

## Objectives

To support the West Country Water Resource Group (WCWRG) in formulating the best value regional plan for the South West. The aim was to develop the evidence base on customer and stakeholder preferences for the various outcomes associated with the planning objectives.

Format	Focus groups
Households (number)	8 (n66)
Non households (number)	1(n8)
Vulnerable customers	
Future customers	✓
Retailers	
Stakeholders	
South West Water	✓
Bournemouth Water	✓
Bristol Water	✓

## Impact on our plan and ways of working

This research provided key insight into customer water use, and expectations and preferences for investment, which was used in support of the regional Water Resource Management Plan and individual company Water Resource Management Plans.

Date	September 2021
Supplier	Eftec

## Key messages – what matters most

### What we did

- Deliberative research was carried out online with eight groups of household customers, and one group of non-household customers, each group meeting over two sessions. Customers were from areas supplied by Bristol Water, Bournemouth Water, South West Water and Wessex Water
- Areas of focus were: supply resilience, best value planning, supply and demand options, sharing water, and policy issues and constraints
- The sessions featured a mix of discussion topics and exercises including voting, as well as pre-reading to build their background understanding, and between session ‘home-task’ exercises for household participants.

### What matters most

- Participants recognised water resources are limited and typically accepted the imposition of less severe restrictions
- There was overall support for a reduction in the level of risk of severe restrictions, but no clear preference for the extent of risk reduction
- Supply resilience was ranked highest priority out of the factors for best value planning, with benefitting and affordable for society ranking the lowest
- No supply or demand options were considered unacceptable for customers, with the strongest support being for reducing leakage, closely followed by reservoirs. In general, supply options were favoured over demand options
- Sharing water was generally supported, with it being strongly supported to protect the environment
- Participants were in agreement that affordability should be considered, however views were mixed as to how this should be achieved – external support via govt., means tested bills, national pricing etc.

### Are there differing views?

Over half of NHH participants stated their business would struggle to use less water, compared to the majority of HH customers considering they could use less.

### Next steps

This research feeds into work being conducted by the Environment team for the WRMP, as well as being important for the long-term delivery strategy.