

# Wessex Water Young People's Panel 2024

Project proposal



BLUE MARBLE



The Wessex Water Young People's Panel (YPP) has become established as an annual event to engage with future customers.

It has delivered real benefits in the form of service innovations which have subsequently been adopted.

Furthermore, it has generated useful PR and provided an opportunity to engage with many secondary schools and sixth form colleges across the region.

## Objective: To bring the views of future customers into the heart of the business

- To understand mindset & expectations of future customers
- To provide a forum for future customers to deliberate on long term company plans
- To look for innovative solutions to a real business problem
- To engage with the community, enabling schools to participate in future decision-making



For students and schools, they value:

- High quality work experience: learning about a local business and a national industry and meeting senior leaders in an activity-based programme
- Educational enrichment: having a real challenge to work on; an opportunity to pitch and present ideas to a senior team; meeting and working with new people



**Engagement was very high on the days – and the quality of panellist presentations was very high**

- However, our efforts to build in check-in calls and additional tasks such as diaries and vlogs received much lower engagement

**Team dynamics are hard to orchestrate - but important to understand**

- Our 'animal personality' exercise is a great icebreaker but didn't necessarily deliver well rounded teams
- The choice of Team rep (to liaise with Blue Marble) is key

**Time between the two meetings is short**

- It was inefficient to have two rounds of material review – and particularly stressful for the Wessex team bearing in mind the PR24 workload
- This additional pressure can be avoided...

**We extended the 'speed immersion' session to support the core task**

- However, this was probably too much information in one go – and some wished they'd had the task briefing before the immersion



We will retain the team competition element which seems to drive engagement. We will also re-think the mid-point catch up call.



Each team will have a Blue Marble researcher assigned to them: we will observe each team more closely and choose the natural leader.



We will prepare the full suite of materials for review and sign off ahead of day 1. This will include the survey and Day 2 pack.



We will consider this in this year's design – and keep the day as interactive as possible.



## School engagement was very good

- The schools' engagement process is working well with high numbers of applicants
- Their support also led to positive survey numbers.

## We had higher drop-out levels than we've previously encountered

- There was no obvious reason for this
- We had straightforward communications with the panellists who had legitimate reasons (university visits etc)

## Core task specification is critical to the value of YPP

- We speculated that this was too complex last year – accounting for some dropouts – although the outputs would suggest otherwise

## CCW involvement adds a positive dimension

- The YPP has received wider publicity in the industry and participation in the Waterfall podcast is great for the students.



The longevity of the YPP means that schools are increasingly familiar and supportive of the initiative.



We will hold the 2 meetings closer together, both ahead of half term (which should avoid running into university interview season).



We will work harder to meet the original principles of the task: to reflect a real business challenge that enables panellists to bring future customer insight.



We hope this collaboration continues in 2024.



## Recruiting the Young People's Panel

### We will engage c.50 schools in the region to convene a panel of 30 students

- Schools will promote the opportunity with years' 12 and 13
- We will use an online application form – and provide schools with a summary of the YPP and a QR code for students to access
- We will choose applicants to reflect the widest number of schools
- Our approach will be inclusive, offering additional support if needed

We have not yet discussed the specific business objectives for the 2024 YPP but suggest a number of general topics here as a starting point for consideration.

