

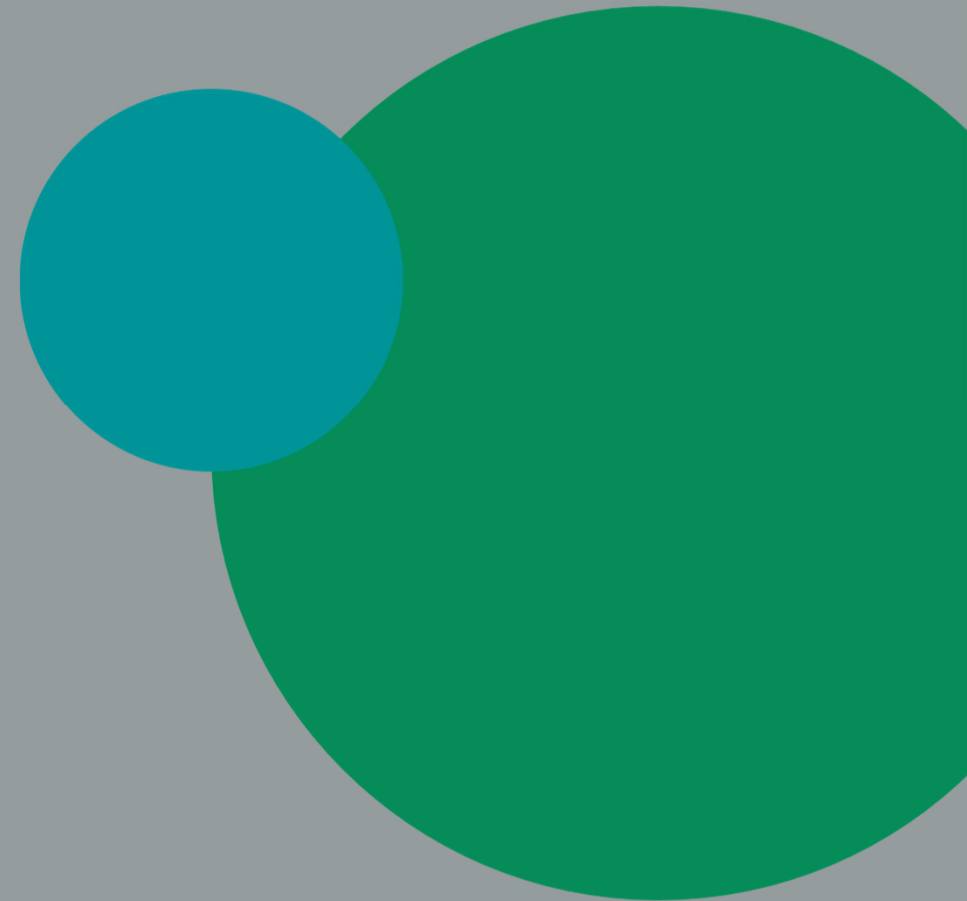


# Priorities Research Qualitative Insights – Year 1

Accent  
Tel +44 (0)20 8742 2211  
October 2020  
3410

# Agenda

- 1** Background to research
- 2** Understanding your customers' world
- 3** Factors impacting on priorities
- 4** Spontaneous priorities – now and future
- 5** Informed priorities
- 6** Business plan aggregation
- 7** Summary and way forward



# Summary of approach for year one

## Stage 1

Desk Research to develop and update the view of customer priorities, and to inform the development of materials

## Stage 2

Qualitative to understand customers informed and uninformed priorities

**Household (HH):**  
10 x 90 min mini digital focus groups  
5 digital depths

**Non-household (NHH):**  
2 x online triads (SMEs)  
5 x depth interviews via Zoom (large)

## Stage 3

Quantitative to track on-going the key hierarchy of priorities and identify new trends

**HH: 1,000 interviews:**  
Online undertaken in three waves in Yr1 and quarterly in Yrs 2 and 3

Interim report after half of fieldwork completed

## The brief

SSC (South Staffs Water (SSW) and Cambridge Water (CAM)) have put together a programme of research to track customer priorities on a consistent and regular basis throughout AMP7

Qualitative work designed to understand customers uninformed and informed priorities:

- Explore uninformed and informed priorities in the short and long term
  - wholesale services: e.g. water quality, supply interruptions leakage, environment, innovation
  - retail services: digital channel experience, front line team performance (e.g. knowledge, professionalism, first contact resolution, customer effort, trust)
- Separate priorities into hygiene, enhancing and over and above
- Understand what factors drive any changes in priorities including whether there are any wider “Water Industry” trends - e.g. Southern Water scandal
- Understand whether there have been changes since Summer 2017 and what has driven these changes.

**This report includes findings from qualitative work that took place between Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> and Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

## Household: Qualitative methodology

10 Zoom mini-groups

5 top-up Zoom depths (to reach more vulnerable customers)

Region	Location	Lifestage	SEG	Segments (See appendix for descriptions)
SSW	Sutton Coldfield	Pre-family	ABC1	A, D, E
		Family	C2DE	A, C, D, E
	Burton / Lichfield / Tamworth	Empty nester/retired	ABC1	B, E
		Pre-family	C2DE	A, C, D, E
	Dudley / Walsall	Family	ABC1	A, D, E
		Empty nester/retired	C2DE	C, E

ABC1 – higher affluence, C2DE – lower affluence

Region	Location	Lifestage	SEG	Segments (See appendix for descriptions)
CAM	Cambridge	Future	ABC1	A, E
		Family	C2DE	A, C, D, E
	St Ives	Empty nester/retired	ABC1	A, D, E
	St Ives	Pre-family	C2DE	C, E

[Refer to appendices B and C for the discussion guides and stimulus showcards used to engage participants](#)

All recruitment was undertaken over the phone via an external supplier, Rite Angle.

## Non-household: Qualitative methodology

2 Zoom Triads (with SMEs)

5 Zoom Depths (with large organisations)

Region	SSW	CAM
<b>Location</b>	Across region	Across region
<b>Sector</b>	1 Service	2 Service
	2 Manufacturing	1 Manufacturing
<b>Size</b>	1-9	1-9
	10-19	10-19
	20-49	20-49

Region	SSW	CAM
<b>Location</b>	Across region	Across region
<b>Sector</b>	2 Manufacturing	2 Service
	1 Service	
<b>Size</b>	50-249	
	250+	

## The study employed online methodology due to the following reasons:

- Participant preference – many prefer to take part in online interviews rather than via telephone or face-to-face as they can pick a time that suits them best, and the time needed to complete the interview is shorter.
- Easy use of multimedia: images including animations.
- Save on travel and venue costs: Undertaking sufficient volume of face-to-face interviews to provide sufficient sample in each wave to analyse this population separately to look for differences, so is not good value within budget constraints.
- Be able to speak to long-distance participants who might otherwise be put off interviewing, avoid delays and cancellations.
- Online methodology shows that a wide range of vulnerabilities are being picked up – both PSR and financial types.
- There is no evidence from past SSC studies or other studies that the views of customers who don't/won't complete online interviews are significantly different to those that do.



## All participants completed feedback forms

	HH	NHH
I enjoyed taking part in the event on Zoom	4.8	4.7
Everyone was given a fair chance to have their say	4.9	5.0
The event was well organised and structured	4.7	4.8
The information provided was easy to understand	4.7	4.8

Differences between digital groups and F2F groups are well documented in the industry (less naturally interactive, shorter attention spans, less share of voice) BUT these issues were mitigated by having a strong pre-task analysed in advance of the groups, shorter sessions and mini groups.



# Pre-task designed to allow participants time to think about what is important to them for their home, their community and their area

**Task 1 Part 1: Your Household and Water**

We'd like you to think about how you use water in your home and what's important to you and your home life.

Write down the three things you want South Staffs Water to really focus on doing **now** for your household - these can be new initiatives/services or could be about something they currently do well that you want them to carry on doing or something that they do **poorly** but you want them to improve.

Then think about what you want South Staffs Water to really focus on after that - so over the **next five years**. Is there anything that might become more important over the next five years? Again, we want you to just think about what's going to be most important for you and your household.

Remember that we're interested in what you want South Staffs Water to focus on. This relates just to your clean water services - i.e. the water that comes through our tap. This isn't about your sewerage, drainage or wastewater services, which are provided by Severn Trent Water.



What's important to your household NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS	What's important to your household OVER NEXT 5 YEARS
1) Keep water usage and cost low	1) Keep water usage and cost low
2) Maintain good relationship with our supplier.	2) Constance water supply.
3) Pay bills on time	3) Pay bills on time

**Task 1 Part 2: Your Local Community and Water**

We'd now like you to think about your wider community - that could be your town, village, neighbourhood - how ever you define it!

Write down the three things you want South Staffs Water to really focus on doing **now** for your community. When considering this think about things that weren't important to your household but might be important to your community and the people who live near you and businesses that are based in your community.

Then think about what you want South Staffs Water to really focus on after that - so over the **next five years**. Again, we want you to think about what's going to be important to the people and businesses in your community.

Remember that we're interested in what you want South Staffs Water to focus on - and this relates just to clean water services - i.e. the water that comes through our tap.



What's important to your community NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS	What's important to your community OVER NEXT 5 YEARS
1) I will like south staffs water to maintain Constance water supply and treatment.	1) Introduce a scheme where by people on low income should pay very little water rate.
2) We need to be inform of any major work that needs to be carry out so resident can prepper.	2) Guarantee water supply in the next five rears and counting.
3) Not every one have access to the internet so it will be better certain information are communicate through post so community will be m...	3) Make it easy for tenant to locate there water meter, I was in my previous tenancy for 6 years and never knew where my water meter

The final part of this Task 1 focusses on the whole supply area for which South Staffs Water is responsible.

They supply drinking water to 1.3 million people - from Ashbourne in the north to Halesowen in the south and from Burton-upon-Trent in the east to Kiveton in the west (there is a map on the final slide to refer to). Write down the three things you want South Staffs Water to really focus on doing **now** in the wider supply area, the people that live across the whole area and businesses that based in different parts of the area. Again, there may be things that aren't important to your household or immediate local community but might be important for communities or customers in other parts of the South Staffs Water supply region.

Then think about what you want South Staffs Water to really focus on after that - so over the **next five years**. Again, we want you to think about what's going to be important to the people living and the businesses based across the wider area that South Staffs Water supply water to.

Remember, we're interested in what South Staffs Water should focus on. This relates just to the clean water services - i.e. the water that comes through the tap.



What's important for the entire supply area NOW/OVER 12 MONTHS	What's important for the entire supply area OVER NEXT 5 YEARS
1) Maintain a good customer / supplier relationship	1) Get us the customers involve in discussing up coming projects in a form of discussion.
2) Communities should be inform of any major change	2) Create good link of communication between communities and supplier
3) No water rate increase	3) No water rate increase

Dear Future Me

I hope 2020 will go down as one the most difficult year to all of us living and dealing with covid19 pandemic. As we approach the end of 2020 there is not much to say about, but thinks the future will be brighter.

We will leave with UK not part EU, Donald Trump no longer USA president and hopefully a vaccine for covid19 will be available and be free for every one given us the time to site and reflects of the past.

At this moment am working on a project due to end some time 2022 should things go as planned, I will be moving back home by the time I turn 53 years of age. My target was 55 but thankfully have worked since my arrival in UK and have decided to bring it back.

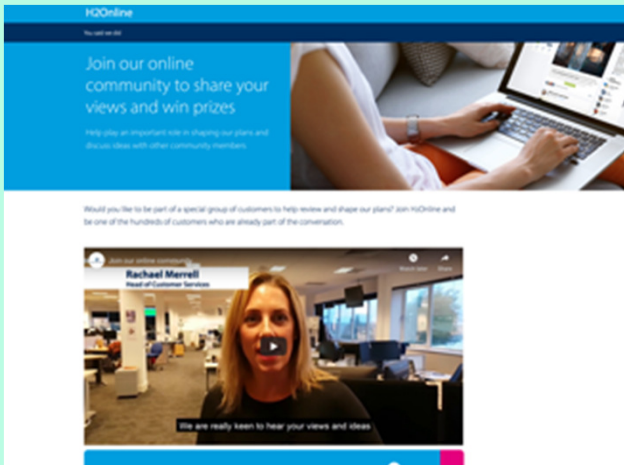
My first grand child will be 4 years old and old pa will be able to spend some quality time with her in tropical Africa while parents go to work.

