Summary report

Autumn Accountability Session with Hafren Dyfrdwy

As part of CCW's Water Voice programme, Accountability Sessions allow community members to challenge water company performance, question senior representatives and agree actions to enhance customer experiences and drive meaningful improvements.

Accountability Session | Monday 19th October 2026
Report published: Wednesday 28th October

Community members had the opportunity to question senior representatives at Hafren Dyfrdwy directly about company performance, customer support and future water supplies.

The Action Plan Review question focused on progress in identifying and supporting vulnerable customers, while the Performance Review question explored how Hafren Dyfrdwy is preparing for future water demand and climate change.

During the Q&A, members raised questions about smart meter rollout, the company's biggest performance weaknesses and how progress is independently monitored.

Hafren Dyfrdwy responded to these questions on the night, with the key discussion points and resulting commitments outlined on the following pages.

Action Plan Review
Q1: Helping more people access support

Members wanted Hafren Dyfrdwy to take a more proactive approach to identifying and supporting vulnerable customers.

Discussions highlighted the need for stronger community partnerships, ongoing engagement and better awareness of available support..

Performance Review
Q2: Resilience and future water supplies

Members questioned how Hafren Dyfrdwy will protect water supplies against climate change, growing demand and ageing infrastructure.

Discussions highlighted the need for clearer investment plans, improved leakage performance and better communication about future water resilience.

Q&A
Q3: Smart meters

Community members wanted clarity on when smart meters would become available more widely.

Hafren Dyfrdwy outlined its phased rollout, with members calling for clearer communication about availability and benefits.

Q&A
Q4: Performance weaknesses

Community members questioned Hafren Dyfrdwy's biggest weaknesses.

The company acknowledged missed leakage and supply interruption targets and outlined measures to improve performance.

Q&A
Q5: Tracking progress

Community members wanted reassurance that improvements are being delivered and independently monitored.

Discussions highlighted the need for clearer reporting and wider communication of progress.

What is the purpose of this report and what happens next?

This report summarises the key discussions and actions raised by Water Voice community members during the Hafren Dyfrdwy Accountability Session held on 19 October 2026.The actions outlined reflect the improvements community members would like Hafren Dyfrdwy to make. These are community-led requests and do not represent confirmed commitments from the company at this stage. Hafren Dyfrdwy will create a formal action plan by Thursday 26 November 2026, setting out its response to each action, what it intends to deliver and the proposed timescales.

CCW will then monitor progress against the company's commitments and provide monthly updates, allowing community members to see what has changed and continue to hold the company to account.

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Q1: Action Plan Review

Strengthening Hafren Dyfrdwy's existing actions

How will you expand Action 32[1] to proactively identify and reach these customers through new partnerships and community-based approaches, rather than relying on them to find or ask for support themselves?

Context from the session:

Community members were impressed by the work already underway, including the Better Off Calculator, community connectors, pharmacy activity and existing charity partnerships. Their concern was that the people most likely to need help may also be the least likely to approach Hafren Dyfrdwy themselves. **Members want the company to delve deeper with trusted local networks**, particularly those already in contact with families, students, older people and people in vulnerable circumstances, and to make sure support does not end after the first contact

Regulatory and existing activity context:

Elements of proactive support and partnership working are already reflected in wider expectations around supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances, and Hafren Dyfrdwy described a number of related activities already underway.
The company should be clear about where they will commit to going beyond current practice, how the approach will be strengthened, and how they will demonstrate the resulting customer benefit.

New actions requested by community members:

1A. Turn community partnerships into active referral routes

Build on existing outreach by developing clear referral routes through the organisations identified by community members, including **Family Link Officers and schools, universities and student services, the Ageing Well Forum, Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham (AVOW) and smaller frontline charities**.
For each route, Hafren Dyfrdwy should establish what already exists, what will be strengthened or added, when this will happen and **how many customers are successfully connected to support through these partnerships**.

1B. Follow support through, rather than simply signposting

Where customers are reached through community partners, Hafren Dyfrdwy should measure what happens next – for example, whether customers went on to receive support and whether further help was needed.
The company should use this evidence, alongside regular feedback from its community partners, to identify where people are still dropping out or facing barriers and adapt their strategies to enable more vulnerable customers to gain and maintain the support they need.

1C. Show the difference proactive support is making

Share anonymised examples (e.g., 'good news stories') and simple outcome measures showing how proactive support has helped customers – including the impact of partner referrals and services such as the Better Off Calculator.
This should demonstrate **what changed for customers**, rather than simply reporting the number of events attended or partnerships established, allowing vulnerable customers to feel more empowered to contact Hafren Dyfrdwy for support.

[1] Hafren Dyfrdwy, Action 32 - *Expand partnerships with trusted external organisations to improve access to support services.*

Q2: Performance Review

Challenging Hafren Dyfrdwy's performance and service delivery

How are you going to make sure there is enough water for the future as demand increases and the climate changes?

Context from the session:

Community members were reassured to hear that Hafren Dyfrdwy has sufficient raw water supplies, draws water from a range of sources and plans for future demand. Their focus then shifted to **how customers can see that resilience is actually improving**. Members wanted clearer information on how far leakage and supply interruptions are from target, why particular investments are being prioritised, how future demand is being managed across different types of water users and what customers will gain from the £266m investment programme. Several felt much of this information may already exist but was not visible or easy for customers to understand.

Regulatory and existing activity context:

Long-term supply planning is already covered through Hafren Dyfrdwy's statutory Water Resources Management Plan, while leakage and supply interruptions are regulated performance commitments and the £266m investment programme forms part of the 2025–30 price determination.
The company should therefore be clear about where it might add to these existing requirements, particularly by making plans understandable to customers, explaining investment choices and demonstrating the outcomes those investments deliver.

New actions requested by community members:

2A. Make future resilience clear and visible to customers

Produce a concise, customer-friendly view of Hafren Dyfrdwy's resilience plans, bringing together information that customers currently have to seek out across different reports.
This should clearly show **where water comes from, how future demand is expected to change, current performance against leakage and supply interruption targets, and the major work planned to protect future supplies**.
Members suggested using straightforward visual formats, including a **'company infographic' summarising key performance and investment information**. This could be shared through bills, newsletters or other direct customer communications rather than relying on customers to find technical plans themselves.

2B. Explain why investment is prioritised – and what it delivers

For major resilience investments, explain **why particular pipes, infrastructure or areas are being addressed first, how this spending is balanced against other company priorities and what work will follow**. Customers should understand the reasoning behind these choices, including why some work is scheduled later, alongside **what each investment will cost, when it will be delivered and what practical improvement they should expect**.
Once work is completed, Hafren Dyfrdwy should report and quantify the resulting outcomes – for example, whether an investment has reduced leakage, bursts or supply interruptions – rather than reporting only the amount spent or work undertaken.

2C. Test and demonstrate the value of home water-efficiency support

Hafren Dyfrdwy proposed using its water-efficiency and metering teams to provide more direct support in customers' homes. Community members wanted this approach to be adequately resourced and tested before being expanded more widely.
A defined initial programme should therefore show **how many households are reached, the level of take-up and what difference the support makes to water use**, with the results used to shape any wider rollout.

Q&A: Q3

Further questions about Hafren Dyfrdwy's services and accountability

What are Hafren Dyfrdwy's plans to roll smart meters out more widely and when can community members in other areas expect to benefit?

Context from the session:

Members responded positively to Hafren Dyfrdwy's explanation of the smart-meter rollout, but the discussion showed that customers did not have a clear picture of **how the rollout is progressing, when they might receive a smart meter, how they can request one or what benefits they will see from it**. Members were particularly interested in access to usage information, identifying leaks and seeing evidence that smart meters are helping customers reduce consumption.

Members suggested a dedicated app, but the company explained that it would **not be developing one at this stage**, with usage information instead intended to be available through its mobile-friendly customer web portal.

Regulatory and existing activity context:

The smart-meter rollout is an existing company commitment. Hafren Dyfrdwy's published business plan aims to upgrade all existing meters to smart technology by **2045**, with 17,440 smart meters expected to be in place by 2030[2], while new property developments and customers choosing to move to a meter are also intended to receive smart technology.

The plan also anticipates near-real-time consumption data for customers. **Any additional Water Voice action should therefore focus on making the rollout, customer access and resulting benefits clearer and more visible**, rather than restating the existing rollout commitment.

New actions requested by community members:

3A. Publish a clear customer-facing rollout plan

Provide a simple view of the smart-meter rollout showing **progress against milestones, how meters are being prioritised, the definitive completion timetable and how customers can request a smart meter**.

Customers should also be told clearly when a smart meter has been installed or activated and what this enables them to do. This would also provide an opportunity to address uncertainty created by different completion dates referenced during the session.

3B. Give customers useful access to their smart-meter data

Ensure customers with smart meters can easily access their water-use information through the customer portal and clearly explain **what information is available and how frequently it updates**.

The aim should be to give customers information they can genuinely use to understand changes in consumption and identify potentially unusual or continuous usage.

3C. Show what the smart-meter rollout is achieving

Report evidence of the benefits being delivered as the rollout progresses, such as **changes in customer water use and customer-side leakage identified through smart-meter data**.

This should allow customers to see whether the benefits described during the session are being realised in Hafren Dyfrdwy's own area, rather than relying only on the expected benefits of smart metering generally.

[2] This information was not stated during the session, but was drawn from Hafren Dyfrdwy's PR24 Business Plan 2025–30 (p. 162) to provide additional context on the company's existing smart-meter commitments.

Q&A: Q4

Further questions about Hafren Dyfrdwy's services and accountability

What do you see as Hafren Dyfrdwy's main weakness and what change do you want to achieve in this area during 2027?

Context from the session:

Community members asked Hafren Dyfrdwy to be open about its main weakness and the change it wanted to achieve during 2027. The company identified **leakage and supply interruptions**, explained the current gap against its supply interruption target and gave further context around leakage and the work underway to improve both areas.

Members found the additional context useful and did not identify any further actions, with both issues having already been explored in detail through the wider resilience discussion. **The company did not, however, set out a separate specific improvement to be achieved during 2027**.

Regulatory and existing activity context:

Leakage and supply interruptions are already formal performance commitments under the current regulatory framework, with performance linked to financial consequences through Ofwat's outcome delivery incentives.

Creating additional Water Voice targets in these areas could therefore duplicate existing commitments, unless Hafren Dyfrdwy chooses to go further than its regulated trajectory or provide greater customer-facing accountability around progress.

New actions requested by community members:

No additional actions were requested by community members following the company's response.

The relevant customer asks around clearer performance information, investment and future resilience are captured under Question 2.

