer 3

In this current period (the period that ends in 2025), there are some things that we had planned to do at the beginning of the period (from 2019) that we're simply not going to be able to do and there's really one main reason for that. We had a very, very slow start to delivery in this control period. We had to make a lot of changes following quite a difficult price review settlement. And so we had to undertake significant replanning.

Let me illustrate this:

In 2019-2020 we only had £100 million of capital works on contract with our supply chain. This year, year 4 of that regulatory period we've got over £800 million on contract with a supply chain. Whilst in the last three years, we've really ramped up delivery capacity enormously, we have left ourselves with too much to do in too little time. So what we're having to do is we're having to rephase the delivery of some of these schemes from the current control period into what I hope will be the very beginning of the next control period. So please be reassured we're not dropping these projects. They will be done. We just can't quite get everything done to completion by 2025. We have to do some of those in the next regulatory control period.

Now, unfortunately, not only are we deferring some of those schemes from this control period, the next control period, because we were late starting this control, but the investment requirements in the next control period are very significant.

And that's not just true for Thames. That's true across the industry. And so what we have done in our plan for the next 5 year period, we have only committed to doing the things that we are confident we can deliver. That's very important.

We've been taking very seriously the evidence and assurance that we need from our supply chain and from our own internal people to know that when we say we can do something, we can in fact do it.

And what that means is that we are proposing, and I emphasise, proposing to our regulators that some of the things that they would like us to do between 2025 and 2030, we'd actually like to defer into the following regulatory period 2030 to 2035.

	Now we don't know whether that's going to be OK or not. And as I said in my presentation, the plan that we've proposed is very much subject to discussion, not only in these sorts of events with our customers, stakeholders, but also with our regulators. And what we actually end up committing to do may change if we get some feedback on that, but that's what we propose.
4.	Safe, high quality drinking water
	Question 4 I'm from Moreton-in-Marsh in the Cotswolds and Gloucestershire. With a concentration of forever chemicals getting stronger in our rivers and freshwater, can you tell us how Thames Water treat these harmful chemicals once abstracted in preparing them for our drinking water? Are you then looking to improve and upgrade this process in future to make sure that you keep us as protected as possible? *Answer 4* You're right to raise it and it's a big challenge for water companies and most sort of conventional treatment of all that doesn't treat for these sorts of forever chemicals. And it's something that I know one of our regulators called the Drinking Water Inspectorate are taking a keen interest in how we make sure that we treat water in future and improve the quality of the treatment. The main thing that we do is we monitor very carefully for the levels of these chemicals in different sources of supply and we then blend the water from those sources so that we keep the levels right down below the minimum specified by drinking water inspectorate. In fact, drinking water treatment process do take out some of these chemicals, but the main way of dealing with this is through blending and really careful rigorous testing to make sure that what we're actually putting into people's taps every day contains a very, very low level, which is within the level set by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. *Question 5* I am from Henley on Thames. So my question was really about how do you keep water quality and monitoring of aquifer and the groundwater sources of water which then feed into our drinking water. What is the monitoring aspect before it gets to the treatment plants? Because certainly there could be some potential housing developments that could affect through drilling pylons or piles into and that could affect the groundwater source. So I'll be really interested to know what it is and how you propose to do that to monitor the community? *Answer 5* When we treat water, we do monitor the quality of what's going into our treatment works because that determines what we need to do to it to then make it safe to drink. So we absolutely do monitor the quality of what we call raw water, some of it is from aquifer or some of it we take from rivers that's really important and we do take steps to secure the quality of the applicants that we depend on as well. And that does include sometimes talking to developers

and seeking to put conditions on planning for new developments to make sure that aquifers are protected.

And I think another thing that we do sometimes where we're able to, is to bring in water from different sources going into a water treatment works.

So we might use multiple boreholes that go into different aquifers in different areas and bring them into the same treatment works and that gives us a really good option of blending the raw water so that we can make sure that the quality of the raw water going into the treatment works never dips below the level, but that treatment works can actually cope with it in order to make sure that what's put into supplies is safe.

If we we're monitoring this continuously, and if we find anything coming in that is remotely concerning, we will simply stop the flow to works while we sort it out.

We're not taking any risks here, and the hundreds of thousands of tests we do every year which are continuously monitored with the Drinking Water Inspectorate and provide a pretty good measure of confidence, we're very happy to share the data on those tests, telling you what we look for. Check your water quality | Help | Thames Water, https://www.dwi.gov.uk/what-we-do/annual-report/drinking-water-2022/

Question 6

I'm in Godalming, near Milford, one of the areas affected not so long ago and my question was in terms of the repairs to the Shalford treatments facility which took about I think 4 days, what felt like a very long period.

Has the quality of the water been tested to the point where it reached the previous quality or were there new measures in order to improve the quality.

Answer 6

Firstly, let me apologise to you and anybody else who's on the call from the area who had their services disrupted recently.

I know that was tremendously disruptive and we're very sorry to for that.

A little bit of background that might help. The problems that we had in the Guildford area was that we had a combination of two things happening at once.

One was that we had a variability in the power source that was supplying a couple of our water treatment works. So it wasn't a power cut, but it was a variability in the power supply. And of course, we do depend on power for the water treatment process that caused those works to trip.

And then the other thing that's happening, which you'll be familiar with if you're in the area, is we had an awful lot of rainfall. What happens when we get this sort of torrential rainfall is that the water in the rivers gets silted up. It gets muddy and murky and you know, food, bits of tree and runoff from fields and things like that. And it causes a problem called turbidity.

	When our water treatment works take raw water that's sort of poor quality, they have to work harder to treat the water to get it up to the required standard of the drinking water. We had a couple of our works; Shalford and Ladymead that were really struggling to do that. The water treatment works suck water out of the river. We put it through a filtration system and that filtration system was getting clogged up because the raw water was so murky. And then we were having to take filters out of service to clean up the back and this was why it was taking a long time to get those water works back into service. I'm sorry for the length of time that it took, but the one thing I can say is that we absolutely did not and would not compromise the quality in the drinking water. And it's precisely because of that that we actually took more time to make sure that we had treated the water. We were taking that raw water in and we were confident that we could treat that to the represent standard. *Follow up question.* It didn't quite answer my question, if there has been testing of the actual treatment of the water and whether or not that that meets the quality, that's the standard? *Answer* We constantly test the quality of what goes into the works. We test the quality of the water at different stages going through the works and then we test it assiduously before it goes out of the site. So there's testing at every stage so that we can make sure that if any of the water that we're testing at any stage goes outside of the requisite quality, we just wouldn't put it in supply, we'd stop the process. *Question 7* In terms of water quality, if Shalford and Ladymead facilities struggled with quality before from the source I'm guessing because of the length of the works, there is no guarantee that this isn't going to happen again if we are expecting much more extreme forms of weather. *Answer 7* This area of Guildford is subject to a relatively higher risk of outages and supply interruptions. One of the reasons for that is that it's an island zone. So the water that we take from the Guildford area is the water that serves Guildford. We don't bring water in from anywhere else and we've got 4 water treatment works there that serve Guildford and Shalford is one of them. They take water directly from the river. We don't take water from the river and then store it and then treat it and then store then put it in supply. We take water from the river; we treat it and we put it in supply. And what that means is when there is a problem with the raw water or a problem with the works, we relatively quickly end up with a supply problem. We are trying to improve the resilience of those water treatment works so in the next 18 months between now and 2025, we're investing at Shalford and we are investing at Ladymead. We're also investing at Mansfield to try and improve the resilience those works for the sorts of events that we've just had, so that should improve the reliability of the supply.

	In our plan for the next control period because we're asking the regulator whether we can put in a 9 kilometre pipe that will join up East Guildford and West Guildford, which, while it doesn't bring water in from outside Guildford, gives us more options to keep customers in Guildford on supply if we have a problem in a particular works. So I'm afraid I can't guarantee it's never going to happen again, but we are investing £10ms in the Guildford area and more to come in the next period to try and improve the resilience of this site. *Question 8* I live near Horley. My question comes back to aquifers and the planning system. How much input do Thames Water have regarding planning applications? We've got Horsham District Council local plan anticipating 10,000 homes, fairly near to us and the other one is about particularly oil and gas drilling. We've had one application which planned to drill very close to the Dorking drinking water aquifer and that one is gone, but there was another one which actually has approval to reinject fluids which contain some nasties and you might be monitoring the quality of the aquifer. But if they are polluted and the whole town is gaining their water from there, how do you clean an aquifer? *Answer 8* In the broadest point, we are a consultee in the planning process. We do submit responses when there are planning applications that would affect our ability to deliver our water and wastewater services. That is quite important. We can't block. We don't have those powers, but we are consulted and we do respond to those sorts of consultations and your point about cleaning aquifers. There's a level of raw water quality below which we can't safely treat drinking water and [in that situation] we've got basically two options. One is if we have multiple sources of raw water, we can seek to blend them to get the raw water back to a quality that we can effectively treat. The alternative is we just abandon that source. It is certainly a challenge, but that's why we take this role that we have as a consultee in the planning process very seriously. Note: further information to be provided in the report once published. (For further information see question 68, p37/38) *Question 9* I'm calling from Wallingford in Oxfordshire. I am a volunteer with the Thames Path National Trail and I also volunteer with Action for the River Kennet as a river fly monitoring person, so I know the Thames and the Thames Valley pretty well. There were two questions that I posed. So, my question is what plans does Thames Water have for new reservoirs, for water storage because obviously that has to be one way of meeting the increasing demand because we're in an area of huge development. *Answer 9*

	We need to supply a billion litres more every day to our customer base by 2050. That's huge. I should say that in our water resource management plan, the biggest contributors, about billion litres extra day, you find is actually demand reductions which include smart metering, addressing leakage and helping customers to address leaks on their properties. But even if we do all of that in terms of demand reduction and water efficiency, we will still need a really large additional storage capacity. Not only to supply Thames Water customers but to secure the water future customers need for the whole of the South East of England. That's why we proposed in our water resource management plan to build a very large reservoir near East Hanney, Abingdon in Oxfordshire. It would have capacity of 150 million litres that would supply not only Thames Water customers but also customers of Southern Water and Affinity Water. It will take a very long time to build and it would not happen until 2039 but we think it is very important that our water resource management plan get the approval from the Secretary of State hopefully later on this year. We're asking Ofwat to approve us to do the development work that we need to do on that over the next 5 year period, but completely agree with you, that is critical if we're to secure our water future. It's not only to make sure we have enough clean and safe drinking water for people across the patch but it will also have a big benefit in terms of the environment because it will mean that particularly in times of water scarcity if we have more water stored we will need to take less water from the environment, that would be good for our health as well. Smart metering is a big part of the programme to address leakage and also helping customers to address their needs. But even if we do all of that, we have a massive push on demand reduction and water efficiency. We still need a really large additional storage capacity. Frankly, not only to supply to Thames Water customers, but to secure the water future for the whole SE of England. *Question 9* I'm a borough councillor for Long Ditton in Surrey, but I actually live near the confluence of the river Mole with the River Thames where there are wild swimmers. I think I asked two questions, but on the clarity and purity of drinking water, I had a friend who lived in Shepperton and during the really hot summer of 2022, she experienced illness at which she thought was long COVID. When she went to the doctors, she found that she had hepatitis E and that there had been a cluster of diagnosis of hepatitis E in the Shepperton area. The doctor felt it was a contaminated drinking water. I was wondering whether the conditions affect the quality of the supply of drinking water and does it affect how you treat the drinking water? *Answer 9* Yes, it [the really hot weather] does affect how we treat drinking water, but no, it does not affect the quality of the water we put into supply because, we take with the utmost seriousness, our public health responsibilities and we simply must not put water into supply that is not a safe, reliable supply for you. That's critically important. But you are right that our approach to abstraction is impacted by drought. What happens in a drought - and this is was what was happening last year was that we were abstracting from rivers that hasn't got very much water in it, so taking water from the murky bits at the bottom rather than nice clean bit, and that is a challenge: it's harder to treat and it means we need to treat more than we otherwise would. The other thing that quite often happens in a drought is that the additional heat will contribute to essentially more bugs in the water.

	Water does vary not only with the availability of that, also with the temperature and which is also why we monitor the quality of the water that goes into the water treatment works really carefully so that we can then calibrate what we're doing at the works to make sure that what we then put into supply is absolutely, 100% safe to drink. And then of course, we do monitor everything. *Question (follow up)* Did you ever hear about a cluster of diagnosis of hepatitis E? *Answer* Not personally but I was in different position last summer. We will follow this up after the event and will provide more information in response (see question 67 for more information). *Question 10* How is Thames Water mitigating for the needs of SES water in maintaining supply and water neutrality, especially when it is known that the South East of England faces future supply issues? *Answer 10* We plan water resources on a regional basis. We have a group now called Water Resources South East and they put all the companies working together. A lot of consultation is published about a regional plan from which each of the companies then produced their own company plan. Those are the ones that are statutory. So it all joins together and what we've looked at is the best way of getting a regional solution. Rather than one company saying we've got this source and that's all for us, it's how can we share it across company borders? How can we do new transfers and that's for the water resource planning. But we also do a lot of planning for drought situations. If one company has a bigger problem, for example South East Water take most of their water from underground while a large proportion of our water comes from rivers and reservoirs. If they've got a problem and we can open up cross connections and make sure they get water from us and potentially vice versa. And then finally, if we have an emergency situation, we have a lot of mutual aid arrangements between the companies so that we will provide tankers, even people, bottled water, all things that could help them out. And similarly, if we end up being in need of supply, they will help us. So there's a lot of collaboration at all levels between the companies.
5.	Wastewater services and storm overflows
	Question 11 I'm from Hatfield and I represent the Green Corridor Group of central Herts. I'm coming back to the earlier question about planning if I may. In your draft business plan, you have £355m for additional sewage treatment work capacity to cater for the 17% increase in population.

	And there's a similar problem for water supply costs to cater for increased developments. Well, the first question is how much we are paying as customers for that in bill increases and why are you not charging developers for it. Now from my experience from sitting frustratedly in inspections of local plans is that the LPAs ask you if you can supply the water and the sewerage and you have a statutory duty to do so. And the answer has to be yes. That's the wrong question. The question should be how much extra is it going to cost you? You should get the developers to pay for it now. In the past I've been told that you are only able to pay for connections, but then I've looked at the recent National Planning Framework, which has a couple of paragraphs that say that developers should pay contributions towards water management. So I think you've now got the powers and guidance to do so. So get on with it and charge developers accordingly rather than us customers, and I put a link on to the appropriate National Planning Framework. *Answer 11* You're right, and I think the new national planning policy framework is a welcome change on this front. For those who are perhaps a little less expert, it's still largely common practice here we have a large new development in our area, the individual connections to the individual homes and properties on that development on the site, they're paid for by the developer and they can choose us to do that or they can choose a third party. But then you can imagine if you've got this new development, it may need a bigger pipe to supply the overall area, not just the individual connections on site and that bigger pipe and possibly also need an increase in the capacity of our water treatment works or increase in the capacity of sewage treatment works. That's been a sort of a general upgrade that has been spread across all of our customer base. That's broadly how it's worked. There is another change which the government is now decided to commence schedule three of the Floods and Water Management Act. What that means is that rather than having a right to connect to the sewerage network, development companies now have to ask us to connect to the network and that gives us the dynamic in the conversation between us and the developers. So we can say yes, but only if you do X, Y and Z to help mitigate the impacts on the sewage network. And that's really important for us because that means that we can then have a conversation with developers about what they can do in the way that they build the new developments. Do things like slowing the flow, putting in sustainable urban drainage, mitigating that fast flowing [run off] water that comes through and quite often overwhelms our sewage treatment works. So that's another welcome change and I think it is partly about who bears the cost, but it's also I think more in my mind about whether we can use these levers to get developers to build more sustainable developments with water efficiency built in, you know, possibly with some rain water harvesting built in and with more sustainable drainage. So that is very much the direction of travel.

I don't think we've done enough of that to date, but that is very much the direction of travel.

Question 12

I live in Ham, which is near Kingston in Surrey. So my question relates to the proposed Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme. I just had a question about the water environment and water ecology. I wanted to find out how Thames Water plan to achieve the 10% net gain biodiversity, which the Environment Agency requesting from the scheme and also what the mitigation would be for the effects on water ecology.

Answer 12

The 10% diversity net gain is actually a planning system requirement rather than Environment Agency. Exactly how we're going to deliver that is, is part of the current consultation. We're looking for ideas on how we could do it.

We know we have to do it but want to do it in the way that gives the best benefit and suits local people and as far as the water quality is concerned, the Environment Agency will set limits on what we can discharge into the river in order to give ourselves the capacity to act, to abstract from it.

