

# South Staffs Water CCG

## 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013

Public Engagement Update  
WRMP Workshop Feedback

# Agenda

- Objectives and Approach
- Key Findings:
  - Meters
  - Leakage
  - Restrictions
  - Water efficiency
  - Environment
- Recommendations

# Context

- The objectives of the exercise were to:
  - Understand customers' informed and uninformed views about various aspects of the WRMP.
  - Gather direct feedback from an informed group of customers regarding SSW's current thinking on the following issues:
    - Water metering
    - Leakage
    - Customer restrictions (hosepipe bans)
    - Water efficiency (encouraging customers to conserve water)
    - The environment

# Approach

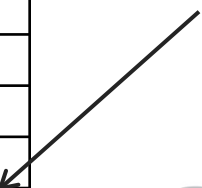
- A full day's deliberative workshop
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2013
- Recruitment of mixed group of customers
- Information provision
- Group work
- Polling

# Sample Achieved

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	13
Female	14
<b>Age</b>	
18-29	6
30-44	8
45-59	6
60+	7
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	20
Black and Minority Ethnic	7
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Employed	17
Unemployed	4
Retired	4
Other	2
<b>Person responsible for SSW bill?</b>	
Yes	24
No	3
<b>Water Meter in Home</b>	
Yes	11
No	14
Don't know / not sure	3

Total =27  
Original Target =40

Over-represented



# Interpretation

- Not quantitative / statistically robust and not intended to be
- Participants became informed
- Provides insight into views of a broad cross section, having learned more about the issues facing SSW
- Wider extrapolation should be cautious, being mindful of the above limitations