Q&A: Q5

Further questions about Hafren Dyfrdwy's services and accountability

How will you prove that reported changes have made a real difference and will progress be independently verified?

Context from the session:

Community members wanted to understand **what sits behind an action being described as 'delivered'**, including what was done, the supporting evidence and whether it made a difference to customers. **Hafren Dyfrdwy confirmed that it had already shared an evidence pack with CCW and was happy for this to be shared with community members.** Members also wanted independently verified performance information to be easier to access without searching through lengthy regulatory reports, and supported wider sharing of Water Voice progress and company achievements.

Regulatory and existing activity context:

Regulated performance is already reported through the Annual Performance Report using audited information, with Ofwat scrutinising and publishing comparative performance information. CCW also confirmed during the session that a Water Voice action will only be marked as complete once supporting evidence has been provided.
Hafren Dyfrdwy also described quarterly regional communications being developed. **The additional requirement is therefore to make existing evidence meaningful and accessible to customers, rather than creating another layer of verification.**

New actions requested by community members:

5A. Make the evidence behind delivered Water Voice actions accessible

Build on the evidence pack already shared with CCW to provide community members with an accessible record for each completed action, showing **what customers asked for, what Hafren Dyfrdwy did, the supporting evidence and what changed for customers as a result**.
Where an action leads to ongoing work, make clear what happens next rather than treating completion of the initial activity as the end of the issue.

5B. Make independently verified performance easier for customers to understand

Bring key independently assured performance information into Hafren Dyfrdwy's own customer communications in a simple format, showing **performance against target, whether performance is improving or deteriorating and, where useful, how it compares with the wider industry**.
Members suggested approaches such as red/amber/green indicators so customers can quickly understand where the company is performing well and where improvement is still required.

5C. Share Water Voice progress with the wider customer base

Use the planned regional communications for Wrexham and Powys to show wider customers **what Water Voice members asked for, what Hafren Dyfrdwy has done in response and the evidence of any resulting improvement**.
This should include achievements as well as areas still requiring improvement, helping customers see the practical outcomes arising from the Water Voice process.

Attendance list

Stephanie Cawley	Managing Director Hafren Dyfrdwy
Louise Moir	Customer Experience and Strategy Lead Hafren Dyfrdwy
Samantha Hare	Session Lead Facilitator Senior Insight Manager, Taylor McKenzie Research
Rhodri Williams	Session Chair Non-Executive Director and Board Member, Consumer Council for Water
11x Community Members	Water Voice Community Members Hafren Dyfrdwy Community

Session transcript

CCW Chair: Good evening everyone and thank you very much for giving up your time. Sorry you've had to waste some of it waiting for me to be able to get into the discussion, but that's probably my incompetence rather than anything else. So, my name's Rhodri Williams and I'm the Wales Board member and Chair at CCW, and my job is to chair tonight's session.

This is, as you know, part of our Water Voice programme, and it has a very simple but important purpose, to give you as customers a stronger, more direct voice into how your water company performs, communicates, and hopefully improves. It's about accountability, an opportunity for you as members of the community to question senior leaders from Hafren Dyfrdwy[3] directly about the issues that matter most to you, what needs to improve and what will change as a result of this discussion this evening.

Now, it's not a complaints hearing, and it's not a technical inquiry as such. It's a structured customer-led conversation focused on accountability, learning, and hopefully agreeing some clear, practical actions.

The topics we cover tonight haven't been chosen by the company. They've been shaped by community members through the pre-task briefing session, spotlight research, and wider Water Voice discussion. So, this is your agenda.

And let me just set a clear tone. We expect the discussion to be a respectful, but challenging one. Please feel free to be able to speak openly and honestly about your experiences and your expectations, and equally we hope that the responses we get from Hafren Dyfrdwy's senior team will be equally clear and brief to the point. When you're not speaking, please keep your microphone muted to avoid any background noise and playback from other people.

The session, as you should know, is being full transcribed and the agreed outcomes will be published. Hafren Dyfrdwy will also be expected to publish an action plan responding to the commitments made. That transparency, if you like, is a key part of what makes this whole process meaningful.

In terms of ground rules, they're very simple. One person at a time, keep your contribution focused, and concentrate on forward-looking actions, what needs to change, by when, and how customers will get to know about it.

Finally, can I briefly introduce those joining us this evening. Firstly, and you've already heard from Sam, our independent facilitator from Taylor McKenzie Research, Sam Hare, who will guide the discussion and ensure that all your voices are heard. And representing Hafren Dyfrdwy this evening, I'm delighted to welcome Stephanie Cawley[4], the company's newly appointed Managing Director, and Louise Moir, the company's Customer Experience Lead.

So, thank you very much for giving up your time. We at CCW are very grateful to you for being willing to do this and think that it makes a real difference to the way water companies in England and Wales perform. So, I'll now hand over to Sam, who will lead us through the session. Thanks very much.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you, Rhodri, and good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us this evening. Before we begin, I want to briefly explain again how names in the transcript will be handled.

In the room this evening we're only going to be using first names, and in the published transcript and the report, all customer names will be anonymised. After the session, community members will have the opportunity to flag anything personal, or just anything that you would rather be removed or further anonymised, for example, the street you live on or something like that, we can remove that before the transcript is published.

[3] Hafren Dyfrdwy, also referred to as Hafren D, and HD
[4] Stephanie Cawley, also referred to as Steph

Session transcript

The purpose of the transcript, as Rhodri mentioned, is to accurately reflect the discussion and the actions agreed. It's not to single any one individual out. It's so that we can refer back to it when we're building the action plan, and develop our actions, and keep on track of them.

There are three main parts to the session this evening. First, we will be reviewing part of the existing action plan, and challenge the action, well, one action in particular that we've agreed on as a community, that needs strengthened and broadened. Second, we will ask one new performance challenge question, and that's developed from an issue that the community members prioritised during the briefing session, but also during the spotlight surveys, as well as pre-tasks that you completed before the briefing session. And third, we will move on to a shorter question and answer session, and community members will ask additional questions that were also prioritised during the briefing session, and we'll open up to the water company representatives to then answer questions, and community members will have the opportunity to ask follow-up questions as well.

For the first two questions, they'll be the same accountability cycle, so a community member will ask the agreed question. Hafren then have five minutes to respond. Community members will react to that response and identify what is clear, what is missing, and what needs strengthened, and we will be creating a live document which captures all the actions that have been discussed during the session, and I will share the screen and share all the actions that we discussed. Hafren will then have a short opportunity to explain if there's any actions that are not feasible and give an explanation as to why.

During the question-and-answer session, it's a slightly lighter version or lighter process than the other two questions, in that the nominated community member will ask the question, the company will respond, and the question asker will have an option to ask a follow-up question before asking for further follow-up questions from the wider community.

Lovely, well you've heard that before in the briefing session, and everyone's used to how the sessions are run now, as this is our second one now, so just to get started, it would be great to get all the community members to introduce themselves, just first names is perfect, and the area that you live in. And once again, I've just written your names down in a random order, so I'll be picking on someone first, so if it's okay, just your first name and the area you're from. I'll start with you, Community Member 1, please.

Community Member 1: Hi, I'm Community Member 1 and I live outside Llangollen.

Community Member 2: Hi, I'm Community Member 2, I'm in North Wales, Broughton.

Community Member 3: Hello, my name's Community Member 3, I'm from Four Crosses, Powys.

Community Member 4: Hi, I'm Community Member 4, I'm from near Bangor-on-Dee.

Community Member 5: I'm Community Member 5, I'm from Wrexham, North Wales.

Community Member 6: Hi, I'm Community Member 6 and I'm from Gwersyllt in Wrexham.

Community Member 7: Evening, everyone, Community Member 7 from Llangollen.

Community Member 8: Community Member 8 from Wrexham.

Community Member 9: Hi, I'm Community Member 9 from Froncysyllte near Llangollen.

Community Member 10: Hi all, I'm Community Member 10, also from Wrexham.

Community Member 11: Hi, I'm Community Member 11, I'm from Bangor-on-Dee.

TMcK Facilitator: Perfect, thank you so much, everybody. I'll pass back over to Rhodri to introduce our first question for the evening.

Session transcript

CCW Chair: We can start with our first question which looks back at commitments already made in Hafren Dyfrdwy's action plan. During the briefing session, community members agreed that proactively reaching people who need support through Action 32 needed further scrutiny. So, I'll now ask Community Member 2, please, to ask the agreed question. Over to you, Community Member 2.

TMcK Facilitator: Sorry, it's Community Member 9.

Community Member 9: No problem. Well, to be honest, it's there on the screen, but Hafren D has made progress through Action 32, with support information now easier to find online, and vulnerability training for staff. However, we feel these approaches are largely reliant or still largely reliant on customers seeking out support for themselves. We want Hafren D to think more creatively about reaching people who may be struggling, reluctant to ask for help, or are just outside current support criteria. How will you expand Action 32 to proactively identify and reach these customers through new partnerships and community-based approaches, rather than relying on them to find or ask for support themselves?

CCW Chair: I don't know if you want to start, Steph? I'll leave it to both of you to work out between you how you'd like to respond. If you can keep it as concise and to the point as possible, that would be much appreciated. And can I just say to community members, please listen carefully and make a note of anything that you might want to follow up on. Thank you.

Steph Cawley: Thank you and just let me quickly say thanks to all of you for taking the time this evening to be interested in HD and giving us your views. We really value your time, and things like this really matter to us for making improvements.

So, a brilliant question. We never want any customer to worry about paying their bill or having to do business with us in any way, shape or form. We think that we offer really good support but, as your question says, if people can't access it or don't know that it's there, then we're probably not doing a good enough job. We know that not everyone in our region has access to the internet, so doing lots of lovely, whizzy things online isn't always going to work really well, so we absolutely want to focus on awareness, and I think there's a whole raft of things that Lou can talk to you in a minute about what we're doing. And then of course we'd love your ideas about what we can do better.

We're really lucky in HD to have a lot of great community support, which makes it a little bit easier and gives us access to many pathways that perhaps some other organisations don't have.

I guess I also just wanted to point out that we know vulnerability differs, and we know that we need to offer different support for different things at different times, so somebody not being able to pay their bill might be very different to somebody who needs to be treated separately if they don't have water, for example.

We want to make sure that everyone in HD is trained in all of those different vulnerabilities, and we don't want the customers to have to know what they have to ask for. We don't want them to know all of our different schemes or all of the different ways, just to get in touch with us and we can help, whatever the issue happens to be. I will let Lou tell you some of the lovely things we're doing.

Louise Moir: Hi everyone. Obviously on the last panel, you gave us lots of food for thought, so we have been doing a lot of work in this area, you'll be pleased to know, but obviously there's a lot more we can do.