Regards

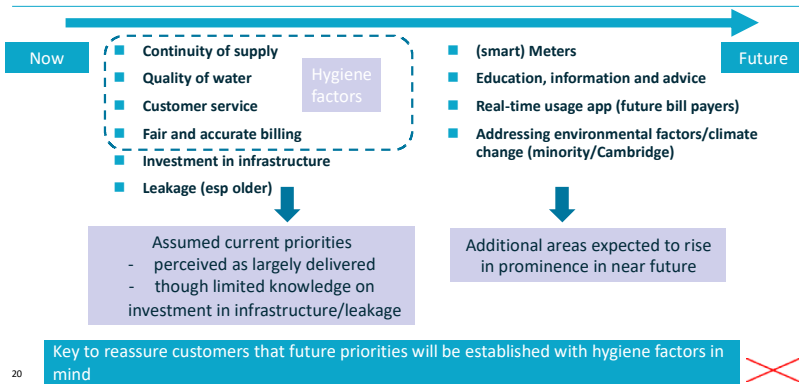
Slightly different approach to Foundation Research in 2017, which prompts people to spontaneously think more about inside and outside their household

# Triangulation exercise

Spontaneous priorities generated here have been cross referenced with H2Online insights, original 2017 priorities and PR19 business plan during 'informed priorities' discussion



Fairly consistent set of spontaneous priorities across HH/NHH and SSW/CW





Understanding your customers' world

# Despite the challenges of lockdown, many felt it provided a chance to reconnect and rebalance their lives

Many customers wanted to retain some of the positives connected with Lockdown in the post-Covid world

## Younger

### Lockdown happiness is...

- Watching Netflix!
- Still working
- Flexibility of WFH
- Being furloughed and paid!
- Studying – having a goal
- Seeing family
- Having space (home and garden)
- Exercise e.g. Couch to 5k
- Getting a dog/puppies
- Chance to rebalance

*I got furloughed so I didn't need to worry about money*  
Future Customer, Cambridge

*I've had my son back living with us since Lockdown and that's been lovely*  
Empty Nester, Dudley

## Older

### Lockdown happiness is...

- Family visits
- Time with the family (children coming home)
- Working
- Getting jobs done around the house!
- Walking
- Exercise = walking and yoga
- New technology = Zoom and Skype

**Maintaining quality time and a better work/life balance (WFH, flexible working) are the biggest things everyone (HH/NHH) want to retain**

# Uncertainty (as a result of Covid-19) is the biggest theme of the 'Future Letter' exercise

General shift in underlying belief structures; everyone finds it difficult to project too far with any degree of certainty

## 'Life Now' Themes

- Survival (Virus and restrictions)
- Present tense focus
- Focused on study/work/family
- Economic stress – furlough, financial challenges
- Busy vs Balanced
- Frustrating e.g. government, holidays cancelled
- Concerns over 2nd wave
- Increasing restrictions
- Lack of wider social interaction

*We're consuming it every day with COVID and everything, it's sort of taken over at this point. I think it's the only thing you can sort of think of*  
Pre-Family, Burton

## 'Life in Future' Themes

### Hopes:

- Happiness
- Social – friends and family
- Medical security/vaccine
- Normality
- Freedom



### Fears:

- Anything is possible
- Dystopia
- Online and anti-social
- Medical uncertainty
- Draconian measures

### For Me:

- Working
- Financial stability/security
- New home/moving
- Holidays/travel/cruises
- Marriage and families
- Social e.g. play in a band
- Theatre, gigs



### For Everyone:

- Kindness
- Stability
- Sustainable planet
- Climate change control

Implications for priorities = 1) economic fear/instability, 2) thirst for communication, 3) environment is a future concern, 4) people now believe anything is possible e.g. water shortages

## Example letters highlight concerns over some bigger picture issues e.g. vulnerable customers, climate change, affordability and future water shortages

Dear Future Me,

It feels a little strange writing to you as an 18-year old! Your birthday is coming up which means your almost 40!  
I'm writing in the middle of a global pandemic - a term that has been said so much it's easy to forget how unique and historical this moment is!  
I have just begun university and I'm loving it already. My household bubble are lovely and I have been able to do in-person supervisions which is really a blessing in the current climate.  
I miss my family a lot though and I cannot wait to see them in December when we go back for Christmas time.

What I wish for my 39-year old self and the society they live in is that the issues of today are not as prevalent. Firstly, COVID 19 – I really hope that a vaccine has been found and that the nations were able to work together to protect those who were vulnerable. I pray that governments will have stepped up to address issues of climate change and that the career politicians of today are a thing of the past; having been replaced by leaders who show great compassion for the population.

I hope for you personally that you will be living comfortably, doing a job you love and not having to worry about financial issues and stresses. Most of all I hope you are happy!

Lots of love (???)

Me x

ing this letter as we are now in 2040 and I'm now over 90. I'm still managing to live at home as I value my independence, and able to do my own cleaning, washing and daily showers with the help of my automated water equipment.

I have children of their own and they visit me regularly but they still have to wear masks even when visiting relatives and to correspondence, like this.

ing up to 2040 certainly have been different. You will notice there are now washing facilities provided at all bus stops, railway stations and airports not only in the toilet area, but also as soon as you enter or alight, to help prevent the spread of infection since Covid is still extremely prevalent. Disposable masks are now part of the routine along with washing our hands whenever we enter supermarkets, outlet stores and restaurants. All local shops have now closed down as Covid meant there could be no small premises, and all groceries are purchased and delivered not only by the supermarkets ( just 2 major supermarkets now) but by the post office and any van that is in the area to cut down on emissions as the climate is changing so rapidly, and all delivery vans report to a centre.

now conserve water, a thing I never did in the 2020's but the free water butts provided by South Staffs water, which is to help catch the rain which I then use on the garden. I am now conscious of preserving water as the reservoirs are not filling as fast as they used and it now hardly rains.

Well my future 90 year old, I hope you live another 90 years in the future now that at last a vaccine has been found for this Covid disease.

Look after yourself.

# NHH customer picture is also dominated by sense of unpredictability, which makes it challenging to plan ahead

Political, societal and economic uncertainty places additional pressures on all businesses (but less mention of Brexit than 2017!) and many putting plans on hold or very slowly rebuilding

## Case Study: Smaller

- 10 staff
- Hospitality
- Water essential for drinks
- Café and Function Rooms
- Heart of Cambridge
- Business folding
- Staff furloughed
- 'A disaster'

*We were going to buy another factory pre-Covid but not now*  
NHH, SSW

*It's just so uncertain and everything feels out of control*  
NHH, CW

## Case Study: Medium

- 20 Staff
- Manufacturing
- Water essential for processes
- Scientific Components
- Cambridge Science Park
- Business thriving now
- Everyone back from furlough
- 'Unpredictable but bouncing back'

*Farming hasn't really been affected except for click and collect to get supplies*  
NHH, CW

## Case Study: Large

- Text
- **RACHEL to ADD**

Implications for priorities = strong focus on 'obvious' hygiene factors. They are looking for SSW/CW to steady the ship e.g. stable pricing, continuity/quality of supply, as attention needs to be elsewhere

Factors that impact on priorities

# TOP PRIORITIES

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## 5 key factors impact on what customers choose as spontaneous priorities

1. General Covid-19 uncertainty (*as discussed in previous section - understanding of Customer World*)
2. Changes in water usage during lockdown and ongoing restrictions
3. Everyday experience and perceptions of SSW/CW performance
4. Personal position on the environmental attitude spectrum
5. Attitude towards big society and support for vulnerable people

**Wider water industry factors trends or adverse press coverage came up 1 or 2 times in Cambridge and focused on water droughts in South East areas**

# Changes in water usage during lockdown and ongoing restrictions

Some HH sense that they have used water more since Lockdown and this has led to greater consciousness of usage and VFM

## Functional Usage

- Full house (kids, adults, students)
- At home and WAH = more cups of tea!
- Washing hands guidelines
- More everyday tasks that involve water e.g. endless cooking and dishwasher stacking!

- More time on their hands to:
- Wash cars
- Water the garden
- Decorate
- Wash the dog!

## Emotional Usage

- Summer fun and water games
- Baths = me time, relieve boredom and escape!

Despite increased consciousness, most think bills deliver VFM or are waiting for their next bill to make a judgement

NB. VFM judgement within parameters of no comparison; many unaware of % that goes to Severn Trent and Anglian Water

**Implications for priorities = 1) Customers seem to be talking more about controlling water usage and how SSW/CW can help AND 2) desire for bill consistency**

# Experience and perception of current performance

Most (HH/NHH) have no issues and limited reason to engage with SSW/CW 'they do what they say they will do'

- Majority had no issues with SSW/CW
- Majority have had limited contact with SSW/CW

*Honestly, I'm happy with the service and have had no issues*  
St Ives, Empty Nester

*No huge issues, it's pretty good*  
Sutton Coldfield, Family

- Some feel that quality of water, specifically high limescale content could be improved and prioritise this
- Some feel SSW/CW should be more proactive with meters/smart metering programmes
- Few water pressure issues, although not sure if SSW/CW are responsible
- Lack of proactive communications

*I'm sick to death of replacing kettles, washing machine because of the super super hard water*  
Dudley, Family

*I'd put about the limescale, that's something we have a really, really bad problem with here. The water is so hard that it basically destroys everything*  
Cambridge, Family

*The only thing I noticed on my water bill recently is that it has gone up but obviously because I've been at home for 5 and a half months, I have been using more water at home so that was just a given really.*  
Burton, Pre-Family

**Implications for priorities = impact of high limescale content emerges across this qualitative sample as a priority BUT wider quantitative tracking work shows that water hardness does not adversely affect customer satisfaction**

# Position on the environmental spectrum

Environmental conversation has got louder since 2017 priorities exercise (HH/NHH) BUT there is still a spectrum of attitudes

## Climate Deniers

- None seen

## Climate Neutral

- Less engaged, but still aware
- Feel that improving planet is 'a good thing'
- Climate change not mentioned in Future Letters
- View it from a personal perspective e.g. plastics, flying
- Covid-19 impact = get through this crisis first

## Climate Warriors

- Highly engaged
- Improving planet is 'urgent'
- Climate change key concern in Future Letters
- Environment should be a priority for SSC

### Not everyone making link between environment and water shortages

*Sorry, I think I put about travelling and being more consciously aware of sort of pollution and stuff because I try and travel as much as I can and I'm very conscious of the fact that you know, it's causing a lot of damage to the planet and yes, sort of making up for that in some way or other.*

Burton Pre-Family

*I'm afraid to say was fairly self-centred because I was in a bad mood when I wrote it. I think if I'd been in a better mood, I probably would have had environment more at the forefront of my concerns*

Cambridge, Family

### People make the link between climate change and water shortages

*You still worry for your grandchildren and future generations at the state of the world .... including the environment*

Sutton Coldfield, Empty Nester

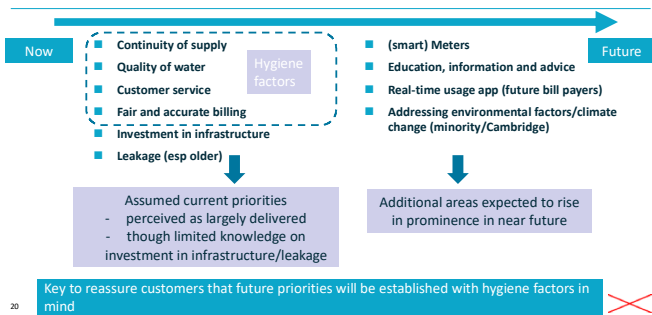
Implications for priorities = Environment seen in 2017 priorities (mainly Cambridge minority) but taking control over personal water usage now emerging as a more consistent priority

# Attitude towards big society and vulnerable people

Support for vulnerable customers in 2017 appeared more industry driven and part of the informed vs spontaneous priorities; this time it comes out in spontaneous homework exercise

## 2017 – Priorities Work

Fairly consistent set of spontaneous priorities across HH/NHH and SSW/CW



That's gone up high in my list. I'm ashamed of myself that I didn't think of it. Pre-family, C2DE, Cambridge,

Task 1 Part 2: Your Local Community and Water

What's important to your community NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS

1) Water bill discounts for financially struggling households	2) Encourage rainwater harvesting (to mitigate urban flooding and reduce demand on mains water)
2) Compel landlords of unmetered rental property to install meters	2) Assess impact of changing industrial usage in Cambridge on aquifer health and supply reliability
3) Renovate old supply networks as new developments are built on the site of old buildings	3) Maintain redundancy into water supply network – I'm very proud that there has not been any water outage in the last three years

Task 1 Part 2: Your Local Community and Water

What's important to your community NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS

1) Keep costs down	1) Deal with water problems as a priority
2) Try to recycle water more	2) Anybody over the age of 75 not having to pay for their water supply
3) Help be available for low income families when needed	3) A better system to retain water for when we have dry spells in warm weather, so we don't need hose pipe bans etc.