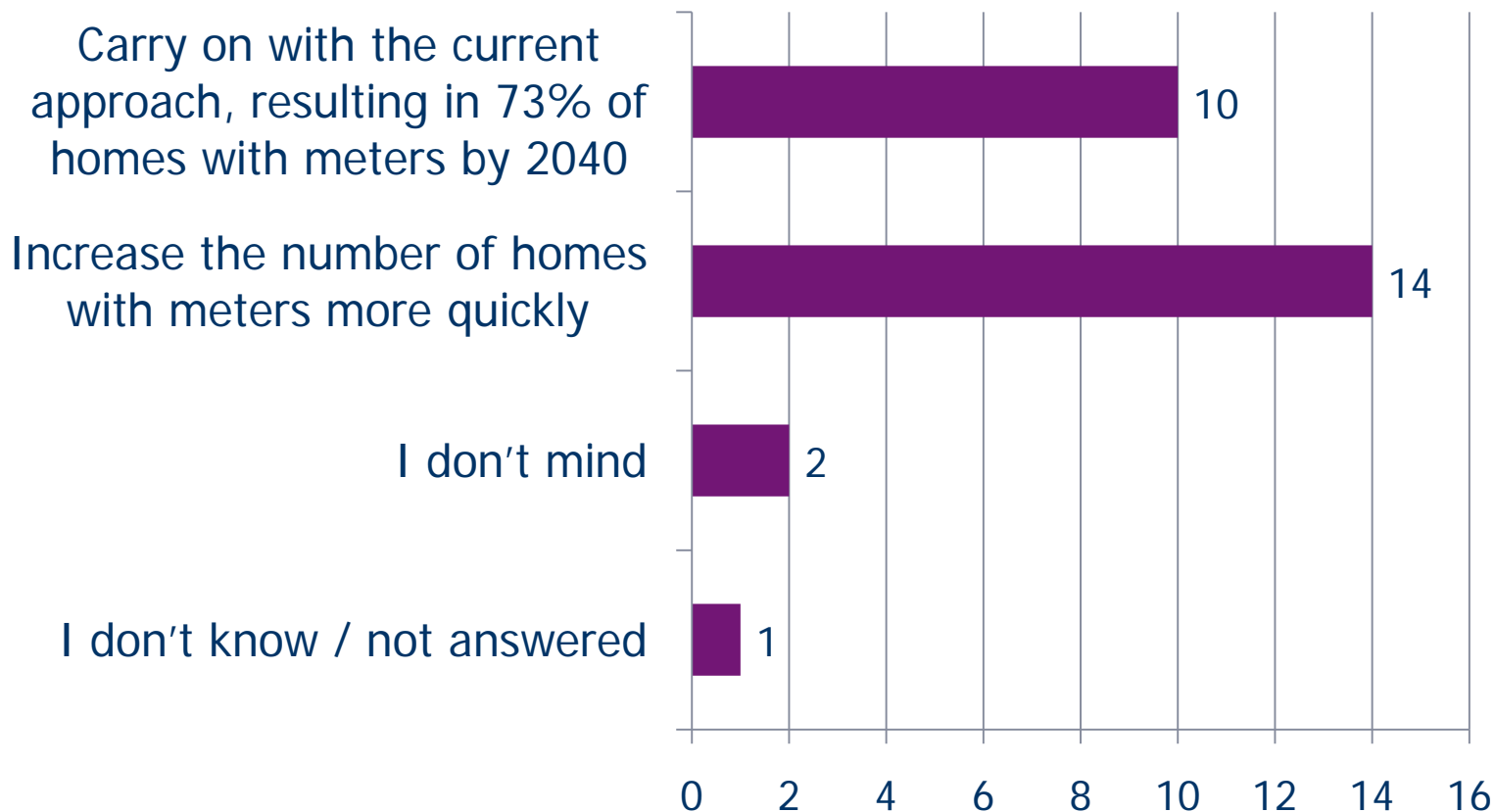
# Key Findings

# Water meters

- Increasing meter levels not initially perceived as a priority issue
- By the end of the day had increased in importance for many
- Almost all agreed that meters are fairest approach
- Many without meters felt that messages on free installation and cooling off periods were not getting through
- Small majority agreed meters should be compulsory for all (16 of 27)
- Small majority in favour of more ambitious metering target over next 25 years (14 of 27)
- Wide ranging communications campaign called for – seen as having considerable potential to increase take up of meters



# Following your discussions, what do you think SSW should do?



*"Compulsory would be far fairer. With choice, they will choose not to have one if it's going to cost more. If you don't have a choice, it's the only fair way."*

*"They should talk more about the stats and the amount of money that can be saved. It might actually help people on lower incomes out and save them money."*

*"You wouldn't get gas and electric saying we'll charge you a flat rate – it should be the same with water."*

