



SCOTTISH WATER
SR21 PHASE 1 – CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNITY COUNCILS
REPORT FEBRUARY 2018



“To understand community council’s views on the customer priorities and how they align with the needs of their communities.”

Full colour thinking from Turquoise for Scottish Water

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Scottish Water is currently in the midst of their Customer Engagement Programme (Engage21), which forms part the Strategic Review of Charges for the period of 2021 to 2027, called SR21.

So far, within Engage21, Scottish Water has completed both qualitative and quantitative research with household customers, business customers and licensed providers. The Engage21 programme aims to incorporate the views of all Scottish Water’s customers; therefore, as a primary link to local communities, Scottish Water recognises the importance of researching and engaging with community councils on these topics.



A key output of the quantitative research with household and business customers is a un understanding of total customer impact which will help to determine investment priorities. This piece of research aims to understand community council’s views on these priorities, and how they align with the needs of their communities in contrast to the original individual impact statements.

The following report details the findings of this most recent phase of research for SR21.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The key research objectives were as follows: -

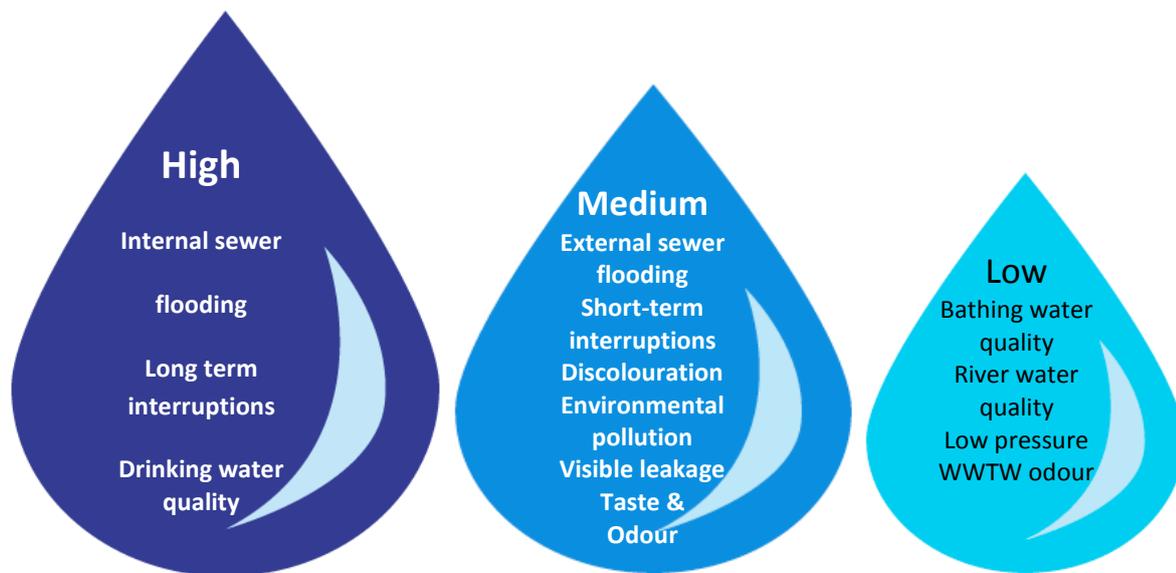
- Share the findings from the phase 1 priorities research with community councils to understand more about why service issues have been placed in the order they have. Do the high/medium/low areas of investment feel right to them? Can they provide reasons/examples as to why?
- Understand if there are any new or different expectations from their communities that are not currently represented in the research findings.
- Understand community council's thoughts on engagement and information expectations of Scottish Water when operational work may impact their community, both now and in the future (including channel preferences and frequency).
- Understand community council's thoughts on engagement and the level of involvement they would anticipate in the strategic review and business planning process.

3. HOW TURQUOISE MET THE OBJECTIVES

Methodology

Turquoise endeavoured to interview as many community council representatives as possible from the contact list provided by Scottish Water. Initial communication about the research was sent to community councils by Scottish Water. All 28 contacts on the list were called and/or emailed (where details were provided) and invited to take part; 15 of whom agreed and were subsequently interviewed in late January and early February this year.

Where possible, respondents were sent some background to the research and a copy of the SR21 Total Customer Impact priorities (see below) prior to the interviews; this enabled the respondents to get input from other members of the community council and/or the community, where appropriate.