- Mixed views here
- Little mention of 'society' in Future Letters
- BUT underlying shift towards 'being kind and looking out for each other' prompted by Covid-19
- Acknowledge that there is likely to be more people needing help post Covid-19
- Emerges as a 'Community' priority

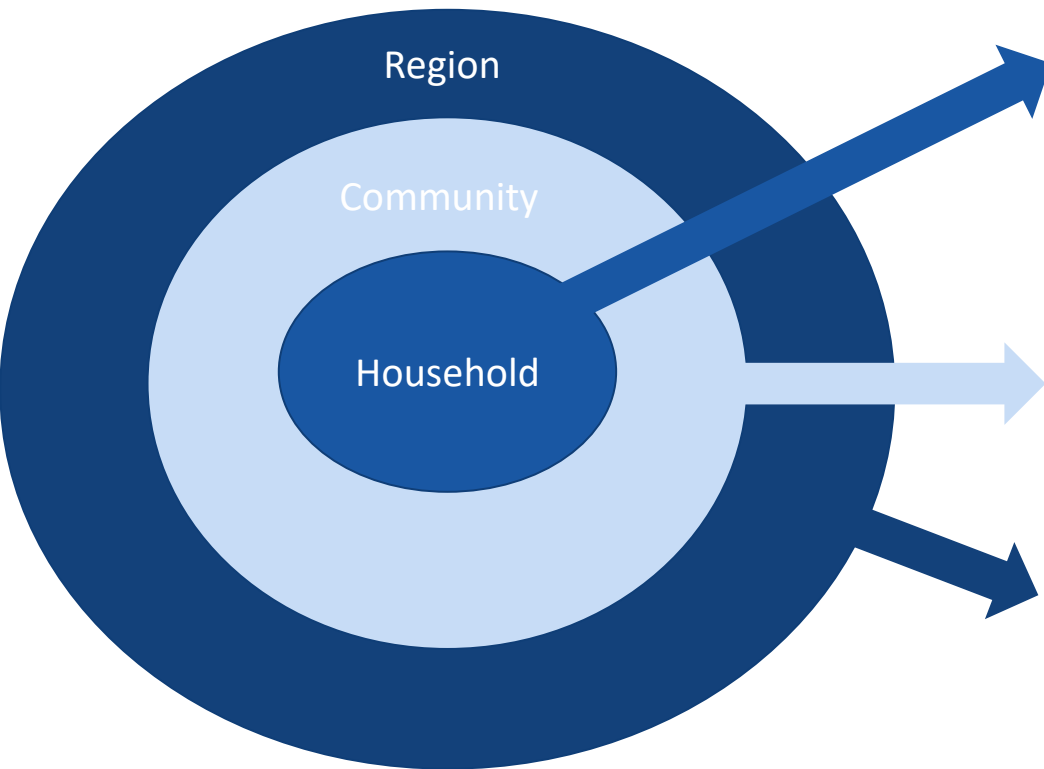
Implications for priorities = Need to look after vulnerable customers is elevated post Covid-19

Spontaneous Priorities

**NOW**

**FUTURE**

Participants were asked to generate spontaneous priorities across household, the community and for the wider region



**Household = Most relevant for everyone**

- Me/family at centre of the world
- What matters to me?
- What is my current service like?
- How do I want it to be?

} Easy to think about own water usage and needs

**Community = Most have some sense of community**

- Community = Geographical community (neighbours, village, temple, schools, town)
- Associations with people in the community e.g. vulnerable customers
- Covid-19 impact here with stronger sense of community for many

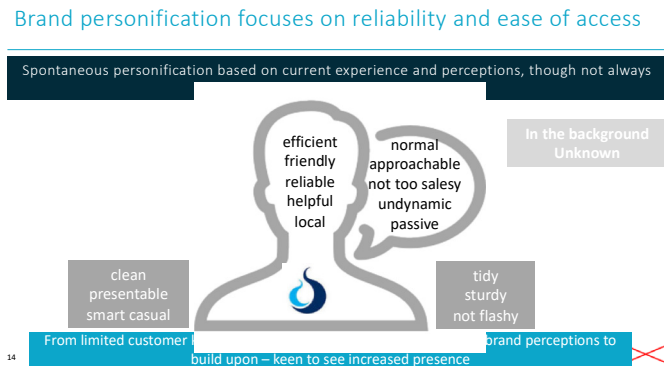
**Region = Extension of community issues**

- Region = not my area
- Lower engagement
- More difficult to think of specific priorities
- Extension of community and household

*I just couldn't do it – I couldn't tell the difference CW, NHH*

**No differentiation between community and wider region – need to simplify this exercise for the quantitative work**

In 2017 there was a stronger brand focus in the discussion and the pre-task was designed to explore SSW/CW brand personality and imagery



### In 2020, South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water brands remain pretty invisible

- There is limited bill engagement with water bills (this is not unique to SSW/CW)
- Customers don't recall SSW/CW communications
- Customers find it difficult to locate or read their meter
- They are not really listening or looking out for communications about water
- BUT we know that Covid-19 uncertainty has created a thirst for communications from all service providers
- AND that customers who take part in the research are intrigued, surprised and impressed with how much SSW/CW do







Impact of invisibility is that customers don't know what SSW/CW do – so when they talk about what's important, it's stuff you are already doing!



# Hygiene factors: now

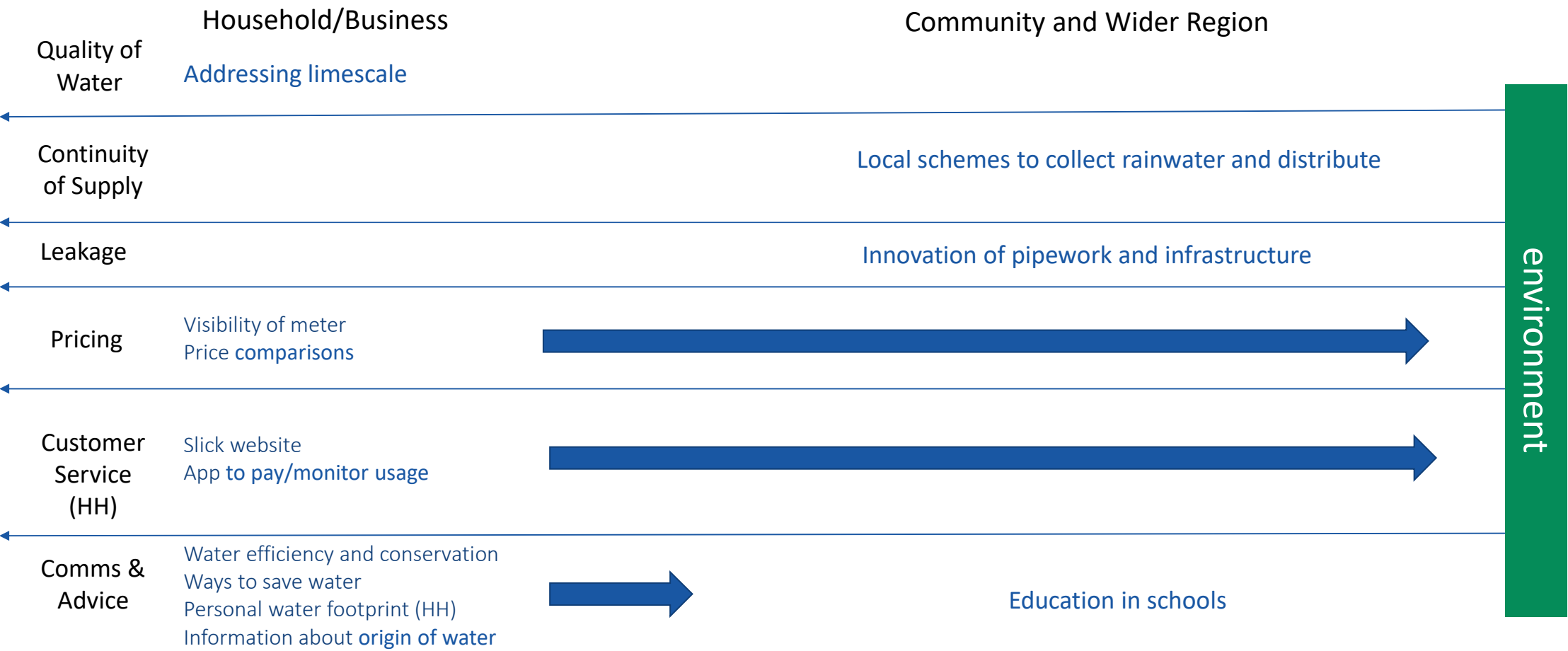
## Household/Business

## Community and Wider Region

Quality of Water	Clean, safe, good tasting water Quality water Good pressure	
Continuity of Supply	24/7 supply	 Meet rising demands of growing populations Planning to ensure consistency of supply in drought situations
Leakage	Fast repair of pipes/leaks Investment in pipework	 Ongoing infrastructure maintenance and investment to minimize leakage
Pricing	Affordable prices No price increases Accurate billing and regular meter reading (HH) Easy to pay (HH)	 Schemes for vulnerable customers e.g. discount, charity payments Fair bills Work with Landlords to ensure metering option for all Consistency of pricing
Customer Service (HH)	Efficient staff Multi-channel access to SSW/CW Option to be metered Easy home moves	
Comms & Advice	Proactive alerts when supply interrupted Proactive alerts for planned interruptions	

**Communications explicitly mentioned as hygiene factor with expectation that SSW/CW will proactively contact if there are any issues in supply**

# Enhancing Factors: now



environment

**Environment seen as an enhancing factor – for SSW/CW it means meeting responsibilities across the business and specifically providing communications and support to help reduce water usage**

## Over & Above Priorities: now

All of these 'Over and Above' spontaneous priorities have the potential to have a strong positive impact on brand and image

### Support with Saving Water

- Smart meters = optimum
- Water saving tools e.g. butts, showerheads
- £ Incentives to save water for everyone
- Comparison with other regions
- Ability to switch water supplier

### Community/Region initiatives

- Coordination and working in partnership with other utilities
- Clean water fountains and refill stations
- Community wide water saving initiatives
- Additional environmental projects
- Community projects e.g. sponsorship
- Grants for local businesses

*You want the water companies to be able to be competitive and obviously probably won't go down but limit the amount it goes up pricewise.  
Cambridge, Future*

*I think the smart meters is enhancing or over and above but I would like it  
St Ives, Empty Nesters*

*I think like, local schools, and about like saving water and like, you see some companies go out to primary schools and secondary schools and do like, I don't know, like roadshows for them and stuff like that.  
Burton, Pre-Family*