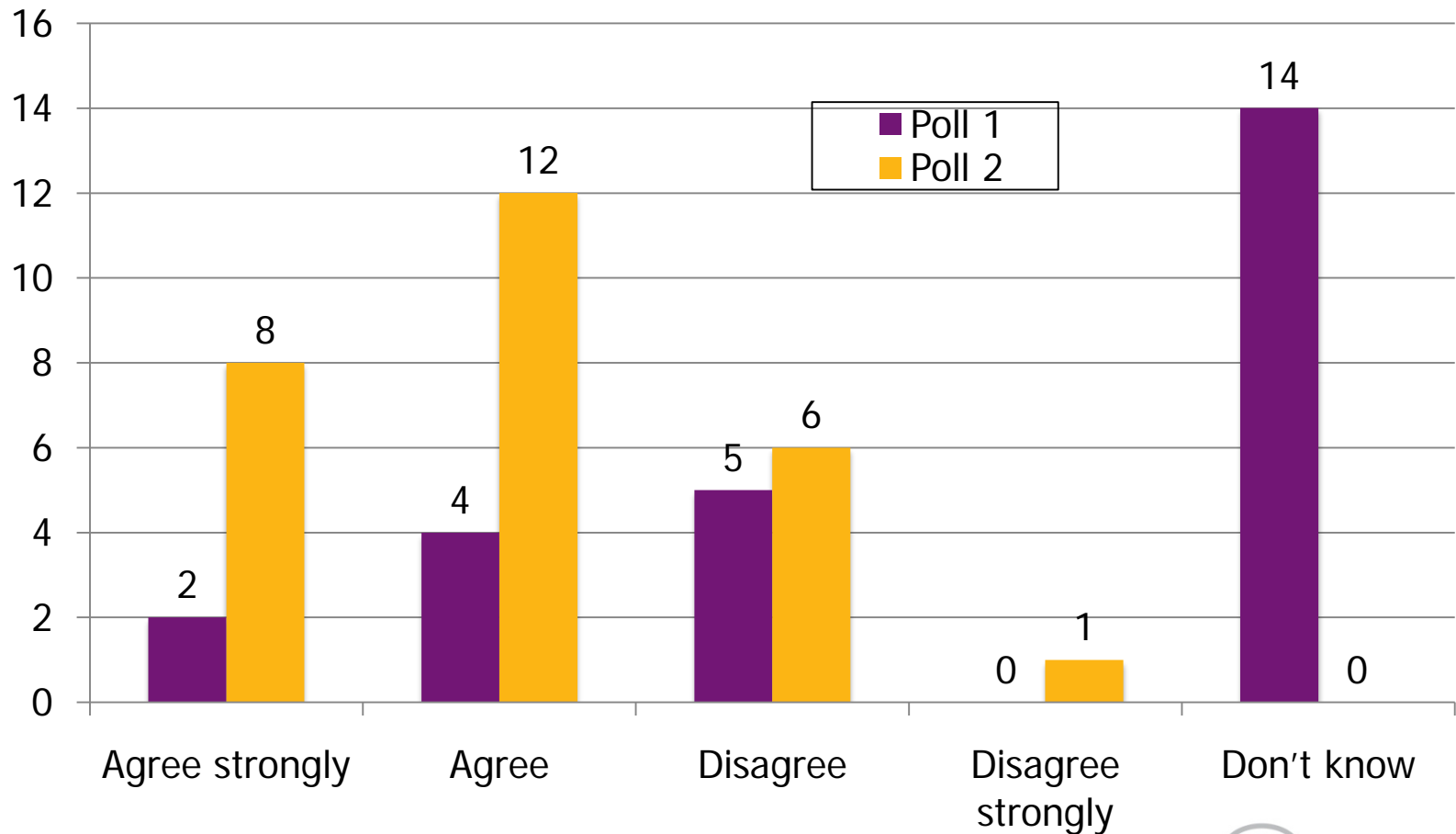


# Leakage

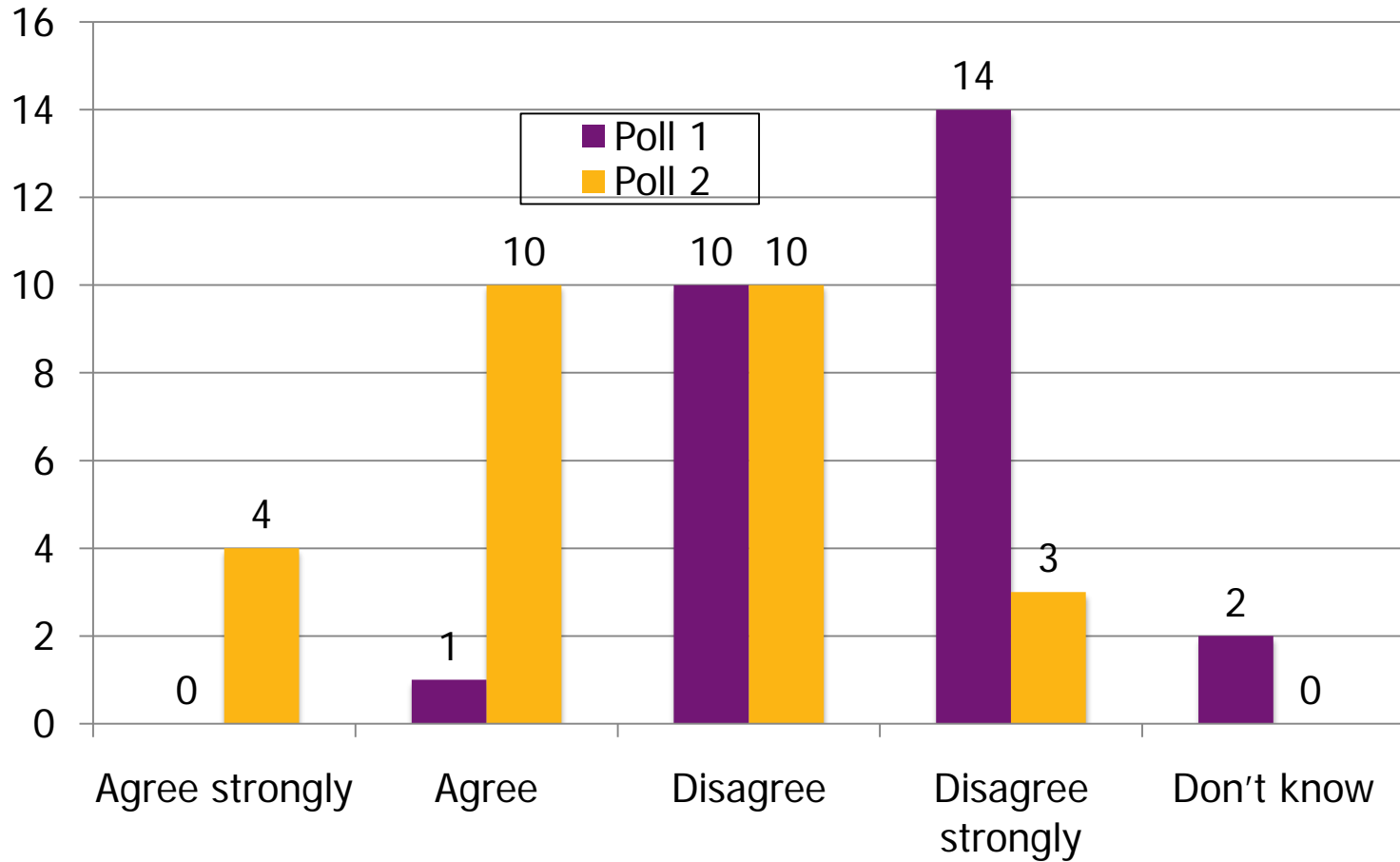
- Leakage levels
  - Pre-existing cynicism about whether water companies care
  - Very few knew how SSW actually performs
  - Highest priority at beginning of the day
  - Declined down the order of priority but still top 4 at end
  - Increased understanding shifted attitudes significantly
  - Participants split over whether to go beyond SELL levels
  - Surplus makes leakage reduction less important for some
- Supply pipes
  - Knowledge of supply pipe ownership was patchy
  - Existing approach to supporting customers with leaks, broadly felt to be acceptable
  - Views about SSW taking ownership would depend on detailed billing implications