So again, that would all be very carefully monitored to make sure that the temperature and all the other quality parameters of what's going into the river are properly checked within minutes.

The treatment plant is on the back end of what comes out of Mogden sewage treatment works and treated effluents, being treated again to a much higher standard so that it can be put into the river without any adverse impacts. And there will be standard set for the treatment plant and it will be monitored very closely against them.

Question 13

I used to be able to swim my local river Evenlode and now I can't because of the fear of getting sick. I want to know when I'm going to be able to do it again. Will it be in my lifetime?

Answer 13

We do want to allow people the chance to swim in rivers and undoubtedly treated and untreated sewage effluent is causing problems for swimmers, but the standards that we have developed our sewage treatment works to it's all about environmental parameters, basically making rivers fit for the fish to swim in and other wildlife. We haven't ever had a requirement to achieve bathing water standards.

We do have one designated bathing water - Wolvercote stream in Oxford and that's monitored by the Environment Agency. The results this year have actually been better than last year when we started looking at where the bacteria come from. It's clear that a lot of them don't come from sewage works, and we've seen spikes in bacteria when we hadn't had storm overflows and we're trying to work out exactly what's going on.

	But even if we can get bacteria from sewage works under control, we have to accept that rivers are an open environment and all sorts of animals and birds have bacteria, such as E.coli, which can cause contamination in rivers. So we need to look at it case by case to see where the bacteria comes from and what can be done. And some of it could be farm run off. Some is undoubtedly sewage, because the sewage treatment process doesn't take all the bacteria out. The other thing that we're doing as far as the Thames Water contribution is the live map that Cathryn mentioned will tell you if there has been a storm discharge in the 48 hours before you want to go swimming. So we're trying to make it easy easier for you, but this isn't going to be a quick or simple fix to get water more suitable for bathing. The most we can do at the moment is provide information, have local discussions with people while we're gradually learn from Wolvercote stream. There will be potentially application for Henley and Wallingford, we're working with local groups to take samples. We'd like to make it work, but I can't pretend it's going to be soon. *Question 14* I'm from West Houston near Evenlode and Windrush. Cathryn, you put up the pollution incidence data, I think you were being quite clever. The serious pollution incidents had declined in the last year. If you look at your EPA data, it actually increased if you take all category one to three incidents. And interestingly, if you look at those data as well, 2022 was the highest pollution category 1 to 3 incidents since 2016. So if you're going to put these data up (in much the same way as you were referring to the dividends nonsense), then you need to make that data accurate. Explain to people exactly what they mean, and one of the things that we are all concerned about is probably the capture of the Environment Agency is a regulator with them downgrading or even in fact not even attending a lot of pollutions which give you easy access to category 3 and category 4 incidents. And if anybody wants to watch Panorama on Monday coming, you may see an example of that and another water company's area. Note from chair: We will come to the dividends later but if you could come to the sort of categorisation and data point that let's get an answer on that now. *Answer 14* The data that we are publishing on our EPA assessment is exactly the same data that we're sharing with the Environment Agency that we're not saying one thing publicly and one thing to the other people, I'm more than happy to take a challenge on the data and we'll work through it if we need to. But of course, one pollution is one too many and what we do with all of those pollutions events is we go through a really careful root cause analysis. We work out what happened, what went wrong, what we could have done to prevent it, and what the learning points are. The aim is to get those down as fast as we possibly can. *Follow on statement from questioner*

	It's just the data that the agency published are contradictory to those that you've given us tonight. It's there on Gov.uk website[2] it's there for people to see. Everyone can look. *Question 15* I am in SW London and I've got a question around serious pollution incidents. If you look at the PR24 methodology, Ofwat says in that there's a long standing expectation that all companies should reach 0 serious pollution incidents, those are category one and two as soon as possible. If I look at what you could describe as the level of ambition, if I can use ambition here, I use it loosely. Thames Water across AMP8 has 27 serious pollution incidents in that business plan and I think Wessex has five off the top of my head and you are therefore clearly an outlier because I think the others have a 0 or next to 0. So why is Thames planning or anticipating such a heightened level of the serious pollution incidents? And surely something has got be done to get those numbers down faster and to the zero. That's the general expectation. *Answer 15* I think it picks up from where we were at the previous question. Even one is too many and if we can get our numbers down much quicker and keep them down, that would be really good and we will. That's the level of ambition, but equally we need to be realistic and set ourselves targets that we think we can achieve and potentially outperform. So how we compared to other companies, it's always difficult. Every company's area is difficult, but we do have the biggest sewer network, which is just a fact. It's not an excuse, but that number is where we think we can definitely get to if we can get down, but below 27, nobody would be happier than me or Cathryn or all of the men and women who run them for us. Wastewater networks [staff] take huge pride in what they do and feel personally aggrieved and responsible when something goes wrong. *Question 16* I'm in Sonning on Thames and I fish on the river Pang in Pangbourne. I've seen from the slides £18.7 billion spend in 2025 to 2030, which I believe is funded by about a 39% increase in customer bills. But sewage leaks are only going to reduce from CSOs by about 28% in that period. That means the river, like the River Pang where I fish, is still going to see 100 plus sewage leaks a year for thousands of hours at a time, like we have already seen. It's already in an ecologically poor condition. It's gone from good to poor in just a few years something that some people say is an ecological catastrophe, but apparently the Director of Sustainability at Thames Water doesn't view it as an ecological catastrophe because that's what he said to the West Berkshire Council recently. The Pang will be dead if it's still got 100 plus sewage leaks a year in 2030. I'd like to ask Cathryn Ross. Does she think that's a good deal for customers, 39% increase in bills but 28% decrease in CSOs and does she think that's a good deal for the paying 100 plus sewage leaks a year in, in

[2] Environmental Pollution Incidents (Category 1 and 2) - data.gov.uk

what, seven years?

Answer 16

I can only repeat what Richard said. Catherine Lynn was saying earlier that we simply can't do everything that everybody wants us to do as quickly and at a price that everybody wants us to do it for. It just isn't possible and I think you know the difficulty we've had in putting together this plan. We've done what we think is a reasonable balance between what we need to do to secure drinking water supplies, what we need to do to improve river health, what we need to do to improve drainage, and what we need to do to improve customer service.

There is an awful lot of investment that's needed and we've got some really tough choices on how we allocate that. I hear what you're saying and I hear you, with the great deal of authenticity that you're not happy with what we're proposing for the Pang. And I hear that I can completely understand why.

And I'd love to be able to do more but given that we have only got so many pounds, we have only got so much capacity. The plan we put together tries to strike a reasonable balance between all of those competing needs. I hear that you don't feel we're doing good enough for the Pang. I've got a lot of sympathy for that, but it's just trying to strike a balance.

Question 17

How are Thames Water incentivising permeable front driveways and reducing water running into the sewers?

Answer 17

To give a little bit of background which I know some will know, we put in a Drainage Water Management Plan which looks 25 years ahead and says what we need to do to ensure that we can actually drain surface water effectively over the next 25 years and that drainage management plan says that we need to drain 7000 hectares. That's 50 times the size of Hyde Park - some 7000 hectares of land in London using those sustainable urban drainage type solutions.

We're not going to do that by doing a few big projects. Exactly as you said it is very important that people who pave their front gardens need to use permeable paving instead.

One of the things we've been talking to Mayor of London and the GLA about is a bid to an innovation fund that Ofwat is running. The concept is that every time somebody digs a hole in the road, maybe to replace pipe, put down broadband when they reinstate the hole, we'd love them to put in, not normal impermeable type, but actually a permeable, porous surface, so that every hole in the road then becomes its own little sustainable urban drainage solution. Now we are in the foothills of this at the moment.

What's been going on in the past in 20-30 years with people paving over front gardens - we've gone in completely the wrong direction.

So we are trying to work out what is the best way of getting customers and indeed local authorities, other companies to change their behaviour. For example, we've got some community

	flood action groups that we're working with in London. Waltham Forest is super helpful and super collaborative where we're working with local partners to get incentive schemes to install water butts and the Grey to Green initiative. There are things that we're looking at as to whether we might be able to give money off bills at some point in the future. We haven't got a silver bullet yet and we're open to anybody who's got the ideas, and we're also willing to try things and see what works. At the moment the most fruitful is actually working with local community organisations and working with local community partnership schemes to try and get people to improve the sustainability and the sort of water environment in their own area by making some quite small changes to the way they live and to their own built environments. *Question 18* I'm in southeast London. It's another question about storm discharges because I've been trying to make sense of the figures which are in the plan and specifically the presentation that we saw in May spoke about an aim to reduce the total duration of storm discharges by 50% by 2030. The current draft plan refers to a 28% reduction in the total number of storm overflows by 2030 and it also speaks of a reduction of the volume of sewage spills into the tidal Thames by 95% once the Tideway Tunnel is in operation, which is obviously very welcome. If I understand correctly, that will be from 2025 so that will cover the whole of this planning period and I would welcome some clarity about how those figures will relate to one another. And specifically, is it the case that the volume of sewage discharge into the tidal Thames will be reduced by 95% from 2025? And what is the expected impact of the planned actions on the volume of sewage spills into the upstream parts of the Thames and tributaries by 2030? *Answer 18* I appreciate it's confusing and we'll explain it in the detailed reply and happy to meet you and can take you through it as well if that would help. The target to reduce the duration was something that we set as a company before the government had set targets in this area. We felt that duration was the right thing to be targeting because the length of a discharge is actually quite significant rather than the number of discharges. Since then, the government had put into legislation a target of getting down to 10 discharges a year by 2050. So, we have moved our target with the same level of ambition into the government's metric. We're now targeting the number of spills on average across our area and that declines over time. The point to be aware of is it's going to be heavily weather dependent. These discharges are caused by rain in wet years. We're going to have more dry years. We're going to have less. So we're going to have to work on an average, probably a 3 year rolling average. Separately to that, Thames Tideway tunnel is the classic “here's one we made earlier”, and I've been working on the Thames Tideway tunnel concept and delivery for 20 years. The aim has

	always been to get the volume because we do actually and usually measure the volume going into the Thames Tideway and get that down by 95% in a typical year. We have a typical year target - we will achieve the standards that Environment Agency set 20 years ago for cleaning up the tidal river and it's all been adjusted for climate impact. It's a massive piece of infrastructure and when it's operational, it'll make a huge difference, but we've also got to be looking at all the other discharges. We've got some 700 permitted discharges across our area, so we are working through where we should be starting and getting those down. We were just talking about the Pang, and I understand the point there. The Pang is a chalk stream and we will be getting the discharges down further and faster on that chalk stream. Similarly, on sites which are upstream bathing waters, they will also get reduced further and faster. So, there is some thought going into this, but we've also got to get more data. We don't know enough about the impact of these discharges, so one of the things that's in the plan for the first one to two years of the next plan is over 100 investigations in detail to work out what we need to do at different locations and what we can do together to bring the discharges down.
6.	Environment and Net Zero
	Question 19 What year are you planning to get to net zero? Can you give a summary of what your net zero plans are? *Answer 19* We want to do it as quickly as possible, but we're aligning ourselves with targets that the government has set to go at the same pace as the rest of industry and other businesses. The first thing we're doing is generating as much renewable energy that we can ourselves. We're getting much more efficient at generating energy from the sewage sludge that our customers give us free of charge every day. We collect that up, we digest it and we generate about 20% of our total energy needs. When you think how much energy is required to pump water and waste water around 4000 square miles that we operate in, that's a lot of energy. So we're getting better and better energy generation. We're also in some cases actually able to export gas we can't actually use on our own sites because we've already got those to be feeding themselves from the energy, we clean the gas up and we're starting to put it into the into the gas grid. So people are actually using our gas at home. A lot of things that we can do are small, good housekeeping in nature. It's a bit more than just turning the lights off at night. We do that, but we are also for example moving away from fixed throughput pumps that are either at full flow or stopped towards smaller variable speed pumps, which are much more efficient. We're also monitoring the energy use of all those pumps so that

	we can work out that they're being used to best effect. We're also using solar power, using the spare land on some of our sites. One thing we are doing is floating solar panels on our reservoirs and this is great because it generates energy, but actually it's also good because it shades the water, reduces algal blooms and that reduces the amount of filtering we need to do, which reduces our energy requirements, which reduces our costs. So there's a big work right across the business. Our website contains information about this but it's a big factor for us and we'll get there as quickly as we can. Next stop, net zero carbon | About us | Thames Water *Question 20* I'm in Princess Risborough, Buckinghamshire part of the Risborough Environmental Group. I'm a WI member and our new resolution for this year is about clean rivers for swimming. My question is about how Thames Water is going to encourage members of the public, consumers like myself to reduce our use of water so we can help reduce costs for everyone and the amount of water that's to be processed. What sort of examples can Thames Water suggest that we can act on? *Answer 20* It's a fantastic question and thank you for it, because it is actually a really important part of the puzzle here. It's for people to actually do what they can do to reduce their own water usage. We did a bit of a survey during the drought last year and we actually started off by asking people how they knew how much water they actually use. Now on average, one of our customers uses 146 litres of water per person per day. That's normal in England. If you compare it to some countries in continental Europe where you've got, you know, Danes and Germans are using more like 100 litres or 110 litres per person a day. We asked people during the drought, trying to work out how we persuade people to use less water, how much they thought they use. I remember one customer in particular in the group that we were talking to who thought they probably used quite a lot because they had quite a lot of animals and estimated possibly forty litres a day. Actually, we need to start by raising people's awareness of the amount of water they do actually use, because that's what will impact changing their behaviour. We can do that. So just having this conversation helps; smart metering is another big part of it. If we can grow the metering programme, we can give people better information about their actual water usage, and we can also give them that information closer to real time, which gives people more of an ability to change their behaviour and see how that changed behaviour is actually flowing through into their demand. Lots and lots of tips and tricks. You perhaps remember during the summer last year, in fact every summer, we have a water efficiency campaign. We have a lovely chap in our team who goes out and does lots of talks about

	water efficiency. He goes on social media and talks about water efficiency. He puts tips and tricks out on our website. Things like shorter showers, not flushing every time. I mean, you know, during drought last year, I was showering with a bucket which is the really easy way to collect water that you could then take out. Whatever we do through those sorts of means, it is not going to be enough. And one of the things we've been asking government for is really a bit of a national mission on water efficiency. Now we have legislation, we have a target to reduce per capita consumption to 110 litres per person per day from 146 litres. And there are various things we can do to get there, but what we really need is things like water efficiency labelling on domestic appliances. We need changes to building regulations and planning requirements to get new developments and big retrofits built with water efficiency as standard, for example using grey water harvesting as a part of new developments. And I know that there are some sites where there are sort of separate potable and non-potable systems where the non-potable system is actually supplied from grey water to harvesting on the site. So there, you're absolutely right to focus on what everybody can do today and we must do that, but we must also focus on some of these bigger picture issues with things like labelling, building regulations and planning environments as well.
7.	Fair and affordable bills
	Question 21 Question regarding customer service. The call wait time on the phone is very long and voice recognition of giving a post code to identify where the leak is does not work. None of it works. Too much is outsourced and having experienced an ongoing leak since April to this week, the ordinary Thames Water customer is left frustrated and unimpressed by Thames Water service. *Answer 21* This is big topic. We absolutely accept our services have not been at the level we want. We have made significant improvements over the last two years. Our complaints have dropped by 60% but there's still a long way to go. One of the things we've done is all of our voice contact centres were offshored into South Africa about 20 years ago. All of that activity has been bought back onto the UK. We now have our local customers supported by local people. We've restructured and are currently in the process of restructuring our organisation further, to make it a lot simpler so that we can be a lot more efficient and a lot more effective. We have significantly reduced our call answering times to industry standard levels in the last couple of months and, as part of the turnaround plan, we've been working through internally and with key stakeholders, a programme where we are significantly investing in our digital capabilities and data. We've also taken a step back and said actually how do we make this simple for customers. A great example is we currently have a telephone routing system where you press one for this, press 2 for that and you've got about 76 options. We're going to take virtually all of that out and

simplify it into “Have you got a billing inquiry?” or “Have you got an operational issue” Over the next few months we'll be simplifying a lot of this just to make it a lot better for customers.

I can't guarantee it's going to improve overnight, but I can assure you there's real commitment on some really detailed plans to make those improvements comes alive over the next 18 months. And as part of the five year plan we're talking about. We are really sorry that we've not given you the service standards that you should.

Note: Issue to be followed up directly with Customer online. (Our Customer Relations team have been in touch with the customer directly to discuss her complaint, and she was satisfied with the information we were able to share in relation to her feedback.)