#### **Water resources**

e.g. behaviour change campaigns

#### **Environmental sustainability**

e.g. biodiversity; pollution prevention

#### **Customer service improvement**

e.g. new licence condition

#### **Climate resilience planning**

e.g. investment and customer education

#### **Innovation and technology**

e.g. Smart meters; CSO monitoring

#### **Partnership working**

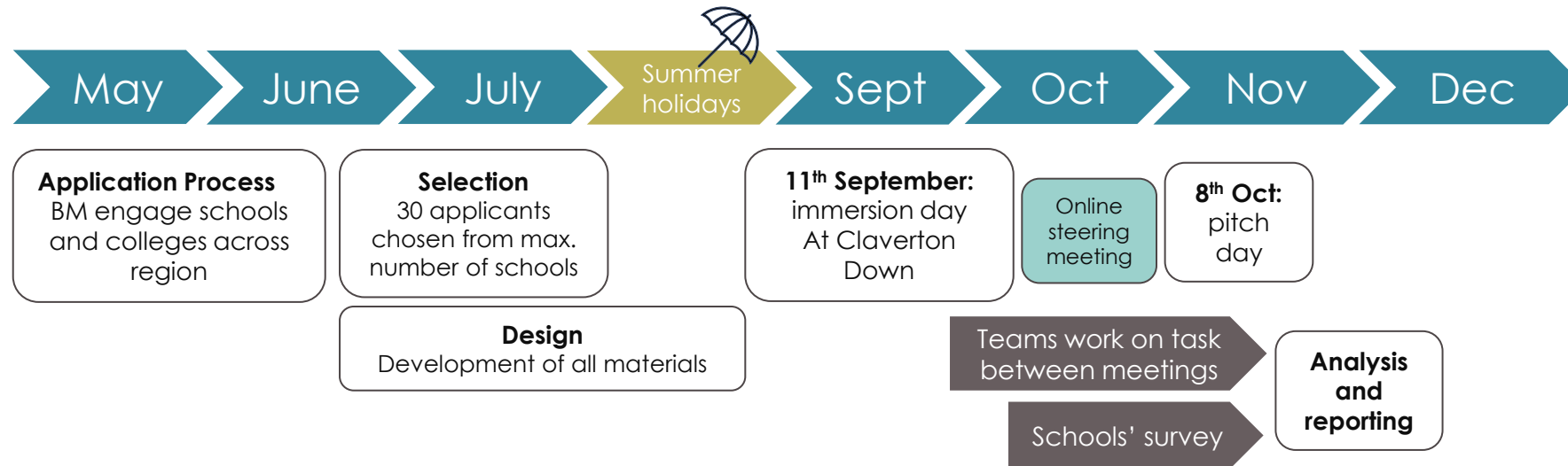
e.g. vulnerable audiences; community campaigns

#### **Reputation and trust**

e.g. communications & actions; future perspectives



We will follow the same face to face process as previous years: details of the running order for the day and the detailed briefing pack for the core task will be prepared in collaboration with Wessex Water. As previously, we will recruit from as many schools as possible, selecting pupils to work in teams with people from a range of other schools.



The following outlines our usual programme for each day. This is flexible and will be finalised with you.

We note (in bold) that there are 4 opportunities for ‘new insight’ over and above the core task, giving scope to cover a range of objectives.

We also propose briefly explaining the core task prior to the immersion session on Day 1, following feedback from last year’s students.

## Day 1: immersion - 11<sup>th</sup> September

Time	Activity
9.15 am	Panellists arrive, sign in, name badges, team allocation, GDPR consent
9.30 – 10	Welcome & ice breaker
10 – 10.45	<b>New insight</b> (e.g. group discussion)
11 – 11.45	<b>Set up core task (briefly)</b> Speed immersion carousel  Rotated with office & control centre tour
12-12.45	<b>New insight</b> (e.g. interactive exercise)
1-1.45	NETWORKING LUNCH
1.45 – 2.15	Core task briefing
2.15-3.30	Teams working on core task
3.30 – 4.00	Thanks, goodbye, see you next time

## Day 2: pitches – 8<sup>th</sup> October

Time	Activity
9.15	Panellists arrive, sign in, name badges, GDPR consent Welcome back
9.30 – 10.30	Teams finalising core task
	Regroup
10.45 – 12.30	Team presentations
12.30 – 1.15	NETWORKING LUNCH
1.15 – 2.30	<b>New insight</b> (e.g. group discussion)
2.30 – 3.30	<b>New insight</b> (e.g. interactive exercise)
3.30 – 4.00	Core task feedback and winners awarded Final comments, thanks and goodbye



Date	Activity	Blue Marble action	Wessex Water action
Early May	Update application form	Update letter, application form, evaluation criteria	
End May/before half term	Engage schools in YPP scheme; open applications	Using database of local schools/colleges contacts	Update website and include application link. Wider social media activity
End June	Applications close	Evaluation	
Early July (before end of term)	Select panellists	Despatch award emails	
Early July	Planning meeting	Prepare full agenda	Consider 2024 objectives and core task topic Enlist colleagues, finalise timings/diaries
July/August	Develop content	Develop all materials	Approve all materials
Early September	Finalise Board Meeting 1 preparations	Send out briefing pack to all panellists	All final arrangements: parking spaces, refreshments etc
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Board Meeting 1</b>	Facilitation	Participation at given points
September	<b>Day 1 informal wash up meeting</b>	Prepare agenda	Participation
October	<b>School's survey</b>	Launch survey	Sign off questionnaire pre-programming
Early October	Pre meeting 2 catch up	Run through plan	Final arrangements (refreshments etc)
October 8th	<b>Board Meeting 2</b>	Facilitation	Participation at given points Judging panel
Mid November	Report	Integrated report of key findings from both Board Meetings and school survey	Face-to-face meeting to discuss findings







**Blue Marble Research Ltd**

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