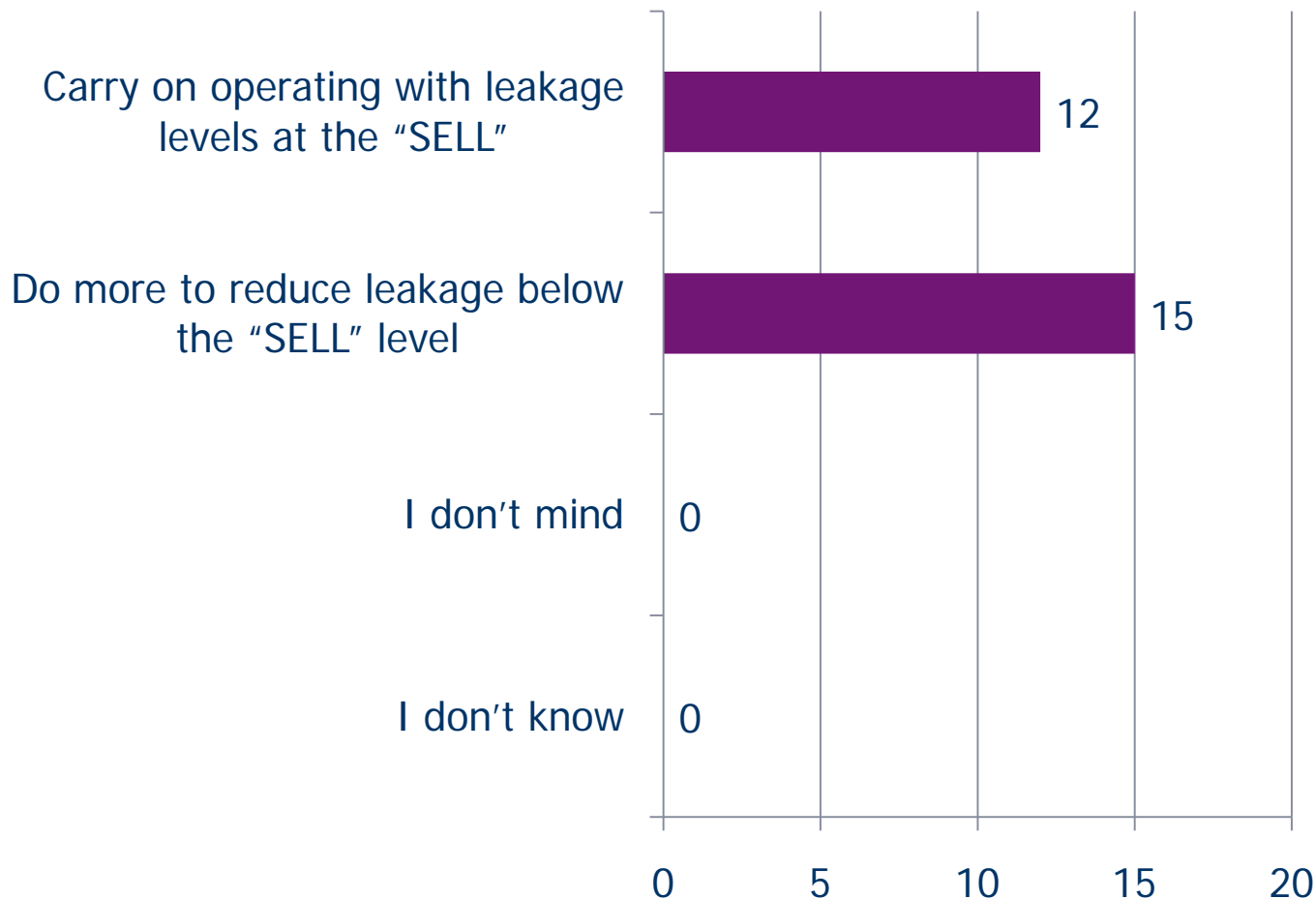
# How far do you agree or disagree with this statement? "SSW is doing enough to reduce leakage in the water system."



# How far do you agree or disagree that ..? “I would be happy for my water bill to increase in order to pay for a reduction in leakage levels.”