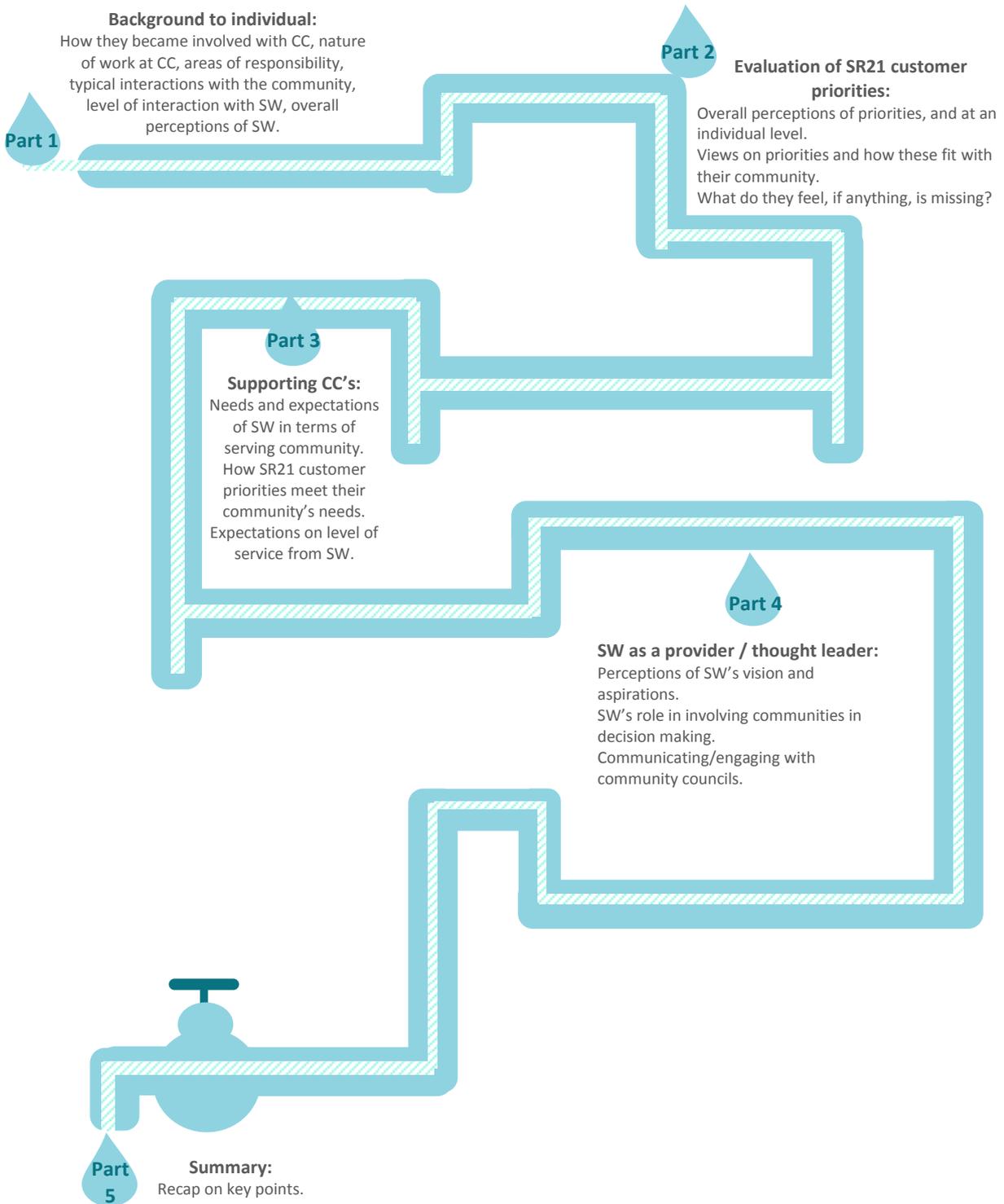
Interviews were approximately 45 minutes in duration and were conducted at a time to suit the community councillor. Each interview was conducted by a Turquoise qualitative moderator.

The Overall Approach and Discussion Flow

- Background to the individual and level of interaction with Scottish Water.
- Upfront discussion of the overall perceptions of Scottish Water.
- Perceptions of the SR21 customer priorities – at an overall level and then taking each in turn.
- How well the priorities relate to their community and examples.
- Overall needs and expectations of Scottish Water in terms of best serving their community.
- How the customer priorities meet the needs of their community.
- Perceptions of Scottish Water’s vision/aspirations.
- Communicating/engaging with community councils.

The discussion guide is summarised in the diagram overleaf; the full discussion guide has been included in the appendix of this report.

Discussion Guide Flow:



4. BACKGROUND TO INDIVIDUALS

Overall, as broad a range of community councils as possible were interviewed:

- The majority were in rural areas, a few were on islands and a couple were in urban areas.
- Most of the community council representatives were experienced chairpersons with at least five years in the role. There were also two secretaries and a treasurer interviewed, all three having been identified as the persons with the most contact and/or experience of SW.
- Typically, the community councils meet approximately once a month (usually 10 times a year). Meetings take place in the evenings and last for around two hours on average. Outcomes from meetings and/or information from outside sources tend to be published on the community council's website or circulated via newsletters, and occasionally on social media.
- Every community council representative had good knowledge of Scottish Water and what they deliver; however, a couple were unaware that they were a publicly owned company.
- Level of contact with Scottish Water was varied. All community council representatives had had some level of contact with Scottish Water in the past, however, the contact channels were varied. Currently, around half of the community councils interviewed have a direct named contact at Scottish Water (mostly those with an ongoing issue).

5. OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF SCOTTISH WATER

Overall, the views of Scottish Water were positive; community council representatives tended to base these views on the reliability of supply and quality of the drinking water which are seen as the key service aspects for their communities. Naturally, those who have had issues, particularly ongoing issues, tended to be more negative.

Q. Which words would your community use to describe Scottish Water?



As can be seen in the word cloud above, the most common words used were ‘positive,’ ‘reliable,’ ‘efficient,’ ‘helpful.’ However, there is some negativity coming through in words like ‘reactive,’ ‘difficult,’ ‘unwieldy.’

Key Strengths of Scottish Water

Given the size of Scottish Water and the breadth of operations, it is perhaps unsurprising that community council representatives focused on different facets of the organisation when thinking about its strengths. However, the area of focus itself was quite telling; some focused on services such as the reliability of supply and the quality of the drinking water, others on the customer service and personal contact they had with workers. Some respondents took a more universal view and saw Scottish Water’s investment in infrastructure and public ownership as its key strengths.

‘Remaining in public ownership is one of the most important things, it’s good for Scotland. If you look at other parts of the UK, where water is privatised, prices have escalated. I think we’re very, very lucky in Scotland – it’s a jewel that should be protected.’

‘They’ve (SW) made huge investment into the Fair Isle electricity project because Scottish Water needs more power to deliver their services. That foresight is needed in a small community.’

‘The drinking water is their key strength. They also answer calls pretty well so their customer service is good.’

‘We have a contact so can be fairly sure that they will follow up on issues...also, the local workers that I’ve had interactions with.’