Some overlap between these 'over and above' and the future priorities

# As seen already, NHH not much different from HH

## Spontaneous priorities map against HH

### Quality of Water

- Clean, safe, good tasting water
- Quality water

### Continuity of Supply

- 24/7 supply

### Leakage

- Fast repair of pipes/leaks
- Investment in pipework

### Pricing

- Consistent
- No hikes

### Comms & Advice

- Proactive alerts when supply interrupted
- Proactive alerts for planned interruptions



What's important to your business NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS	What's important to your business OVER NEXT 5 YEARS	What's important to your community NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS	What's important to your community OVER NEXT 5 YEARS	What's important for the entire supply area NOW/OVER NEXT 12 MONTHS	What's important for the entire supply area OVER NEXT 5 YEARS
1) Reliable water supply to ensure business can run	1) Peace of mind regarding water charges, no sudden price hikes	1) Constant running water	1) No fear of big price hikes	1) Confidence in safe drinking water	1) Reliable clean water everywhere and show the public that they are taking account of population increases and planning for more extreme climate events like drought in an environmentally good way
2) No price rises in view of problems caused by the pandemic. Small businesses have suffered probably more than the big corporations so could be classed as vulnerable	2) Assurance that good notice given if supply needs to be cut off for any reason	2) Water standards regarding cleanliness to be always maintained	2) If supply needs to be cut off for maintenance, good notice given and do the work on the day specified	2) Repairing leaks as fast as possible	2) Focus on leaks which waste water
3) Any supply problems to be addressed immediately as business can't run without water	3) Confidence in customer service and transparent pricing	3) Always able to speak to someone on the telephone regarding any water-related matter rather than email	3) Leaks dealt with as fast as possible	3) Good and prompt customer service if problems arise	3) To feel the company is working to keep charges down by good maintenance and leak prevention. Also promote wise use of water

**Environment discussed as important as they understand the environmental pressures but vulnerable customers not always considered spontaneously**

## All future priorities are ‘enhancing plus’

- In five years time, people expect SSW/CW to still deliver against the NOW hygiene, enhancing, above and beyond priorities
- Therefore many FUTURE priorities were duplicated from the NOW priorities e.g. supply to meet changing demand, etc
- Below we have included the *additional* FUTURE priorities mentioned

### Household/Business

- Complete metering programme
- Guarantee long term sustainability
- Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage
- Competitive market

### Community/Region

- New/different climate change initiatives
- Rainwater harvesting projects
- Accessible community incentive schemes
- Reassurance that SSW/CW are monitoring water sources and aquifers e.g. minority would read communications about the water table

# H2online member insights back up the wider fieldwork by reinforcing the core categories

**H2Online Insights that matched with wider fieldwork**

**Quality of water**

- Improving pressure
- Safe, clean, good taste
- Addressing limescale

**Stable supply**

- Short and long term

**Repairing and preventing leaks**

- Infrastructure investment

**Pricing and affordability**

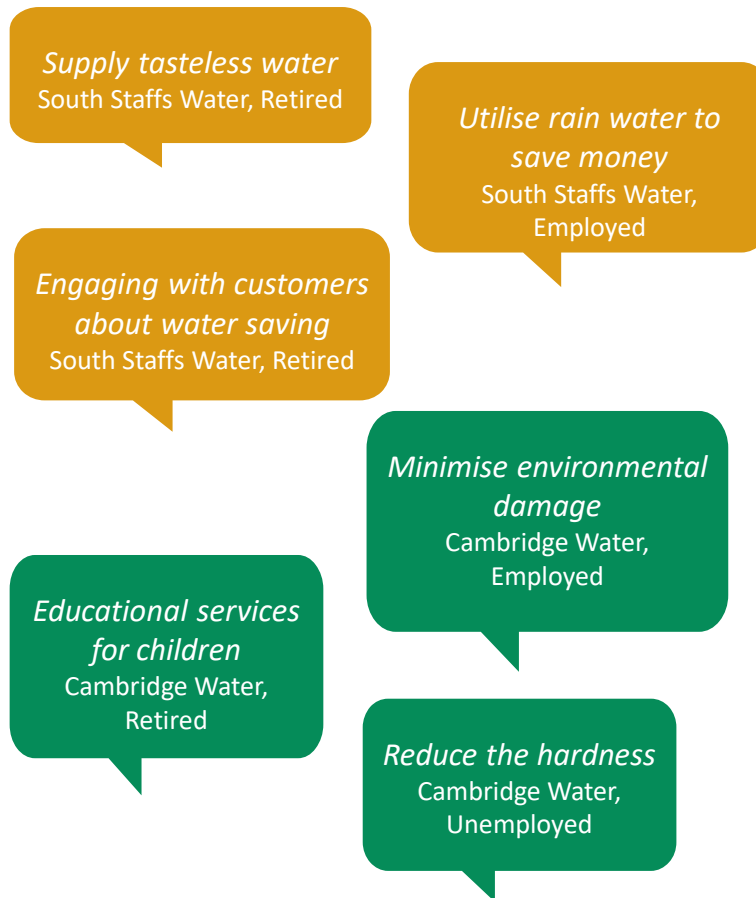
- Help for vulnerable customers
- Meters and smart meters

**Good customer service**

**Comms & Advice**

- Educate about water saving ideas
- Encourage conservation
- School education

**environment**



**H2online insights that were not raised in the wider fieldwork**

- Rebates linked to profits
- Match executive pay to profits
- Reduce dividends
- SSW efficiency to save money
- Reservoirs for leisure
- Easy access to online accounts

**Consistent list of priorities generated**

# Summary hierarchy of priorities: now and future based on qualitative insights

## NOW

### Above and Beyond

- Smart meters
- Incentives and tools to save water
- Additional environmental projects
- Sponsorship/grants
- Community initiatives e.g. water fountains

### Enhancing

- Environmental responsibilities
- Choice of meter
- Good website
- Water conservation at home and outside
- Water usage information and control
- Education in schools
- Ongoing innovation of infrastructure
- Addressing limescale issues

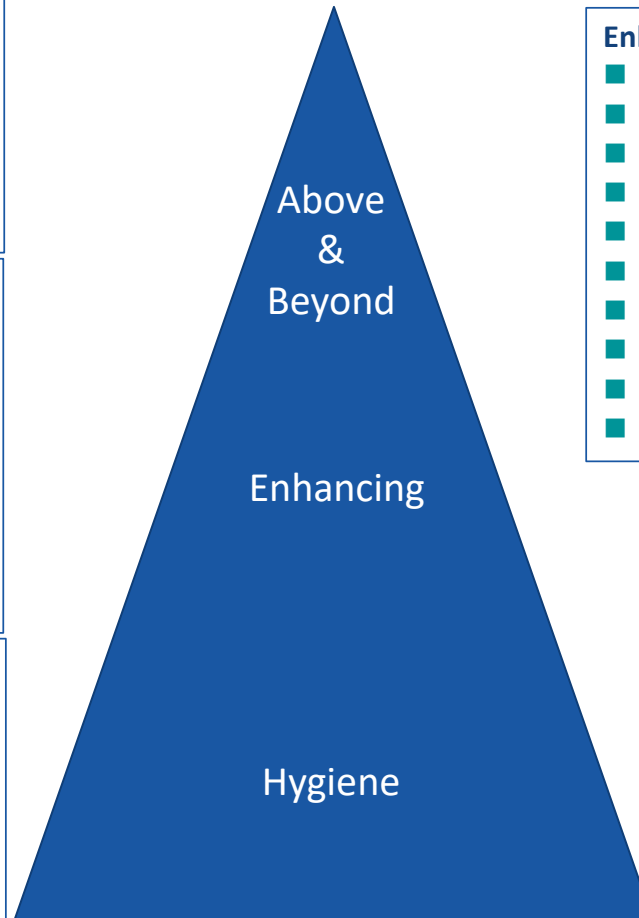
### Hygiene

- Water quality and pressure
- Continual supply for everyone
- Minimising leakage through repair and investment
- Affordable pricing and support for vulnerable
- Efficient customer service (if need)
- Good communication during outage

## FUTURE

### Enhancing Plus

- Roll out metering programme
- Guarantee long term sustainability
- Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage
- Better website/app provision
- Competitive market
- Carbon neutral
- Addressing climate change
- Rainwater harvesting projects
- Accessible community incentive schemes
- Monitoring of aquifer health and water sources



# Summary of changes since 2017

New spontaneous priorities in 2020 highlighted in red

## NOW

### Above and Beyond

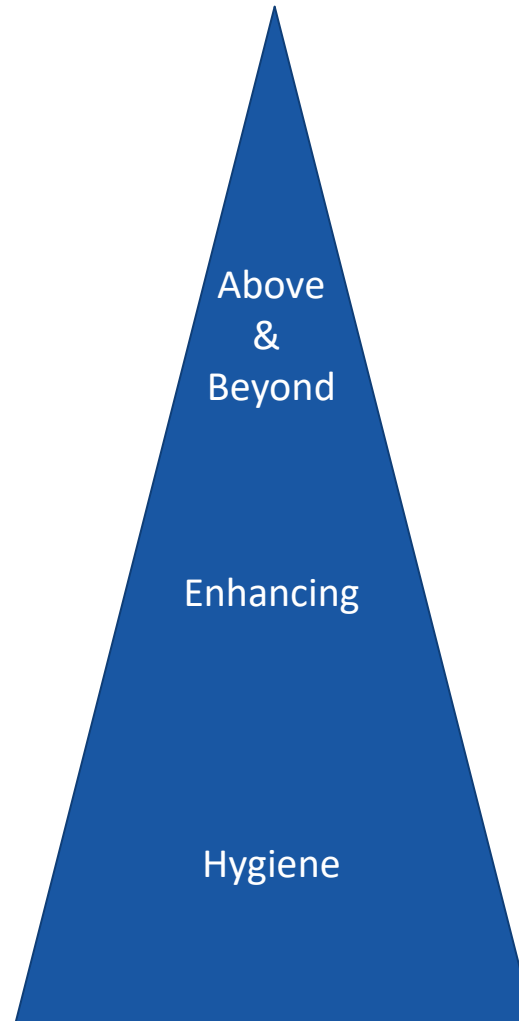
Smart meters  
Incentives and tools to save water  
Additional environmental projects  
**Sponsorship/grants**  
**Community initiatives e.g. water fountains**

### Enhancing

**Environmental responsibilities**  
Choice of meter  
Good website  
**Water conservation at home and outside**  
**Water usage information and control**  
**Education in schools**  
Ongoing innovation of infrastructure  
**Addressing limescale**

### Hygiene

Water quality and pressure  
Continual supply and **planning for supply/demand**  
Minimising leakage through repair and investment  
Affordable pricing **and support for vulnerable**  
Efficient customer service (if need)  
Good communication during outage



## FUTURE

### Enhancing Plus

Roll out smart metering programme  
Guarantee long term sustainability of water  
Better website/app provision  
Competitive market  
Carbon neutral  
Addressing climate change  
**Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage**  
**Rainwater harvesting projects**  
**Accessible community incentive schemes**  
**Monitoring of aquifer health and water sources**

*Some of the priorities highlighted in red were important in 2017 after prompting OR were important for the future but this time they were raised spontaneously as important areas for NOW*





# Informed Priorities

# Sharing business plan and priorities


## Key information shared with all participants

Showcard I: Challenges (CAM)

Cambridge Water is facing a number of "big challenges" in the future

- Increased demand for water
  - population growth
  - property building/development
- Changing rainfall patterns leading to higher risk of flooding or longer periods of draught
- Changing the way resources are used
  - some of the water taken from the rivers and other water sourced could lead to a deterioration of the environment
- Further reducing leakage on the network
- Educating, informing and helping customers to use less water and reuse more
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Reducing the amount of bad plastics used in business operations
- Ensuring services are accessible to all customers who need extra support


All whilst balancing the need for affordable water bills and ensuring the long-term resilience of services to meet the challenges outlined above



Showcard G: Highlights of their Current Business Plan – 2020 to 2025

Over the period 2015 - 2020 your water company made 15 promises to its customers - it achieved 63% of the targets set over that period

	Progress of meeting our targets				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total targets passed	10	10	7	10	11
Total targets missed	5	5	8	5	4