# Following your discussions, what do you think SSW should do?



*"To lose 71 million is criminal."*

*"The situation seems fine at the moment, but it needs reviewing constantly – I might be happy to pay in future if things change."*

*"They're saying their business model is effective, losing that amount per day. They've obviously factored that in. If they can charge us 1% to save 3m litres a day, what's the point?"*

*"Originally I wouldn't have been happy with an increase on my bill, but knowing it would be so small to benefit everyone, I'd be more than willing now compared to when I walked through the door."*

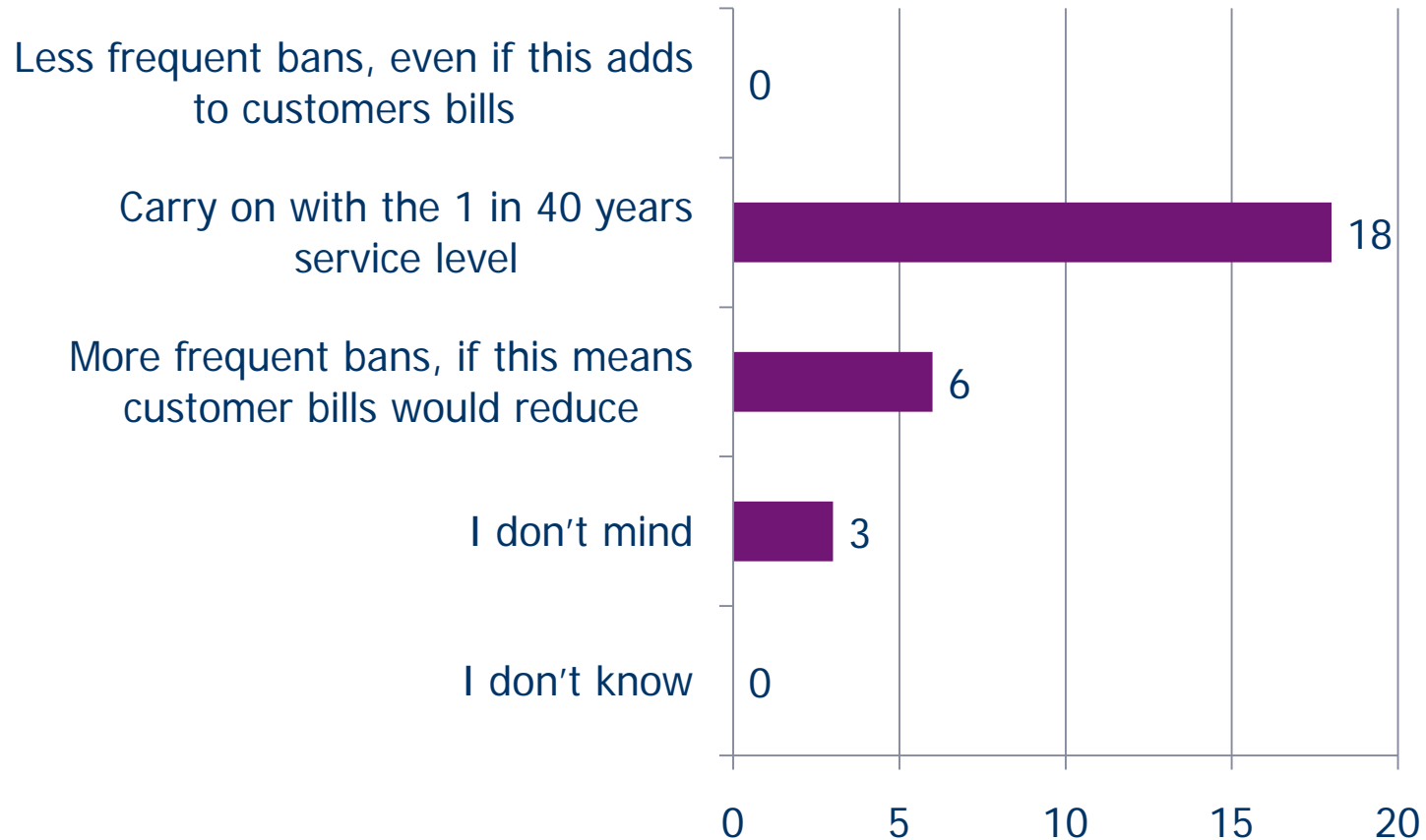


# Restrictions

- Wide surprise at infrequency of bans being achieved
- Some feel bans would not affect them much anyway – not seen as a major concern
- Some prepared to see lower level of service
  - Others see this as retrograde
  - Rather than reduction in bills, money could be invested in leakage reduction / other projects