One of the things that I think's really going to make a big difference is off the back of our support in the community events that we carry out with external partners. Our most recent events were attended by Kidney Care, Welshpool, Age Cymru Powys, Ponthafren Mental Health Charity, and Lyndon Davies, just to name a few.

And what we're going to do next is actually look at how we tap into those organisations to more proactively promote some of our support to our services. For example, with Kidney Care, we could actually go into the hospitals and actually give patients information, and actually share that with them, because we know that's a group where we would definitely be able to support from potentially an affordability perspective, because if they're on a low income at that point, but also from our priority services perspective. So, we're really looking forward to pushing that over the coming months.

I did mention previously that we'd launched our Better Off Calculator, which is basically a one-stop shop for everything in terms of affordability, but like you say, we really, really need to get that out into our customers in the community, so they're not having to contact us for that support.

So, we are trying different things. We're putting little cards in prescription bags, using like the local pharmacies so that we can promote our services, and our online Here2Help hubs, so again trying to think differently.

We're also looking at how we can go to our events where we're doing, for example, laying mains, and we might be at an event talking to customers about traffic disruption, actually taking that opportunity to promote some of this support there, because there might be customers coming to those events to talk about traffic disruption, but actually they might see something where they would benefit from a financial or another vulnerability perspective.

We've also, since the last panel, built some really great media partnerships in Wrexham and Powys, and we will be using them to really push some of this messaging, because we know our customers rely on that trusted media, rather than us putting things on our own social media, which was feedback that we received last time. We don't have a great following, but using those trusted media partners, we're really, really hoping that that's going to help grow our numbers.

In terms of our Better Off Calculator, since we've been doing some of this work, we've actually allowed some customers to access around £120,000's worth of unclaimed benefits in addition to the support that we've been helping them with. So, it just shows, once we get to having these conversations with customers, and they're aware of what we can do, it really can make that tangible difference to their income and help with some of their other bills as well.

So, definitely a lot more we can do. We've also doubled our number of community connectors and recruited a Welsh speaker so that we can actually tap into some of those more rural Welsh-speaking communities as well, because I think that was a little bit of a barrier for us in some of those areas. By having a dedicated Welsh speaker as well, we're really hoping that we can focus on those communities as well.

CCW Chair: Great, thank you both for keeping to time, that's much appreciated. I'll hand back straight to Sam, who's going to lead now a discussion with our panel members as to what they've heard from you both. Thanks.

TMcK Facilitator: Lovely, thank you so much, and thanks so much for your response, Steph and Louise. We're going to now go to community members and see what your thoughts are on what you've just heard. Does it challenge what you initially thought? Is there anything that you're really interested to hear about? Is there something still missing from what you really hoped that you would hear this evening that hasn't quite happened, now's your opportunity to bring that up.

The best way to do this is if you can pop your react hand up or your physical hand up, and I'll come to you and get your input, but we'll start with Community Member 9 if that's okay, since you asked the question. What did you think of that response?

Session transcript

Community Member 9: Much as this might be a surprise, I actually think that's all pretty good. I'm really quite... I wasn't involved in previous meetings, but as somebody who's coming in this time around, that sort of level of involvement with communities quite impresses me, and I particularly like the fact that, I didn't write down what it was, but the, is it the spending calculator, sorry, was that the right phrase?

Louise Moir: The Better Off Calculator.

Community Member 9: That's it, yeah, because we did talk about this, "How could you identify this through people claiming benefits?" and it's really interesting that, through this process, people have actually identified that there's other benefits they should be claiming, which is [Inaudible]. So actually, yeah, everything there I think is – because I was wondering how you were actually going to do this, and I think this is quite impressive, to be honest, so well done. You maybe don't get that very often but well done.

TMcK Facilitator: I remember on the briefing call you were really focused on the word "proactive" and you thought how can they show that what they're doing is proactively identifying people that might need help, and things like that, and being able to recognise when someone's needing extra support, without that person I guess being the one that needs to put their hands up and ask for the support. Is there anything else you want to add before I move on? Are you happy with that response or is there anything else you want to put forward?

Community Member 9: No, I'm really quite happy with that response. I'd have to go away and think about anything to add to it, but yeah, it strikes me as being really good.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 9, and thanks for the question. Community Member 7, I'll come to you next, please.

Community Member 7: It sounds like there's lots of great work going on, very proactive as you said. What popped into my head was universities and students, and I wondered, so for example, if they're a student, a full-time student, they get a discount off council tax, and there's a form that they fill in at the university which allows that to just happen, the university finance department sorts that out for them, so it's quite seamless. I just wondered if you'd done any work with universities and students, like I'm quite involved with student nurses, for example. I know that they really struggle with finances for three years, and I just wondered if there was anything available to full-time students in terms of any discount off their water bills, or maybe there isn't, but I just wondered if there was anything [overtalking 00:20:13] -

TMcK Facilitator: So, Community Member 7, we're not going to introduce a new question, but I guess what action -

Community Member 7: Sorry.

TMcK Facilitator: - moving forward, no, no, you're fine, you're on the right track, what action would we want them to put forward in their action plan then that covers off that point?

Community Member 7: The work that they're doing in communities is great. I would just ask could they get involved with universities; I guess. Could that be another kind of outreach arm that we can look at, because that is another vulnerable group of people, I suppose, and they're not likely to be at the community hubs and things like that. Sorry if that's a different question. In my head it was the same. It was the same kind of thing.

TMcK Facilitator: No, absolutely. It's so we can formulate an action for them, so that's exactly it, we can ask them to do more work with universities, see if there's any discounts available, like they get with council tax, and work with that group of people as well, so absolutely, Community Member 7, that's spot on. Anything else you want to add?

Session transcript

Community Member 7: No, no, otherwise I think, yeah, it sounds like they're really trying hard to reach people, so yeah, well done.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 7, and that's a great action, I can see the team writing it up at the moment. Community Member 1, over to you.

Community Member 1: Yeah, I want to say the same. It sounds like they're doing loads. I just wonder if we could go more in-depth into the local communities, because I know it's great, these big charities, but I think it needs to go more local. I'm a teacher and, for example, we have a family link officer that works with 10 schools in the area, she works with the families, and she has links to council, to the council tax, she has links to housing, all kinds of things that she can help families with. I actually spoke to her this week, and she said she doesn't have any kind of person to contact in the water if people need help with their water bills, or they've got children with disabilities. So I just wonder whether, I know that that's quite in-depth for such a big company to be going into, but I think that is what's needed, going to these people, because a lot of our families will put their heads in the sand, won't go to these community things, won't ask for help, and us getting the family link officer involved would help, so I think it might be worth a...

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, absolutely, so back on the action thing then, what can we put forward to them to get external charities and things like, or directly with link workers, what would an ideal action look like to you?

Community Member: I think it needs to be more that we go more in-depth into the communities rather than the bigger charities, because I know my friend works for a local Wrexham charity, and she knows loads of families around Wrexham. So, I think it's going, the big charities are great, but now trying to go to the next level, to these smaller charities that are with the families, that are on the frontline. Does that make, is that okay?

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. That's perfect, Community Member 1, thank you so much. Anything else you want to add?

Community Member 1: No.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, that's perfect. Community Member 11, I'll move over to you now.

Community Member 11: I'm quite impressed with what I've heard from HD, but in terms of hitting a wider audience, there are a couple of things. In Wrexham there is an Ageing Well Forum, some people may have heard about it, and that is under the umbrella of AVOW and Wrexham Council. That works with, how can I put it, public sector, voluntary, third sector organisations that have contact with the elderly and/or disabled. It's quite a big organisation and it is quite broad based, so that could be possibly an organisation or a forum which HD could tap into, and it would give quite a wide hit.

And the other thing is, I've mentioned before, AVOW is an organisation in Wrexham, ironically, in the old Wrexham and East Denbighshire water company offices in Wrexham, and they've got a directory of all the voluntary organisations that operate in the area and, you know, their client base and what they do. So, in terms of, how can I put it, getting to a wider audience, there are two avenues that I would advise HD to explore on top of what they're already doing. It's just a suggestion.

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, absolutely. What was the first charity that you mentioned? What was the name of that, sorry?

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Community Member 11: It was a forum, it's the Ageing Well Forum, and that involves loads of organisations, statutory, voluntary and third sector who have contact or provide services for the elderly and/or disabled. And AVOW is the umbrella organisation in Wrexham for all the voluntary organisations of all different elements, not just the elderly. So those are two avenues there which could open doors for HD in terms of their community engagement.

TMcK Facilitator: Absolutely. Thank you so much, Community Member 11, I can see the team writing down the names of those and putting them forward for action plan, so thank you so much, that's super helpful. Community Member 10, over to you now.

Community Member 10: I thought the response was really good as well, lots of initiatives in reaching vulnerable client groups through the charities. In terms of maybe the action plan, I'd like to see what would happen maybe next. Do the relationships or links with, say, the vulnerable customers continue? I just don't want to see maybe support given to someone and then they're left for a prolonged period. I'd like to see if there's any kind of follow-up, any kind of potential safeguards in place just to carry on with ongoing support for people they've reached through link charities and that kind of thing. So, it's just a bit more of the development of the action plan really there.

TMcK Facilitator: What does continued engagement look like to you then, in an ideal situation? What can we put forward to them?

Community Member 10: I think we should be maintaining those relationships with those charities. I think there should be regular reviews with both the charities and the individuals who they supported. I think there could be good news stories as a result of people Hafren Dyfrdwy continue to support. So yeah, it's just regular contact, it's open communications and just ongoing support.

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, because I think during the briefing session you'd mentioned, I think you called it "good news stories", case studies to share to get other people who may be vulnerable that aren't ready to seek support or aren't able to at the moment, sort of help them feel empowered, I guess, to then come forward too. That was a really good point on the briefing call as well, Community Member 10. Thank you so much. Anybody else got anything to add about this topic here? Everyone happy with what has been put forward and discussed?

Okay, I'm going to share my screen just in a moment, and you'll see what was shown during our briefing session. We'll go through the actions that they're currently doing and what Hafren plan on doing in the future, and then also what you as community members have put forward as a sort of ideal water company response, which will then be used to update the action plan and potentially add some new actions based on this point about being more proactive with the community, but also being proactive in the ways that you're able to identify and communicate with vulnerable customers, to ensure no one's left behind there. So, let me just share my screen in a second.

There we are, can everyone see that okay? We've got some nods. So, a bit of a summary, I guess. They've acknowledged that there's a lack of awareness, means that support is not advertised always correctly. Not everyone has access to the internet, and they're doing the best they can to identify those individuals, but our main focus is on awareness.