Using customer feedback, the company has now made 28 specific promises to customers in its plans for 2020 – 2025. These are split into a number of areas


Showcard Hii: Measuring and Reporting Performance

Cambridge Water's performance is now measured across different customer

Business	Community	Customers	Core Promises
Reducing the amount of bad debt from unpaid bills, so customers do not pay more than they need to	Financial support for households struggling to pay their bills	Households receive excellent customer experience/service	Customers can trust us to deliver
Making sure property records are up to date so that all customers are correctly charged	Customers who need assistance who are registered for support	Developers building new homes receive excellent customer service	Offering a value for money service
Making sure all our people love their jobs and offer great service	Extra care support for customers who need assistance	Retailers who handle businesses' bills, queries and meter readings receive excellent customer service	
Treating all our suppliers fairly and paying small businesses quickly	Working with schools about the need to use water wisely		

Legend:   
 🟢 Regularly hitting targets and/or improving performance   
 🟡 Not always hitting targets and/or slow improvements   
 🟠 Regularly missing targets and/or no real improvements

New promise for 2020 - 2025




Showcard Hii: Measuring and Reporting Performance

Cambridge Water's performance is now measured across different customer

Service	Environment
Making sure water always comes through customers' taps – short and long term	Reducing leakage levels from pipes
Reducing the number of burst mains	Reducing how much water each person uses each day
Reducing the number of water production failures	Supporting water-efficient new house building
Reducing the number of customers contacting due to water quality issues	Reducing our carbon emissions from our operations
Very high level of compliance in terms of passing water quality tests	Supporting water-efficient new house building
Finding and fixing visible leaks more quickly	

Legend:   
 🟢 Regularly hitting targets and/or improving performance   
 🟡 Not always hitting targets and/or slow improvements   
 🟠 Regularly missing targets and/or no real improvements

New promise for 2020 - 2025

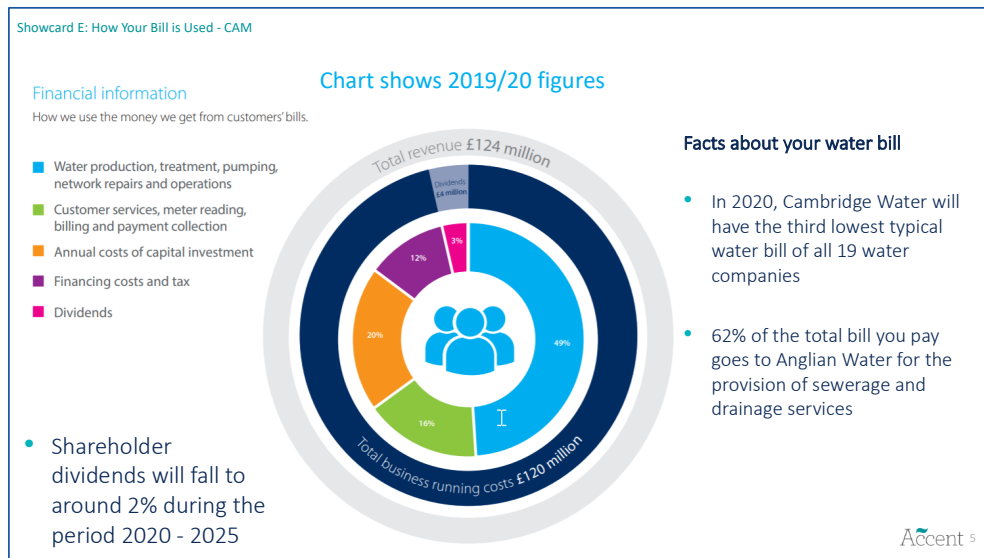


*I'm really quite pleased looking at this – it covers most things that we talked about – the environment but in more detail... carbon emissions. This covers the population growth from housing we've talked about Cambridge, NHH*

Customers unaware of the business planning process and felt reassured by the thoroughness

# Sharing the bill breakdown reinforces all the different operational costs that they do not think of – showing this has a positive impact on VFM perceptions

For HH and NHH the biggest positive message was the low shareholder dividend. And for HH that SSW/CW have the third and fourth lowest bills



SSW/CW water bill is not one they usually worry about

Other bills like energy are higher and get more attention and focus

BUT the Covid-19 context is changing the focus on all bills and people reinforce the need to keep bills consistent and low

As seen before, VFM difficult to judge in non-competitive world but seeing the reduction in shareholder dividends is generally positive

**Recommend that VFM is included in quantitative work at three levels – blind, within the context of other household bills and then after seeing the donut chart**

# Sharing the challenges helps customers understand that SSC is already considering many of the spontaneous priorities raised

Covers key areas around supply/demand, environment, water conservation, vulnerability and leakage

Showcard I: Challenges (CAM)

## Cambridge Water is facing a number of “big challenges” in the future

- Increased demand for water
  - population growth
  - property building/development
- Changing rainfall patterns leading to higher risk of flooding or longer periods of draught
- Changing the way resources are used
  - some of the water taken from the rivers and other water sourced could lead to a deterioration of the environment
- Further reducing leakage on the network
- Educating, informing and helping customers to use less water and reuse more
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Reducing the amount of bad plastics used in business operations
- Ensuring services are accessible to all customers who need extra support

**All whilst balancing the need for affordable water bills and ensuring the long-term resilience of services to meet the challenges outlined above**

Accent 6

One of the big emerging priorities was security of supply due to concerns around increased building of homes and businesses and higher demand, challenges demonstrate that SSC recognise this

Consideration of ‘bad plastics’ prompted some to think more about the impact of SSC business operations on the environment

**Affordable water bills caveat is really important and addresses the spontaneous priority of keeping bills low especially in current climate**

# Current performance is questioned

Many concerned about the 2015-2020 performance

Showcard G: Highlights of their Current Business Plan – 2020 to 2025

Over the period 2015 - 2020 your water company made 15 promises to its customers - it achieved 63% of the targets set over that period

	Progress of meeting our targets				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total targets passed	10	10	7	10	11
Total targets missed	5	5	8	5	4



Using customer feedback, the company has now made 28 specific promises to customers in its plans for 2020 – 2025. These are split into a number of areas

Even with all the supporting words, people take these figures at face value

15 promises and 63% achievement feels low

Increasing the number of promises to 28 makes people a bit nervous

*I hope they can deliver; they're going quite high with 28. They only had 15 that failed quite visibly I thought.*  
Cambridge, Family

*Quite concerning that they only achieved 63% - not sure we'd get away with that in our business!*  
Cambridge, Large NHH

*63% not good is it. That just sounds low*  
Dudley, Family

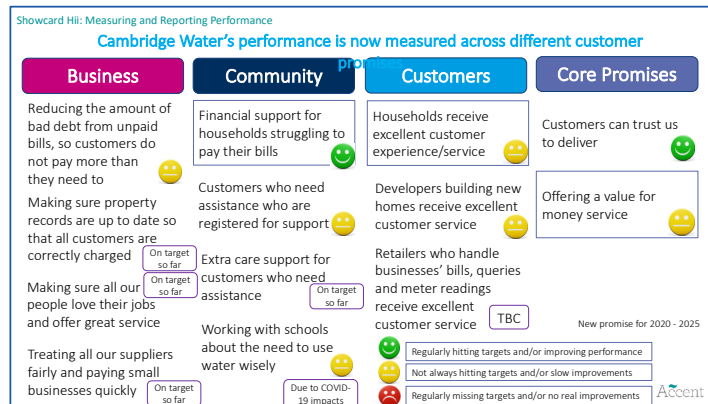
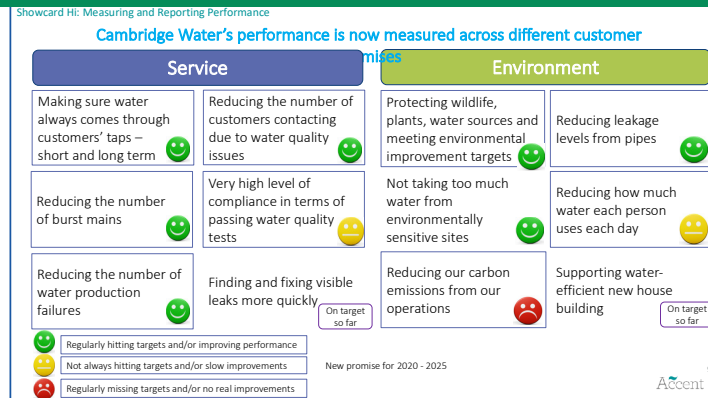
Not sure this information helps to achieve the objectives – not necessary for quantification

# Response to specific promises is mainly positive

Most of these issues had been raised spontaneously by HH/NHH customers although not in this level of detail

+

- Covering all important areas
- Much more specific than spontaneous priorities
- Demonstrates the seriousness of the exercise
- Environmental promises are far-reaching and go over and above what they were thinking e.g. protecting wildlife, reducing carbon emissions



-

- Red/Amber/Green show some areas where SSW/CW are not performing

*It's a shame that the only red is on their own environmental performance given that all businesses should be taking this seriously Cambridge, NHH Large*

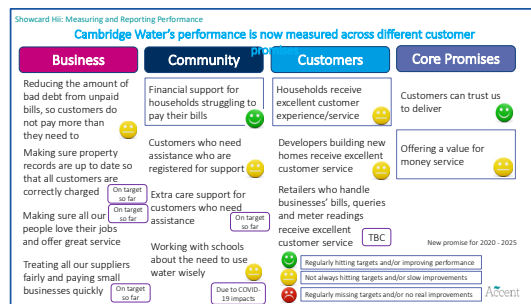
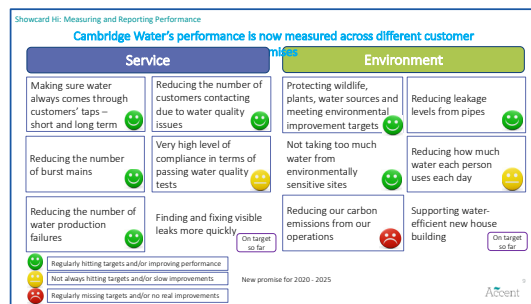
*I guess the big unhappy smiley face about the carbon emissions, there's not much information there about what their current level is and what they're aiming but I guess that they're not even making any sort of improvements is upsetting. Cambridge, Family*

*Yes, I mean I think it's all part of the same thing; I think we were like it's got to be good for the environment but not the specific measures that are, I guess, quantified. Burton, Pre-Family*

All these should be included and cover the hygiene/now spontaneous priorities

# Having shared the current plan, we asked whether things became more important or whether priorities changed

Sharing the plan and current performance generally reassured customers that SSW/CW were already working on the spontaneous priorities they had identified



## Shift in Priorities

- Sense that SSW/CW have covered things they hadn't thought of e.g. not taking too much water for environmentally sensitive sites
- Reassured to see that other hygiene factors are key promises e.g. water supply, leakage
- Good to see that education in schools is mentioned and support for vulnerable people is taken seriously
- Compliance and quality of water
  - This was a concern but was already a hygiene factor and remained so
- Reducing our carbon emissions
  - Some concern that they were not delivering against this BUT remains an enhancing priority
- Good to see the reducing water target BUT they haven't seen anything about this!