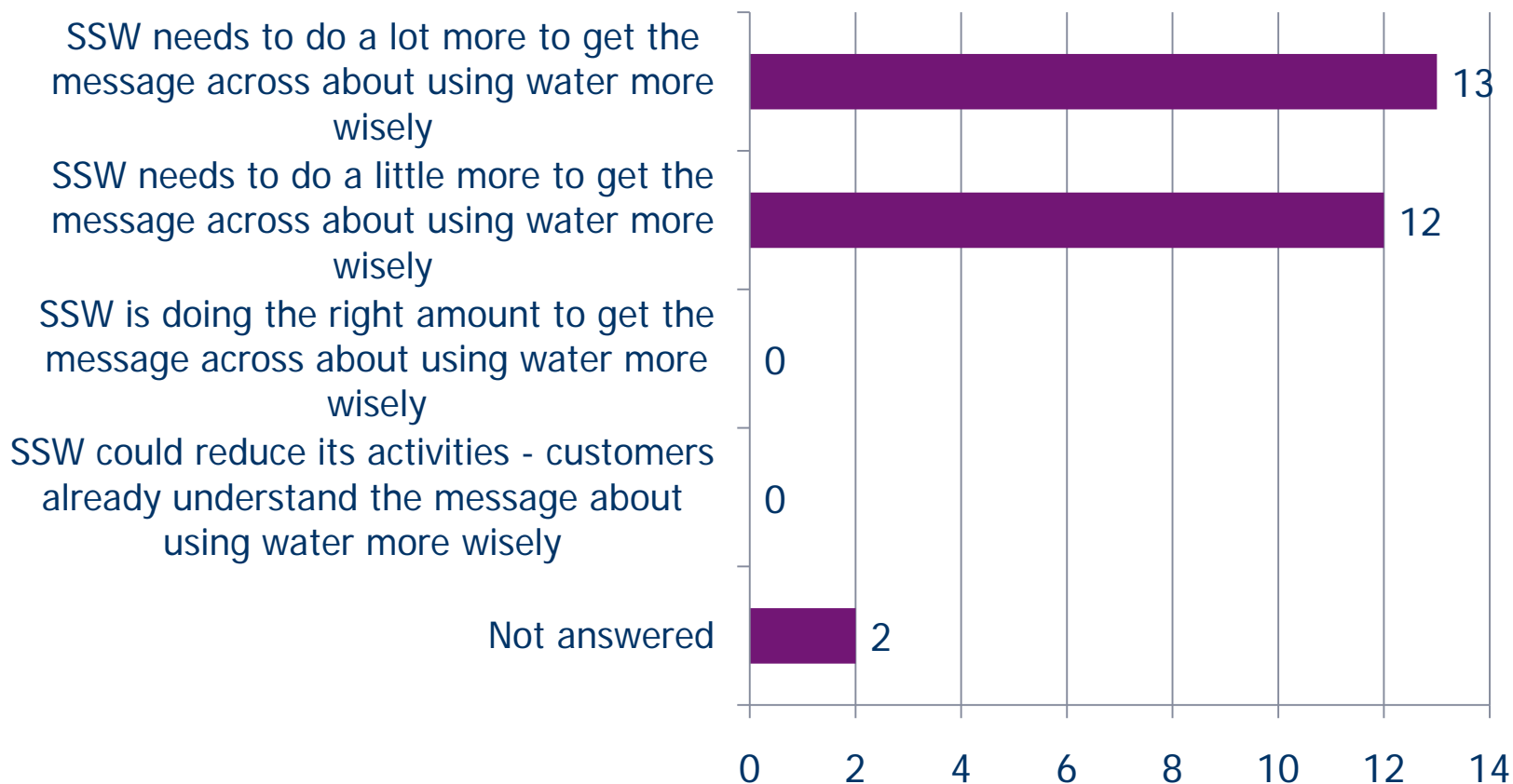
# Following your discussions what would you want to see?



# Water efficiency

- Most admitted they could do more to save water
  - Those without meters more likely to say this
- Current consumption unknown = barrier to reduction
- Even those with meters find cubic meter measurements confusing / difficult
- Little pre-existing awareness of SSW efforts to drive down customer consumption
- Mix of passive and active measures needed
- Strong support for SSW to do more