Question 22

How can you justify 600 new jobs when you're currently consulting on 300 job losses?

Answer 22

What we're trying to do is we're trying to focus the people that we have on the things where we can make the biggest difference for our customers. So a lot of those 600 jobs that we talked about at the start, they are in our frontline roles, they're operating our sewage treatment works, they're running wastewater treatment, water treatment works, they're going out and they're fixing leaks. They're answering customer queries and that sort of thing. They're absolutely the frontline people who have that contact with our customers.

What we are trying to do, behind the scenes is take out more of the management layers, take out more of the work or the things that don't matter quite so much to our customers.

They're maybe things that are nice to do, but not things that really matter most. You'll find that the roles that we're taking out are in quite different areas than the roles that we're putting in. It's all with the aim of making the best use of the resources we've got to serve our customers.

Question 23

Can I just correct a misapprehension that the CSOs run when it rains because Chow Grove Sewage works has run for 17 days. We've had no rain for 12, so please don't say that it’s just when it rains, it is not every one of those is the pollution incident is not recorded anywhere.

Now moving on to the profit Cathryn, do you think financial mismanagement has caused the lack of funds over the period since it was privatised in 1989 that's 34 years ago and your assets were 45 years old then, now 79 year olds, you haven't moved forward at all in 34 years. How long will it take for me to get your assets in good shape? Another 30-40 years?

Answer 23

So it's a great question and it will take time to get our assets up to standard that we want to as Cathryn Ross said earlier on, there is so much to do and there's only so much that we can deliver from a supply chain perspective as well as a customer bills perspective.

	Do I think it's due to financial mismanagement? I think Thames is where it is now and we can only move the business forward from where we are actually with our infrastructure and with the massive investment that we're proposing to put nearly £19 billion into the next review period. We can always look back and we can always blame the past, but my role on the board is to challenge the Executive team to deliver the future and make sure that we're making the right trade-offs on priorities to spend that money where we think we can do the best thing for our customers, our communities and the environment. *Question 24* Can Thames Water share what the board and senior executive salaries and bonuses will be over the next five years? *Answer 24* We publish what the board and the executive board members get paid as part of our annual report and accounts. What that will be in five years' time, I don't know. But rest assured that we do work very hard to do three things with pay. One is to make sure that the team are of the right quality to deliver the mammoth task that we've got to do within the organisation. Secondly, we want to make sure that it is a representative and fair in terms of bills and what customers have to pay and that any incentives are really driven around delivering for the three areas that we've been talking about, which is about customers, communities and the environment. We are transparent and we've got nothing to hide. We have a very good process around benchmarking through the renumeration committee and we do publish that on an annual basis as a part of the Annual Report. Annual Report | Investors | About us | Thames Water *Question 25* Please, could you confirm if it's true that Thames Water have paid £37 million in internal dividends recently as of March 2022? If so, couldn't this money have been directed towards these infrastructure upgrades rather than unfairly forcing customers to pay these costs themselves? £14.55 a month might not sound like much, but it is crippling for families. People are already suffering with the cost of living crisis. *Answer 25* Our shareholders haven't made any money from their billions of pounds of investment in this business and they've not taken any dividends back. A lot of them are pension funds. We have paid internal dividends and that is to service debt. So, it's just paying interest on money that we borrowed and we have to do that to be a responsible company but certainly we are actually quite blessed that we've had shareholders that have worked with us and not demanded to take cash out of the business for a very long period of time and commit it to do so up until 2030.

I know we hear a lot in the press about fat cat shareholders and pulling dividends out, but to be honest, that's just not the case with us at this time. So that's the simple explanation between an internal and external dividend, and I'll probably bring David in on the bills.

On the customer service committee and the whole board we're very conscious of the impact that increasing bills makes on families and the risk of putting people into water poverty and David Bird and the team have thought of some innovative things that we can do with tariffs and also what we can do to really help people who need that extra financial support.

That's why we're increasing the numbers of customers that we support by 250,000, offering discounts of up to 80% off their bill. So that's over 530,000 customers. And again, to cover off that point, we are looking in this period to trials and different tariffs. So those customers that are using huge amounts of water with swimming pools and you know, who should be more responsible, we will be charging them more to enable subsidy of the more vulnerable customers. We want to try that.

We think that will drive down the use of a scarce resource and more appropriately reflect who pays for what they're using.

Question 26

I think the one question that I need to choose is on the aspect of trust. Basically, over the last 30 years, things have gone downhill. Looking at this point Thames Water has not delivered what we would like it to have delivered over the over the last years and we're not in the situation that we should be now. It's been a very good presentation, very professional, but it all comes down to trust.

Why should we trust you now? What is it that makes what you're saying genuine rather than just a PR exercise? And going forward there will be no improvement.

Answer 26

I think yours is probably the question that matters most out of everything that we've heard tonight and I agree, I mean it makes me very sad actually the current position that we're in, I don't think we are trusted and I don't think Thames Water is trusted and I don't think that the sector is trusted and I only know two ways of rebuilding trust: to show up, and to engage.

You know, people trust people, its corporations that they don't trust. Corporations, institutions don't trust institutions but people trust people, and I think it's really important. That's one of the reasons why tonight is really important.

We need to be unafraid of going out and having the conversation and being transparent and explaining what we're doing and why we're doing it and dealing with people's questions and queries and doing that in as open and honest, and transparent way as we can, and the only other thing that matters is we need to do what we say we will do. We have to deliver.

You've seen what we've set out in our plan and one of the things you've heard us all saying, right the way through this evening and I know it's not what a lot of people want to hear.

	We've had some really tough choices to make and the plan that we put together is the plan we think we can deliver and I know it's not the plan that everybody wants and I know it's not the bill level everybody wants, but it is the plan that we think we can deliver and we will only build trust if we relentlessly, demonstrably, transparently deliver on that. So maybe if we're having this conversation in five years' time, it might look slightly different.
9.	Independent Chair closing
	The Chair closed the session, thanking all delegates for their participation. The Chair reminded all of those on the call that all the questions submitted by 10:00 on Monday 4 December 2023 would be shared with Thames Water and any questions not asked in the session would also be answered within the meeting notes. The company will share a copy of the session notes and presentation on its website due course. The Chair informed those in the session that Ofwat will be also holding 'Your water, your say session' in 2024. The Chair also encouraged everyone to take part in Ofwat's survey – details were shared.

Report of the Your water, your say

Ms Teams
On 30 November 2023, 5pm – 7pm

Outstanding questions not answered at the meeting:

	Question	Response
27.	I am given to understand that the more over paving of front gardens takes place, this causes rainwater to run into our drains leading to more pressure than our drains were constructed to cope with, as a result they overflow into the storm drains and in turn, into our sewage system, hence the raw sewage ending up in our rivers and on our beaches. Would you be able to confirm this is true?	Yes, this is broadly correct. The loss of permeable (green) surfaces means when it rains, more rainwater runs more quickly into our sewers. During very heavy rainfall, this can mean that some of our combined sewers (where foul and rainwater are collected in the same sewer), become overwhelmed and diluted, untreated, sewage escapes from manholes and sewer connections into peoples' properties and from Combined Sewer Overflows (emergency overflows designed to help stop properties from being flooded) into rivers. The rapid and continuing loss of permeable surfaces is a major problem and one that we are working with Local Authorities, who have the responsibility for managing flooding from heavy rainfall, to address. Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan | Thames Water) - a long term plan into the future needs of wastewater management - recommends that we need to work with Local Authorities and customers to re-green our town and cities to help slow and reduce the volume of rainwater entering our sewers to reduce flooding of properties and pollution of rivers.
28.	How utterly disgusted I am at pumping sewage and waste water into rivers and sea will you actually stop doing this or is it a case that you just don't care about our planet even though you probably pretend too.	We have publicly stated that we believe all untreated discharges are unacceptable and apologised where our performance has fallen short. We are committed to be fully transparent on our discharges - we were the first UK water company to publish our live storm discharge map - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/river-health/storm-discharge-data Our proposed plan for the next 5 years - currently under consideration by Ofwat - would see investment of £885m to achieve a 28% reduction in storm overflows and reduce pollution incidents by 30%. We will commission the Thames Tideway tunnel which will prevent millions of tonnes of untreated sewage mixed with rainwater from entering the tidal River Thames. Chapter 10 of our business plan provides further
29.	Do you think it is ever acceptable for raw sewage to be discharged from your drains onto the public highway?	

	Question	Response
		detail on how our plan delivers for our environment - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf
30.	Why has the faulty infrastructure and its updating (its lack of updating resulting in regular sewage overspills into our rivers and coasts), not been prioritised over the awarding of bonuses to the shareholders of Thames Water?	Our business plan - currently under consideration by Ofwat recognises reflects a significant proposed increase in investment, including over £3 billion to improve our sewage treatment works. Our shareholders continue to be supportive of our turnaround and the need to invest. Shareholders haven't taken an external dividend in 6 years and are not expecting one until the end of the next regulatory period. Our proposed plan for 2025-2030 would see investment of £885m to achieve a 28% reduction in storm overflows and reduce pollution incidents by 30%. We will commission the Thames Tideway tunnel which will prevent millions of tonnes of untreated sewage mixed with rainwater from entering the tidal River Thames. Chapter 10 of our business plan provides further detail on how our plan delivers for our environment - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf
31.	I'm an outdoor swimmer living in West London who swims in the Thames, my child also likes to play near the river Brent. In the river Brent the signs of sewage are constantly present as is the smell. In the Thames from Kingston to Chiswick its often unsafe to swim and we have a whole bank made of sanitary wipes near Kew. At what point will Thames Water be able to say that I will not be at risk of swimming in sewage on days when there is no exceptionally heavy rain. Also on how many days each year does Thames Water anticipate there will be exceptionally heavy rain that permits legal discharge of untreated sewage.	We have spent £4.4billion on our Thames Tideway Tunnel which aims to significantly reduce spills into the tidal Thames. This is to be commissioned by 2025. In addition, our proposed plan for the next 5 years - currently under consideration by Ofwat - for the next 5 years will see investment of £885m to achieve a 28% reduction in storm overflows and reduce pollution incidents by 30%.
32.	In the response to the previous meeting, I note that there was no answer from Thames Water to the second part of my question (question 42 in the record) Vis: 'The company argued [in the online meeting] that shareholders were making investments and foregoing dividends to fund the shortfall of infrastructure development that had resulted from previous profit taking from the company. It would be good to see this properly set out in a long term balance sheet.	Our shareholders are very supportive and haven't taken a dividend in 6 years and are not expecting one until the end of the next regulatory period. To support our turnaround plan our shareholders subscribed to an initial £500 million of new equity in March 2023 and committed a further £750m in the current AMP, subject to certain conditions, to drive Thames Water's turnaround over the remainder of the current regulatory period. This is coupled with an acknowledgement from our shareholders of the need for significant medium-term equity support in AMP8. This amount is indicatively expected to be in the region of £2.5 billion, subject to finalisation of the

	Question	Response
33.	Can the TW representatives describe exactly how their shareholders HAVE benefited from investment in TW?	refocused turnaround plan. We have recently published our interim results. More information on our finances can be found https://www.thameswater.co.uk/news/thames-water-interim-results-to-30-september-2023
34.	Please explain how a return to shareholders for Thames current poor performance is acceptable. Any return will make the bills even more unaffordable for customers. Please explain how it will make bills more affordable?	
35.	You now employ Nevil Muncaster who when employed by Yorkshire Water famously offered the residents of Hebden Bridge his solution to the disastrous Boxing Day flood in 2015 which was to empty the reservoirs above and use them to collect flood water. In 2020, just 2 years after Muncaster's plan was announced, Hebden was flooded again, 5 years after the last flood. Thames Water modelling for the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) is for very light use of the reservoir, annual 20,476 Ml, so were you so impressed with Muncaster's Hebden plan that you thought to deploy both him and his plan?	While we do not recognise the specific figure of 20,476 Ml which you have quoted, we believe you may be referring about the average utilisation of the reservoir in a normal year. It is true that during non-drought periods we would not use a significant volume of water from SESRO. During droughts, however, significant volumes of water from the reservoir would be needed in order to ensure an appropriate level of drought resilience by 2040. The reservoir will be used to ensure drought resilience for customers from Thames Water, Affinity Water and Southern Water. If we have misunderstood the nature of your query then please get back in touch.
36.	What happens if the government refuses to underwrite SESRO as it did with Tideway? When Sarah Bentley attended the House of Lords committee, a member advised her that he would sack anyone who advised him to invest in Thames.	Our current expectation is that a similar government support package will not be put in place for SESRO. SESRO will also have a different risk profile to Tideway reservoirs generally being seen as lower risk projects than tunnelling projects like Tideway, a tunnel in central London, in close proximity to the River Thames and with very constrained construction sites. We will continue to discuss with regulator the best way to manage these risks to ensure value for money for customers.
37.	Why is it the case that you will make more money building a reservoir due to increasing your regulatory capital than you will from maintaining your reservoirs or curing leaks?	Leakage continues to be a very important part of what we do and the most significant change within our long term planning is a greater emphasis on demand management. • Leakage is a priority issue and we've increased our ambition to tackle leaks, aiming to reduce leakage by 20% by 2027; by 30% by 2032; and to at least halve leakage by 2050 • We'll focus on helping our customers to reduce their water use and achieve an average water use of 110 l/h/d by 2050. We'll also work with businesses to reduce their water use, aiming to achieve a 15% reduction in water use by 2050. The above targets are in line with the targets set within the regulatory guideline and plans set by regulators and government. In total the actions to tackle leakage and work with customers and business to reduce water demand alongside temporary drought restrictions make up around 80% of the water shortfall by 2050.

	Question	Response
		However, just managing demand and reducing leaks will not be enough to ensure we have enough water to serve all of our customers in the region, especially when accounting for climate change and population growth. Therefore, our Water Resources Management Plan also identifies new water supply options, including a new reservoir. The options are appraised based on what will deliver best value for our customers what will be needed long term, looking at both supply and demand. Therefore, we have to ensure that we focus on tackling leaks while at the same time bring new water sources onboard long-term.
38.	What are findings of economic appraisals of costs and benefits of options for tackling environmental pressures especially for deferred measures and the resulting state of their water bodies and extent they will cause failures to achieve Good Ecological Status in how many water bodies.	We take meeting all our statutory and environmental obligations seriously. Our plans are ambitious and aim to deliver on what our customers have told us are their priorities – which include reducing pollution incidents from storm overflows. However, in designing this plan, we have had to make difficult decisions and trade-offs (balance our customer priorities with what is possible to deliver and affordable to customers). This has meant that certain projects scheduled for AMP8 we are proposing are completed in AMP 9 – namely phosphorous reduction and removal of complex chemicals such as antibiotics from treated sewage discharges. However, no final decision has yet been made and we are in ongoing discussions with our regulators about the scope of our proposed plan.
39.	How much does the contribution of TW costs of £355m for the additional STW capacity for the 17% increase in pop (40, 340 houses) contribute to the proposed 40% increase in HH bills? To what extent will Thames Water charge developer contributions for these additional costs for sewage treatment, which would amount to just £8800 per house (which should in any case be reflected in a lower land value premia for housing developments rather than increased house prices)? This should not be paid by the current cross subsidy on water customers. Similarly what are the additional full investment, operating and environmental costs of water supply for the new houses (e.g. new resources and transfers)? To what extent do TW charge developers for these additional water supply costs? Clarify TW incentives for developments to reduce such costs and problems.	Upgrades to the network to cater for growth are funded from Developers through the use of Infrastructure Charges. Ofwat recently confirmed changes to this mechanism which will require greater contributions from Developers in the future. However, the regulations are clear that any upgrade to sewage treatment works or increased water resources (e.g. reservoirs or water treatment) must be funded through general charges from all customers.