Although there was some concerns over 'the number of yellows', people were told that this was early into the current plan and therefore they felt that SSW/CW had time to improve

# Finally, there are some spontaneous priorities that are NOT covered in current plan and need further consideration

(missing priorities highlighted in red)

Most of these issues had been raised spontaneously by HH/NHH customers although not in this level of detail

## Above and Beyond

Smart meters

Incentives and tools to save water

Additional environmental projects

Sponsorship/grants

Community initiatives e.g. water fountains

## Enhancing

Environmental responsibilities

Choice of meter

Good website

Water conservation at home and outside

Water usage information and control

Education in schools

Ongoing innovation of infrastructure

Addressing limescale

## Hygiene

Water quality and pressure

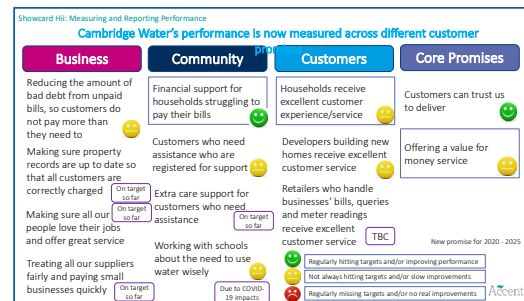
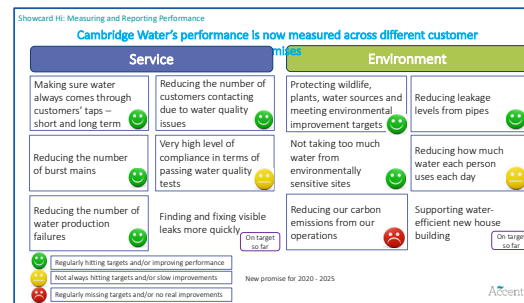
Continual supply and planning for supply/demand

Minimising leakage through repair and investment

Affordable pricing and support for vulnerable

Efficient customer service (if need)

Good communication during outage



## Enhancing Plus

Guarantee long term sustainability of water

Better website/app provision

Competitive market

Carbon neutral

Addressing climate change

Roll out smart metering programme

Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage

Rainwater harvesting projects

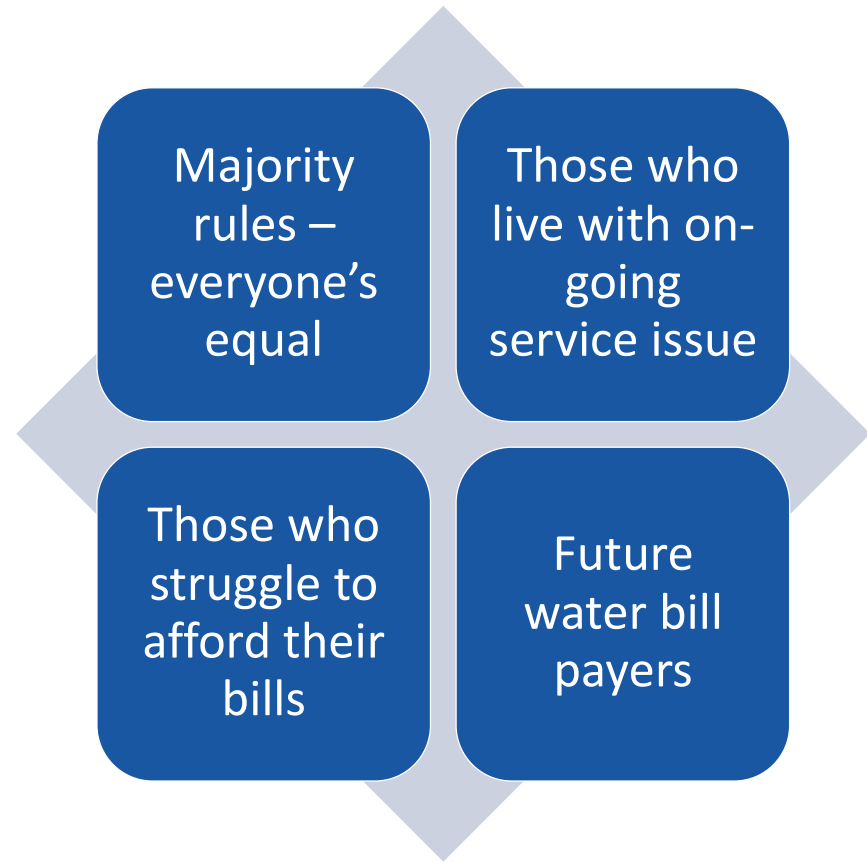
Accessible community incentive schemes

Monitoring of aquifer health and water sources

Need to quantify to measure relative importance



# Business Plan Aggregation



# Response to Business Plan aggregation options

Challenging exercise which would benefit from longer discussion and greater context e.g. how many have ongoing service issue

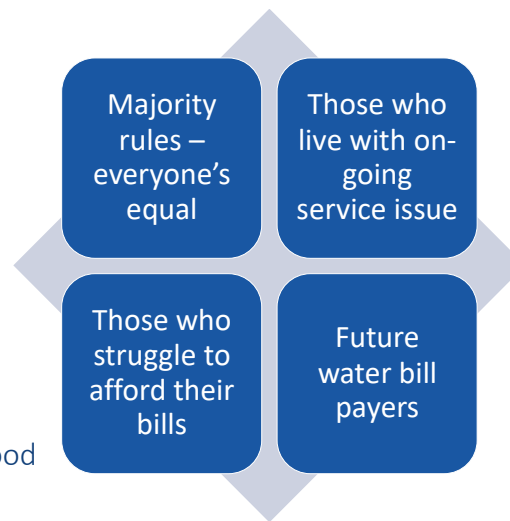
## Majority Rules (Most were here)

- Easy and simple
- All votes are counted
- Everyone's opinion is valued
- Democratic
- Fair

## Affordability issues (Minority here)

- Important to hear the views of this group
- But not necessary to overweight their view
- Unobjective mindset so difficult to make good decisions
- Schemes in place to protect from bill rises

*I think the most democratic answer to that would be majority rules.  
Burton, Pre-Family*



*I think you have to go majority rules – surely everyone should be treated equally  
St Ives, Empty Nesters*

## Ongoing service issues (Quite a few here)

- Important to listen to this audience
- Real, informed experiences to draw on
- Feels fair that they have a bigger share of voice
- People can empathise with frustrations of ongoing bad service

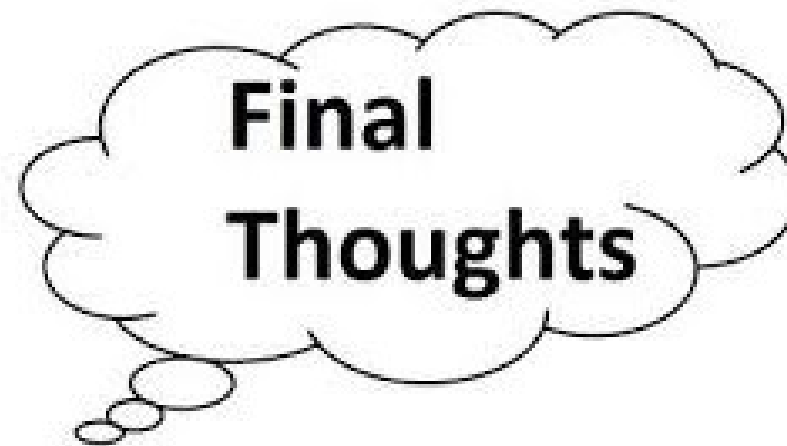
## Future water bill payers (Minority here)

- Important to hear the views of future customers
- Share of the vote only
- Don't see this audience as more important – even future customers don't vote for this option!

*Oh that's an impossible question! I'd have to say those with an ongoing service issue because it must be awful to have cloudy water all the time or something  
Cambridge, NHH*

Based on this piece, combination of asking everyone, but upweighting those with ongoing service issues is preferred model

Summary and  
Way Forward



## A number of factors impact on how customers generate priorities

Factors that influence spontaneous priorities	Implications for SSC
<b>Covid-19 economic uncertainty e.g. furlough, jobs at risk, businesses reducing t/o, children have no work</b>	Creates concerns about personal and wider affordability and elevates need for SSC to keep costs stable
<b>Covid-19 'alternative world' that contributes to a new belief system that anything is possible</b>	Water consciousness increases and customers think about droughts, water usage and how to save water; they are keen for SSC to provide guidance
<b>Covid-19 time at home = increased water usage</b>	
<b>Personal experience and perceptions of current SSC performance</b>	Negative experience over quality of water, specifically limescale, creates focus on this priority for SSC
<b>Position on environmental spectrum</b>	Stronger belief in environment as an important issue and greater link with water usage and conservation
<b>Attitudes towards big society and vulnerable people</b>	More vulnerable customers likely as a result of Covid-19 and stronger sense that SSC will need to support and protect

# Range of priorities generated - now and future

## NOW

### Above and Beyond

- Smart meters
- Incentives and tools to save water
- Additional environmental projects
- Sponsorship/grants
- Community initiatives e.g. water fountains

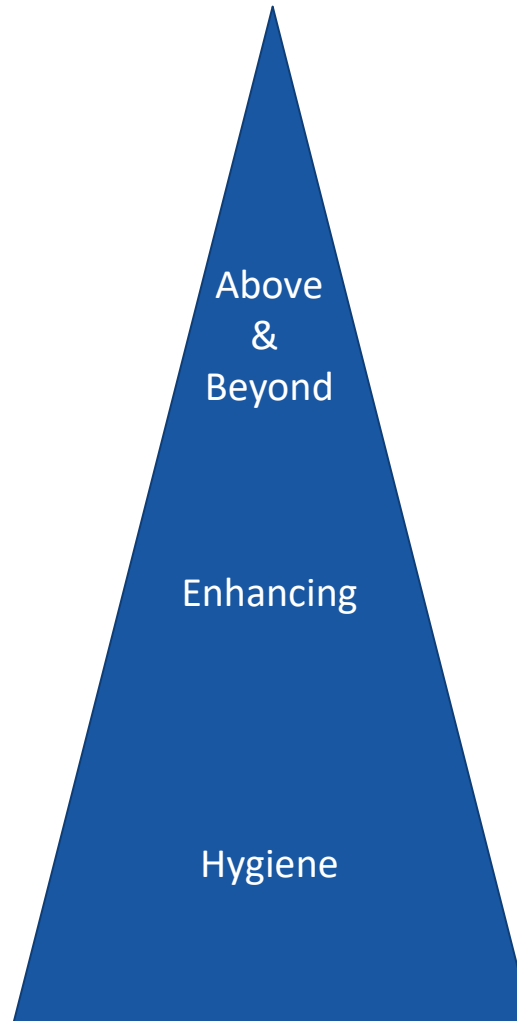
### Enhancing

#### Environmental responsibilities

- Choice of meter
- Good website
- Water conservation at home and outside
- Water usage information and control
- Education in schools
- Ongoing innovation of infrastructure
- Addressing limescale issues

### Hygiene

- Water quality
- Continual supply for everyone and pressure
- Minimising leakage through repair and investment
- Affordable pricing and support for vulnerable
- Efficient customer service (if need)
- Good communication during outage



## FUTURE

### Enhancing Plus

- Roll out metering programme
- Guarantee long term sustainability
- Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage
- Better website/app provision
- Competitive market
- Carbon neutral
- Addressing climate change
- Rainwater harvesting projects
- Accessible community incentive schemes
- Monitoring of aquifer health and water sources

Some of those priorities were not raised spontaneously last time AND some are not covered in the current Business Plan

None of these are hygiene factors

**Raised spontaneously this time so could have greater importance BUT already covered in current Business Plan**

- Environmental responsibilities
- Water conservation at home and outside
- Water usage information and control
- Education in schools
- Planning for supply and demand
- Education in schools

**Raised spontaneously but NOT covered directly in the current Business Plan promises**

- Addressing limescale / hard water impacts
- Good website
- Sponsorship/grants
- Community initiatives e.g. water fountains
- Smart meters
- Smarter, dynamic pricing based on time of usage
- Rainwater harvesting projects
- Accessible community incentive schemes
- Monitoring of aquifer health and water sources

Need to consider quantification of these in quant tracking exercise

# Appendix A



## Segment Descriptions

Customer segment	Overview of segment
<b>A – 23% (of SSC’s customer base)</b>	Very time pressed juggling all their commitments. Consequently don’t think much about their water usage and don’t want their time wasted. Often online.
<b>B – 35%</b>	Highly engaged with their water usage and the wider community they live in. Expect a very high level of service from companies they use. Use technology, but prefer a personal relationship.
<b>C – 15%</b>	Often financially and time pressured. Strong preference for being on-line and using social media.
<b>D – 8%</b>	Highly engaged with using the ‘latest’ technology and managing their lives online. Switched on to saving water.
<b>E – 18%</b>	Highly engaged with technology and very focused on their network of family and friends. Admit to not thinking much about their water usage or services and prefer a more transactional relationship with their water company.