Key Weaknesses of Scottish Water

Interestingly, when discussing Scottish Water’s weaknesses, although a couple of respondents did mention specific issues such as unattended leaks and slow response to problems, most community councillors highlighted problems with communication. One respondent felt that ‘they (Scottish Water) have lost that personal touch,’ others commented on communication at a more general level – ‘not much feedback when work is done;’ ‘Scottish Water are not very good at routine communication.’ It’s clear that some community councils don’t have the required communication channels open with Scottish Water; even for those that do, there is a sense that Scottish Water aren’t listening to their concerns.

‘Nobody higher up at SW has ever come to our CC and explained why the problem we’ve been having with the bowser has been taking so long.’

‘They don’t seem interested in listening to people in the community who actually know what’s happening.’

‘I have found them to be quite defensive. Although they came out and sorted the problem, they didn’t inform us that they were coming, or what they were doing, or why they were doing it.’

6. SR21 CUSTOMER PRIORITIES

Importance of Engaging with Community Councils Regarding Customer Priorities

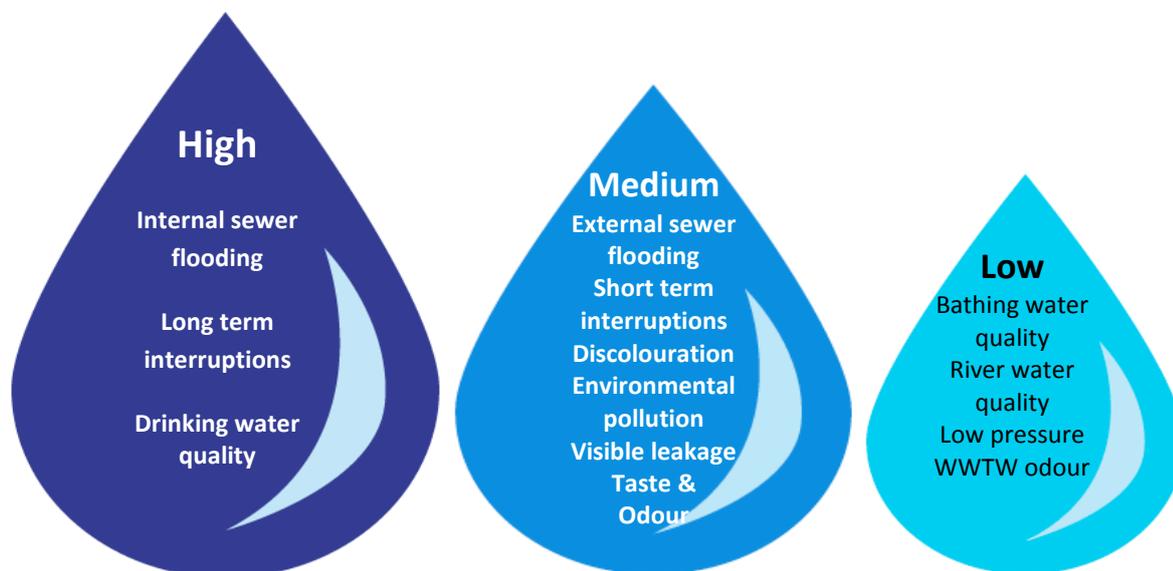
All community councillors felt that it is important they are engaged with over the customer priorities and similar projects. In general, the community councillors feel they have ‘an ear to the ground’ as to what people in the local community are feeling and are in a good position to pass on any public concerns to outside organisations.

Whilst all community councillors felt that an ongoing relationship with Scottish Water is important, they don’t necessarily want to get involved as a decision maker; consultation and ‘being kept in the loop’ is most important to them.

Overall Perceptions of the Customer Priorities

Overall, the community councillors felt that the ranking of the total customer impact (customer priorities) fit theirs and their communities’ views; they could certainly understand their placement as a reflection of customers nationwide. However, understandably, as representatives of their local community, where there had been specific issues they wanted to see these related priorities sitting higher in the pecking order.

Fig 1 – SR21 Customer Priorities:

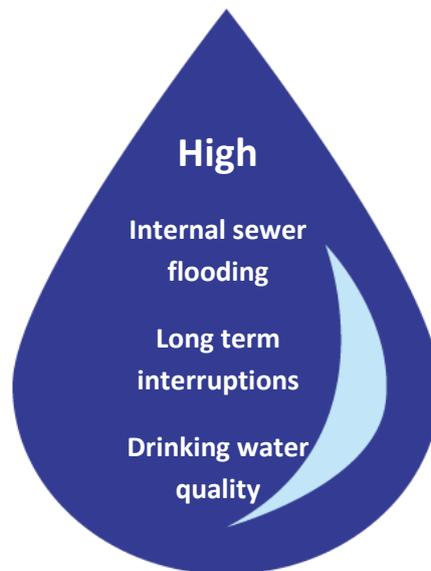


As well as personal experience, the location and demographic make-up of the local community had an impact on whether a community councillor would like to see a priority moved. For example, coastal communities were more concerned with bathing/river water quality and sometimes environmental

pollution (particularly tourist destinations); some island communities had no rivers and so were less concerned with river water quality but seem more likely to suffer from low pressure.

High Priorities

Fig 2 – SR21 High Level Customer Priorities:



Internal Sewer Flooding

Whilst only one of the community councillors interviewed had experienced internal sewer flooding in their community (and this was many years ago), the consensus was that the potential impact of this type of flooding meant that its ranking was appropriate.

A few community councillors had experienced external sewer flooding and so, knowing the impact it could have, could understand why internal sewer flooding would be seen as a higher priority.