They're offering a variety of support to a range of customers with different vulnerabilities, and HD employees are trained in a variety of vulnerabilities, and that's currently on the action plan as well, so we're keeping track of that.

Session transcript

Recent events attended by a variety of charity, community partners. They've launched the Better Off Calculators, so need to create better awareness of these services. Customers have accessed £120,000 of additional support since its launch. Support in the community events with external partners including Kidney Care, so going to hospitals and identifying the support that they need, and following up with that support there, so a different way of getting to harder-to-reach individuals or more vulnerable individuals.

Built local media partnerships to push messaging to help with awareness, so social media partners, more trusted partners, or people that are more likely to follow, to build the awareness there as they understand that not everybody follows HD on social media and whatnot. And they have employed a dedicated Welsh speaker to access more niche customer bases in more rural parts.

What they're planning on doing in the future, so they're investigating how to tap into charity or community partners for further customer outreach, and you've given some great examples of what they could be doing and what in ideal water company response looks like, which is great, actually, that's a collaborative partnership there.

Cards in prescription bags as well, to advertise support and the Better Off Calculator. Capturing opportunities at other company events to push messaging around support and leveraging trusted media partners to grow HD's own media presence.

And you can see the team are currently typing as we speak, so I'll go through this slowly and I'm sure they'll catch up.

We then went to the community members and asked the community what the ideal water company response would be, so if there were any gaps in the actions that they have put forward in either what they're currently doing or what they will do in the future. So, involvement with local communities is impressive, said Community Member 9, so the Better Off Calculator is a positive service. I guess there it would be to push that out more and make more people aware of it, which is what it sounds like they're doing with the prescription bags and things like that. Continue to expand the range of stakeholders that HD engages with, in order to support the full customer base.

You gave lots of good examples which are all captured here. Community Member 7, you mentioned universities and students as a unique customer base, so identify how best to support them, whether it's a discount similar to what you get for council tax, or just identify them as a potentially vulnerable group.

Engaging with family link officers to further expand outreach to harder-to-reach customers. Aging Well Forum would enable HD to access a further network of third sector organisations which is tailored to older individuals, to enhance community engagement, and also, they could engage with the Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham (AVOW). And finally, maintaining engagement with voluntary organisations and conducting regular reviews to capitalise on relationships.

So, lots of things to be done, community-based activity which really, Community Member 9, echoes what you said during the briefing session surrounding being more proactive, proactive in both identifying the individuals but also engaging with them as well.

I'm going to go back to the community again, and I just want to see if there's anything missing, or this is your opportunity to add anything that maybe you didn't get a chance to say earlier, or now that you've reviewed the actions that are put on the screen, is there anything missing there that we can add? So, I'll just open back up to the community members. If you've got anything else to add, pop your hand up. Community Member 7 and Community Member 1, I think your hands are up from before or are they new hands? Hands are down, okay, there we go.

I'll start that again. If you've got anything that you want to add or change or expand on in what's on the screen currently, pop your hand up and we can have a bit of a discussion. Are we all happy? You're all nodding. Okay, perfect, I'll pass back over to Rhodri.

CCW Chair: Thanks, Sam, and thank you all for contributing to that. Before we finalise these actions then, I'd like to turn back to Stephanie and Louise for a brief opportunity to highlight any of those commitments you think maybe are not feasible or are difficult, and if you could explain why, I think understanding that is good that we can actually understand what the problems are, and that it's recorded as part of the session. So back to you both.

Steph Cawley: Brilliant, thank you. Look, we really welcome all of those ideas. We haven't got a problem with any of them at all, they're all fantastic. I'll hand to Lou in a minute, because we've actually worked through some of the named charities, others we haven't, so we'll pick that up. But some of your ideas, particularly the schools and universities, we've done that before, so I think it's just a case of picking it up again, and I really liked the suggestion about how do we keep the engagement going to make sure that we are always connected to these different communities? Lou, do you want to pick up some of the specifics?

Louise Moir: Like Steph said, it's really great to hear that some of the stuff that you've mentioned, we're either already in conversation or have connections in those charities. But I think it goes back to that point that we're saying actually, it's making it a lot easier for customers, so actually getting into those smaller partnerships is just going to add a lot more value.

Like I said, we have doubled the number of community connectors. We did just have one connector, which obviously it's quite a big patch to cover. We've now got two. Katie, who works with me, looks after all of that activity, and she's got a really big plan of like getting into all of these local partnerships, and just sort of like reinvigorating those relationships, getting them trained up a lot more on how they can signpost customers to support to remove some of those potential barriers, so that the customers aren't having to contact us.

So, yeah, no worries with any of those, they're really great ideas, so thank you so much for the thought you've put in. It's really good to know that we're going to be on the right tracks with what we're doing. We'll have some really good stuff to share with you over the coming months.

TMcK Facilitator: Can I just jump in quickly, sorry, Rhodri. Community Member 10 made a really good action that's not been captured on the screen currently. It's probably because I was going to quickly. I just want to double check that that's all okay as well with the good news stories and -

Steph Cawley: Yes, absolutely. We love it.

TMcK Facilitator: Sort of promoting that way, so what's happened well for an individual to empower them to then maybe pick up the phone or engage with the service or whatever it is, the leaflet through the door or anything like that.

Louse Moir: We have tried to do some of these before. It's quite a sensitive subject for a lot of customers, so it's quite difficult to get customer buy-in, but obviously where we can, sometimes we've done things where we've just obviously made it anonymous, just to show the benefits, but that's definitely something that we really want to do to encourage customers. The more stories we have, the better, because it just makes it a lot easier then for other customers, and gives them reassurance that it's actually okay to speak to us for help. We're all human at the end of the phone in Hafren, and we just want to help customers with that support, so anything like that that we can share, we will.

TMcK Facilitator: And another point, sorry, I think I just showed my screen too early and the team hadn't quite finished typing it all out, another point that Community Member 10 also raised about the continued engagement and follow-up and maintaining, I guess, a relationship if you want to call it that, with vulnerable members or customers, and have that continue, is that okay to add into the action plan there as well?

Session transcript

Louise Moir: Yeah, that's fine. We've actually got that as an action in our vulnerability strategy document where we're going to have a panel of partners and customers, so that when we're introducing new things, when we're looking at our strategy, we can engage with those partners and customers. Obviously, all the feedback yourselves share, that will all be incorporated, but that is one of things that we've committed to, so more than happy to have that as well.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you. Rhodri, back over to you.

CCW Chair: Great, well thank you for the positivity and once again for keeping it concise and allowing us to get back on target timewise, which I'm particularly grateful for since I was responsible for the delay. We'll now move swiftly on to the new performance issue that community members chose to challenge on, and the topic was prioritised through the pre-task and briefing session, because community members wanted reassurance that water supplies could meet growing demand and withstand climate change. So, I'll now invite Community Member 1, if I may, to ask the next question.

Community Member 1: Hi. Only half of our community members currently trust Hafren Dyfrdwy. The company has missed its leakage and supply interruption targets. Ageing pipes need replacing, while demand is growing as more houses are built. Climate change will put even more pressure on supplies, with hotter, drier summers and wetter winters. Community members said trust would be higher if they could see that Hafren was planning ahead, and future-proofing water supplies. How are you going to make sure there is enough water for the future as demand increases and the climate changes?

Steph Cawley: Thanks for the question, it's really timely, I think, particularly given the last two summers we've had, which have been a real reminder of what climate change is bringing, and although our supplies are secure in HD, and I'll talk about that a little bit more in a minute, we cannot take resilience for granted in any way, shape or form.

Probably a bit too long term, but we do have a water resource management plan that looks 30 years ahead, and that takes into account climate change and population growth and demand changes, and the good news is that in HD we have got enough water, raw water sup-supplies for everyone.

But your question is absolutely pertinent, because if you look at this summer, the hottest summer ever, demand increased by 30% at some points in the HD region in August, and that means we need to have, one, enough raw water, but two, we need to keep up with demand. And some of the things that you mentioned around leakage and supply interruptions and burst mains, are things that we know that we want to do better on.

If I just give a little bit of context about raw water, though. We're really lucky in HD in that we get our water from different sources. So, 60% of the water comes from the River Dee, 30% comes from groundwater sources, so aquifers that are underground, 5% comes from reservoirs, and 5% from spring water, which is brilliant, because if any one of those sources is struggling, we can change our abstraction and we can move water around, and we've got brilliant people who worked mega hard over the summer in 40-degree heat to do that. So, I'm not worried about that.

But you're absolutely right. We ask a lot of our customers, when it gets hot, we ask people to use less water, and again, I think the work that we collectively did, customers and ourselves over the summer, meant that we didn't have to put any restrictions on our customers, but we never want to have to do that, and that means that we have got to be better at maintaining our network and reducing our leakage.

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We have got a plan to reduce leakage by 23% by 2030 and, as you quite rightly say, that is a measure that we haven't managed to hit. As I joined HD, it's one of the things that is top of the list, to try and understand and get better at. As I'm sure many of you know, we're investing this year in replacing a good section of the Wrexham Ring Main, which is a problem, so it does burst and cause supply interruptions, but obviously it's leaking as well, so replacing some of that really out-of-date pipe over the course of the next few years, when we're replacing 12 kilometres will make a really big difference to supply interruptions and leakage.

We want to work really hard, though, on water efficiency, so we want to work really hard with our customers to understand what is it that we can do as an organisation, working with individuals to make sure that people are using less water, and that is absolutely on us to make sure that we've got the right solutions in place as well.

Smart meters are going to be a really good way to do that. As you know with energy, if you've got a smart meter, it does make you think differently about how you're using your water, and water does cost money as well, particularly if you're using it for showers and things, where you're having to heat it also. So, we've got a great plan to roll out more smart meters, particularly for those customers who want it as well.

But education is going to be key in all of this. Lou, I don't know if you just want to quickly pick up on the work we're doing there?

Louise Moir: As part of our education strategy, we go into schools across Wrexham and Powys. We also go to various events where there's a focus, we were at the Eisteddfod with an education stand, and a key part of that is water efficiency. For anyone who's got children, I'm sure you know that they'll come home from school, telling you everything that they've done that day and sharing all of that information, so we do really know that actually those future generations, that's really important, and that's why we've really ramped up our education activity over the last 12 months.

We've also just recruited a dedicated Water Efficiency Analyst in Hafren, who will work really closely with our education team, looking at different ways that we can engage with our customers and young children.

Again, I think when you mentioned before about universities, we can go into universities and talk to the students about using water wisely, keeping their bills low, and also, we are exploring with our new analyst how can we go into homes and deliver free home water efficiency checks? When customers are struggling, and they're just wanting a little bit of advice about how they could use water a little bit more wisely, how can we use some of our metering technicians to go and have those really good quality conversations with customers as well, who want it, so that we can share that information with them as well, without them having to worry about their water bill.