# Appendix B



# APPENDIX B

## DISCUSSION GUIDE (household)

Please note that the questionnaire is regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

3410 / Priorities Tracker  
Final Group Topic Guide



### Welcome

5 mins (5)

Good evening... My name is ... and I work for an independent market research company called Accent. We are conducting research for South Staffs Water/Cambridge looking to understand what customers expect the company to focus on – now and in the future. Your views will help their senior team to ensure their plans are continually updated to reflect any changes to what customers think is most important about their water services.

Thank you very much for agreeing to help us with this research and for being here this evening.

The research is being conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society (MRS) [approved](#) with the Data Protection Act, with whom Accent is registered. This means that everything you say here this evening is confidential and will not be attributed to you personally.

You are not being observed live by representatives of South Staffs Water/ Cambridge Water throughout this discussion. The discussion is being recorded to allow the team at South Staffs Water/ Cambridge Water to view it from tomorrow. This is standard market research procedure and is to ensure accuracy – so I do not have to try to remember what you have said – and for analysis purposes only. The recordings will not be passed to any third party not associated with the research project, and in our reporting of the findings from this research everything that you say will be confidential and will be reported in grouped format only. Please don't let that stop you expressing your views frankly.

The discussion will last around 90 minutes.

Can I stress that we are looking for your views. There are no right or wrong answers. I hope you will all contribute to the discussion as everyone's views count.

### Warm Up

5 mins (10)

**OBJECTIVE – MAKE EVERYONE FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SAFE TO SHARE VIEWS**

- We would like you to find out a bit about you
  - First name
  - Where do you live/work/study?
  - Who lives at home with you?
  - How long have you lived in the area, what do you like most about it?
  - Tell me one small thing that has made you happy during this difficult year?

### More about you

10 mins (20)

**OBJECTIVE – GET PARTICIPANTS INTO THE FUTURE MINDSET. PROVIDE CONTEXT FOR FUTURE PRIORITIES**

Before we start talking about water let's have a look at the second [exercise](#) we asked you to do as part of your homework exercise.

We want to start by finding out more about you and your lives and your thoughts for the future. We can use your letter to future self to do this.

- How would you describe your life [at the moment](#)?
- What kind of things did you write to sum up your life [at the moment](#)?
- How has this changed since March 2020 (ie: the start of the Covid pandemic)?
- What about your future life, what did you write about that?
- What are the key things you are hoping for in the future? (**moderator – if necessary separate out Covid and non-Covid aspirations – if necessary contextualise with assumption that vaccine will have been in place from next year onwards**)
- Taking [all of](#) your thoughts and aspirations for the future (above) what two would you choose if you had to?

### Understanding Spontaneous Priorities: Now

15 mins (35)

**OBJECTIVE – UNDERSTAND WHAT'S DRIVING SPONTANEOUS PRE-TASK PRIORITIES**

Thanks for doing the homework exercises for us. We now want to start by understanding what you want South Staffs Water/Cambridge Water to focus on – both in the short and longer term. So, grab your homework exercise sheets and let's get started!

**First of all** – let's start with what you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to do focus on now.

Let's start with you and your **HOME/HOUSEHOLD**.

- What are the challenges/issues that are giving you sleepless nights [at the moment](#)?
- What are the main issues that you face about your water/water supply (if any) – this could be about your bill or the actual water supply?
- What do you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to focus on now? Remember that at the moment we're just interested in the things that would make a difference to you and the people you live with when you're at home. Remember this is just about your water supply that comes through your taps, and not about your drainage/waste/sewerage services.
  - Is this something new/something they're doing well and you want them to carry on doing/ something they're doing badly that you want them to improve?

- Why are these areas important to you?
- Are they important to you individually/to others in your household/all of you?
- What difference would it make to your household if South Staffs/Cambridge Water did this?
- Was there anything else that you wanted to include (but couldn't because we limited you to three priorities?)

Now let's focus on your **LOCAL COMMUNITY** – how would you describe this?

- What are the challenges/issues that impact on the quality of life in your community?
- What are the main issues that your **community** faces with regards to water/water supply (if any)?
- What do you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to focus on now? Now we're thinking about the areas that would make a difference outside of your home to your immediate community
  - Is this something new/something they're doing well and you want them to carry on doing/something they're doing badly that you want them to improve?
  - Why are these important to your community?
  - Would they have any impact on your/your household or just benefit your wider community?
  - What difference would it make to your community if South Staffs/Cambridge Water did this?
  - Was there anything else that you wanted to include (but couldn't because we limited you to three priorities?)

Finally, let's focus on the wider **SOUTH STAFFS/CAMBRIDGE WATER SUPPLY AREA** – how would you describe this? Do you think about the wider region much?

- What do you think are the challenges/issues that impact on the quality of life in this wider area?
- What are the main issues that the region faces with regards to water/water supply (if any) (**Showcard A as needed**)
- What do you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to focus on now? Now we're thinking about the areas that would make a difference outside of your home and your immediate community but might help those who live and work in the wider South Staffs/Cambridge Water areas.
  - Is this something new/something they're doing well and you want them to carry on doing/something they're doing badly that you want them to improve?
  - Why are these important to the wider?
  - Would they have any impact on your/your household or just benefit the wider area?
  - What difference would it make to the wider area if South Staffs/Cambridge Water did this?



## APPENDIX B

### DISCUSSION GUIDE (household)

- Was there anything else that you wanted to include (but couldn't because we limited you to three priorities?)

#### Understanding Spontaneous Priorities: Future 15 mins (50)

Let's now focus on the future, so that's thinking ahead to 5 years' time and the important areas you want them to be focusing on then.

**Moderator: cover first for household, then community and finally the supply area.**

- What do you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to be focusing on in five years' time?
- Is this something new/something they're doing well and you want them to carry on doing/something they're doing badly that you want them to improve?
- Why would these be important to you in 5 years' time?
- Why are these important to **you/your household/your community/the wider area?**
- Was there anything else that you wanted to include (but couldn't because we limited you to three priorities?)
- If the same as current priorities – let's assume that South Staffs/Cambridge Water have got those sorted and are doing those things for you – what else would you want them to do in the next 5 years?
- Is this something new/something they're doing well and you want them to carry on doing/something they're doing badly that you want them to improve?
- Why would these be important to you in 5 years' time?
- **For community:** would they have any impact on your/your household or just benefit your local community the wider area?
- **For wider supply area:** would they have any impact on your/your household or just benefit the wider area?
- Have you read or heard anything about water in other areas of the country about water services and supply that has had an impact on what you think is important for South Staffs/Cambridge Water to be focusing on (anything different from what we've discussed so far today)?
  - What was this about? (e.g. lower bills, less/more issues about water security, a water quality failure, a massive main burst causing people to lose their water supply pollution, impacts on rivers running dry, reducing carbon footprint, improving wildlife/planting more trees, etc)
  - What impact does hearing about this have on what you think is important for your water company to focus on in terms of you/your community/the supply area?

Please note that the questionnaire is regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

#### Ranking Priorities 10 mins (60)

**OBJECTIVE: OBTAIN QUALITATIVE RANKING OF PRIORITIES (HYGIENE/ENHANCING/WOW)**

Okay, so now we've got a list of priorities let's rank them in order of priority.

Group the current priorities, the things you want South Staffs/Cambridge Water to do now into three groups.

**Showcard B**

- Group 1: "essential" priorities – these are the things that you think South Staffs/Cambridge Water should be doing as a matter of course, the things that you would not accept the service to get worse in any way
- Group 2: "enhancing" priorities – these are the things that you think South Staffs/Cambridge Water should focus on next, after making sure the group 1 "essential" priorities are being delivered on
- Group 3: "above and beyond" priorities – these are the things that would really make South Staffs/Cambridge Water really stand out for you, things that you wouldn't necessarily expect of a water company.
- **Moderator note: if not already mentioned prompt:**
  - Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you think more about your water services, how they are delivered and/or future challenges you think a water company might face?
  - If yes, how?
- Has this impacted on your priorities for your water services? Which? And how has it altered the order of your priorities?

#### SSC Plan, Challenges & Performance 20 mins (80)

**OBJECTIVE: UNDERSTAND IF AWARENESS OF SSC'S CURRENT PLAN, PERFORMANCE AND CHALLENGES INTRODUCES NEW PRIORITIES OR CHANGES PRIORITIES**

**Moderator present showcards C, D, E, F**

South Staffs/Cambridge Water are regulated by Ofwat and has to submit a Business Plan every five years. Their current plan runs from 2020 to 2025. The Business Plan is grouped into five areas: Customer, Communities, Environment, Service and Business. At the centre is what they call their "core promises" which are two important areas to them to deliver on – Trust and Value for Money.

Their performance is monitored and reported across many different areas and you can see how they're currently doing.

- Questions? Thoughts?
- How do you feel about the value for money offered by your South Staffs/Cambridge Water bill given what you know now – poor/average/good

## APPENDIX B

### DISCUSSION GUIDE (household)

- Is everything clear?
- What else would be helpful to know at this stage?

When putting together their business plan South Staffs/Cambridge Water had to consider a large number of challenges (Showcard G)

- Questions? Thoughts?
- Is everything clear? What else would be helpful to know at this stage?
- Having learnt more about South Staffs/Cambridge Water, their Business Plan and the challenges they face are there any priorities that you want to add? Anything new to consider?
  - Why?
  - Which section of your priorities ranking would you add them to?
  - And does learning more about their challenges mean that you want to change anything on the list of priorities we've just discussed?
  - Or move any of the priorities between sections of your priority ranking? Why?
- And any you want to take out from your list? Why?

South Staffs/Cambridge Water's Business Plan is centred around five key themes (Showcard H). You'll see they've made 28 specific promises in its plans for 2020-2025. And you can see how they performed in their last Business Plan against the 15 promises made over that period.

Their performance against their current promises is shown in the following slides (Showcards I and J).

- Having learnt more about South Staffs/Cambridge Water's past and current performance are there any priorities that you want to add? Anything new to consider?
  - Why?
  - Which section of your priorities ranking would you add them to?
  - And does learning more about their performance mean that you want to change anything on the list of priorities we've just discussed?
  - Or move any of the priorities between sections of your priority ranking? Why?
- And any you want to take out from your list? Why?

#### Aggregating the Business Plan

5 mins (90)

**OBJECTIVE: GAIN AN INITIAL VIEW FROM CUSTOMERS AS TO WHETHER THE FUTURE BUSINESS PLAN SHOULD BE BASED ON THE MAJORITY VIEW OR GIVE MORE FOCUS TOWARDS CERTAIN CUSTOMER GROUPS?**

Please note that the questionnaire is regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

When developing their plans South Staffs/Cambridge Water undertaken engagement with customers from all different walks of life and situations to ensure that their views are taken into account in their business and investment plans.

There are a number of ways that the views of different customer groups can be analysed and then represented in the plan and they want to understand your views on how they should balance all the different feedback they receive from the customers they serve. (Showcard K)

- **Majority rules:** all customers' priorities are treated equally when the company is making decisions about their plans and investments, with no over representation of different groups of customers. If the majority approve the idea and the impact it will have on their bills, then it will go ahead
- **Service issues:** some customers experience unusually high incidence or severity of service issues – such as extreme and/or on-going low water pressure, hard water causing limescale to build up on taps/kettles, etc or their property might be served by a lead pipe. Whilst these issues happen to a minority of customers, they would be given a greater share of voice when deciding if any investments that reduce the number of customers affected by these types of service issues go ahead
- **Financial vulnerability:** a major service improvement will only be funded if customers who are classified as being financially vulnerable (e.g. those on very low household income and/or household benefits) approve the approach and say the bill impact to fund the improvement is affordable to them
- **Future customers:** major investment decisions will only be funded if the majority of customers under 35 in age approve the approach and say the bill impact to fund the improvement is affordable to them
- Thoughts? Anything not clear, if so, what?
- +/- of each approach
- Which of these approaches do you think South Staffs Water/Cambridge Water should take?
- Why do you say that?
- Do you think this is an area they should be asking customers' for their views on?