Long-term interruptions

Similar to internal sewer flooding, very few instances of long-term interruptions had been experienced. However, community councillors could appreciate the disruption and inconvenience this would cause and, therefore, understand why it had been placed as a high priority. For the few that had experienced long-term interruptions, the reaction of Scottish Water was praised, particularly in terms of providing bottled water and keeping people informed of the situation.

A couple of community councillors, having just discussed internal sewer flooding, suggested that although long-term interruptions may affect more people, it will likely have less of an impact than internal sewer flooding.

'It (long-term interruptions) feels like less of a priority than internal sewer flooding. Yes, it might affect a lot of people, but less of an impact.'

'If you have specific health needs, dialysis for example then it's more of a problem. I presume Scottish Water know of these customers.'

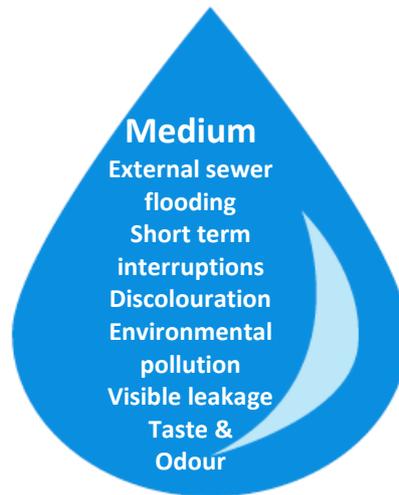
Drinking Water Quality

This was seen by most community councillors as Scottish Water's 'bread and butter' and, therefore, the highest priority. The majority of community councillors were very pleased with the drinking water quality they receive; however, some did spontaneously mention discolouration and/or taste and odour issues. When it was explained that this priority related to the safety of the drinking water, the view that this should be the highest priority was enforced. Having said that, a few community councillors questioned whether there was the need to further improve the drinking water quality, or whether maintaining the current level was more prudent.

'That would have to be the highest priority I'd say. That would be the most important thing to our community. Safety of the drinking water is Scottish Water's bread and butter. It should be a given.'

Medium Priorities

Fig 2 – SR21 Medium Level Customer Priorities:



External Sewer Flooding:

As mentioned in the previous section on high priorities, most community councillors agreed that this element should be less of a priority than internal sewer flooding; therefore, its position as a medium priority seemed logical.

However, a couple of communities had ongoing problems with external sewer flooding and had been, or currently were, frustrated at the response from Scottish Water. Naturally, both saw it as a high priority, particularly as it was affecting tourism in their area.

‘Certainly lower than internal sewer flooding, assuming it doesn’t impact on property. If it’s leaking onto a road maybe it’s more of a nuisance.’

‘We have an ongoing problem with this when we have any heavy rain. It’s a tourist resort so definitely a high priority for us. Scottish Water have made lots of promises but never follow through.’

Short-Term Interruptions:

As with long-term interruptions, community councillors could recognise the inconvenience caused by any interruption to supply; the consensus was that it was in the right place as a medium priority considering long-term interruptions were rightly, in their view, considered a high priority. However, a couple of respondents did note that for communities like theirs, with an older demographic, any interruption to supply may be more of an issue.

Community councillors who were aware of short-term interruptions in their communities said they were few and far between; however, highlighted the importance of upgrading the infrastructure, where needed, to avoid these situations occurring.

'It should be their (Scottish Water's) strategy to prevent that; i.e. to know the weak spots in the infrastructure. They should be tackling it but not as the highest priority.'

'Our community has an older demographic. As the interruption goes on, and there is more need to buy bottled water, some may struggle.'

Discolouration and Taste & Odour

Both aspects garnered similar responses; for those who experience or have experienced either in their community, most would see it as a high priority. However, a couple did assert that drinking water quality (safety) was more important than the aesthetics. Community councillors who had no experience of either in their community generally agreed with the medium priority ranking.

As mentioned above, in terms of those who had experienced these issues, the majority would move both up to a high priority. Communities suffering from these problems are often vocal in raising their concerns to community councils; as representatives of these communities, the community councillors felt that these issues would be a high priority for them. The overriding theme was that customers with discoloured or bad tasting/odour water often perceive their water to be unsafe, even if Scottish Water say it isn't. Therefore, they would see these issues as high priorities alongside drinking water quality.

On the other hand, one community councillor commented on the peaty nature of some of Scotland's waters and agreed that discolouration, in this case, should be a medium priority and the safety of the drinking water a high priority. Similarly, another community councillor believed that the safety of the drinking water is paramount and the aesthetics 'secondary;' for them, both could be moved to low.

'Discolouration and taste and odour is a matter of perception – you (SW) say it's safe, but I don't know it's safe...put that in high with drinking water quality, it's consumer confidence.'

'Discolouration is fine as a medium; some waters in Scotland are peaty and like with taste and odour it's less of a priority...As long as the drinking water quality is there and it's safe to drink.'

Environmental Pollution

The majority of community councillors felt that being positioned as a medium priority was right for environmental pollution; however, a few would consider it more a high priority. Many councillors interviewed represented rural, coastal and/or island communities; therefore, the environment and its preservation is perhaps more to the fore for their communities. Many echoed this sentiment, and reiterated the importance of caring for the environment, not only for Scottish Water but in a wider societal context. Reducing environmental pollution is seen more as a long-term goal, therefore, not as pressing as some of the high priorities would be should they occur.

'Pollution is very important to our community due to our geographical location and livelihoods. The shellfish industry and fish farming all provide important income streams. Along with bathing water quality, it would be a high priority for our community.'

'We've had dealings with Scottish Water in terms of run-off from fields and discharging into streams. Definitely not a high priority but must be attended to.'