	Question	Response
40.	I've just asked a question in the Your Water You Say session about figures for reductions in storm discharges. Richard Aylard said he'd be glad to follow up in more detail. I'd welcome that.	Call between customer and Richard Aylard took place on 6 December 2023 to go through the topic, and a nice follow up message was received saying it had been helpful. Our plan outlines the percentage reduction in storm overflows by 2025.
41.	With only 5% of the global population subjected to fluoridation it is clearly not widely practised. With America accounting for the majority of the fluoridated population it is noteworthy that, even after 75 years, they have a worse level of dental decay. In 2015 they slashed the concentration level used by at least 30% to 0.7ppm. What level has Thames Water imposed, or would use in the future? So, how will Thames Water protect the Individual's Right of Consent and will they accept responsibility for any adverse effects resulting from the imposition of any such scheme?	We do not dose any of our water supplies with fluoride. This is a decision for the local health authority - and if decided then Thames Water install the necessary treatment plant, however, the decision to install is not a Thames Water decision.
42.	You're a damned disgrace. You've been making huge profits and paying big dividends and paying huge salaries and benefits to your executives. While pouring shit into rivers and the sea. You are now paying lip service to caring about us	Our shareholders are very supportive and haven't taken a dividend in 6 years and are not expecting one until the end of the next regulatory period. To support our turnaround plan our shareholders subscribed to an initial £500 million of new equity in March 2023 and committed a further £750m in the current AMP, subject to certain conditions, to drive Thames Water's turnaround over the remainder of the current regulatory period. This is coupled with an acknowledgement from our shareholders of the need for significant medium-term equity support in AMP8. This amount is indicatively expected to be in the region of £2.5 billion, subject to finalisation of the refocused turnaround plan. We have recently published our interim results. More information on our finances can be found https://www.thameswater.co.uk/news/thames-water-interim-results-to-30-september-2023
43.	Thank you for the opportunity to listen to your plans for 2025-2030 and taking so many questions. Last night's event was expertly moderated and extremely useful. You mention that the average pipe throughout the TW area is 76 years old, 20 something years older than the national average. Firstly, it feels like you utilise this figure in your favour, stating how much work has to be done, but I see it only as a failure of TW to prepare and upgrade the system. It highlights the lack of long term investment and the cliff edge that TW now face. Are there any statistics available to show how the average age of a pipe has changed year on year since the privatisation of water in 1989? Similarly, are there any other figures on how the average age of the pipes at other water companies have changed over that period? I accept that the level of	How our substantial asset health deficit has arisen, how our networks compare to other water companies, and whether customers have historically funded the level of investment required to address this issue are important questions. We are also the only company in the industry where almost 40% of our assets predate the 1920s. We do not accept that historic levels of funding have been sufficient to address this issue, which is why our proposed plan envisages a step up in investment. We have published further detail within our business plan on this matter and provides comparison with other water companies - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf - Section 11.4 from page 137 provide further details

	Question	Response
	investment in AMP8 is significantly higher than previous AMP's, but the rise in costs and failing to complete AMP7 means much of the planned works have been pushed out of AMP8. How do TW aim to tackle the asset health deficit?	More detailed information can be also found in our Technical Appendix TMS15 - Asset Health Deficit - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/asset-deficit.pdf
44.	Your business plan 2025-2030 accounts for all the customer's fees. So what funds are made available, and from where, for any fines given to TW for either performance related issues or one-off events?	Penalties for poor performance as set out by Ofwat are ordinarily reflected by reducing the level by which future customer bills may rise. Any other fines have to be funded by the company's shareholders - they are not accounted for in the Totex submitted as part of our PR24 plan submission to Ofwat
45.	A link to all the presentation and answers to the questions would be extremely useful	https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/your-water-your-say/presentation-november-2023.pdf
46.	Could you explain to us the impact your business plan will have on the Evenlode – a river which currently rates "poor" ecological status due to pollution? Would you be prepared to meet with community groups and customers in the Evenlode area to discuss this?	Our draft Business Plan places a strong emphasis on environmental improvements, and we are committed to reducing our impact on rivers like the Evenlode. At present, our draft plan focuses on investigating and reducing the number of storm overflows coming from our assets. This is one of the top priorities that our customers have told us they would like us to address. As we are currently in discussion with our regulators about this draft plan, this may be subject to change. We acknowledge the importance of playing our part to achieving Good Ecological Status and are more than willing to engage with community groups and customers in the Evenlode area to discuss the specifics of our draft plan, share information, and gather valuable insights. We will of course be able to provide greater certainty once a Final Determination is accepted.
47.	Could you explain to us what metrics you plan to measure to show positive impact on the ecological heath of the Evenlode and other rivers supplied by Thames Water? Why have you chosen these metrics and what quantitative improvements do you expect to deliver over what time frame?	Responsibility for measuring river health rests with the Environment Agency and they set our permits to ensure that the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directives) regulations 2017 are met. These regulations require all water bodies to meet Good Ecological status within specified timeframes unless lesser objectives are justified and agreed. The standards applicable to Good Ecological Status (GES) are set out in The Water Framework Directive (Standards and Classification) Directions (England and Wales) 2015 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1623/pdfs/uksiod_20151623_en_auto.pdf. The most recent update for assessment of the Evenlode against GES criteria (2022) variously rated the 18 water bodies in the Evenlode catchment as either poor or moderate with none achieving good ecological status. Improvements to water industry assets required by the EA all aim towards achieving GES, albeit that other interventions from other sectors are also necessary for that objective to be achieved. Additional monitoring by the Evenlode Catchment Partnership is also beneficial in monitoring progress towards GES
48.	Could you explain how much investment/spend is going into "core" services versus "service enhancement"	Based on our PR24 submission to Ofwat, we requested £12.1bn of "base total expenditure" to invest in our core services and £6.6bn of "enhancement total expenditure" to invest in service enhancement (all prices in 2022/23 price base).

	Question	Response
49.	Could you tell us what the impact of the recent judicial review brought by Wildfish will be on the frequency of "exceptional" releases of raw sewage into our river? What do your current legal permits allow you to do and what is happening in reality?	The recent Judicial Review by Wildfish was dismissed. The judicial review challenge related to the Government's Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan. This was not a challenge against TWUL. The Government updated its Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan in September 2023. The Plan requires all water companies to achieve certain targets including that • by 2035, water companies will have to improve all storm overflows discharging into or near every designated bathing water; and improve 75% of overflows discharging to high priority nature sites; and • by 2050, this will apply to all remaining storm overflows covered by our targets, regardless of location. Thames Water is taking steps to ensure compliance with these targets by the relevant deadlines. Thames Water holds a large number of different environmental permits covering the activities it undertakes. Generally Thames Water's storm discharge permits allow it to discharge storm sewage in storm conditions. We have set up a map which provides near real-time information about storm discharge activity, as indicated by its event duration monitoring. This can be found at www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map
50.	Could you make available a cumulative total in the EDM? Data on the last 48 hours is not terribly useful – do you have annual and combined data you can share?	We have identified adding cumulative totals, and a more detailed history of discharges as enhancements for future development on the map, but we don't have a project in place to deliver these enhancements currently, so can't confirm when this might happen. The map is still a relatively new tool and we're keen to hear more feedback and understand how different people are accessing and using the information. Annual data is made available already via our EDM reports, which are published on our River Health pages . In order to provide complete transparency EDM data is also shared via an API, which provides a full, open source access, but does require the relative skillset to be able to maximise its use. You can find out about the different ways of accessing our EDM data I've mentioned above here - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/river-health/storm-discharge-data

	Question	Response
51.	What plans do you have for reducing abstractions from aquifers where this is contributing to low flows on environmentally sensitive rivers, such as chalk streams like the Hogsmill, and when are these likely to be implemented?	The National Framework for Water Resources, published in March 2020 sets the environmental ambition required to address unsustainable abstraction between 2025 and 2050 on a national scale. The Framework sets out that Regional Water Resource Plans are required to develop an agreed environmental destination to achieve sustainable abstraction by 2050. All of the scenarios that we have developed incorporate the need to cap some licences at 'Recent Actual' abstraction to prevent the risk of deterioration under the WFD, as set out in Environment Agency supplementary guidance. Following consultation on our dWRMP the Environment Agency has required us to review how we might be able to deliver our environmental ambition quicker. We have undertaken a review of all reductions required under the environmental destination to see where we could bring reductions forward. Using the guidance and the prioritisation approach described above and in Section 5 of our WRMP24 we plan the following sites to be addressed in AMP8 (2025-2030): • Bradfield (River Pang) • Netley Mill (River Tillingbourne) • New Gauge (River Lee) For the Hogsmill we have looked at the option of reduction in our licensed abstraction at Epsom and included this in our draft WINEP but it was rejected by the EA due to not being cost/beneficial. The EA are planning to review their cost/benefit assessment process and their WFD drivers to see if it can be accommodated in future e.g. in AMP9. Meanwhile we will undertake further investigation and options appraisal in the next AMP – AMP8 to see if we can find a lower cost option to deliver some benefit to low flows in the Hogsmill River. See section 2 of our revised draft WRMP24 for more information on the reductions above. Despite the reductions we have made to our abstractions over the last 30 years, there is still more to do to protect our rivers and streams. Across our region, particularly in some vulnerable catchments such as chalk streams, the quantity of water that is licensed for abstraction is still considered to be higher than is environmentally sustainable. Climate change also poses a growing risk that means some abstractions could become unsustainable as climate change causes river flows to drop. We will continue to make abstraction reductions to protect the environment. But protection from over-abstraction is only one measure to safeguard them and improving their morphology, ensuring the channels are natural rather than artificially straightened or concrete lined, is also important, as is protecting them from poor water quality through discharges and agricultural and road runoff. We have been strong supporters of the

	Question	Response
		national Chalk stream strategy since work on it began. Restoring England's internationally rare Chalk streams is now a government priority and water companies have been urged by the Government to work with other stakeholders to restore Chalk streams where they are affected by adverse pressures including abstraction. This represents a major challenge and is likely to take a considerable time to implement in full. We have made significant strides and have addressed the most clear-cut low flow problems, for example those seen on the River Darent in Kent in the late 1980s. However more measures are needed to ensure that these, and other streams, are resilient to abstraction impact. Furthermore, Chalk streams are part of a natural system and, therefore there will be occurrences of low flows in these streams in the future due to seasonal droughts. In some cases, they will dry up in their upper reaches, a natural feature in parts of these rivers know as 'bournes'. Our challenge is to devise and implement a plan to ensure that abstraction is not a cause of any unnatural drying of any of our Chalk rivers or other sensitive streams. This record of abstraction reduction forms a foundation on which our future plans are building. We are undertaking our planning on a regional basis with other water companies through WRSE. Our long-term aspiration is to cease all abstraction that adversely affects sensitive streams, where supported by our customers and regulators. More detail can be found in section 2 and section 5 of our revised draft WRMP.
52.	How many SWOP investigations are you planning in the next 5 year period compared to the number being undertaken in the present period?	Actual SWOP Delivery of completed improved outfalls in AMP8 is still TBC, in the current period we are aiming to significantly improve and attain EA sign-off on 200 outfalls. The number of SWOP investigations started and ongoing however is usually much higher than the completed (EA signed-off) figure, as some catchments are very large and can take many months/years to complete. The number of outfalls being investigated at one time depends on the size and complexity of the catchments.
53.	As a regular year-round river swimmer, I participated in the recent Thames 21 water testing project. Whilst I was aware that on occasion there are sewage spills from nearby Thames Water treatment plants into the river, it was rather alarming & extremely disappointing to see that the water testing point D; at Loddon Drive Bridge, approximately 5km upstream from Mill Meadows, Henley for which designated bathing status is being applied AND the closest to our frequent swim spot had the worst results of all 6 areas tested. When tested for ECOLI, results were POOR for 19/20 tests (95%), and POOR for Intestinal enterococci in 12/20 tests (60%). I am also aware these terribly poor results are in part due to the nearby (Wargrave) sewage works being unable to cope with the sheer volume of sewage generated by both local homes and the high volume of house-building in the surrounding areas over the last 50 years which has been directed to this treatment plant. As such, I	We've welcomed the opportunity to support Thames21 and citizen scientists with laboratory support to process the river samples. There are multiple causes impacting the health of rivers. Pollutants, animal faeces from livestock and wildlife, along with run off from farms and roads can contribute to hazards found in watercourses. In this report the correlation between storm overflows and increased FIOs is not consistent and would suggest consideration should also be given to other inputs of bacteria, including the treated final effluent from our STWs, which is not designed to produce effluent to meet bathing water standards. An upgrade is planned for Wargrave STW. This will improve its ability to treat the volumes of incoming sewage, reducing the need for untreated discharges in wet weather. The scheme, which is still being designed, is due to complete in 2026.

	Question	Response
	would like to know a) what is being done to reduce the frequency of sewage spills and b) in particular, what is being done to upgrade the Wargrave Sewage works, and the time frame for these works please?	
54.	With the concentration of forever chemicals getting stronger and stronger in our rivers and fresh water, how do Thames treat for these harmful substances during their cleaning process for drinking water? And are you looking to improve/upgrade this process in the near future to keep us as protected as possible?	The main thing that we do is we monitor very carefully for the levels of these chemicals in different sources of supply and we then blend the water from those sources so that we keep the levels right down below the minimum specified by drinking water inspectorate.
55.	What needs to happen and when will Thames Water stop illegally dumping sewage into our waterways?	Storm overflows are used to prevent sewers flooding our homes, gardens and streets. They act as a safety valve, diverting some of the rainwater and foul water into watercourses. Storm overflows are regulated by the Environment Agency. Storm discharges are legally allowed, under the conditions of the Environment Agency permit. Storm overflows should only be used when necessary. We don't actively switch them on, they operate automatically when the flow levels increase. Taking action to improve the health of rivers is a key focus for us. We regard all discharges as unacceptable and we have published plans to upgrade over 250 of our sewage treatment works and sewers across London and the Thames Valley. The Thames Tideway Tunnel, a £4 billion investment, is nearing completion. This project, combined with previous upgrades we've made to our London sewage works and the building of the Lee Tunnel, will capture 95% of the volume of untreated sewage currently entering the tidal Thames in a typical year.
56.	What actions will Thames Water take to clean up our rivers, restore rivers back to healthy and thriving places for all aquatic creatures and stop (not reduce) any discharges?	Taking action to improve the health of rivers is a key focus for us. We regard all discharges as unacceptable and we have published plans to upgrade over 250 of our sewage treatment works and sewers across London and the Thames Valley.
57.	What is Thames Water doing about reducing all types of pollution: e.g. plastic, sewage and restoring our rivers?	We are undertaking a number of activities to reduce pollution entering our waterways. These include work to ensure compliance of our sites with discharge permits, upgrading our sites to meet tighter discharge standards, works to reduce the amount of unwanted surface water entering our networks to reduce the amount of storm discharges made from our sewage works, extending some works to provide additional treatment capacity, working with other water companies to understand the best way to address complex chemicals and the extent to which current treatment processes are effective in their removal and working with catchment partners to develop alternative approaches to addressing pollution sources.
58.	What is Thames Water doing to monitor the impact of pollution or building works on groundwater and aquifers water quality- where our drinking water comes from?	In the broadest sense, we are a consultee in the planning process. We do submit responses when there are planning applications that would affect our ability to deliver our water and wastewater services. We are a statutory consultee on these planning matters (ability to deliver services). Where a planning application is located within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) the Environment Agency is the statutory consultee.

	Question	Response
		Within our internal process, if a development is within an SPZ, the Groundwater Resources Team will be consulted in case there are additional risks to groundwater quality/the aquifer from the development. The Groundwater Resources consultation will sometimes request that the local planning authority (LPA) include an additional "source protection" condition within the planning approval (although the LPA can choose not to include this). Our involvement in the planning process is important. Within our statutory obligations, we cannot block a development, but we are able to request that future housing delivery is phased to allow appropriate water and/or wastewater infrastructure to be delivered so that service to all customers is maintained. Within the planning process, the Environment Agency is the statutory consultee for matters relating to the environment (including aquifer protection). Within our internal process, Thames Water specialists will also respond to developers plans where a risk to local drinking water quality might exist. The aim is to work with developers and the Environment Agency to protect aquifers from being impacted. If an aquifer is impacted by development, the Environment Agency will be the primary appellant regarding groundwater protection (under the Environmental Protection Act (1990)), however where a groundwater abstraction or river is specifically impacted by a development, other parties might be able to take private legal action. Groundwater contamination is a very complex matter to deal with. The concept of cleaning aquifers is often incredibly difficult and takes place over long timescales. This is why we will always seek to avoid impact to groundwater in the first instance. In the UK, the Environment Agency is responsible for groundwater protection, you may find the following document of use in how potentially polluting activities are managed to minimise groundwater risk: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements Providing safe, clean drinking water is our absolute top priority. The quality of your water supply is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) under the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 (as amended 2018). These regulations cover how the water should taste, look and smell, as well as the chemical content, treatment requirements and monitoring arrangements. If a drinking water source becomes polluted, we can sometimes blend or treat the water to ensure ongoing supply, however in extreme cases we would cease the use of a particular source in order to protect customer drinking water quality." One is if we have multiple sources of raw water, we can seek to blend them to get the raw water back to a quality that we can effectively treat. The alternative is we just abandon that source. It is certainly a challenge, but that's why we take this role that we have as a consultees in the planning process very seriously.