# Which of these statements best reflects your view?

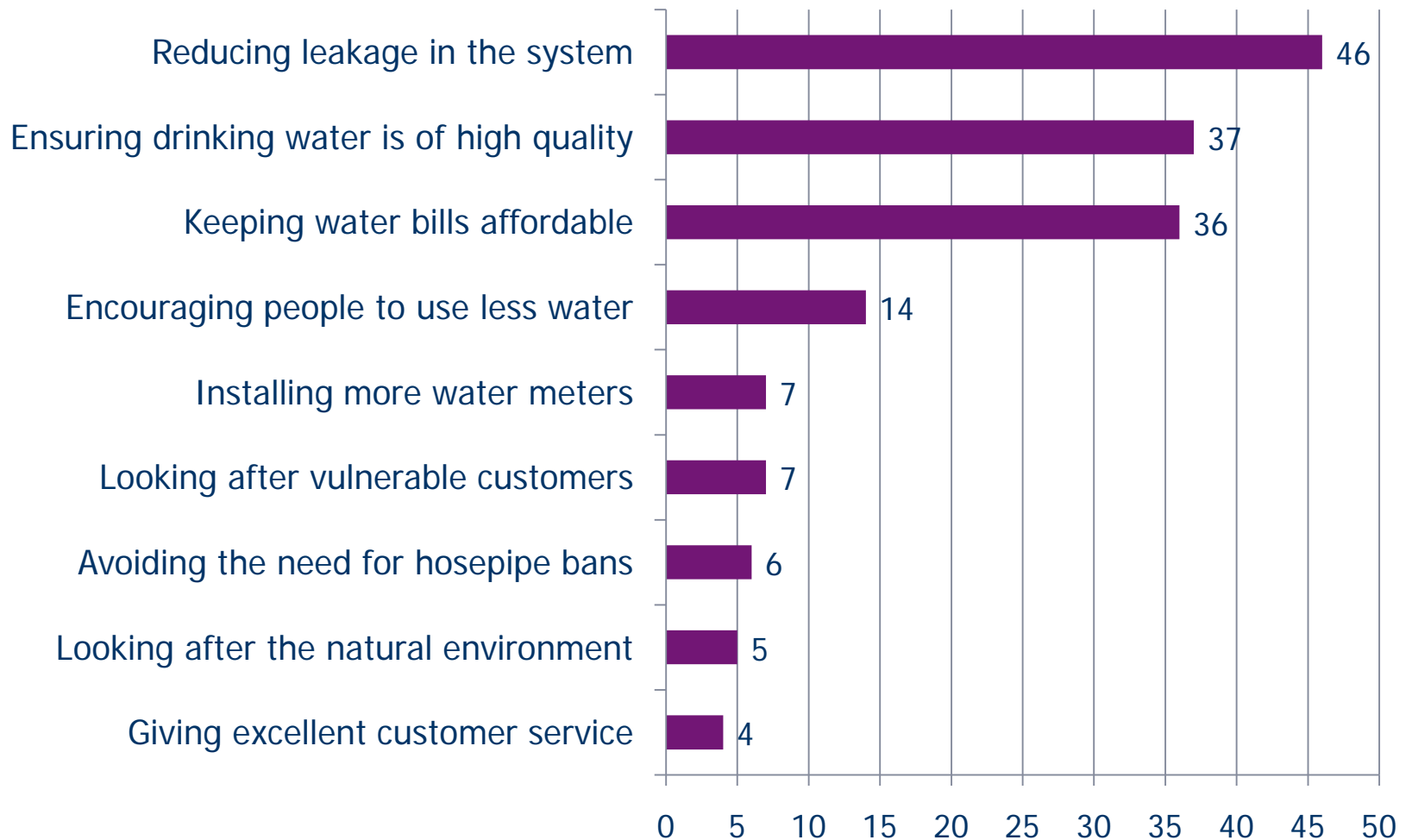


# Environment

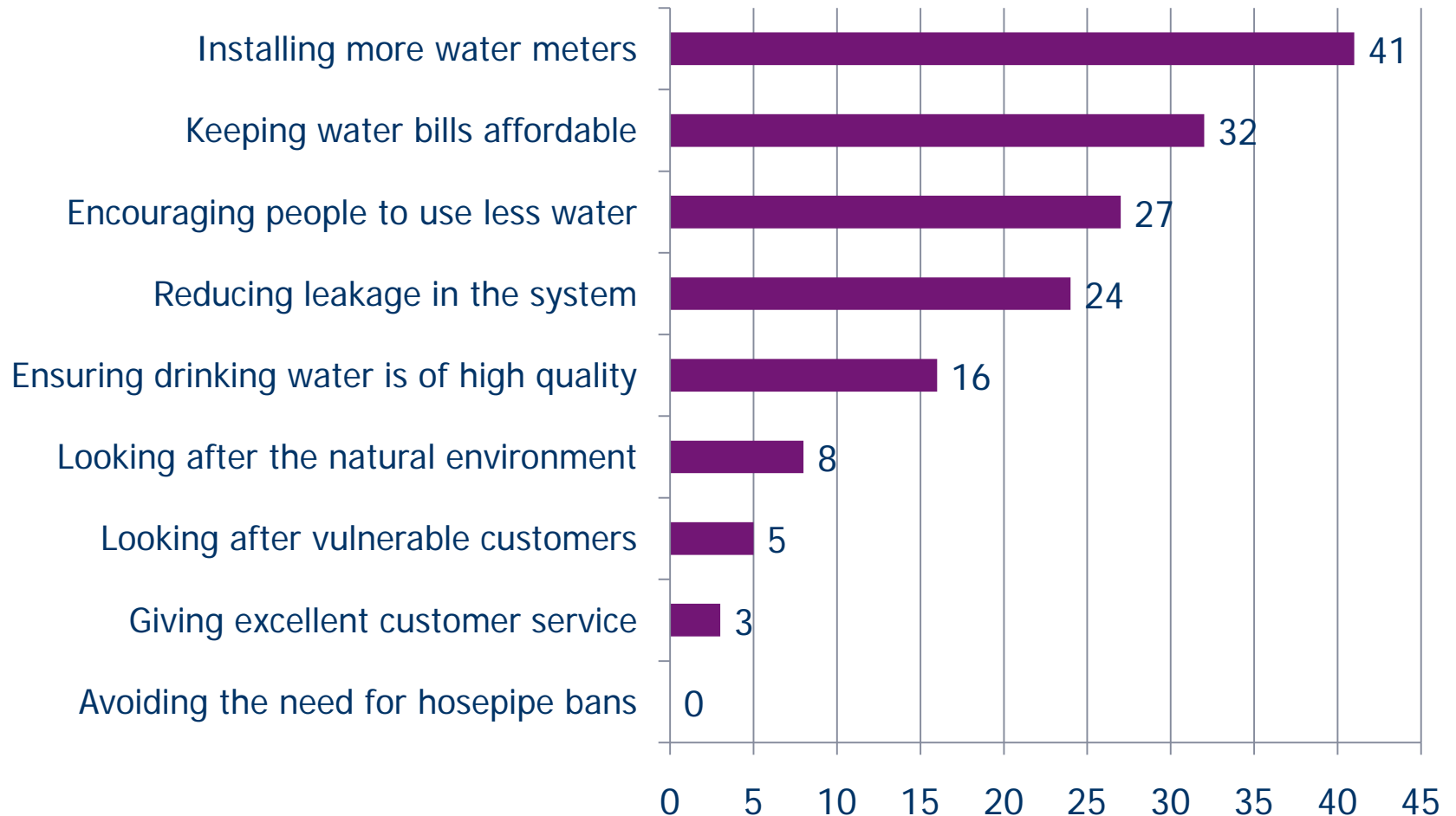
- Not prioritised at the start and whilst given more priority by the end, still only in the top 3 issues for fewer than a quarter
- Water companies do have special responsibility
  - Natural local environment is precious
- Relatively difficult to engage with this aspect of the discussion
- Theoretical willingness to pay from some (but not all).
- Desire to know exact projects before being decisive

# How priorities changed

# Pre-informed prioritisation



# Final prioritisation



# Final thoughts

*"Of all the issues we talked about we thought water meters was the most important."*

*"Our message to South Staffs is – communicate please!"*

*"Sell themselves – why not let people know how well you are doing, especially compared to others."*





# Recommendations

- Customers believe there is considerable potential to increase meter levels through education and communication - communications on meters should focus on free installation and cooling off period.
- More ambitious leakage reduction, beyond the SELL should be explored further, in future willingness to pay research.
- Maintain current service level on customer restrictions.
- Increase activities and communications regarding water efficiency.