Visible Leakage

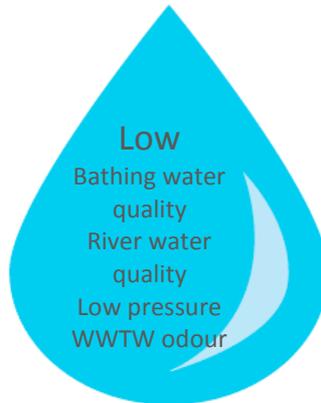
There was little direct experience of this aspect amongst the community councillors interviewed. The consensus was that any water wastage was a problem as it was costing the taxpayers money. Scottish Water, therefore, should be doing as much as possible to upgrade the infrastructure to address any leakage. A few community councillors noted that it would be much more of an issue if the leak was on a personal property rather than in the network. Overall, it was deemed appropriate for visible leakage to be classed as a medium priority.

'We pay council tax which pays for leakages. If there is a potential for another burst which could turn into a larger problem, then it seems logical to address this.'

'I'd agree with the medium priority ranking; it's a non-emergency situation and therefore does not warrant being a high priority.'

Low Priorities

Fig 3 – SR21 Low Level Customer Priorities:



Bathing and River Water Quality

Some community councillors were confused by the term ‘bathing water’ and did not immediately translate this to sea water. A couple were unaware that Scottish Water had anything to do with the beaches in their area.

As we’ve seen with some of the high and medium priorities, the location of the community councils had a large bearing on views towards this aspect. A few community councillors had no beaches in their area and a couple on islands had no rivers or beaches; for them, these were low priorities. On the other hand, many of the community councils were in coastal or rural areas with a reliance on the tourism industry.

Understandably, for these communities both bathing and river water quality were of a higher priority; some would consider them high priorities (particularly bathing water quality), others would move them to being medium priorities.

‘We have had problems with bathing water quality in the area, one of our beaches lost its blue flag status. The blue flag status is really important for the tourist economy.’

‘I’m not sure you can separate this from environmental pollution. To me it’s all one and should sit in medium.’

Low Pressure

This aspect was considered a low priority for the majority of community councillors; none of whom reported it as a problem in their area. For the few who did experience low water pressure, their community would likely see it as a medium priority but could understand its placement as a low priority due to its infrequency.

Many of the community council locations were seeing new housing developments and expansion in their area; some did question whether this may affect their water pressure in the future, particularly those who already suffer from seasonal low pressure.

'I don't suffer from it personally, but I do know some residents on the island do. I'm sure they would consider it more of a priority, but I can see why the country as a whole would see it as low.'

'It might happen here but I've not experienced it. They are building 4000 houses across the road, so that will take a lot of water and affect the pressure – it has been raised as a concern.'

Waste Water Treatment Odour

For the majority of community councillors, it seemed logical that customers had ranked this low. However, a couple did have issues with odour from local treatment plants. Others cited potential environmental and public health concerns which should warrant a higher priority.

One community councillor noted this aspect as a particular area of concern for their community and for them it would certainly be a high priority. This community relies on seasonal tourism and a couple of hotels in their area believe that the effects of waste water treatment odour has harmed their business. Another community councillor was in a long-term dispute with Scottish Water and others over a particular treatment works in their area.

As we have seen with other aspects, as community councillors are representing the views of their community, the ranking of priorities essentially comes down to what they experience in their area. Most rural communities have their treatment plant away from any major settlements. For those closer to a treatment plant, it's naturally more of a concern.

'There are environmental aspects to consider with this. Also concerns that the odour comes with toxins. If there are public health concerns, then it should warrant a higher priority.'

'We're a tourist resort here, so for us three of these low priorities should be higher. The waste water treatment works odour in particular has an effect on the local tourism industry.'

Additional Priorities

Having explained to community councillors that Scottish Water are investing in the overall customer experience, including how they communicate with customers, but that they do not feature within the priorities, very few suggested any additional priorities that might impact their community.

For those who did suggest additional priorities, they were all based around infrastructure upgrades and future planning. For example, are Scottish Water doing enough about long-term infrastructure development, particularly in expanding communities where there will be increased demand for their services? In turn, are they planning for the disruption caused by these works? However, it was accepted that a lot of this was about customer interface and thus unrelated to service issues.

7. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Needs and Expectations of Scottish Water

First and foremost, community councillors would expect Scottish Water to continue to provide a safe, clean and reliable service to their community. More specifically, community councillors would like to see issues in their area, relating to the customer priorities discussed previously, addressed. Whilst the majority appreciate that there is a limited pot of funds and an order of priority when addressing issues, they would like Scottish Water to be more open with them when discussing these matters.

In terms of supporting the community councillors in their roles, their needs almost entirely centre around communication. As well as representing the views of their communities, another vital role for community councils is to disseminate information to their residents on upcoming projects from organisations like Scottish Water. Therefore, it's vital that they have a consistent channel of communication open with Scottish Water.

From the community councillors in our sample, current satisfaction with Scottish Water's communication and engagement is mixed. Some have regular contact with Scottish Water or at least a specific contact they can reach if they need to; others have little to no contact at all. The main themes of what is desired largely consistent across the board; these can be summarised under the three sub-headings below:

Being Kept up to Date

Community councillors want to know about anything that's going to affect their community. As well as projects/works in their own community, this would also ideally include projects/works happening in nearby communities which might affect their residents. They largely don't want information on anything affecting areas outside of their community.

'We'd like to be kept up to date, we don't want to know everything that's going on, but if it affects our community, then yes.'

'People want to know what's happening in the area...what are the long-term plans. We don't need a great big document, but a brief summary would be useful.'

Specifically, community councillors would like to know; what is being done, why is it being done, where is it happening, and what the benefits will be. This information can then be distributed to their communities. Giving as much notice as possible is key to building trust with the local community; if short-notice is given this can lead to frustration and suspicion.