So, there's quite a lot from an education perspective that we've started to explore, and we'll be able to share that with you again over the coming months, with that new person in role.

Steph Cawley: So I guess the summary is raw water, all good, loads of options, way into the future, which is fab, but, we want to protect it as a really precious source - and we want to make sure that the money that we're using to treat water is being used for things like drinking, and not leaking out of our pipes - and we know that we've got a way to go on that, but we're really excited. This five-year cycle is the biggest investment we've got, £266 million, and it's going on schemes like the Wrexham Ring Main where we know we have historically underinvested.

CCW Chair: Great, thank you both yet again, and keeping it short and concise. That's brilliant. So, back to you, Sam. We have plenty of time to respond to the company's response.

Session transcript

TMcK Facilitator: That you so much, and thanks, Steph and Louise, for a detailed answer there. I want you to think, community members, I want you to think about what we discussed during the briefing session. This was a very hot topic, as Steph said at the beginning, with summer just finishing, but then all the backlog and things like that coming forward now. I want you to think about what was discussed during the briefing session and compare that to what you've just heard this evening. Is it positive, did it give you confidence, or is there anything that feels vague or not yet answered or not yet addressed? Now's your chance to voice that, and hopefully we can put together some really good actions for the action plan.

This is a new topic, so it's a new area that we're covering, so we can get some really detailed and good actions for HD to commit to for the future for next summer and all the summers after that, and things like that. Community Member 1, I'm going to go to you first, since you asked the question. First of all, thank you so much for asking the question, and then if anyone wants to follow up and be asked to provide some information afterwards, pop your hand up now, but Community Member 1, over to you to begin, if that's okay?

Community Member 1: I think it's really comforting to know that there's lots of water available, that we're not in a situation where we're concerned about water supply and things, because I know we're not an area typically that has hosepipe bans, so it's good to know that there's lots of water coming in.

The only thing I would like to know, it's more of a question, is how far off the targets are you? Are we way off? Is it a little bit off? Did you just miss the point or is it something that is going to take years to be able to meet those targets? Are they realistic for what's happening now?

TMcK Facilitator: How can we turn that question into an action, I guess would be my feedback for you, Community Member 1?

Community Member 1: Maybe to be more specific, if the company can be more specific about the targets, rather than that, "We've just missed them," could there be a percentage or a red, green, amber on how close or far off they were for making the targets?

TMcK Facilitator: And how would they communicate that with you as customers?

Community Member 1: Maybe you know on the tracker that we have, where it says that they missed, maybe there could be a bit more of an infographic on there, saying what percentage they missed the target by.

TMcK Facilitator: Those fact sheets are made by us, so we will take that feedback on board, but in terms of what HD could do to communicate with you or relay that information to you, where would you want to look for it or find out that information?

Community Member 1: I suppose maybe on their website or via an email. They could put that they were not concerned about the water coming in, but this is how far off we are from hitting targets and things like that.

TMcK Facilitator: Lovely, Community Member 1, thank you. Anything else you want to add about what you heard? I mean obviously during the briefing session we covered lots and lots of areas, so is there anything else you want to add?

Community Member 1: I don't think so at the moment.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 1. Community Member 9, over to you, please.

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Community Member 9: I've got a couple of questions. There was a lot of very laudable discussion of the description of what's been done for the domestic market. I was just interested in what proportion of the water goes to the different sectors. For domestic use, well, there's a lot of work being done, but what about the industrial and commercial sectors? And there's plans being drawn up, and again that's great and what have you, but is it addressing industrial and commercial growth as well? How is that going to be …?

It's just a personal interest, because I think there's a lot of focus on domestic, which is fine, but there is this other part, the whole commercial, the broad commercial sector which I think is really important, because some of those, you know, we do hear in the news about industries actually being asked to, through the summer, not in this area, but they were being asked to reduce output because of water shortages, and that just seems absolutely mad, to be honest, given the economy and everything like that.

So, the question is, you know, we were asked how would I put this into a question - really there's three parts to the question. Where is most water being used? Is it domestic or broad commercial? Or I suppose agriculture is the third part actually, so, there's three parts. What is the projected growth in demand for each of those three sectors, and what is actually being done to encourage the commercial and agricultural sector to, I don't know if they can reduce demand, but at least use water more efficiently? Does that kind of make sense?

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, okay Community Member 9, I'm sure that Steph and Louise have the answers to all your questions, but this session this evening, we're not going to be asking any more questions on this. It is a domestic customer panel. But I've got all your points on board about where's the water being used, what's the projected growth, and also what are industries or commercial customers being asked to do to reduce their water, as your three questions.

I guess from what I'm going to ask you, Community Member 9, is how do we put that into an action then for domestic customers? Maybe it's about the information that you're asking for, how do they relay that information to you? How would you want to see that information?

Community Member 9: How do I personally want to see the information? Well, given it seems to be quite a personal thing, to be honest, I don't really know. If it comes in a, you know, if we get a biannual or quad-annual sort of information sheet/newsletter, something like that, it can go into that. I don't know if that exists, to be honest. Put it on the website, but again we go back to the old question, is how many people actually look at the website sort of thing? It needs to be something people physically have in front of them really to engage with these things. At least that's my opinion.

TMcK Facilitator: Okay and I'm sure Steph and Louise have all that information, so we can pass that over to you after the session as well if it's a case about a commercial sector…

Community Member 9: Well, the point is, this whole thing is about, the question is about future proofing, and everything we've written there doesn't just apply to the domestic market, does it? It is the whole; the three sectors are together. The farms where I live still come off the same water main as I do ultimately.

TMcK Facilitator: Okay. What would you like them to be doing then?

Community Member 9: How do you mean, what would I like them to be doing?

TMcK Facilitator: As in for an action, so it would give you that information surrounding what commercial customers are being asked to do to save water and that kind of thing.

Community Member 9: Yeah, or how are they being helped to save water, because the water that comes into this village supplies all of those. If there's a problem in one area, there's going to be a problem in another.

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TMcK Facilitator: Okay, definitely we can put that forward as an action, and you also, you asked where water's mostly being used, and the projected growth. Is there anything we could put forward in this action plan, or would we give you that information after the session?

Community Member 9: Okay, so I suppose the action would be, and I'm sure the company already does, but the action would be to publish the 30-year plan. But I'm sure that's probably already published somewhere, I just don't know where it is. Yeah, there you go, I'm going to thumbs up. Since we're asking lots of questions about future proofing, then maybe this future plan needs, and sorry, it's not a criticism of the company, but we're asking the questions, so maybe it needs to be much more readily available and obvious than I'm finding it.

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, that's exactly the point there as well, so I guess back over to you, what could they do to make it more readily available? How would you like to be given the information or find the information?

Community Member 9: How do I get communicated by the company? Put it in an email. Put it in my water bill. It's about, this is one of those things. It's not readily, I don't expect it to be communicated, every little thing the company does, to receive an email about it, but maybe it's the sort of thing when the bills are sent out or emailed to us, there is a newsletter in with that that tells us where we can find all of these things.

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, absolutely, Community Member 9. That's a perfect action to put forward. Thank you so much. Who's next? Community Member 6, I'll go to you next.

Community Member 6: Yeah, I think basically from, this was one of my biggest points, from the summer, was the big scaremongering with the water and drought and hosepipe bans and all that kind of stuff, then actually hearing the lady talk about everything that HD is doing in the local area, I was really quite confident about that, so that was good to hear.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 6. Community Member 10, over to you.

Community Member 10: Thanks. It was good to hear about the amount of investment going on. I can't remember the figure that was quoted, but it was also said that it's a critical five-year period, so in terms of obviously investment over that period of time, it's where that investment is going to be directed, more to the point, maybe prioritised, and the reasoning where the investment is going above other criteria. I think that's something, as an action point, really, to establish, all this investment going to infrastructure. I think there was talk of smart meters and things like that, how much that's going to cost. But yeah, it would just be interesting to find out where the money's going to be directed, and why x amount is going this way. And I suppose in terms of obviously that information being communicated to us, I guess it would have to be some kind of annual report, so it just shows this amount of money is going towards this area, and this amount is going to go here, that kind of thing.

TMcK Facilitator: You mentioned prioritised against other criteria. What do you mean by that?

Community Member 10: So with the investment, in terms of obviously you've got ageing pipes, haven't you, so does that mean that there's a lot of investment having to go into the infrastructure, or is there x amount of investment needs to go into the prioritisation of any kind of other technological advances, whether it means that we're putting a smart meter in every home, that's going to cost, or is the investment going to go towards awareness or towards vulnerable customers, that kind of thing?

TMcK Facilitator: Okay, so not just only prioritising where the investment goes when it comes to infrastructure, but then almost another layer to that in that where the investment is going in infrastructure versus other priorities that they have?

Session transcript

Community Member 10: Yeah, I'd just be interested to see where their priorities lie and the reasoning behind that, because it obviously could differ to our opinion. We might think it should go somewhere else. But as the water company's responsible directly for where they want to put the investment, it would be interesting to see the rationale behind it.

TMcK Facilitator: That was my next point as well, so you said to provide a rationale behind why they're prioritising something over something else, you can kind of understand their thought process or the decision making there.

Community Member 10: Yeah.

TMcK Facilitator: Thanks, Community Member 10. Community Member 11 please.

Community Member 11: I was quite interested in the appointment of a Water Efficiency Analyst and the target of providing advice face to face in customers' homes etc. I mean that's all well and good, but my point is, that's going to take some resources in terms of boots on the ground. I just hope that they've got a plan for this, and it's adequately resourced in terms of personnel, otherwise it's not going to have the impact that I think they would like.

TMcK Facilitator: What could they do to show that impact or manage expectations there, Community Member 11?

Community Member 11: I think if I was rolling it out, I would do a sample in terms of appointing one or two field officers, for example, and them concentrating on a particular area and offering their services, and see what the take-up is, and then sort of multiply that through the number of properties which is served by Hafren Dyfrdwy. That's a big thing for them to do, and it's a cracking target, but it's going to need some working out and some thinking, and it needs to be adequately resourced, and it needs to be for the long term.

TMcK Facilitator: Okay, so you're saying that maybe a bit of a phased approach, I guess [overtalking 01:00:28] -

Community Member 11: Yeah, I mean they've got to think it through.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 11. Community Member 5, over to you now, please.

Community Member 5: I just want to say I'm quite impressed with the response that came from Steph, and the few things I've just made a note of here, I'll keep it short, is I think they should promote how you source the water, because I think that's a good starting point. It avoids scaremongering, that we're not just reliant purely on the reservoirs. How you could promote where you source the water, how you could tell the customers, so before joining, I was a customer who'd probably only read the annual bill, and I think that's probably a good starting point, so include it on the annual bill.