- No broad based support to pay more to support environmental improvements beyond those specified by the Environment Agency – would need more specific details and consultation.
- More and better communication was called for, across the board.

# Your questions?



# Online customer panel

# The approach

- Use of existing online market research panel
- c.10,000 in South Staffs Area
- Recruit and profile a sub-panel specifically for South Staffs water
- Use this for surveys, groups discussions and so on as required
- Panel of 500-1,000
- Targets to match customer base

# Panel Targets

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	49%
Female	51%
<b>Area</b>	
North	43%
South	57%
<b>Metered</b>	
Yes	28%
No	72%
<b>Acorn Group</b>	
Wealthy achievers	23%
Urban prosperity	3%
Comfortably off	33%
Moderate means	12%
Hard pressed	29%

<b>Bill Payer</b>	
Yes	70%
No	30%
<b>Age</b>	
18-29	21%
30-44	25%
45-59	25%
60+	29%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	85%
BME	15%

# Profiling survey – what else we will know about panellists

- Number in household
- Property type
- Tenure
- Water relevant appliance in home
- Garden or not
- Water Sure or not
- Environmental attitudes / behaviours
- Satisfaction with SSW



# Timings

- Full launch of recruitment survey
  - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb
- Fieldwork timing
  - Progress to be monitored daily until panel is recruited
    - expect maximum of 2 weeks