The majority would prefer to receive information via email, and a few suggested that a quarterly (or bi-annual) newsletter would be good in order keep a consistent level of communication, particularly for those who don't have any contact with Scottish Water currently.

A (Consistent) Direct Contact

It is evident from the interviews that having a direct contact at Scottish Water makes a huge difference to perceptions of Scottish Water. Around half of the community councillors interviewed have a direct contact who they can reach if an issue arises; they all find this contact extremely useful and reassuring.

For the community councillors who don't have a direct contact, this would be a desired improvement for all. Currently, if they need to contact Scottish Water they call the main switchboard and invariably find it difficult to get the response they require. The perception here is that Scottish Water have 'lost that personal touch' and are 'too unwieldy.'

'I'm in touch with a community liaison officer at Inverness who's very helpful...If I contact him, he takes ownership of the problem and gets back to me.'

'We would like a direct contact at SW, rather than relying on the council to inform us. We need to know of planned work in our area but also in the surrounds as this would have an impact on people commuting out of the town.'

Ideally, the direct contact would have or would attain a good understanding of the community they are dealing with (the area, what has happened there in the past etc.). Visiting the community council and the area is important to get a feel for life in the local area and day to day experiences.

A couple of community councillors who have or have had a direct contact with Scottish Water have been left frustrated by the contact changing, seemingly without any handover. Whilst they both accept that it's a fact of life that people change jobs and move to different roles, it doesn't seem like there is a system in place to pass on the local knowledge to the incumbent and to continue the promises made to the community council.

'It's important to get a feel for daily life in the community; it's not a one size fits all approach for Scotland – you can't sit in an office in Glasgow or Edinburgh and understand what goes on on Orkney.'

'Over the last 18 months, there has been a change of personnel every time I have had to contact Scottish Water it takes a while to get through and when you do speak to the new contact, things haven't been handed over sufficiently.'

Attendance at Meetings

Several community councillors suggested that Scottish Water attendance at their meetings would be helpful; just once a year would be sufficient. However, those in more remote areas appreciated that this may be difficult given the logistics.

Community councillors believed that attendance at meetings would give Scottish Water a better understanding of the area and the needs of the community. Also, it would enable Scottish Water to update the community and keep them in the loop on issues or upcoming projects in the area. The community councils would also have more faith that Scottish Water will listen to them and follow through on promises made.

For community councillors with a consistent direct contact, attendance at meetings was of less importance. Having a direct contact, for the most part, alleviates their concerns.

'It's key that Scottish Water have an understanding of the village, where it's come from and where it's going. If they (SW) could attend one of our meetings a year that would be great. Twice a year would be even better, but I understand that might not be feasible.'

'Yes, come to meetings; residents in the community know what's happening. It also gives Scottish Water the chance to give updates and keep us in the loop, otherwise we have to push for any clarification.'



8. PERCEPTIONS OF SCOTTISH WATER’S VISION

‘Scottish Water’s vision is to be trusted to care for the water on which Scotland depends.’

The majority of community councillors agreed with the statement and do trust Scottish Water to care for the water in Scotland. In terms of their communities, they believe that generally they would agree but noted that there are issues.

A couple of community councillors didn’t believe that their community would trust Scottish Water in this sense; both currently have ongoing issues and problems with communication.

‘I would agree with that; that’s their number one priority, that water is of the required high standard and they should maintain that by operating the huge network of infrastructure throughout the country.’

‘No. It’s a bit of a ‘hot potato’ at the moment. I’d say that there is a large element of distrust. They (SW) don’t listen to the people in the community who know what’s happening. They make a lot of promises but don’t follow through on them.’

‘I think they (the community) probably would think that, but the fact is there are issues. I think the community do trust that Scottish Water are trying to address the issues but, like with the bore holes; that was the beginning of last year. We assume something might be happening, but we don’t know.’

‘As part of this vision, Scottish Water always aims to listen to customers, including communities and community councils.’

All community councillors agreed that this is an appropriate aspiration for Scottish Water to have. However, views were mixed on whether Scottish Water currently deliver on it.

For those who don’t feel that they realise this aspiration, a couple did mention that research like this is evidence that they are trying, but in general they don’t feel that Scottish Water do listen to their community councils. For the others, the consensus was that Scottish Water do listen to them at the time but then nothing happens in response and/or they don’t stick to promises made.

‘It’s one thing listening and then another to actually do something about it. They can often ignore our comments; they need to listen more.’

‘Yes, it’s important that they let customers know that they are listening to them. They do listen to us but won’t actually find a solution.’

9. INVOLVEMENT IN FUTURE PLANNING

Community councils do want to help shape future investment priorities as it directly impacts on their lives and those who they represent. They see themselves as ‘the lowest level of democracy’ with their ‘fingers on the pulse’ of the local community, perhaps more than local councils who are further removed with their own agendas. As such, they would expect some involvement in Scottish Water’s Strategic Review and Business Planning Process.

A couple of community councillors recognised potential problems with this approach in that not everybody in their community wants the same thing. Residents have opinions without necessarily knowing all the facts and technical details, they should have faith in Scottish Water to decide what’s best. However, consultation would be advantageous.

As with communication and information preferences discussed earlier in the report, community councillors are generally only interested in being consulted on future issues which affect their own communities.

‘We’re not interested in consultation for the sake of, but if there’s an issue to address or a project coming up that will affect us then that’s when we’d like to be consulted.’

‘People make decisions without knowing all the facts and technical details. They’ve got to put a bit of faith in Scottish Water. I do think some consultation, definitely more communication so we can understand what and why they are doing things.’

‘Again, it’s back to whether they’re doing something in our community. They did some work on Orkney and had to put a temporary bridge up – they (SW) came out to explain what they were doing and why. That was helpful – it didn’t have a great impact but we could let the community know to allow a little more time for their journeys.’