	Question	Response
		Finally, we would like to advise you that the source protection zone in Dorking relates to a SES Water groundwater abstraction. You may therefore wish to contact them directly on: customerserviceops@seswater.co.uk
59.	We have recently had to get private pest control and groundwork experts in to remove rats from our property and prevent them from re-entering via the drains on our side of the boundary. What is Thames Water doing to make sure rats are not in the drainage system at all and particularly just beyond our boundaries?	Sewers can be habitats for rats to either nest or use as a network to get around and we are unable to ensure that rats are not in our sewer network at all. However we have a robust process for dealing with rodent problems and more information can be found on our website - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies/rodents
60.	Also Are Thames Water monitoring rat incidents and especially if there have been an increase in rats entering household properties due to flooded sewers?	All rodent incidents are monitored and reviewed by technical specialists on a case by case basis and any underlying root cause such as flooding will be investigated and resolved where possible. If it's confirmed that rats are coming from our sewers, we'll lay bait underground. If the sewer has a problem that we're responsible for, we'll lay bait until repairs are finished.
61.	My final question for Thames Water is to share my concern regarding the traffic disruption in my local town of Henley on Thames caused by recent remedial works. I'd like to request that greater care be taken to take into account the needs of communities affected by Thames Water work; and to ask for some statistics as to the number of calls outs and the reasons as to why there had been such a high number of issues in our local town. (It would be interesting to know if we are being more affected by old pipe systems than with other comparable towns).I'm concerned about the impact the Thames Water engineering works has on the traffic flow and the increase pollution of idling cars. Please understand I'm all for Thames Water fixing various leaks - but our town have had a number of local issues they have had to fix and the negative impact it has had on traffic flow and increased pollution of many cars stuck in long queues and the pollution this then causes from a noise, air quality and general wellbeing of pedestrians, residents and transport users. In late September 2023, local traffic was at a standstill due to the leak TW were fixing on the mini roundabouts - One evening I had to phone up the Thames water helpline in a panic to report that the temporary traffic lights had been moved to face the wrong way and not working- and how the traffic cones had been put out to cause dangerous driving - with traffic not knowing which way or when to go on the double mini roundabout and as a pedestrian I also felt quite in danger simply trying to cross the road. It had taken some people I know over an hour to what would usually take a 5-10 min car journey. When Thames Water closes or causes diversions for their work do they consider the wider traffic flow measures?	The decision on what type of traffic management to use i.e. Road Closures is based upon the remaining road width available. If a road is used by buses and HGVs then an absolute minimum of 3m is required otherwise there is no option other than to close the road. Road closures are always a last resort as we always seek to minimise disruption to the public. All traffic management, diversion etc need to be approved by the Highways Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) as they have the knowledge of their road networks. Since 1 Sep 23 there have been 18 road closures in Henley-Upon-Thames; 9 of which were planned and will have been publicised using Advanced Warning Signs and 9 were emergency works (x1 Fire Hydrant Install & x8 VS). The very nature of emergency works means we are unable to warn the public in advance of the works.

	Question	Response
62.	Since the start of September, there have been at least six road closures in Henley on Thames because of emergency work being carried out by Thames Water. As a market town with narrow streets and no bypass, these works inevitably cause significant disruption for traffic, for residents and visitors to the town, and affect local businesses. There is little communication from Thames Water as to what work is being carried out and why and there appears to be little consideration to mitigating the effects of the work. It is likely that Henley is not an isolated case. What could and should Thames Water do to improve how it communicates with communities, and how can road closures be minimized in the future?	The decision on what type of traffic management to use i.e. Road Closures is based upon the remaining road width available. If a road is used by buses and HGVs then an absolute minimum of 3m is required otherwise there is no option other than to close the road. Road closures are always a last resort as we always seek to minimise disruption to the public. All traffic management, diversion etc need to be approved by the Highways Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) as they have the knowledge of their road networks. Since 1 Sep 23 there have been 18 road closures in Henley-Upon-Thames; 9 of which were planned and will have been publicised using Advanced Warning Signs and 9 were emergency works (x1 Fire Hydrant Install & x8 VS). The very nature of emergency works means we are unable to warn the public in advance of the works.
63.	I cannot attend the meeting but am interested to know how much extra will be loaded onto our bills to pay for infrastructure to prevent overflow of sewage into our rivers and seas when shareholders receive massive dividends? "Water firms have also accrued £54bn in debt since privatisation - but paid out dividends to shareholders of £66bn, according to an analysis by The Guardian newspaper last year, with 20% of bills going towards servicing debt or paying out dividends on average.	Thames water included £885m (2022/23 prices) of investment in their PR24 plan to address this issue. £75m of this is for investigations and £815m for implementation of solutions. The overall impact of this investment is approximately £10 on customer bills by the end of AMP8 (2030). Our plan is subject to review by Ofwat.
64.	How much sewage have they dumped in the River Mole? Other rivers in their jurisdiction?	Storm overflows are regulated by the Environment Agency. Storm discharges are legally allowed, under the conditions of the Environment Agency permit. We don't actively switch them on, they operate automatically when the flow levels increase. In 2017, the Environment Agency asked all water companies to start monitoring storm overflow activity. Knowing how frequently they discharge gives us insight into the performance of our network and sewage treatment works. Since then, we've been using event duration monitoring (EDM) to continuously monitor our storm overflows. EDMs don't measure the volume of sewage discharged, but the duration of discharges. This data can be used to count how many discharges took place, and for how long they operated. All of this data is reported annually (alongside the live map we also operate), and in the annual reports can be viewed by the name of the site, and the relevant watercourse - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/river-health/storm-discharge-data
65.	I installed a micro plant watering system about 5 years ago which saw a significant increase in my water usage during summer. I have writing to Thames Water requesting a reduction in our waste water charges but	Customer submitted a Wastewater Abatement Reduction Webform to us on 22 April 2021. Contact was attempted on 23 April 2021 to advise the customer that he would need to contact Sutton & East Surrey as they are the company who bill him. – The

	Question	Response
	they have not responded. I don't have the water usage increase to hand to I am sure you hold all the records to assist me in receiving a credit for the overcharge and a reduction going forward.	customer is not billed by Thames Water, and Thames Water are only responsible for the treatment of Wastewater within this area. As we were not able to get hold of the customer by phone, an email was sent advising to contact Sutton & East Surrey. This email bounced back. The agent then picked this up on 26 May 2021 due to being notified the email was not delivered, and unfortunately sent it to the incorrect email address again. We understand that you were contacted on 14 December 2023 and requested a call back for the morning of the 15 December 2023.
66.	How, when and what cost to stop the sewage spills into the River Mole at Brockham?	We have three locations which are permitted storm discharge locations in Brockham, two of which are sewage pumping stations and one combined sewer overflow: • Castle Gardens, Dorking • Stonebridge SSO, Brockham • Brockham Bridge The Government set its Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan in September 2023. The Plan requires all water companies to achieve certain targets including that • by 2035, water companies will have to improve all storm overflows discharging into or near every designated bathing water; and improve 75% of overflows discharging to high priority nature sites; and • by 2050, this will apply to all remaining storm overflows covered by our targets, regardless of location. TWUL is taking steps to ensure compliance with these targets by the relevant deadlines but isn't in a position to provide specific detail relating costs and solutions at these locations. Our proposed business plan for the next regulatory period includes £885m to tackle storm overflows, reducing their use by 28%. This plan is under review by Ofwat.
67.	Hepatitis E in contaminated drinking water near Shepperton	All water abstracted from whatever location, including the River Thames receives treatment at one of our Water Treatment Works. All of our Water Treatment Works are designed and operated to remove and/or inactivate microbiological parameters, including bacteria and virus. The level of treatment necessary and provided is regularly risk assessed by the Company and independently assessed by the independent government regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The health teams at Local Authorities have a process for notifying us if they think there may be a link with an illness cluster and the drinking water. We engage with them proactively and reactively on a regular basis. However, we have not been notified of Hepatitis E near Shepperton.
68.	How do you clean Aquifer pollution?	In the broadest sense, we are a consultee in the planning process. We do submit responses when there are planning applications that would affect our ability to deliver

	Question	Response
		our water and wastewater services. We are a statutory consultee on these planning matters (ability to deliver services). Where a planning application is located within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) the Environment Agency is the statutory consultee. Within our internal process, if a development is within an SPZ, the Groundwater Resources Team will be consulted in case there are additional risks to groundwater quality/the aquifer from the development. The Groundwater Resources consultation will sometimes request that the local planning authority (LPA) include an additional "source protection" condition within the planning approval (although the LPA can choose not to include this). Our involvement in the planning process is important. Within our statutory obligations, we cannot block a development, but we are able to request that future housing delivery is phased to allow appropriate water and/or wastewater infrastructure to be delivered so that service to all customers is maintained. Within the planning process, the Environment Agency is the statutory consultee for matters relating to the environment (including aquifer protection). Within our internal process, Thames Water specialists will also respond to developers plans where a risk to local drinking water quality might exist. The aim is to work with developers and the Environment Agency to protect aquifers from being impacted. If an aquifer is impacted by development, the Environment Agency will be the primary appellant regarding groundwater protection (under the Environmental Protection Act (1990)), however where a groundwater abstraction or river is specifically impacted by a development, other parties might be able to take private legal action. Groundwater contamination is a very complex matter to deal with. The concept of cleaning aquifers is often incredibly difficult and takes place over long timescales. This is why we will always seek to avoid impact to groundwater in the first instance. In the UK, the Environment Agency is responsible for groundwater protection, you may find the following document of use in how potentially polluting activities are managed to minimise groundwater risk: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements Providing safe, clean drinking water is our absolute top priority. The quality of your water supply is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) under the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 (as amended 2018). These regulations cover how the water should taste, look and smell, as well as the chemical content, treatment requirements and monitoring arrangements. If a drinking water source becomes polluted, we can sometimes blend or treat the water to ensure ongoing supply, however in extreme cases we would cease the use of a particular source in order to protect customer drinking water quality."

	Question	Response
		One is if we have multiple sources of raw water, we can seek to blend them to get the raw water back to a quality that we can effectively treat. The alternative is we just abandon that source. It is certainly a challenge, but that's why we take this role that we have as a consultees in the planning process very seriously. Finally, we would like to advise you that the source protection zone in Dorking relates to a SES Water groundwater abstraction. You may therefore wish to contact them directly on: customerserviceops@seswater.co.uk
69.	What is the current situation regarding dumping waste into rivers by water companies, and specifically Thames Water, which was a big media issue a while back?	We think any discharge of untreated sewage is unacceptable, even when it's legally permitted. So, we're taking steps to make the use of storm overflows unnecessary. We're delivering the Thames Tideway tunnel, London's 'super sewer' and the biggest single overflow reduction project ever. The tunnel will prevent millions of tonnes of untreated sewage, mixed with rainwater, from entering the tidal reaches of the River Thames via storm overflows each year. In the rest of our area, we've developed a detailed programme for reducing the number of overflows from our sites. This includes removing surface and/or groundwater from our sewers in some cases. Our long-term aim is to get rid of all storm overflows. You can find out more about our plans here - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/river-health/investing-in-river-health
70.	When Thames water says it is investing/spending £x billion on infrastructure upgrades, what exactly is the money actually being spent on i.e. why is it so expensive?	Our plans are a mixture of upgrades to our networks and treatment facilities. Pages 115 & 116 of our business plan provide detailed specifics of some notable investment programmes. Many of which involve complex civil engineering projects. All of our projects are tested in the market place and using our historic cost data to ensure value for money. However, there's no doubt that large infrastructure projects are expensive. For example, we will spend over £400m at Coppermills WTW to improve the resilience of the site, which delivers over 400 million litres per day to customer is east London.
71.	Why doesn't the management of Thames Water seem to show any contrition??	I can assure you that our staff and management teams are emotionally invested in the success of Thames and take our current performance/position very personally. The effort and personal commitment many make to Thames is not necessarily seen, but can assure you that this is very much the case.
72.	Does Thames Water provide any support or encourage in anyway provision of household scale rain water harvesting systems for flushing toilets? If individual homes supplied some of their own water it would reduce all the stresses on the system you have been referring to	We don't offer financial assistance or undertake installation work for rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems. Whilst RWH and greywater recycling (GWR) systems will both have key roles to play in off-setting mains water use within future domestic and commercial buildings, they are rarely suitable for retrofitting into existing build stock.

	Question	Response
		Water utilities are best placed to run major water infrastructure and networks, and work with Government and regulators to influence the policy and planning levers that could increase these water reuse technologies, rather than fund individual installations outside of our asset base. We are currently providing Government with data and insight to influence future updates to Building Regulations and planning requirements. We are also the first water company to offer developers of new homes, a 3-tier financial incentive to install water efficiency devices, install RWH and/or GWR technologies, and achieve water neutrality for their new developments. We have also installed around 1 million smart water meters, helping us find and fix leaks faster, whilst helping customers understand their water consumption and enable greater water efficiency behaviour change.
73.	Could TW confirm that housing developments will be required to meet 110L p.p.pd. water use in proposals submitted from now on - brought forward from the original 2030 date for its introduction?	Local Authorities are responsible for requiring new housing developments to meet 110 l/p/d requirements, as per the 'Optional' requirement within Part G of Building Regulations, by attaching conditions to in planning permissions. Developments would then be required to meet this standard in line with the Building Regulations. Thames Water supports this rightly ambitious target approach, which is also shared by Government, Ofwat and the Environment Agency. Thames Water have advised Local Authorities that in order to achieve the 110 l/p/d target Local Authorities need to require that developers use the 'fittings approach', to ensure that the target is effectively met. In March 2022, Defra also wrote to all local authority chief executives, encouraging them to adopt the 110 l/p/d target, using the 'fittings approach'. We are encouraging developers to meet this target though our developer environmental incentive scheme, which provides financial offers per new dwelling to meet the Part G 'Optional' requirement. Our environmental incentive also offers financial assistance to go beyond the 110 l/p/d performance level through financial incentives for embedding water reuse technologies and provides a delivery mechanism to new developments reach water neutrality.
74.	From British Canoeing: How does this plan prioritise the reduction of the adverse impacts of sewage discharges on public health, including on rivers, popular with recreational users, the majority of which are not classed as bathing waters?	The plan includes our biggest investment programme at STW's and to reduce storm spills. Our overall investment to improve the quality and frequency of discharges is in excess of £3bn between 2025-2030. We have a dedicated investment programme to reduce the "poor" quality status at Wolvercote Mill Stream. The 3bn quoted makes further improvements across our entire network. (We do have a further bathing water in our area Fresnahm Great Pond - which for the last few years has been classed as Excellent).
75.	When we refer to levels of water quality - has the standards of what constitutes good water quality changed at all or are these reviewed on	Water quality standards are the same across England and Wales and indeed across the UK. They are legally enforceable and are monitored and assessed by the

	Question	Response
	an annual basis? Are these the same standards across all water companies?	independent government regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The DWI keeps water quality standards under constant review and takes action in the event of any water quality breach
76.	How do TWUL propose to reduce per capita consumption of water over the next two asset management periods?	Water companies will play a key role in reducing household water consumption (measured as Per Capita Consumption) and have included a PCC reduction glidepath out to 2050 within each Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP). Achieving this PCC reduction will be reliant on both water company action and Government policy and regulation levers. Our demand reduction interventions, as outlined in the WRMP Section 8, include the full rollout of smart metering across meterable households and business properties, a wide range of targeted water efficiency activities, targeting and fixing continuous flows (internal wastage), innovative tariffs, direct customer engagement to drive behaviour change. Our smart meter rollout and associated water efficiency activities will continue to deliver most of the household demand reductions available through water company levers, through to 2035.
77.	There is a tremendous shortage of skilled engineers and this is affecting all process industries. How are Thames Water going to attract the necessary skills to complete there investment plans?	It is a really competitive market for engineers we need to continue demonstrating we offer best in class apprenticeship to attract and retain our engineers of the future. We don't just stop at Level 3 we can then offer Level 4 progression. This will allow us the ability to look at roles/levels and structures to incentivise and attract experienced and qualified engineers to supplement our current teams and also support the training and progress of apprentices on their journey to becoming qualified. Reward consistently review our packages to ensure we are competitive and if we can give individuals the best working environments and reward them effectively we will turnaround the challenges we currently face. The Skills & Emerging talent team have links and relationships with our community groups, local FE colleges and schools and also IOT's/UTC's to build a pipeline of talent into the business and this will support our recruitment in a competitive environment. In AMP7 as part of the insourcing of Capital Delivery we are ramping up recruitment to support the number of Engineers across our teams to deliver our step up in investment. We have been able to recruit over 150 colleagues in the past two years, a large number of whom are Engineers. We have run a number of recruitment campaigns and will looking to recruit a further circa 200 colleagues in the next few years to underpin our proposed larger investment programme in the forthcoming regulatory period. Where we are unable to recruit, we have arrangements in place with Consulting organisations to provide resource and expertise to support addressing skill gaps. Our strategy as noted above through the Apprentices and the recruitment is to increase our own internal capacity and capability and skills.
78.	Do TWUL know how much per capita in litres per day for potable customers current leakages equate to?	Leakage in 2022-23 was 619.7 Ml/d; population was 10.379.727m. Therefore, leakage per head was 59.7 l/h/d.