Regarding future planning, this can also be added onto the annual bill. Do something similar to council tax, where it will give you a breakdown where the money's been spent over the past 12 months. It gives customers a bit more reassurance their money's being spent wisely. But that's it. Thank you.

TMcK Facilitator: Lovely, Community Member 5, thank you so much. Yeah, because you mentioned about how they're prioritising against ageing pipes over new reservoirs and things like that, so I guess it was answered a bit there when they were talking about where the water's sourced from. Thank you so much, Community Member 5. Community Member 7.

Session transcript

Community Member 7: Just a quick one really. I think in terms of future proofing our water supplies, as us customers have a shared responsibility obviously not to waste water, and I feel like for me, the best way to do that is to be able to visually see what I'm using, so definitely smart meters, but also, I think I've mentioned this before, having an app like you've got for your energy, for gas, electric, where you can see actual graphs of hour to hour what you're using, where if my husband's having a 10-minute shower, I can actually say to him, "Look, you've had a 10-minute shower." I think we all need to be able to see exactly where it is that we're using, the water we're using.

And also I'd like to be able to more easily report leaks, and if I see, not saying seeing other people wasting water, but there's someone living by me whose overflow pipe has been running for the last two years, and I would just like to report that to somebody so somebody can go and help him, because it's probably a little plumbing issue that just needs a bit of help. But yeah, I think an app would be the way forward really, especially if we're going down the smart meters route. I think we need to be able to visually see where we're actually using water, not just the numbers moving on the meter, but where are we actually using it on a day-to-day basis.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 7. Community Member 1, have you got your hand up again or is that an old hand?

Community Member 1: Yeah, I've got my hand up again. I was just looking at the question and the part that says, "Only half of our community members currently trust Hafren." I think that's just showing that they're not communicating this stuff to us well enough. I do really like the factsheet that you've made of all the different facts on there. I wonder if they could do one for future proofing and attach it to the bills, and say, "Look, this is what we're doing, this is what," and hold their hands up and say, "We're not so good in this area and we're trying to improve it by doing this."

I also think, I had a letter recently about the water pipes being changed near me, but nowhere on that letter, I mean there could have been and I've missed it, but nowhere on that letter did I see, "The reason is we're trying to future proof the water, we're trying to do this, this is the reason." It was all about the disruption, rather than focusing on, "This is what we're trying to do for the future." I think if people saw that, they would understand a bit more and be like, "Okay, this is what it's for."

TMcK Facilitator: Community Member 1, that's a perfect action to put forward, thank you so much, and it kind of links to Community Member 10's point as well about being involved, not involved in the decision-making process, but having that oversight, so when it comes to why they're doing whatever they're doing to those pipes, and just having a bit more information on that. I guess that comes down to what they were saying about education there as well. Thank you so much, Community Member 1. Does anyone else have anything to add about resilience and future water supplies? All happy.

Just a point, Community Member 4, you mentioned about value for money and the communicating of the investment. Was your point covered tonight? I just want to make sure.

Community Member 4: It kind of is. I like the idea of a newsletter or attaching something to an annual bill, because that would then feel like value for money, and I'm talking specifically probably from rural areas now. As a trend, we seem to pay a lot more for what feels like a lot less. However, it's specifically water-wise, because properties are fewer and further between, I would imagine, and the water pipes cost a lot more to get water from a main to one house. That could be where the value for money is. But having an annual report, certainly I think that would definitely make me feel like I was receiving value for money a little bit more.

Session transcript

TMcK Facilitator: Yeah, so building that into their own company factsheet and what they're doing, but then also how they're improving value for money or managing your expectations there, what the money's being spent on, I suppose. Thank you so much. Anybody else got anything to say before I share my screen? I can see that the team has been busy writing down all the bits and pieces that have been discussed. We've got lots to get through, but anything else that anyone wants to add at this point? All happy, okay.

I'll just go through everything, because I think it all ties in lots of points that we've discussed, expands on what Steph and Louise had mentioned. What they're currently doing, they don't take resilience for granted, so water resource management plan covers over the next 30 years, and their catchment area does have enough supply of raw water.

Strong flexibility and resilience around water sources, so the River Dee, groundwater, reservoirs and spring water making up the water sources. They're currently proactively encouraging customers to reduce usage during times of water stress, but they did note that they have not placed a ban or any restrictions on your water.

They've ramped up education and school outreach on water conversations, and they said they could extend that to universities based on what was mentioned in the previous question, as well as smart meter use over the past 12 months. They have also hired a Water Efficiency Analyst to work on this.

What they will do in the future, their water efficiency efforts, so behaviour change initiatives, so they're working with customers to educate and encourage water conservation. Leveraging smart meter rollouts to encourage water use reduction and conservation efforts. They're carrying out in-home visits with metering teams to educate customers.

There's a £266m investment plan over the next five years going to areas such as Wrexham Ring Main to improve on water efficiency and resilience within the system, and they're replacing 12 kilometres of out-of-date pipes over the next five years to also minimise leakage.

So, lots of actions that have been put forward here from you community members. Transparency and specificity on the target reality gaps for water efficiency and conservation work. Communicating this information in easy-to-understand and visual format. Helping customers to understand where water is being used, so domestic, agriculture, or industrial, and how commercial users are being encouraged to conserve water and improve their own water efficiency. Projected growth in these areas would all be interesting for customers to know. It could be on a newsletter or customer bill.

Signpost customers to the 30-year plan. Most community members this evening appreciated what Steph and Louise have said about their plans. They just don't know about it. So, signposting customers to the planning and feeding more information in what the next sort of five years and then 30 years will look like.

Provide customers with the rationale behind investment choices and prioritisation processes, both at the infrastructure level, so why certain infrastructures are getting prioritised over others, but also with different priorities itself, so where resilience and future water supply supplies are prioritised on other topics.

Making the leak report process easier for customers. Helping customers to understand where most water is being used, so the Water Efficiency Analyst and plan for home visit education process needs to be adequately resourced, so it was mentioned a phased approach to make sure it's working as it should before investing lots of money in something that sounds quite expensive but very useful, so phased reports to make sure everything's working as planned before going more wider.

Session transcript

Promote how you source water and where you source it from. Everyone was pleased, I'm sure, to hear that there's an adequate water supply and water sources, and actually it was a bit of an education piece to know that these places are where you're getting your water from, so there's obviously a communication link missing there, so promote this, because it sounds good. So, how you source water and where you source it from, and that was suggested to communicate this on the bill.

Communicate how you spend the money raised through customers' bills in relation to resilience and future water supply, so investment in infrastructure, pipes, and things like that, and make it easier for customers to understand their water use and what they are using there.

Okay, that was a lot of me, so I'm going to move back to community members and see if there's anything else you want to expand on, or you want to add to the list here before we go back to Steph and Louise for a final comment. All good? Okay. I'll pass back to Rhodri now then.

CCW Chair: Well, back to you, Steph and Louise, please, your response to what you've heard.

Steph Cawley: That was absolutely brilliant. We love all of the comms ideas that you guys have got, the factsheet, using the council tax bill is absolutely a brilliant idea. If possible, we'd love to share some thoughts with you and get your feedback before they go to the wider community, but yeah, absolutely brilliant.

On investment, we do loads of engagement with our customers. Again, we just need to share all of this stuff. It's out there, we're just not publicising it enough. I think we're on the right track, we're just not getting it out there.

Community Member 9, I could talk to you all day about non-household use. It's absolutely fascinating. Non-household use is about 10% of all of our water use. We work quite individually. Some farmers, for example, do have their own private supply which is fantastic. If we've got an organisation that uses a lot of water in its production, we'll talk to them about could they perhaps use it at different times of the day so that it's not impacting on demand and things like that. We might talk to a local football club and say, "Does your grass really need to be green, or can the kids play on dead grass for a few weeks?" Those kinds of things we do, but I think we're doing loads of it.

Resources, was it Community Member 11 who was talking about resources? Community Member 11, we love you, we want to give you a job, so we're going to, it's a great observation, but as we put more smart meters in, we need less people to read meters, so we can use those really knowledgeable people to talk to our customers about water efficiency, so that is our plan there.

We would love everyone to be looking at their water usage more. We think that we can do that through a fantastic web portal. We don't think that we need to use customer money to pay for an app or have people download an app. I'm an Anglian Water customer, and they've got a fantastic web portal, so we're going to steal all of their ideas and make that visible to you, but it's really, really powerful, so I think we can do that as well.

And then I'm happy to answer questions on performance, but that is all available on supply interruptions and leakage. As I said, a long way to go on that, but yes, all of that data is available.

CCW Chair: Great. Thanks once again, Steph, for keeping it concise. That's the new challenge question which will be added to the action plan alongside what was discussed in the first part of the meeting. We'll now move on to the Q&A, a new element in our accountability session, so it's the first time we've tried this. There's no timer this time, you'll be glad to hear, but we do actually want you to keep it to about three minutes. It should give us enough questions, but obviously we can see how we get along. We're going to start with the first question, and do I see who's due to ask this?

Session transcript

TMcK Facilitator: Yes, so this is Community Member 2 who's going to ask this question.

CCW Chair: Yes, great, Community Member 2, over to you.

Community Member 2: Thank you, Rhodri. It's unclear which areas currently have access to smart meters and when they will become available elsewhere. What are Hafren's plans to roll out smart meters more widely, and when can community members in other areas expect to benefit?

Steph Cawley: Great, brilliant question. We're all in the smart meters. Lou, do you want to talk about the details?

Louise Moir: We're currently on year two of our five-year plan for the rollout of our smart metering. We've done really well so far. Obviously, we've got a lot of meters in the ground that are ageing pieces of equipment, so we've got some work where we're proactively replacing meters that are already in the ground, so customers are already used to having a bill that's based on their meter readings, but we know that that meter needs replacing.

We're replacing those proactively across the whole of Hafren, and then we've also got the reactive ones. A lot of our customers are switching to meters. We have customers phone in to my team every day, having really good conversations about whether they'd save money moving onto a water meter. We also give customers 12 months to change their mind. It's like a try-before-you-buy scenario, and all customers who apply for a water meter will actually have a smart meter installed.

We've currently replaced over 6,000 meters, which is 99% of our year two target, so we're massively ahead of year two, but we're not actually slowing down, so obviously as we're coming across ones that need replacing, as customers are requesting them, we're getting those in the ground.