Community councillors see Scottish Water’s role in this as simply communicating and consulting over any future plans in their area. As discussed previously, they would like to know in advance of any planned works or projects, so that they can disseminate the information to their community. They don’t require endless

consultation, just when it will have an effect on their community. For the majority of smaller works, an email with the necessary information would be sufficient; for more major works, attendance at meetings or at least more of a dialogue would be preferred.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The majority of community councillors interviewed were in rural areas, a few were on islands and a couple were in more urban communities. Naturally, as representatives of their communities, their views and opinions on the placement of priorities were focused on the needs of their communities.

Broadly speaking, community councillors agreed with the placement of the priorities. They could understand their placement as investment priorities for Scottish Water customers nationwide, even if they didn't necessarily marry with the needs of their own communities.

The location and demographic make-up of the local community has a bearing on the community councillor's perceptions. Many of those interviewed were in communities which rely on tourism, therefore, priorities like 'bathing water quality,' 'river water quality' and 'environmental pollution' were more important.

In terms of the high priorities, whilst few had experienced any of the three, they could appreciate the potential problems and inconvenience caused by them and agreed with their placement.

Similarly, the priorities in 'medium' were largely considered appropriate. A couple of community councillors have problems with external sewer flooding, which has impacted on tourism in the area; they would see this as a high priority. In terms of water aesthetics (discolouration, taste and odour), whilst some community councillors would make this a high priority in their community, others believe that as long as the drinking water was safe, this could potentially move down to a low priority.

Overall, it was the low priorities where the community councillors suggested the most movement. Both bathing and river water quality are high or medium priorities for some communities, mostly those with a large tourist industry in the area. For communities suffering with waste water treatment odour, responses were more emotive; with the effect of this issue making it a high priority for their community.

Few additional priorities were mooted; those that were related to infrastructure development and future planning. Ultimately, for Scottish Water, this would boil down to customer interface and communication with communities.

In terms of how Scottish Water should support community councils, it comes down to communication. Community councils want to be kept up to date with local plans which would affect residents in their community. They would like information given to them as early as possible to give them time to disseminate it to their community. For large projects, consultation with the community council would be essential.

Whilst attendance at meetings once a year would be preferable, community councils appreciate that this may not be feasible (particularly for remote areas). One thing they all would suggest, however, is a direct line of communication with Scottish Water; specifically, a designated contact whom they can reach if they have any issues.

All community councillors would agree with Scottish Water’s vision for the future, in terms of listening to community councils and customers. However, not all of them believe that they currently do this. Having a direct contact and more engagement would likely go a long way to changing this belief.

The majority do trust Scottish Water to ‘care for the water on which Scotland depends,’ and believe that their community would too. Naturally, in communities where there have been issues or where there are ongoing issues, trust of Scottish Water is at lower levels. Again, good communication with these communities should help alleviate this.

Community councils do want a role in helping shape future investment planning as it directly impacts on their lives and the communities they represent. They largely see themselves as being in the best position to represent the views of the local public.

The majority do not want to be over-consulted, nor do they feel that they should be the ultimate decision makers, but believe they should have a say in things which will affect their communities.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintain a consistent level of contact with each community council. This could be in the form of a quarterly or bi-annual email newsletter, or if possible, annual attendance at community council meetings.

Ideally, each community council should have a direct contact at Scottish Water with a good knowledge of the community they represent. This is particularly important for areas where there are ongoing issues.

Where upcoming works or projects are to be carried out, Scottish Water should consult with the relevant community councils, or communicate the necessary information as early as possible.

Scottish Water should continue to engage with community councils, as representatives of the local residents, over priorities for investment and future planning. Community councils don't expect to have too much influence but feel that they should at least be consulted so that they can represent the views of their community.

12. APPENDIX

Community Council Depth Topic Guide January 2018 V1A

Section 1 - Introduction

2 mins

- Introduce Turquoise
- Introduce oneself and objectives of the discussion: set the scene; reason for discussion
 - We are interested in talking to you with regards to SR21, which is the period of 2021 to 2027; Scottish Waters future business plan.
 - In particular, we want to understand what might sit behind the priorities set out by SW customers in previous research, the needs and expectations your Community Council has of SW with regards to your community and its needs and how you would like to structure communications now and in the future.
- Explain MRS code of conduct and rights to anonymity
- Explain audio recording
- Respondents to introduce themselves – name, Community Council and job role

Section 2 – Background to the individual

5 mins

Firstly, I would just like to ask you a few questions about your work.

- Explore nature of their work at XXX...
 - Where do you fit into / within XXX?
 - How did you become involved with the Community Council?
 - What areas of XXX are you involved with?
 - What areas of responsibility?
- What are the typical interactions you have with the community?
- How long have you been working for your Community Council in the SW region?
- Do you know who Scottish Water is?
 - If yes, what do they deliver?
- Do you know if they are publicly owned?

Scottish Water is a publicly owned company, formed in 2002, which delivers water and waste water to over 5 million customers. Scottish Water delivers over 1.3 billion litre of drinking water and treats 864 million litres of waste water every day.

- What is your level of interaction with SW?
 - Is that direct interaction?
 - If yes, what and how?
 - How often?
 - Which department did you deal with?
 - What has been your experience of working with SW across that time?
 - What has been good?
 - What has been bad?
- If no interaction, what would you expect them to be like to deal with?
- Has SW, or their activities ever come up in discussions with your community?
 - If yes, what was the nature of those discussions/issues and how they were resolved?
- What do you think your community would say is the key priority with regards clean and/or waste water services?
- What three words would your community use to describe SW?
 - When I think of SW I feel...
 - When I think of SW I feel...
 - When I think of SW I feel...
- What are your perceptions of SW?
 - What are its key strengths?
 - What are its key weaknesses?