#### Wrap and Close

Thank you very much.

Can I finally ask whether any of you would be happy to be contacted again if we need clarification of any of your comments tonight or to take part in other research for South Staffs/Cambridge Water?

We'll be emailing some feedback forms for you to provide feedback on this evening's events. There's also an opportunity to sign up to South Staffs/Cambridge Water's customer online customer Community called H2Online if you're interested in being involved in ongoing engagement to help the company shape its plans. They have over 300 members on their Community already.

# Appendix C

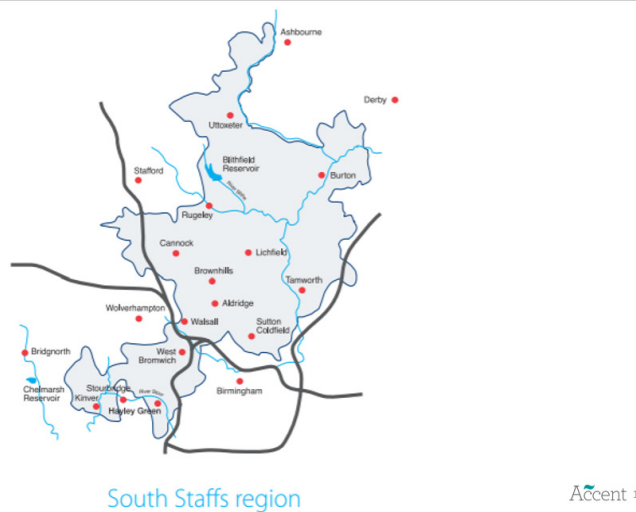


# APPENDIX C

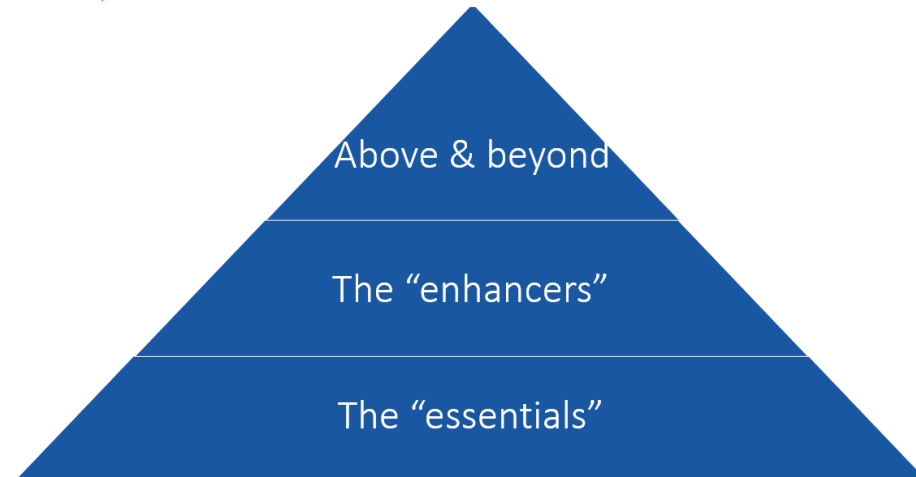
## STIMULUS MATERIALS – SSW (example)

Please note that the stimulus materials were regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

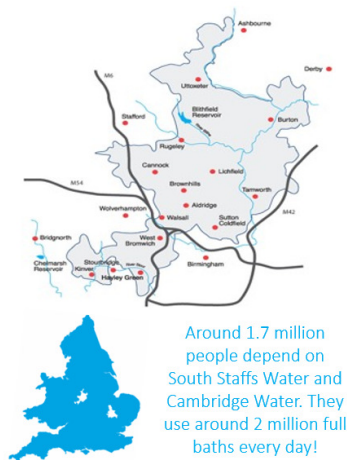
Showcard A: South Staffs Supply Area



Showcard B: Pyramid of Priorities



Showcard C: About South Staffs Water



### About South Staffs Water (SSW)

- Serves 1.3 million people across 1,500 km<sup>2</sup>
- Supply approx. 562,000 homes and almost 34,000 business properties
- Supply 305 million litres water per day
- Drinking water comes from 2 surface water sources (River Severn and Blithfield reservoir) and 19 underground water sources
- As a household customer, you **can't** choose which company supplies your water

- Merged with Cambridge Water in April 2013
- Employ approximately 440 staff in Cambridge and Walsall

Around 1.7 million people depend on South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water. They use around 2 million full baths every day!

Showcard D: About South Staffs & Cambridge Water

Water supply for customers	Customer facing activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Taking/collecting water from the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Read meters: 45% of customers have meters in the South Staffs region/75% in Cambridge</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transport water – through 8,580km of pipes, powered by 113 pumping stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send out bills: including offering an online MyAccount service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Operate 40 water treatment works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Customer service: handle hundreds of queries every day through e-mail, phone, website, webchat, APP, social media, letter, SMS texts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintenance, repairs and renewals of all these assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extra support: help almost 25,000 customers with discounted bills and assist when needed over 33,600 customers who need extra help accessing their services – e.g. supplying bottled water in the event of people losing their <u>supply</u>, or visiting a Community Hub.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delivering water to customers' premises and fitting water meters</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Protecting and improving the natural environment by working with landowners - i.e. wildlife, trees, plants, rivers and streams</li> </ul>	

# APPENDIX C

## STIMULUS MATERIALS - SSW

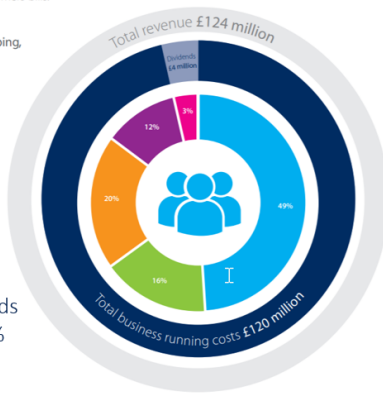
Showcard E: How Your Bill is Used - SSW

### Financial information

How we use the money we get from customers' bills.

- Water production, treatment, pumping, network repairs and operations
- Customer services, meter reading, billing and payment collection
- Annual costs of capital investment
- Financing costs and tax
- Dividends

Chart shows 2019/20 figures



### Facts about your water bill

- In 2020, South Staffs Water will have the fourth lowest typical water bill of all 19 water companies
- 54% of the total bill you pay goes to Severn Trent for the provision of sewerage and drainage services

- Shareholder dividends will fall to around 2% during the period 2020 - 2025

Accent 5

Please note that the stimulus materials were regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

Showcard F: Introducing Ofwat & Business Plan

### Why is a business plan important to you?

Most household customers in England and Wales cannot choose the company that supplies their water and wastewater ('sewerage') services.

Instead, the regulator, Ofwat, acts as an alternative for competition. It protects customers' interests and makes sure they receive high-quality services at an affordable price.

Every five years Ofwat asks the water companies to prepare a business plan. It reviews these plans and decides whether the price and service package companies have proposed will deliver the best outcome for customers now and over the long term.

Your water company's current business plan covers the five years to 2025 and thousands of customers had a say in helping them to develop it. The plan sets out the promises they have made to their customers about the services they will deliver and the bills they will pay.

South Staffs Water

When developing its business plans, the company must look to the future and test its proposals against a number of different scenarios – such as a serious water draught.

It must also maintain its financial performance and credit rating at all times

Accent 6

Showcard G: Challenges (SSW)

### South Staffs Water is facing a number of "big challenges" in the future

- Increased demand for water
  - population growth
  - property building/development
- Changing rainfall patterns leading to higher risk of flooding or longer periods of draught
- Changing the way resources are used
  - some of the water taken from the rivers and from underground for human needs could lead to a deterioration of the environment
- Further reducing leakage on the network
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Reducing the amount of bad plastics used in business operations
- Ensuring services are accessible to all customers who need extra support
- Increasing number of households experiencing financial hardship / increasing levels of bad debt
- Educating, informing and helping customers to use less water and reuse more.

All whilst balancing the need for affordable water bills and ensuring the long-term resilience of services to meet the challenges outlined above

Accent 7

Showcard H: Highlights of their Current Business Plan – 2020 to 2025

Over the period 2015 - 2020 your water company made 15 promises to its customers - it achieved 63% of the targets set over that period

	Progress of meeting our targets				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total targets passed	10	10	7	10	11
Total targets missed	5	5	8	5	4



Using customer feedback, the company has now made 28 specific promises to customers in its plans for 2020 – 2025. These are split into a number of areas

ccent

# APPENDIX C

## STIMULUS MATERIALS - SSW

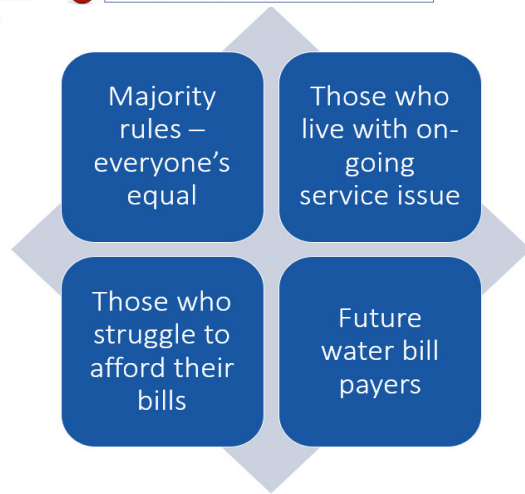
Please note that the stimulus materials were regionalised to South Staffs Water or Cambridge Water where appropriate. There were also variations used for non-household customers

Showcard I: Measuring and Reporting Performance

South Staffs Water's performance is now measured across different customer promises

Service		Environment	
Making sure water always comes through customers' taps – short and long term	Reducing the number of customers contacting due to water quality issues	Protecting wildlife, plants, water sources and meeting environmental improvement targets	Reducing leakage levels from pipes
Reducing the number of burst mains	Very high level of compliance in terms of passing water quality tests	Not taking too much water from environmentally sensitive sites	Reducing how much water each person uses each day
Reducing the number of water production failures	Delivering a £63m upgraded at two water treatment works <small>On target so far</small>	Reducing our carbon emissions from our operations	Supporting water-efficient new house building <small>On target so far</small>
Finding and fixing visible leaks more quickly <small>On target so far</small>	Regularly hitting targets and/or improving performance Not always hitting targets and/or slow improvements Regularly missing targets and/or no real improvements	Worse than industry average performance	<small>New promise for 2020 - 2025</small>

Showcard K: Aggregation Options



Showcard J: Measuring and Reporting Performance

South Staffs Water's performance is now measured across different customer promises

Business	Community	Customers	Core Promises
Reducing the amount of bad debt from unpaid bills, so customers do not pay more than they need to	Financial support for households struggling to pay their bills	Households receive excellent customer experience/service	Customers can trust us to deliver
Making sure property records are up to date so that all customers are correctly charged <small>On target so far</small>	Customers who need assistance who are registered for support	Developers building new homes receive excellent customer service	Offering a value for money service
Making sure all our people love their jobs and offer great service <small>On target so far</small>	Extra care support for customers who need assistance <small>On target so far</small>	Retailers who handle businesses' bills, queries and meter readings receive excellent customer service <small>TBC</small>	<small>New promise for 2020 - 2025</small>
Treating all our suppliers fairly and paying small businesses quickly <small>On target so far</small>	Working with schools about the need to use water wisely <small>Due to COVID-19 impacts</small>	Regularly hitting targets and/or improving performance Not always hitting targets and/or slow improvements Regularly missing targets and/or no real improvements	

Feedback Form (will be emailed to participants)

Based on this evening's group, please indicate whether you **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Neither Agree or Disagree** with each of the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed taking part in the event on Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Everyone was given a fair chance to have their say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The event was well organised and structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information provided was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any suggestions or comments to make about this evening's groups and/or what could be improved?



# Thank you



Registered in London No. 2231083  
Accent Marketing & Research Limited  
Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