We have got in our strategy that all meters will be replaced by 2045, because we need to get all of those meters rolled out. It is a phased approach across Wrexham and Powys. Obviously, like I said, if customers, sometimes customers will phone up and say, "Actually I do really want a smart meter, because mine's a bit old and I'd really like to be able to see a bit more usage," so again we'll get that booked in for customers. But that's the sort of two-pronged approach for getting all of those meters replaced by 2045.

CCW Chair: Can I just ask there, you clearly have a timetable for this, is that publicly available? Is there an element of it that we can incorporate into the action plan, do you think?

Louise Moir: It will be in our business plan, but as a customer, that would be the last place I'd want to go and seek out information, so I'm not recommending you do that. But definitely, to the point that yourselves have raised tonight around how do we share progress on some of these activities that we're doing, the smart meter rollout will be really, really key, because that's a really good, tangible thing as a customer like, I think somebody mentioned before, seeing that usage, your gas and electric, we're all used to that. Having that full visibility, knowing what we use, spotting if there's any problems early on is like really, really helpful for a customer, and I think that's the level of offering that we expect now from out utility companies.

So, I think being more transparent in some of this communication that we do with our customers is probably key to getting this information out there.

CCW Chair: Okay, thank you. Who else has a question for Steph and Louise? Community Member 11.

Community Member 11: Yeah, just a question really on new builds, new-build property within Hafren Dyfrdwy's area. Any new-build properties, do they have to have a smart meter or is it an option to have a conventional one, just out of curiosity?

Session transcript

Louise Moir: We just use smart meters. All of our metering technology now is smart.

Community Member 11: Okay, thank you.

CCW Chair: Community Member 5?

Community Member 5: I just have a couple of questions regarding the smart meter and the rollout. Firstly, I just wanted to know, are customers able to see the live data, so your live water usage? And is there a plan for a smart meter rate, so offering a different rate depending on demand, just like energy bills? So, like Octopus, they offer agile waits to every 15 minutes, you can get a different energy rate, are you planning to do something similar with the water?

And then just finally, what can, say me, how can I get a smart meter? I've got a conventional meter now, but how can I get one?

Louise Moir: All good questions. We have got an option to go online, we've got a dedicated section of the website, but again that's you having to go and seek that out, so again, going back to the point that we keep coming across, we need to be able to share this information wider with our customers so that they know.

We have got a usage tracker on our new customer portal, so you may have seen on some of the monthly updates, we've moved to a new billing system which actually gives us a lot more information and insight than we had previously, and the new customer portal will actually display that information for customers on smart meters.

In your next monthly update, we've actually shared some screenshots of what that looks like, so hopefully that will bring it to life a little bit for anybody who's on the panel who hasn't got a smart meter, and, like I said, if you want a smart meter done, if you go to the website or drop me via CCW your details, and I'll get one of my team to give you a call.

Community Member 5: Good, thank you.

CCW Chair: Great. Thanks.

Steph Cawley: Sorry, if it's okay just to add, it just might be useful to give it a bit of context. On average, an HD customer uses about 135 litres of water a day. I don't know whether you think about that that much, whether that number surprises you, but if you think about how much you drink, probably two litres, there's a lot of our beautifully treated water being used for other things. And a smart meter reduces that by about 20 litres, which is really, really significant in the grand scheme of things, just by people thinking a little bit differently about what they're using their water for. So, we're all in.

CCW Chair: Community Member 5, did you want to come back on that?

Community Member 5: Yeah, there was just one final thing, just with the question regarding the smart meter rate, is there a plan of something like that coming in?

Louise Moir: Sorry, Community Member 5, I completely missed that because I was excited that you wanted to sign up for a smart meter. I got carried away. At the moment, we're not looking at that, but obviously that could change. That doesn't form part of our current business plan, but we are looking wider across the industry and outside of the industry to have a look and explore some of those things, because we obviously do have to keep up with others. So, we're not doing it within this business plan period, but that's definitely not to say that we're not keeping an eye on it.

CCW Chair: And Community Member 2, did you want to come back?

Session transcript

Community Member 2: Yeah, thank you, Rhodri. I just want to say I really like the way that you've prioritised the rollout for smart meters. You mentioned it's not only by area, but it's by people who are actually moving to the water meters and then you're installing the smart meter. I think that's a great idea, very efficient as well.

I just wondered if you're going to publish the benefits to customers, whether it's via email or a newsletter, to sort of show us the targets for the rollout; when you're looking to complete it, what area's getting it next, and then also how it can benefit them. So, reducing leakage, ourselves, we can reduce consumption as well, sort of help towards that 2030 plan, that 30-year plan you mentioned before.

Steph Cawley: It's a great shout, Community Member 2, because I just talked about consumption, but about 20% of all leaks are past the meter on the customer's property, and of course unless it was like gushing into your garden, you might not notice that. So, smart meters are going to be brilliant for leakages as well, you're absolutely spot on. And yes, we will publish more. That's loud and clear.

Louise Moir: One of the things that we're doing as well, and we've not yet been able to do it because of obviously we had the migration to the new billing system over the summer, we're going to be communicating with all of our customers, because a lot of our customers won't necessarily know that they've got smart meters in the ground, because they've not had to contact us. If their meter's outside in the boundary box, it will have just happened at some point.

So, we will be communicating to all of those customers, and we'll be taking the insight that we've seen from those smart meters to your point, Community Member 2, about showing what is the benefit. So back to Steph's point earlier, if we see that consumption's reducing by 20 litres a day for a customer, let's shout about that, and it's those good news stories that we spoke about earlier, and then we can use that in our promotion of smart meters to other customers as well.

CCW Chair: Excellent. Thank you. Community Member 9?

Community Member 9: Sorry, just one question, and I might have missed this earlier, does HD have an app? No.

Steph Cawley: No.

Community Member 9: Are there any plans to create an app?

Steph Cawley: Not at the moment. We're going for a web portal, which will look very nice on a mobile phone, and you can use it like an app, but we're not planning to develop an app at the moment.

Community Member 9: Okay, thank you.

CCW Chair: Community Member 5, back to you.

Community Member 5: On the back of Community Member 9's question, what's the reason for not going down the app route, considering if you're doing smart meters, you're building a portal, you can potentially see water usage? I think most people tend to do everything on their mobile phones these days. I think it's just maybe missing something there.

Steph Cawley: It will be easily accessible on your phone; it will be really easy to view on your phone. An app is really, really expensive and we don't think it's the right use of customers' money when many people wouldn't choose to use it. However, we're here to listen, so at one of these future sessions, if you tell us that we've got that wildly wrong, then of course we would rethink. But I think it's worthwhile you having a look at what we can do on a web portal first.

Session transcript

Community Member 5: Sorry, I was just going to add one thing there. We talk about communication, and I think a lot of people are using their mobile phones, and they will use the app, and that's where they would see this communication. Using their mobile phone on a webpage, I think you're just, yeah. That's me personally.

Steph Cawley: And I think that's the thing, we've all got really different views about this, and it's important that we get the right views from the right community of people, and we act on that in the most efficient way for our customers. So, I absolutely hear you, Community Member 5, you want an app, I've got you.

CCW Chair: Not one to add to the action plan then.

Steph Cawley: Not today, thanks, no.

CCW Chair: Thanks for that. That's very clear. Any more questions, please? Does anyone else want to come in with any questions? We've got plenty of time left if you want to use it.

TMcK Facilitator: There's two other questions to go through, Rhodri, that we decided during the briefing session, so we can move on to one of those now.

CCW Chair: Is that what Community Member 7's hand's up for? Yes? Great.

TMcK Facilitator: Yes, it's Community Member 7's question's number two. We'll move over now. There are just a few actions that were put forward based on that discussion, which I'll just quickly read out now, if that's okay.

CCW Chair: Yes, please do.

TMcK Facilitator: Lovely. I won't go through the additional actions that HD have said tonight, but some additional actions which were requested were to enable customers to see live data on their water usage, trial innovative tariffs, so variable pricing models, and clearly communicating how customers can request to have a smart meter installed.

And, as you can see the team typing up in the corner there, apps were mentioned, but it is not currently under consideration. A web portal is in development, which is designed similar to an app, easy for mobile phone usage, just not felt that it was a good use of customers' money currently, but Steph and Louise are obviously aware that that's a potential for maybe down the line, but not currently part of the action plan. If everyone's happy with what actions I've just gone through, then we can move over to the second question on the Q&A.

CCW Chair: Okay, Community Member 7.

Community Member 7: Hi Steph, Louise. Community members want Hafren to be open about where it is falling short and take ownership of the improvement it most needs to make. What so you see as Hafren Dyfrdwy's main weakness and what change do you want to achieve in this area during 2027?

CCW Chair: Thank you, Community Member 7. Over to you, Steph and Louise.

Steph Cawley: I think it's a really fair question and I think I've probably mentioned already, leakage and supply interruptions performance have missed their targets for the last few years, and that's not something that we're particularly happy about. I'll talk about supply interruptions first. It is improving. It's improved by 20%. And I know we were asked earlier about how far off the targets are we. Supply interruptions are worked out by the total number of minutes that are lost, the total number of minutes where customers don't have supply, divided by the number of customers in the area, and so the target's five minutes, so that would mean if everyone lost supply [inaudible 01:30:15] for five minutes, and our performance last year was eight minutes and 57 seconds.

That's come down massively in the last few years. The Wrexham Ring Main plays a very large part, and the work we're doing to this will improve that, we're hoping will make a significant difference.

But there are three big things that we can do. The first thing is to prevent the supply interruption from happening in the first place. That can be a combination of the investment that we're making, but it can also be better monitoring and data so that we can see when something's perhaps leaking, before it's caused a supply interruption. So, lots of effort there from our control room team to make sure that we're spotting and identifying.

Then, if we do have an issue responding, so we have options to re-zone water from different areas, valve out leaks so that customers remain on supply, and in some situations use tankers to pump water into the network so customers remain on supply as well. So, if we can't prevent it, then we respond to it. And then of course the third thing is to repair it so that it doesn't happen again. But we've got actions in all three of those areas, and we're absolutely committed to that five-minute target.

And leakage is the other big area. We produce about 61 million litres of water a day in HD. We leak about 25% of that. That's obviously not a very nice number to communicate, and not one that we're very proud of. It doesn't all come out of pipes. Leakage is unaccounted-for water. If somebody is illegally using water, that might be from like a fire hydrant or it might be an illegal car wash or something like that, and we don't know about that water usage, that gets counted for in leakage.

So, we've got two big things that we've got to do. One, we've got to find and fix more, and we're doing that, we're doing more and more of that every year. But the other thing is, we need to understand unaccounted-for water and what that might look like, and how we can work with people. And of course, in a more rural location, which some of HD is, that's more challenging if you don't have quite as many eyes and ears on the ground.