Section 3 – SR21 Priorities for customers	15 min s
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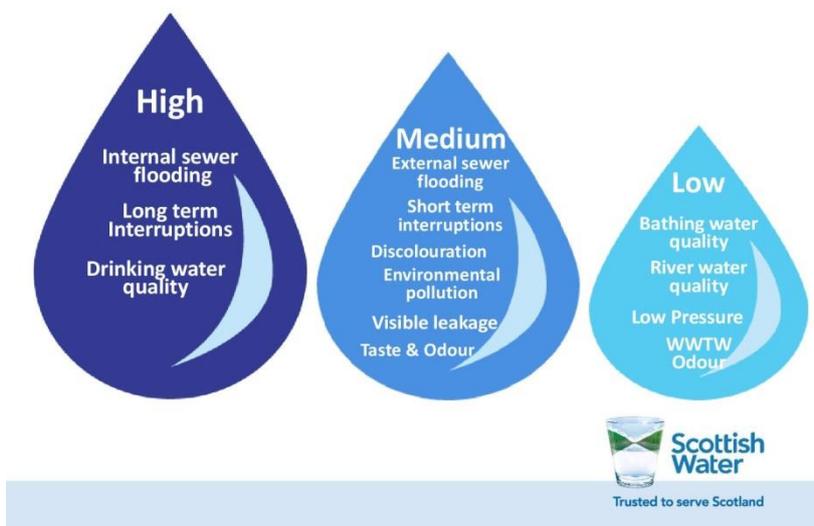
SW is keen to understand Community Council’s future needs and expectations for their community. Part of this is gaining deeper insight into the customer priorities; that were an output from SW’s earlier research with household and business customers; understanding if you feel these are right for you based on your experience with your community.

- Do you feel that engaging with Community Council’s such as yourselves to understand your community’s priorities is important?
- As a community councillor, do you want to be involved?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you feel this kind of engagement is an opportunity to build an ongoing relationship with SW?
 - Would you want that kind of relationship?

Did you receive the list of high, medium and low customer priorities from SW? (if not received, get email and send direct)

- Just at an overall level, what are your perceptions of the high, medium and low priorities that SW customers have identified in the earlier research?

SR21 Customer Priorities



- Ok, let’s take the high-level priorities...
 - Why do you think customers have indicated that these are a high priority to them?

- How well do these relate to your own community from your interaction with them?
- Are you able to help us understand why customers have placed these here?
 - Take each in turn and probe why you think it is where it is?
 - Do you have any examples from your own dealings with community that support or refute that?
- Ok, let's take the medium-level priorities...
 - Why do you think customers have indicated that these are a medium priority to them?
 - How well do these relate to your own community from your interaction with them?
 - Are you able to help us understand why customers have placed these here?
 - Take each in turn and probe why you think it is where it is?
 - Do you have any examples from your own dealings with community that support or refute that?
- Ok, let's take the low-level priorities...
 - Why do you think customers have indicated that these are a low priority to them?
 - How well do these relate to your own community from your interaction with them?
 - Are you able to help us understand why customers have placed these here?
 - Take each in turn and probe why you think it is where it is?
 - Do you have any examples from your own dealings with community that support or refute that?
- When do you feel that any of these priorities (low, medium or high) differ to those presented by customers?
 - Is this related to the type of community?
 - Probe
 - What about geography, urban V's rural
 - How do you differ?

These priorities represent groups, or categories of issues that might impact customers. When SW did their survey, there were around 30 different sub-categories covering all service issues (e.g. internal flooding, sewer flooding in the workplace coming through an entrance door, internal sewer flooding coming into the workplace in storage areas not used for day to day working, etc).

SW are investing in the overall customer experiences (e.g. how you communicate with customers). However, this does not feature within priorities as they are related to service issues; the customer experience is linked to all of these.

- From what we have been talking about and knowing your own community, is there anything at all, that you feel would be an additional priority for your community?
 - If yes, would you consider this a requirement for delivery from SW?
 - Is there anything on the periphery that has been missed or might have an impact on your community?

Section 4 – Supporting the Community Council’s	5mins
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We now want to talk to you as a Community Council and as a customer of SW. Where possible SW is keen to support your needs and expectations within its plans for the future.

- What are your needs and expectations from SW in terms of how you serve your community in the 2021 to 2027 period?
- How far does SW’s business plan (priorities) meet the needs of your community?
- What experience expectations and levels of service are you looking for SW to deliver?

Section 5 – SW as a provider/thought leader	5-10 min s
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- Do you feel that SW keep you up to date with work they have been doing and any benefits delivered in your local area?
 - Yes/no?
 - Do you want to be kept up to date?
 - If yes, how should you keep you up to date?

SW’s vision is to be trusted to care for the water on which Scotland depends.

- Do you think your community would think they do this?

As part of this vision, SW always aims to listen to customers, including communities and Community Council’s.

- Do you think this is an appropriate aspiration?

- Do you feel they do this?
- Would you like more information on the research that is conducted and the benefits delivered?
 - If yes, how and when?
- Do you think that SW has a role to play in empowering communities to be involved in decision making?
 - If yes, how would you expect SW to do this?
 - What type of comm’s would you want?
 - What type of information do you want e.g. frequency of works in the area?
 - What would you see as being the CC’s role in supporting this process?
- Generally, how good do you feel that SW are at engaging with Community Council’s?
 - Why do you feel that way?
- Do you think Community Councils have role to play in helping frame the future investment priorities for SW?
 - What level of involvement would you want/expect in future strategies?

Section 6 – Summary

1 mins

- Based upon our discussion and moving forward, what would be the one thing that you would do if you were SW to support you and your community needs for the future?