	Question	Response
79.	Why are TWUL and for that matter the other water companies along with the regulators so reluctant to support volume monitoring of storm discharges?	We and other companies are keen to direct our investment where it will have greatest impact for the environment and/or our customers. The volume discharged under storm conditions is not in itself a good indicator of environmental impact since it is the polluting load that matters. Therefore, volumetric monitoring will add little to our knowledge and understanding of storm discharges and money would be better spent on scheme to directly reduce their frequency and duration.
80.	Bathing water - May I suggest the plumes of bacteria colonies coming out of Cassington just above the Oxford swimming area may be responsible - in the 'treated' sewage?	We have extensive plans for Cassington STW in the period 2025-2030, including the introduction of UV treatment.
81.	What is the white scummy foam that appears on the surface of the rivers particularly near the weirs on the River Mole?	Foam is a natural phenomenon in lakes and rivers, caused when molecules like fatty acids disrupt water's surface tension, allowing air and water to mix. Turbulence from river weirs can create foam by trapping small bubbles. These natural surfactants, often from decaying organic matter, can also come from living organisms. Not all foam is natural; detergents and human activities like fertilizers can induce it. While foam in rivers is generally harmless, about 1% is the foaming agent, mainly a natural fatty acid. Synthetic foam may be a signal harmful pollution to aquatic life, and excessive foam could result from nutrient-rich water, causing algal blooms that harm fish by depleting oxygen. We recommend also engaging with the Environment Agency on foam related issues in rivers.
82.	Notwithstanding the constraints of discharge consents, some of which are many years old, what levels of the nutrients phosphate and nitrate plus toxic ammonia, are TW looking to limit discharge treatment works discharges to?	We aim to operate our treatment works to reliably meet the limits set out in our environmental permits set by the EA. To date we have no requirement to meet nitrate limits from any of our works with the focus being on phosphate and ammonia. In our catchment we have some of the tightest standards in the UK for these parameters with ammonia limits of 1 mg/l being commonplace and 0.25mg/l P being considered for some STWs in the next 5 year business planning period.
83.	Just how stringent is the foul water network adoption procedure on completion of new developments? There seem to be numerous instances of misconnections and blockages from building debris on new developments.	Sewer adoption is discretionary. In our experience, the vast majority of new networks are not offered for adoption. However, when they are the adoption process is very robust. It has been a nationally followed process and procedure since Ofwat implemented it's Code for Adoption rules in 2020. All sewers and manholes that are offered for adoption are either physically inspected on site or via a CCTV survey and must pass national operating and condition standards.
84.	What are you doing to incentivise low water usage? What are your plans to get customers onto meters? Would you consider charging higher rates for high water users to financially encourage more economical usage?	We have an extensive metering programme that has connected almost a million domestic customers to smart meters and our intention is to increase this number by another million by 2030. Metered customers, and specifically customers with high use, are offered free home visits with personalised advice and water efficiency devices fitted, so that our customers can manager their usage and control their bills. We also use metering data to detect customer side leakage, and support and advice

	Question	Response
		customers on how to deal with their leaks to reduce wastage and their bills. Our online calculator helps our customers understand their and provides tips on reduction. During high-demand period with run extensive campaigns through multiple channels to encourage our customers to use water more efficiently. We are considering rising block tariffs to enable social tariffs for low income customers and further incentivise reduction is water usage, something we have included in our AMP8 proposed plans.
85.	PFAS, microplastics, drugs (medical and recreational), and countless other chemicals are not filtered out before water is returned to the river. Some of these are captured in human waste 'sludge' which is then put onto farmland of fertilisers leading to contaminated land and environment. Why are these not filtered out at the STW and destroyed before contaminating the environment and becoming virtually irretrievable?	The sewage treatment process is doing exactly what is advocated here, filtering out and concentrating substances that should not end up in our rivers, into sewage sludge. Some of this is used to generate heat and power with the remainder being disposed of as a nutrient source to agricultural land. We are working with other industry partners to understand the risk that continued use of the land disposal route poses and to identify the need for alternative methods of sludge disposal as appropriate.
86.	Does Cathryn accept that the difficulties delivering on so much now is the result of the company stripping out dividends and other payments that the company extracted rather than addressing these issues as they remained, emerged and multiplied? Why should the public not expect TW to continue on that same exploitative route as her comments indicate no change in the company business ethic,? Delay fudge, fail and keep the shareholders happy.	Our shareholders are very supportive and haven't taken a dividend in 6 years (March 2017) and are not expecting one until the end of the next regulatory period. To support our turnaround plan our shareholders subscribed to an initial £500 million of new equity in March 2023 and committed a further £750m in the current AMP, subject to certain conditions, to drive Thames Water's turnaround over the remainder of the current regulatory period. This is coupled with an acknowledgement from our shareholders of the need for significant medium-term equity support in AMP8. This amount is indicatively expected to be in the region of £2.5 billion.
87.	There's a gulf between the TW wastewater masterplan and what happens at treatment works. My river group visited Dorking treatment works which is unable to treat at FFT so that every overflow is illegal. Planned upgrades do not address growth in the catchment. It appears that treatment works only respond to EA permitted requirements that do not reach for the same targets as the masterplan which remains a vision only. Furthermore, treatment works are operated by a handful of people at most and these rarely have a handle on the vision to improve the works. How are TW dealing with the gulf between vision and operational improvements in real time on the ground?	Visions are by their very nature aspirational with business plans setting out the individual actions and interventions necessary to move towards the vision. We recognise that we have a lot to do before we can be confident in the compliance of all our wastewater assets and have eliminated all storm overflows and category 1 and 2 pollution incidents. However, each business plan period takes us a step further forward towards meeting this aspiration. Under our proposed business plan Dorking STW is being upgraded at a cost of more than £14 million. This project will increase the capacity of the storm tanks and improve its ability to treat the volumes of incoming sewage (FFT). This substantial upgrade will reduce the need for untreated sewage discharges during storm conditions. The storm tank scheme is due for completion in 2025, with further works to improve the sites ability to treat incoming flows completing in 2026.
88.	Have TWUL any idea of their annual CO2 emissions created by intersite and flow management operations using tankers? Given these operations are an integral and necessary part of the operation are there any plans in the pipeline aimed at mitigating CO2 emissions created through tankering operations?	Our plans in 2025-2030 is to start the ambitious project of decarbonising our fleet including our vans and HGV's including tankers. Our plans currently replace 2,185 vehicles with two thirds of our HGV fleet decarbonised by 2030 and the remainder by 2035.

	Question	Response
89.	There are 9 million TW customers but there were around 160 on this call at its peak (less than 0.002% of customers). What are you doing to better publicise these kinds of events and what are you doing to ensure you hear from as many customers as possible? Where will the write up of this event go and how will it be publicised?	We have promoted this event through number of channels including our website, social media, broadcast radio interviews and press releases. We have also directly invited our stakeholders and asked them to share it with their communities. The write up of the event will be available on our website at www.thameswater.co.uk/yourwateryoursay
90.	Are there any further opportunities to comment on the 5 year plan for 25-30 and when is the plan finalised?	Submission of the business plan to Ofwat in October is the start of the process which will complete in December 2024. Ofwat is currently reviewing our proposed business plan (along with other water companies) and will provide its draft determination in May / June 2024. Following this, Thames Water will have a specific period to respond and this will be made public on our website. Ofwat will provide its Final Determination in December 2024 that will set the investment plan for 2025 - 2030 along with customer bill profiles. Throughout this period, we will continue to engage with our customers and communities to ensure that our plan aligns with their expectations.
91.	We've heard from top people at TW which is welcome. However, many still feel honesty and transparency can still be improved not least to improve customer confidence and move forward together with communities to improve water quality, reduce water consumption and understand bills wrt to the "staggering implications of growth and climate change" (quote from WWMP). How is TW planning to improve this critical aspect of their masterplan? (in particular engaging with river groups like mine, for example)	We recognise the sentiment that calls for increased honesty and transparency, and value the input from customers and communities as we work together to achieve our long term goals. We are working to improve our transparency and have proposed a programme of work called 'Rethinking Rivers' which builds on the work we have already started through the Smarter Water Catchments initiative. We would like to see this funded as part of our PR24 business plan, however this funding is under review by Ofwat. With greater collaboration at its heart, we believe that working together in partnerships will be the only way to achieve Good Ecological Status for the rivers across the Thames basin. We would encourage river groups and interested parties to get involved with their local Catchment Partnership to capitalise on this potential programme.
92.	Do you have the voice of regular customers on the board?	We have a Customer Challenge Group The Customer Challenge Group (CCG) is independent and informed. They constructively challenge Thames Water on the: • Quality of its engagement with the customers and communities it serves. • Extent to which customer priorities are reflected in what the company does. • Company's delivery against those priorities. There is a regular engagement between the CCG and Thames Water Board. You can find more information about our CCG including their reports and minutes from meetings at www.thameswater.co.uk/ccg
93.	Chalgrove STW stopped discharging untreated sewage today. It has been discharging untreated sewage continuously for the last 17 days. That is 17 days of pollution that is not even recorded as a pollution event. When will Thames Water start to include CSO discharges of	Pollution incidents are categorised into four categories with category 1 incidents being the most polluting and category 4 incidents having no impact. Since many storm discharges have no discernible environmental impact categorising them as category 4 will have no material effect on our response. We are committed to meeting

	Question	Response
	untreated sewage as pollution incidents? Until you get real rivers like the River Thame are doomed	government targets for storm overflows which will see their progressive reduction over time with the most damaging overflows addressed first.
94.	COP 28 has just started - has Thames Water Divested their financial assets? And/ or what is TW divestment plan going forward for a oil and gas free future.	Within our Thames Water Annual Report published in July 2023 we have included details within our Strategic Report on our non-financial and sustainability information statement. Aligned with our Purpose and our approach to becoming more sustainable, we continue to put ESG at the heart of our financial and operational decision-making. Our support for customers, roll-out of smart meters and investment in our waste network to improve river health are just some examples of projects that support our approach. We're also enhancing the way we oversee climate risk, with the creation of our formal, climate change working group during the year, led by our Engineering and Asset Director and reporting to the Executive and Board. The working group includes representatives from the finance, sustainability, engineering and energy teams, to increase oversight across the business. In this report, we have included our disclosures against the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). We also have TCFD disclosures within our Thames Water Defined Benefit Pension Schemes reports and ESG is considered through the Investment Advisors and the investment decisions made by the Pension Trustee Boards.
95.	Ground water infiltration is constantly being quoted as a major contributor to spilling sewage treatment works. Are TWUL aware that much of this GWI might be generated by their own leakage?	We do not believe that leakage is a significant contributor to groundwater infiltration. We only experience groundwater infiltration during periods of sustained rainfall and when the water table rises - which only occurs in winter/spring. Leakage is present all year round yet infiltration is only present at specific times of year and depending on the weather may not occur at all. Further the volume of groundwater arriving at STW's is far in excess of the leakage levels across our Thames Valley region.
96.	How utterly disgusted I am at pumping sewage and waste water into rivers and sea will you actually stop doing this or is it a case that you just don't care about our planet even though you probably pretend too	We have publicly stated that we believe all untreated discharges are unacceptable and apologised where our performance has fallen short. We are committed to be fully transparent on our discharges - we were the first UK water company to publish our live storm discharge map - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/river-health/storm-discharge-data Our proposed plan for the next 5 years - currently under consideration by Ofwat - would see investment of £885m to achieve a 28% reduction in storm overflows and reduce pollution incidents by 30%. We will commission the Thames Tideway tunnel which will prevent millions of tonnes of untreated sewage mixed with rainwater from entering the tidal River Thames. Chapter 10 of our business plan provides further detail on how our plan delivers for our environment - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf
97.	Do you think it is ever acceptable for raw sewage to be discharged from your drains onto the public highway?	

	Question	Response
98.	I asked a question under OALC which was my work Teams account. I asked about poor customer service. My personal email address is christinelalley@gmail.com 46 Henry Street, Reading RG1 2NN (Original question from chat - CCW ask please Customer Service is woeful. Wait time on the phone is long. Voice recognition of giving a postcode to identify where a leak is does not work, after saying postcode 10 times the will to live evaporates! The various teams - leak, dig, low pressure are not joined up. Much work is outsourced. Having experienced an ongoing leak from April to this week the ordinary TW customer is left frustrated and unimpressed by the TW service)	Our legacy systems have restricted the information able to be presented on our website and the information we're able to provide proactively to customers. We're in the process of replacing several of our operational systems with a new system, which is already live across our Wastewater operation and is now being rolled out to our Water operation. Our Customer Relations team have been in touch with the customer directly to discuss her complaint, and she was satisfied with the information we were able to share in relation to her feedback.
99.	A previous Chairman prefaced his address in a recent account with this expectation: "If customers had a choice they would choose Thames Water" Do you believe that? If so, why?	It is a privilege to deliver life's essential service to our 16 million customers every day. We measure performance across multiple metrics. Across several areas we are in line with water industry averages. We have some of the lowest numbers of water quality complaints across the industry and we have met our target for reducing sewer collapses for the third year in a row, thereby reducing the risk of sewer flooding and pollutions. But in some other areas our performance needs to improve, including some areas of operational and environmental performance that matter most to our customers and communities. We have refocused our turnaround plan to prioritise the following areas: health and safety, customer complaints, water quality, leakage, supply interruptions, and pollutions. Our plan for 2025-2030 builds on the good progress and foundations laid in the last two years.
100	What is the full environmental costs of waste water treatment and water supply (including carbon emissions from STW operation and transferring water from new water resources such as SESRO valued at the Government's carbon values).	In 2022/23, each megalitre (Ml) of water we treated had 11.4kg operational CO2e associated with it using a market based methodology (or 169.8kg using a location based methodology, where the benefits of the green energy we purchase are not considered) and each megalitre (Ml) of waste water treated had 106.2kg operational CO2e associated with it using a market based methodology (or 241.8kg using a location based methodology, where the benefits of the green energy we purchase are not considered). The published figures can be found here https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-results/2023-reports/annual-performance-report-2022-23.pdf Page 262 The greenhouse protocol define the difference in reporting methodologies as follows: A location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of grids on which energy consumption occurs (using mostly grid-average emission factor data). A market-based method reflects emissions from electricity that companies have purposefully chosen (or their lack of choice) (https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/Scope2_ExecSum_Final.pdf)
101	Have customers a guarantee that our water is not polluted by chemicals or waste; what are the cleaning processes?	Water quality standards are the same across England and Wales and indeed across the UK. They are legally enforceable and are monitored and assessed by the

	Question	Response
		independent government regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The DWI keeps water quality standards under constant review and takes action in the event of any water quality breach.
102	The drains leading from Tanners Dean, Leatherhead KT22 8RU through Fortyfoot Road are often blocked and some sections are crumbling. The sewerage pipes and junctions are porous and brittle encroached by tree roots. These need replacing with plastic pipes and junctions. We already replaced our section which collapsed 6 years ago.	We have attended after reported issues with the drains in the area in January, June and July this year. When we attended in June no issues were found, and in January and July we found roots in the sewer line, which were removed on both occasions. We've assessed the sewer as being in a good serviceable condition, but we'll continue monitoring the situation to assess whether upgrades are required in future. We encourage residents to keep reporting issues to us to ensure we have an accurate record of the frequency of problems.
103	When are our streams, rivers and seas going to be free of sewage so called 'spills' , with provision of reservoirs for surplus sewage instead	Our proposed plan for 2025-2030 would see investment of £885m to achieve a 28% reduction in storm overflows and reduce pollution incidents by 30%. We will commission the Thames Tideway tunnel which will prevent millions of tonnes of untreated sewage mixed with rainwater from entering the tidal River Thames. Chapter 10 of our business plan provides further detail on how our plan delivers for our environment - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf.
104	Can you tell us where the monies for "investment" are coming from, is any group company in the Thames Water group of companies borrowing money to make these investments and what is the cost of that debt and who is bearing it?	In addition to the money we collect from bills, we need additional funding to finance our spending. To bridge this gap and avoid significant fluctuations to bills, we borrow money at attractive rates. By spreading the cost of our investment and managing our debt over a number of years, we also ensure the generations that will benefit from the improvements are the ones that will help pay for them, making our bills fairer and more sustainable. We borrow money through a combination of loans, from banks and institutions, and corporate bonds. Our corporate bonds are typical debt 'instruments', consistent with the way many large UK companies raise funding. They're sold to third-party investors such as pension fund managers and insurance companies, and, as with any other loan, we pay interest on these bonds. Most of our bonds are publicly listed on major stock exchanges, such as the London Stock Exchange and Irish Stock Exchange. While the majority of our funding requirement is in sterling, we also monitor investor demand in other currencies to optimise our average cost of funding. Further detail can be found in 'Our finances explained' document - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-finances-explained.pdf
105	Billing - why are we no longer getting notice prior to increases in water rates? This is a contravention of the Sale of Goods and Services Act.	How we set our prices for the year: As well as inflation, we, and other water companies, take several other factors into account when we set our prices. For example, how much we need to invest in our network and reacting to changes in regulation.