So yeah, we do have those two areas of weaknesses, we take them really seriously, but I hope we can demonstrate improvement over the coming months and years.

CCW Chair: Does that answer the question, Community Member 7?

Community Member 7: Yeah, thank you. It's all linked, isn't it, and I think there was some new information given there which was really useful, just to help to see the context, really, of what you're dealing with, so thank you, Steph.

CCW Chair: If there are no more questions, I'm going to turn back to Sam to bring us up to date on any additional notes that the team at Taylor McKenzie have made during the past …

TMcK Facilitator: No additional actions have been requested from community members, unless anyone else has any follow-up questions in relation to water resilience or leakage as their main weakness that they've identified. But, as mentioned, we've covered that quite a lot this session, so we can move on to the next question. Everyone happy to move on?

CCW Chair: Yeah. And who's that coming from, Sam?

TMcK Facilitator: That's from Community Member 10, and I will share my screen now.

Community Member 10: Thanks, Sam. This question, by the way, comes across that I don't trust Hafren Dyfrdwy, but I just want to put it on record that I totally do, before I read it.

Community members want confidence that the improvements Hafren reports are making a genuine difference, rather than simply taking the company's word for it. How will you prove that reported changes have made a real difference, and will progress be independently verified?

Steph Cawley: It is a brilliant question, and I think there are probably two strands to it. One is our actual performance that we have to report to Ofwat and they have to assure, and it gets compared and published - so we can't hide from that. The things I've talked about particularly on supply interruption and leakage, yeah, absolutely, we tick all the boxes on that front.

But I think the big thing that's come through is that you've given us lots of ideas this evening about things that we can do better to improve communication, relationships, engagement with the community, and I think that you are a brilliant, independent source of confirmation that we're doing the right things, that we're following up on the actions that we've committed to. Lou and her team do a fantastic job of following up on those, but I think we continue to have these sessions whereby you can hold us to account for those things. Lou, I don't know if you want to add to that?

Louise Moir: Yeah, definitely. Obviously, we go through all of our performance as well with CCW regularly. We meet with them quarterly and go through all of our performance, and they will come in and do rigorous assessments with us, but again, more of a like collaborative, to actually understand what are our challenges that we're facing, so from a customer perspective we'll look at any complaints that we're getting. We'll work with them to look at any changes that we're making.

I think where we need to get better is sharing, like we said, some of the stuff, so it's been great talking to yourselves, and obviously when we had the last one, we had some other members, but we'd love everybody to know what we've shared with you. And obviously me and Steph can't go and talk to a hundred odd thousand people, although we would love to, it might take us a while, but the information we're sharing with you, hopefully you'll tell friends and you'll tell family, and that's what we find in Hafren, it is so close and local, and that real community feel, a lot of the time the messages do come through from people having these conversations.

So, it does make us really think, actually, how do we get some of this stuff and our progress and our performance, and the stuff that people clearly, like you guys are clearly really passionate about this, which is great, how do we get that into the day-to-day with all of our other customers? Because it's definitely really good for us to share it, and hopefully our other customers will find it as insightful as yourselves as well, and also, they can then hold us to account as well. It's not just the panel. It's all of our customers. So, definitely a lot for us to think about how we do that and share that more.

CCW Chair: Any further comments or questions in relation to that, or are we happy?

Community Member 10: I think just on a point on that, I think it's good, this whole Water Voice really, it's very open, there's a lot of transparency of what Hafren Dyfrdwy are doing. In regards to obviously my question, for me it's – obviously you can put out what improvements, what changes are taking effect, and obviously we want to know how the performance has improved on the back of these changes. I personally don't know where to go straightaway to see, to verify the performance. I know you mentioned Ofwat, Environmental Agency, those kinds of regulators. I'm just wondering whether those reports to show how improvements have been made can be encompassed within maybe HD's own web portal so we can see it, maybe on an annual basis. That could give greater trust perhaps.

Steph Cawley: Definitely, because I think, you know, even Lou and I take a deep breath when we have to go and read a report from a regulator, so we would definitely like to make that more consumable for everybody.

Community Member 10: Thanks, Steph.

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CCW Chair: I think you're absolutely right there, Community Member 10, as someone who has to read some of these, some of the long reports. I mean all the data is there, but of course it's, I mean there are people who sometimes are interested in comparative data and want to go into the detail, but I think what you're pointing out is the ability to access what's relevant to you quickly and easily.

Louise Moir: I think somebody made a good point earlier about almost having the performance with a red, amber, green assessment, just so that you can actually see where we're performing against our targets, so then maybe like an industry benchmark or something, just to make it a little bit more meaningful. That's definitely something that I've made a note of, and I'm sure that's something that we'll go away and think about how we can bring that to life. It's just getting that balance of what works for some customers won't work for others, so we just need to try and come up with, we might have to try a few different things to get it right, but we're definitely open to trying different things based on the feedback.

CCW Chair: And would you share the sort of output of what we've been talking about tonight and the previous session, would you share that with your wider customer base to just show them what you've been talking about with the panel?

Louise Moir: Definitely.

Steph Cawley: Definitely.

CCW Chair: Okay, great. Sam, do you want to summarise? I think we are getting close to the end now.

TMcK Facilitator: Based on what was discussed, for a bit more context I guess, when discussing the action plan during our briefing session, there was a lot about providing evidence about what you are doing on the ground, and I guess then more evidence about each of the actions within the action plan, but also of what is important to community members and your customer base. And I guess it's just being able to show more evidence of what you are doing to achieve each of these actions so that the community members and customer base know what you're doing to address their big concerns, and that sort of came through the action plan review during the briefing session as well.

Louise Moir: One of the things that we were going to mention is we're looking at introducing quarterly regional comms that would be tailored, so there'd be one specific for, for example, our customers in Wrexham that gives that customer group all of the information that they need to know, what's going on in their area, how we're performing in that space, any additional information. Same for our customers in Powys where there might be slightly different challenges, they might need slightly different information.

And they will start landing from later on this month, so hopefully that will help customers access some of this information. Some of the things that we've introduced off the back of the last action plan, that will be some of the stuff that we'll be sharing in those quarterly newsletters, so customers, signpost customers to go and have a look. We'll see how they are, obviously we'll test how effective they are, listen to feedback from customers, but hopefully you'll see those land in your email, if you've got your email registered with us, over the coming weeks.

TMcK Facilitator: Lovely, thank you, because I think that was the sort of point of the question as well, as a strand from the action plan is, okay, we know that you're doing x, y and z, and this is in progress and this is delivered, but actually being able to show evidence of the changes and things like that.

Just before I share my screen and show the actions that the team have been typing up for the third question, from the Q&A, Community Member 8, you mentioned a bit about being independently verified and things like that. Have Steph and Louise, have they answered your concerns this evening? I just want to check in.

Community Member 8: Yes, it's just I wouldn't know where to get information from Ofwat or whatever it is further up, and that's what I was after more, to know about how far, you know, I was looking on the action progress tracker, and it says it's delivered. But how do I know that's been delivered, other than you saying it's been delivered?

Steph Cawley: Fair.

Community Member 8: I mean I don't know that's been delivered. To me it's a tick. You've ticked it, but how do I go, as a paying customer, to find out that you've delivered it, and what steps you've put in to get it to be delivered, and what's ongoing from that, if anything? Does that make sense?

Steph Cawley: Makes total sense, yeah.

Louise Moir: We have been sharing back evidence with CCW for the panel, but we are actually pulling together a pack with just everything. So, I touched on before, like the smart metering usage, we'll be providing screenshots to show what's been delivered, so it should hopefully be a lot easier to say, "This is what was said, this is what we did," and then we'll have some visuals that you can go in and look at, so CCW should be sharing that with you once we've published that with them.

Community Member 8: Lovely, great. I'd also like to say you need to shout louder of what you're getting right. As a customer, I don't see that. I just think you should take pride in what you do very well.

Louise Moir: Ah, thank you, Community Member 8.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you so much, Community Member 8 and Louise. Does anyone else have anything they want to add? No. There's just two actions that have been brought forward based on the final question, and that's to provide community members, so Water Voice community members and the wider customer base with clear and comprehensive context on the accountability action plan delivery, so exactly what Louise was saying about an easier-to-digest, this is what we've done, or this is what we're doing and then this is what we've done, as a sort of pack I guess.

And, as Community Member 8 just said, shout about your achievements and what is going well as well. It doesn't always have to be bad news stories, as Community Member 10 said, good news stories have impact as well, so it would be good to know what achievements you've achieved, based on this panel but also the main topics and concerns that we've raised this evening.

It was just those two ones, so I've not shared my screen for those, but just want to double check, Louise, Steph, you're happy with both of those that I've mentioned, and yeah, over to Rhodri then to close the session. Thank you very much, everybody.

CCW Chair: Thanks, Sam. So, the actions that have been captured will form the basis of the follow-up action plan, and obviously you as members of the panel will be updated on that in due course.

In terms of next steps, a summary report, fully anonymised transcript, as Sam mentioned, and the fullest of actions will be published within seven working days, and, before publication, you will have the opportunity to request any changes or redaction of any personal information that you don't want published.

Hafren Dyfrdwy in due course will publish its action plan within 28 days, setting out how it will deliver against the agreed actions, and CCW will publish that on our website. And once the action plan is published, community members will be sent a link and a short survey asking whether the plan accurately reflects what was agreed, and whether it's enough to address the concerns that were raised during this meeting, and they'll be about 10 days to complete that process.

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And we at CCW, following on from that, that last question about how do you know whether actions have actually been completed, well, we at CCW will be following up on that, and if you see on our reports that it has been completed, you can take it that that means we've been given evidence by the company to prove that it has, rather than somebody simply saying, "Yes, we've done that." So, you can rest assured that when things are shown as being completed, that they are.

And of course that's the whole purpose of this process, to make sure that what we've been talking about tonight needs to follow through, not just a nice discussion. So can I, on behalf of CCW, thank all community members for your time, not just this evening, but the time you put in answering questionnaires and looking at material that we send you. We think it's hugely valuable that you do it for your company, and other panellists such as yourselves do it for every other water company in England and Wales. We think it's a significant step to help companies improve their performance.

And that brings me to Steph and Louise, can I thank you for your time. We appreciate the level of engagement that you bring to this process by engaging with us, and by taking part in the conversation in the way that you did, so, thank you very much for that. Your input is really important, and it makes this whole process worthwhile. So, on behalf of everyone at CCW, can I thank you all and wish you a very good night.

Louise Moir: Thanks, everyone.

CCW Chair: Thank you.

TMcK Facilitator: Thank you, everybody. Nice to meet you all.

[CLOSE]