	Question	Response
		Any changes we make need to follow the charging rules from Ofwat – the economic regulator of the water sector in England and Wales. Ofwat controls what we can charge customers. When we set our prices, we report any rises to the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) who act as the voice for water consumers. CCW reviewed this year's charges to make sure you're getting the best value, and they've let Ofwat know they're happy with our changes. Bills will rise by 11.7% for the upcoming financial year (1 April one year until 31 March the following). Part of this increase reflects the 8.8% rise in inflation, but there are also other factors which have contributed. These include: • Investing more to prevent leaks and improve our network • Maintaining customers' sewers (adopted in 2011) • the Thames Tideway Tunnel (TTT) • investment in our oldest water pipes • supplying homes with fresh water • treating the waste that goes down sinks, toilets and drains. • We spend more than £1 billion each year future-proofing our sites and water pipes. This is more important than ever as our population grows and we see more extreme weather, from droughts to flooding. • We continue to protect water supplies including reducing leaks, fitting meters and investing in our sewer network to reduce the risk of flooding.
106	Gatwick Airport wants to repurpose it's existing emergency runway. Have they consulted with you on the impacts to runoff water and increased sewage that will result from the considerable passenger increases proposed? The expansion can only increase the strain on water pollution and sewage, and therefore on your legal obligations to handle this. Is this already built into your ongoing plans? Are you confident that you can confirm to your customers that there will be no worsening of existing problems and that this will not slow up the remedial work you are doing?	We receive two different discharges from Gatwick Airport. The first is the sewage from the terminal buildings. For Gatwick, that flow is split between our Crawley STW and our Burstow STW. We are required to accept this flow and will asses where and how the flow could increase based on future plans. If upgrades are required we will implement them. Sewage flow from airports is directly driven by passenger numbers and we routinely predict how passenger numbers are expected to change to determine the sewage flow. With five international airports in our area, we are experienced in predicting domestic flow from airports and have a dedicated calculation tool used for airport flow. The second discharge is trade flow, predominantly from de-icing in the winter. This is a commercial activity (i.e. Gatwick airport can choose what to do with that flow and one option is to discharge it to the sewer). Any changes to the trade flow that Gatwick propose to discharge to our sewer will require Gatwick to apply for a revision to their Trade Effluent Permit. Any upgrades required to accommodate this change is fully funded by Gatwick. For the trade discharge, Gatwick have other options not associated with Thames Water which we cannot comment or advise on.

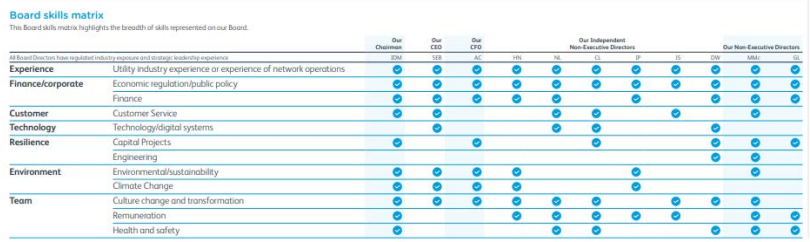
	Question	Response
107	What is so frightening is that Thames are saying that come of their pipes are over a 100 years old. This shows how little maintenance has been done, if leakage wasn't so common we wouldn't need to extract water from the Thames	Our WRMP24 includes ongoing leakage reduction to beyond the statutory target of 50% of 2017/18 levels by 2050. Demand management as a whole represents around 80% of the solution to Thames Water's water resources problem by 2050. However, demand management alone does not meet our forecasted future demand for water and new resources are required to increase supply. We agree that we have more to do on leakage and leakage reduction remains a priority. In the long-term the best way to reduce leakage is through mains replacement, but mains replacement is also one of the most expensive and disruptive solutions per unit volume. As such a solution involving leakage reduction and demand management alone would be very expensive and very risky compared to a twin track programme as advocated by government and the regulators. 500km of mains rehabilitation is planned for 2025-30 in addition to other things that we can to do reduce leakage in the short term (e.g. install meters to help us better identify where leaks are), but in the longer term the only option to reduce leakage is to replace/renew our water mains. Our mains rehabilitation plan quickly increases in pace, with 3700 km of mains rehabilitation included for the period 2030-50, with 733 km planned in the period 2030-35. It is important to note that the lengths mentioned above are only the mains renewal lengths which contribute to leakage reduction; there will also be an amount of mains rehabilitation which is needed to keep leakage levels "flat". This investment in 2025-2030 is also under consideration by Ofwat.
108	How has the infrastructure got into such a bad state? It's often blamed for poor quality + high costs, but it seems as though maintenance of the infrastructure would be a foreseeable cost.	Our business plan provides details on the requirement for further investment into our assets (link below). Since privatisation, we have always invested in line with our regulatory allowance - our historical expenditure has been consistent with the level funded through the regulatory regime. However, we are the only company in the industry where almost 40% of our assets predate the 1920s. Moving forward, we believe that our funding needs to be higher than the industry average given that our assets tend to be older than the rest of the industry. In addition, many of our assets are no longer capable of reliably performing their function, have already passed the defined risk threshold, or are non-critical assets which are in a very poor condition. We have published further detail within our business plan on this matter and provides comparison with other water companies - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-business-plan.pdf - Section 11.4 from page 137 provide further details. More detailed information can be also found in our Technical Appendix TMS15 - Asset Health Deficit - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/asset-deficit.pdf

	Question	Response
109	Why have Thames Water sold off areas such as Seething Wells (Kingston) which could have been developed into a reservoir?	Seething Wells in Surbiton is the location of two no longer used assets: - An abstraction point from the River Thames, which was closed due to siltation problems and moved upstream. Note: we do also have an abstraction at Surbiton which we use to abstract water into the existing Island Barn reservoir, which then provides water to the Walton WTW - A treatment works. Unfortunately, neither of these assets would help to solve London's water resources problems if recommissioned. This is because the problem which we have is that we need to maintain an amount of flow over Teddington Weir of 300 million litres per day during drought periods and with our existing infrastructure we should be able to abstract enough water from the river to hit that minimum amount of flow which we need to leave. As such, our solutions focus on increasing the amount of water in the river during a drought or storing more water so that we have greater stocks when droughts hit. If we were to just increase the total abstraction capability on the river we wouldn't necessarily be able to take any more out (due to the need to maintain that minimum flow), and if we were to reinstate the treatment works again this wouldn't be useful as our existing treatment works are able to treat more than enough water than is needed for London. The Teddington DRA scheme, by contrast, helps us solve London's water resources problem by increasing the amount of water in the river upstream of Teddington and thus allowing us to take more out of the river while maintaining the minimum flow over Teddington Weir.
110	Why should I have confidence that Thames will deliver if Ofwat accepts the plan. A plan which will increase my bill by c50% and be unaffordable for many of my neighbours? On the wastewater side Thames visit my street in SW London every six to eight weeks to remove blockages. When they do not visit sewage runs down my street. I think we should receive a discount for poor service.	We have worked very hard to develop the best possible plan, a plan that can balance the needs of our customers, our communities and the environment while being deliverable and financeable. Our bills are expected to rise due to the scale of the investment that we need to make. We recognise that increases in our bills will be a big ask for some of our customers. Therefore, we are putting in place more help for those in financially vulnerable circumstances than ever before. We will increase our support for customers who struggle to pay their bills. We will help prevent more than 290,000 (directly billed) customers from falling below Ofwat's threshold. We will do this through our new, targeted social tariff. We will provide an average 59% discount for directly billed income deprived customers by 2030, up from 27% in 2023, providing an average £358 of support per household. As a part of our proposed Business Plan for 2025 - 2030, we are proposing to reduce blockages caused by sewer misuse by 15%, helping all our customers understand that what gets put down the drain can impact sewers and the environment.

	Question	Response
		As a part of the Ofwat's Performance Commitments / Outcome Delivery Incentive framework company incurs rewards and penalties which results in discounted bills for customers where targets are not met.
111	How many important worthwhile measures (with B>C) to address TW's other environmental problems not been included in the DBP since crowded out by affordability concerns and priority expenditures on reducing your unacceptable sewage overflows?	We take meeting all of our statutory and environmental obligations seriously. We are in ongoing discussions with our regulators about the scope of our proposed plan. Our plans are ambitious and aim to deliver on what our customers have told us are their priorities – namely maintaining safe high quality drinking water, ensuring water security now and in the future, reducing pollutions, storm overflows and leaks and protecting our most vulnerable customers. In designing this plan, we have had to make difficult decisions and trade-offs (balance our customer priorities with what is possible to deliver within our record investment proposal of £4.7bn, bearing in mind our other responsibilities and constraints of available capital and delivery capability across the supply chain). This has meant that certain projects scheduled for AMP8 we are proposing are completed in AMP 9 – namely going further on phosphorous reduction (noting we have already reduced P in our effluent by 74%) and removal of complex chemicals such as antibiotics from treated sewage discharges which are very difficult to deliver on the basis of current technology and where we think more time to deliver could help unlock innovation and with it better ways of doing things. Importantly, no final decision has yet been made and we welcome ongoing discussions with our regulators.
112	Although we (surfers against sewage) commend Thames Water on releasing a public sewage pollution portal ahead of the deadline, there is no validation on the data and therefore little accountability for duration of spills. Will Thames Water be looking at validating this data and working with the wider water sector on a nationalised approach to data validation?	Our current view is that for us to share data in near 'real-time', our best course of action is to share the data exactly as we receive it. This allows river users to make more informed decisions. Validation will reduce the speed at which we can share data, therefore making it less useful for river users. We will be working with the wider industry via WaterUK to understand how we can provide a more consistent approach to data and develop an industry standard.
113	What is the ratio of CEO to staff salaries?	For 2022/23 the pay ratio calculation shows that in total remuneration terms, the CEO earned 32 times that of the median employee. See page 95 of ARA https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-results/2023-reports/thames-water-annual-report-2022-23.pdf
114	Questions: - How many cubic meters has been discharged in the ocean, rivers, lakes, etc. in 2022? - What are the solutions to resolve the discharge of raw sewage on the beaches or rivers currently? - Is Thames Water interested to reduce to ZERO (!!!) the sewage? WE HELP Companies to NOT DISCHARGE the Sewage in the Ocean, rivers, lakes, etc.	Many thanks for your offer to support and for bringing your capabilities to our attention. Can we recommend that you complete the following form and this will be considered by our innovation team - Innovation form

	Question	Response
	We have the technology to resolve the sewage problems completely and reuse 50-90% of the water! Our technology is 20…60x times faster than the classical one. We can Reduce PHOSPHOROUS by 100%, RIGHT NOW! We can Reduce NITRATES, NITRITES by 100%, RIGHT NOW! We can Reduce HEAVY METALS by 100%, RIGHT NOW! We can Reduce BACTERIA by 100%, RIGHT NOW! www.nwt-tech.com With the help of our technology, you can save costs associated to wastewater treatment. We have the solution to resolve the discharge of raw sewage on the beach or rivers, completely, including the sludge resulted from the treatment process.	
115	Do you think it's acceptable for the CEO and senior managers to have received millions of pounds (from Thames Water customers) in recent years despite the poor performance of the company? What are your plans in terms of reducing salary costs and bonuses in senior management?	CEO and CFO remuneration is set by the Remuneration Committee. The role of the Committee is to make recommendations to the board regarding the remuneration strategy and framework to make sure that the Executive Directors and senior management, including the Executive Team, are appropriately rewarded for their contribution to Thames Water's performance. The Committee applies good corporate governance by taking into account regulatory requirements, the UK Corporate Governance Code and any corporate governance principles issued by our regulator, Ofwat. Details of the remunerating policy and metrics used can be found in the Annua Report and Accounts pages 88-101 https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-results/2023-reports/thames-water-annual-report-2022-23.pdf
116	What does TW class as safe drinking water?	Water quality standards are the same across England and Wales and indeed across the UK. They are legally enforceable and are monitored and assessed by the independent government regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The DWI keeps water quality standards under constant review and takes action in the event of any water quality breach
117	Is there a plan to begin organising wastewater treatment networks and their operation at the river sub-catchment level so that improvements to works to reduce pollution to rivers and streams can be coordinated to get maximum benefit and to prioritise rare and vulnerable habitats like chalk streams? Additionally, when do you plan to start coordinating your operations across multiple sewage treatment works, particularly across works that all discharge into the same streams/rivers, so that improvements can be maximized? We have found that currently, operation teams are only aware of what goes on "within the fence-line" even if things like pumping stations impact the functioning of the works.	When planning our investment in our assets across our sites and networks, we consider them as a system, assessing the cumulative performance and risk they pose in totality. Our System Planners assess assets across the value chain, from source to tap and sink to river. By understanding individual assets' current performance, the impact of this on our customers and the environment and how this is expected to change in the future, we can prioritise investment where it will make the biggest difference. To build these plans, planners work with colleagues from across the business to ensure a breadth of knowledge and perspectives is captured in the overall plans. This is an approach started in the last 3 years and in alignment with best practice as set out by the Institute of Asset Management.

	Question	Response
118	Much play has been made about the age of the pipes. How has Thames Water not seen this coming and acted to start replacement a long time ago?	The rate of capital investment since privatisation has increased considerably, with around three and a half times as much spent on new assets across our business now. During this period, we have replaced over 10% of our water network, with many London boroughs having around two thirds of their pipes replaced this century. Much of this work was undertaken in AMP4 (2005-10) under the Victorian Mains Renewal programme, which was successful in reducing leakage from our pipes. The rate of pipe replacement in the last 10 years has reduced as we used other approaches to tackle leakage quicker, such as through optimising how we configure and operate our networks. We understand our network's condition better so we can target the worst performing pipes for replacement and to work with our suppliers and stakeholders as we plan to increase our rate of replacement again in the next AMP and beyond. We recognise we need to improve and reduce the impact on local communities as we replace pipes and have already seen success in our work collaborating with other utilities and councils in London to integrate asset replacement programmes. We are testing industry leading approaches under our AMP7 conditional allowance programme in London which will enable us to identify the worst performing pipes and identify the best available technique for replacement.
119	What is the proportion of metered versus unmetered household customers currently?	Currently we have around 58% customers metered. By the end of AMP7 (March 2024) the meter penetration will be 61% For the next Business Plan period 2025 - 2030, we plan to install 310 000 new meters and upgrade 754 000 meters to smart meters.
120	How accurately is Thames Water informing customer consultees to ensure that their responses are based on reality? As an example, I note that TW is using an Environment Agency video that grossly misrepresents the use of storm overflows, for example. Senior Thames Water Staff who do know the facts must have either not watched that video or decided to run with blatant misrepresentation. This is the key statement about storm overflows ' As they only operate during heavy rainfall, any pollution is quickly dispersed as rivers will be full and fast flowing' Does TW's leadership seriously suggest this is the truth?	Storm overflows are designed to operate only in heavy rainfall so that this statement is not in itself incorrect. However, we do recognise that we have a number of outfalls which discharge more than this statement implies and are developing and implementing plans to rectify those situations.
121	Please explain the £18.7m investment planned. Is this additional to "maintenance costs"? How do you distinguish between P&L spending and Capital Investment?	The £18.7bn (not £m) includes all of our proposed costs for the period 2025-2030. Our "base" costs which include day to day operation and maintenance/renewals amounts to £12.1bn. Enhancement investment which is focused on additional investment that typically delivers compliance with higher standards is 6.6bn. Our total expenditure is also split between "operating expenditure" (P+L spending) and "capital expenditure" (Capital investment); both types of expenditure are within base and enhancement, and we set out the full details of this in our published PR24 business plan.

	Question	Response
122	What will Thames Water do to support local communities who are testing the quality of water in our rivers and streams e.g. Thames21 (bathing water status) and Riverfly Surveys?	The EA have responsibility for monitoring water quality in our rivers and streams, but we are happy to work with local communities who are keen to explore bathing water applications, particularly where there is evidence of land owner or local authority support for an application. We support the collection of water quality data through our Smarter Water Catchments approach to managing rivers, and projects such as ChessWatch on the River Chess are good examples of where data sets from different agencies can combine. We would encourage collaboration via a local river catchment partnership for maximum benefit.
123	Please give more details on how you spend revenue - the pie chart on screen now is helpful but very light on detail e.g. what is government spending. A detailed breakdown that explains all of your categories would be appreciated.	Our summary of business plan provides further details on what is included in each of the element - https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan/pr24-2023/our-plan-summary.pdf
124	The figure of average monthly bills is due to increase by £14.55. Is this in total over the 5 year period or just for the next year? What does this mean in percentage terms?	Our PR24 submission forecasts that the average monthly bill in 2024/25 will be £36.34 and the average monthly bill in 2029/30 will be £50.90 (22/23 prices). That is an increase of £14.55. This is a 40% increase in monthly bill.
125	In money (actual) terms the bill increase is actually £23pm not £14.55 which is real increase. What inflation rate are you assuming in your bill estimates	In 2022/23 prices: The average monthly bill in 2024/25 will be £36.34 and the average monthly bill in 2029/30 will be £50.90 (22/23 prices). That is an increase of £14.55. This is a 40% increase in monthly bill. In Outturn prices: The average monthly bill in 2024/25 will be £39.30 and the average monthly bill in 2029/30 will be £61.29. That is an increase of £21.99. This is a 56% increase in monthly bill. We use CPI-H to forecast the expected inflation.
126	Can you tell us how many Board members have an environmental background please? With the current performance how are committed environmentalist allowing you, at the highest level, to continue to pollute our rivers with untreated sewage?	Every year, in our Annual Report we include a Board skills matrix outlining the breadth of key skills represented by our Board. This is a snapshot of last year's table:  Board skills matrix This Board skills matrix highlights the breadth of skills represented on our Board. All Board Directors have regulated industry exposure and strategic leadership experience Our Chairman (KM) · Our CEO (SEB) · Our CFO (AC) · Our Independent Non-Executive Directors (HN, NL, CL, JP, JS, DW, MM, SL) · Our Non-Executive Directors (DW, MM, SL) Experience — Utility industry experience or experience of network operations Finance/corporate — Economic regulation/public policy; Finance Customer — Customer Service Technology — Technology/digital systems Resilience — Capital Projects; Engineering Environment — Environmental/sustainability; Climate Change Team — Culture change and transformation; Remuneration; Health and safety
127	What happens if this plan for the next 5 years is NOT accepted by Ofwat?	Ofwat is currently reviewing Thames Water's business plan and may propose to make adjustments through the draft determination process. We will have the opportunity to review Ofwat's provision findings during 2024. All water companies currently have the right to appeal Ofwat's final decision.
128	What is the time frame on the Thames Tideway project?	Thames Tideway Tunnel is on track for completion in 2024 and to be handed over to Thames Water for the commissioning process in 2025. Benefits of the Lee Tunnel are clear as fish return to Channelsea River Source ARA 2022-23 p 19

	Question	Response
129	The presentation made a claim that Thames Water delivers above average water quality to its customers. What is the basis behind the claim?	Water quality is assessed by the Drinking Water Inspectorate against the national drinking water standards - which are legally enforceable. Our performance this year is ahead of the average for England and Wales. Additionally, Thames Water receives a lower than average number of customer complaints for water quality, taste and appearance, compared to other companies across England and Wales
130	Hi how important is it to Thames Water that key infrastructure is recognised as national infrastructure projects in order to supply water to customers ?	It is important that they are recognised as nationally infrastructure projects because of the urgent need to deliver water infrastructure in the region, and London in particular.
131	Customer Service: After I complained about water pressure, I was assured a pressure test had been undertaken and the problem was with the pipe to my property. Unfortunately this was an untruth. No monitoring had taken place and the promised pressure monitoring they claimed was attached was not and was not supplied on request. What are you doing to improve your customer service response?	Please would you contact our Operations Customer Centre with your full details and we will investigate your issue further.
132	You have requested special treatment with company specific ODIs for a number of common PCs, downside protection on ODIs/C-Mex, and the introduction of a risk adjustment mechanism to taper out- and under-performance. Why do you feel that special treatment in the context of a well-established regulatory regime that is based on comparative regulation, and is the injection of equity from the current owners of Thames dependant on getting your ask over the line?	Chapter 14 of our PR24 business plan outlines the risk analysis we have undertaken which indicates Thames Water is exposed to an asymmetric downside risk. We have proposed mitigations to bring this risk back into line with Ofwat's expectations of +-4.8% return on regulated equity as set out in their final methodology. We have also requested company specific performance commitment levels which are stretching and deliverable based on where we are today and our Turnaround and PR24 plans.
133	Following the major incident which started on 4th November where at least 13,500 homes in Guildford, Godalming and the surrounding areas were left without water, when will residents start to see credits on their account or water bill?	We started to process household payments on 27th November (Day 15), and the team continue to process payments daily (note that we are still within timescale for some of these customers, based on the individual dates that properties came back into supply). • 14,009 household properties were reported as impacted by the event (not all of these properties will be eligible for payment) • As of 8 December, 11,759 payments have been processed for household properties, 3 confirmed as excluded, 2,247 still in progress. • Of the 2,247 in progress, we know that some will require payment, however there will be a large volume that will need to follow our Occupier process, where we send a letter addressed to The Occupier as we have no record of who lives at the property to make payment. • We will contact customers with a breakdown of payments made once all payments have been made. We'd like to thank our customers for their continued patience. Should those affected by the event have any questions regarding compensation, they can find information on our website.

	Question	Response
134	As there is only 1 bathing water in the Thames Water region but we know there are many popular swimming locations - do you have any plans to investigate the impacts of sewage on bathers in these locations?	We are happy to work with local communities who are keen to explore bathing water applications, particularly where there is evidence of land owner or local authority support for an application. We expect the learning from studies we're undertaking to better understand the water quality at the bathing water designated at Wolvercote Mill Stream in Oxford will benefit our knowledge at other locations being considered for bathing water designation. There are multiple causes impacting the health of rivers. Pollutants, animal faeces from livestock and wildlife, along with run off from farms and roads can contribute to hazards found in watercourses.
135	Would Cathryn like to comment on the disparity between care for human customers and that for the environment?	Our top priority is the health and safety of our customers, the public and our colleagues. We take our environmental responsibilities very seriously as well. To give an example, two of our operational priorities are leakage and pollutions. Reducing pollutions is clearly an important way in which we can improve environmental outcomes. We have made good progress in reducing pollutions that come from our network - we have met our target for reducing sewer collapses for the third year in a row, thereby reducing the risk of sewer flooding and pollutions. This follows an increased programme of work to rehabilitate our sewers. We know we have more to do in reducing pollutions from our STWs, and as we aim to reduce pollution by 30% we are planning to invest in 16 sites where additional capacity is needed in AMP8. This will provide treatment capacity for a population equivalent to 97,233 people or 40,371 homes. Reducing leakage is also important in delivering better environmental outcomes, because it will allow us to take less water from the environment, especially from sensitive watercourses like chalk streams. We will reduce leakage by a further 22% from our 2019/20 baseline - our smart meter data shows at least 10% of London homes have continuous flows (customer side pipe leakage or internal 'wastage' such as dripping taps or leaky loos). We are also targeting a 30% reduction in pollution incidents.
136	Waste Water services question. How are Thames going to address the shortage of engineers who are qualified to upgrade our sewage treatment works, since this seems to be the main reason for many of the differed planned upgrades?	Since 2020 Thames have recruited Level 6 degree apprentice engineers into the business, which will support our plans to grow future talent and skills. Our core Level 3 Engineering apprenticeship has been going for a number of years and upon completion of the apprenticeship we have fully qualified and competent -Electrical / Mechanical and ICA Engineers to support us in the business. To further enhance and develop our qualified Level 3 Mechanical, Electrical and ICA existing engineers we are launching a Level 4 Lead Engineering Maintenance Technician apprenticeship in 2024. This apprenticeship will further develop and support our existing colleagues who will complete a HNC in engineering as part of the apprenticeship which will further knowledge and learning to support our capability and plans for the upgrading of our works. We deliver over 30 apprenticeship standards now all focused on key skills

	Question	Response
		areas that are more demanding to recruit. In addition to this we have created links and relationships with our community groups, local FE colleges and schools and also Institute of Technology and UTC's to build a pipeline of talent into the business. Finally in 2022 we launched our Shared apprenticeship scheme, first for the sector to ensure we build capability not just across Thames Water but also our supply chain. In AMP7 as part of the insourcing of Capital Delivery we are ramping up recruitment to support the number of Engineers across our teams to deliver our step up in investment. We have been able to recruit over 150 colleagues in the past two years, a large number of whom are Engineers. We have run a number of recruitment campaigns and will looking to recruit a further circa 200 colleagues in the next few years to underpin our proposed larger investment programme in the forthcoming regulatory period. Where we are unable to recruit we have arrangements in place with Consulting organisations to provide resource and expertise to support addressing skill gaps. Our strategy as noted above through the Apprentices and the recruitment is to increase our own internal capacity and capability and skills.
137	My hand question: If 10Billion is going to be spent in the Guildford area, does that mean less than 50% (£8.7Bn) for everywhere else?	Our Guildford water resource zone is a complex system with limited flexibility and insufficient resilience to cope with severe weather events. We are investing £93m (£84m in the AMP7 price base) over this and next AMP to increase its reliability through connecting Netley Mill WTW to Shalford WTW to improve the flexibility of the system and making each individual water treatment works more resilient. (The reference to £10billion did not relate to expenditure in the Guildford area alone)
138	Sewage Pollution question: Thames have said that they are going to reduce pollution incidents by certain percentages. Are these percentages based on current discharge figures or legal permitted figures?	The percentage reductions are based on anticipated performance levels (i.e. actual numbers of discharges) at 2025. We have proposed a plan that delivers a 30% reduction - along with many other companies.
139	Do you think you should be asked to capture microplastics in sewage treatment?	The management of microplastics is a complex topic, and one on which we continue to liaise with the rest of the water industry and the Environment Agency to try and understand better what options are available and cost-effective. It is currently believed up to 94% of microplastic particles are captured by sewage treatment and removed from the treated effluent. Enhanced capture may well be possible but would have to be consistent with a national Govt strategy and would require considerable time and funding to be installed; as such it would have to take its place among other priorities for environmental protection and improvement.
140	Cathryn referenced a power issue with Shalford. From what I understand it was a power issue that took out Ashford WTW with knock-on impact on Hampton WTW. To what extent are your assets sufficiently	Our large sites such as Ashford and Hampton water treatment works have standby power (diesel power generators) and uninterruptable power supplies to protect control systems. However, frequent fluctuations in the electricity network do test the reliability of these systems - pumping and treatment can also be affected by small changes in

	Question	Response
	resilient to power fluctuations, and if they aren't what's the plan to make them resilient?	voltage. A loss of water supply at Ashford can effect operations at Hampton, as the two works are hydraulically linked via the London ring main. This issue is well understood and we will be delivering a project in the next two years to improve water supply resilience from these works.
141	What investment plans do you have to address the following issues: (I) sewage discharges on to public land e.g. roads (ii) discharges due to insufficient capacity to pump sewage to treatment plants (iii) instances of indirect river pollution arising from (I) and (ii) above?	In addition to our commitment to invest £885m to reduce the frequency of storm overflows by 28%, we have committed to reducing all external sewer flooding incidents (including those to public land and spaces) by 15% by 2030. Our focus on the latter will be on reducing blockages (from fats, oils and grease in particular) by educating customer about sewer misuse and digitising our network so that we can identify and respond to discharges quickly. Further investment is planned to ensure that all sewage treatment works are capable of treating the sewage that they are permitted to receive and upgrades are planned at 14 sites to keep up with population growth. Overall, our investment enables our commitment to reduce pollution incidents by 30% in line with the government's Water Industry Strategic Environmental Requirements (WISER) 2022.
142	Customer service is dire. You have a Customer Charter and yet don't deliver on it. How do you intend to invest in this area so that customers can contact you when they need and in a method that works for them?	Our customers expect a great service from us every time, and we're sorry when we fail to deliver at the first opportunity. We've been working hard to turnaround our performance and have plans in place to improve our service. We're absolutely focused on continuing to improve the quality of customers' journeys with our business, from their first contact with us right through to the resolution of their complaints. We strive to ensure all contact channels are equally robust and varied enough to allow suit customers individual needs. We've also now completed the onshoring of our customer service call centre in Swindon so we can be closer to our customers and deliver the reliable and better-quality service they deserve. We will continue investing in additional resources to improve our response times to customers.
143	Where are the drinking water cleaning facilities and extraction points located within the TW catchment, and what percentages are river. reservoir, 'other'?	Many thanks for your enquiry. Please can you raise an Environmental Information Request stating which catchment you are interested in. Please raise the request to eir.requests@thameswater.co.uk
144	To Cathryn: If it is too difficult for Thames Water to provide legal and environmentally acceptable sewage effluent quality, should Thames Water step aside and let someone else have a try?	Thames Water is the statutory monopoly provider of water and waste water services in London, Thames Valley and the Home Counties. As such we must provide water and waste water services to our customers and fulfil our obligations as set out in the Water Industry Act 1991 and subsequent acts. We are not able to 'step aside' from these responsibilities. Instead, we are focussed on improving those areas of performance that matter most for our customers and the environment, including improving river health.
145	In 2010 Thames Water employed 4,500 rising to 7,000 in 2016 and is now +7,000 in your latest financial report. Apart from the fact that every other company provides precise employment data and eschews using symbols such as +, can you explain why so many more people were employed for such poor results?	During AMP7 we have made several strategic decisions to insource a number of activities including our customer service and financial support centres, critical work on our water network, essential haulage services and Capital Delivery and Engineering teams. As a result of these insourcing activities, we have taken back control of the services which mean most to our customers and have seen a continued reduction in

	Question	Response
		customer complaints. We continue to deliver record levels of investment in our network and are delivering nearly £3.5bn of capex investment in the last 2 years of the current AMP. This ramp up in investment is set to continue into the next AMP with an investment of £18.7bn submitted in our Business Plan to Ofwat- a 40% step up from AMP7. We have ensured the right levels of capability within Thames to support this delivery.
146	Back in 2021, we raised with Thames Water the issue of Guaranteed Standards (GS) as applied to all water companies and in particular, the GS for keeping appointments in the area of New Connections. Thames Water indicated they did not believe the GS applied to New Connections however, Ofwat provided their view and that was that the GS did apply to New Connections – this was in 2022. Since receiving the view of Ofwat, Thames Water continue to fail appointments for New Connections (letting Customer down over and again) with no recognition of GS failures which not only gives Thames Water a financial advantage (Thames Water are not paying monies to Customers when they should) but also creates a "blurred view" of performance standards. Our question is, when will Thames Water recognise this failure, pay previous failed appointments and start paying for future failed appointments? Ironically, other water companies simply don't (or at least rarely) fail appointments. In addition to the written question submitted - would like to know why Thames Water fail Guaranteed Standards time and again creating a competitive advantage and blurring reporting stats?	Our legal view is that at this point, this service is in anticipation of a provision of water services and not the actual provision of water services and it is our opinion that these would not be covered by the GSS regulations. However, we do intend to implement a Customer Guarantee style scheme for developers in the future. The scheme is still in development. This enquiry is under review by Ofwat under a Request for Information.
147	Will you stop paying out massive golden handshakes to CEOs and with joint CEOs in place are we paying for two CEOs	While acting as Interim Co-CEO Al Cochran and Cathryn Ross' core terms and conditions did not change – including no change to base pay. However both are in receipt of a temporary allowance while acting as interim Co-CEO. Al Cochran as a Director of TWUL discloses his full reward package in our in the Directors Remuneration report published each year. Sarah Bentley resigned in June 2023, As a former Director of TWUL Sarah Bentley's remuneration arrangements will be disclosed in the Directors Remuneration report published each year