



xserve

2020

Business Plan

Draft Version 1

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CEO Foreword

I am delighted to be able to share with you the first draft of our 2020 Business Plan (BP20).

This document builds upon the thinking that we shared with you in the BP20 Principles and Approach publication, where we set out our approach to developing BP20 and the key issues that we need to consider, incorporating your feedback to date and detailing our planned investment activity and financial planning. Our aim in this process has been to improve how we communicate our thinking, making the comparison of year-on-year activity as easy and relevant to your customer constituency as possible.

Central to this plan are our focus areas, planned activity and investment assumptions, which reflect our approach to both making sustainable improvements to our services and delivering additional functionality for our customers.

As we outlined in our BP20 Principles and Approach, the energy market outlook as we head into the BP20 period is uncertain and dynamic, with Xoserve at the centre of what will be significant customer and market change. Our strategic response to this changing market outlook is to change ahead of the market, embracing automation, digitising our business and opening up our data, moving our infrastructure to the cloud, protecting our industry against an

ever-increasing cyber security threat, and building next generation platforms fit for the future. Our business plan for the next year lays the foundations for this approach, whilst also improving the level of service and the effectiveness of communications we provide to customers today.

Please read this document in conjunction with our Principles and Approach document, which can be found [here](#).

I'd like to reiterate that I am proud of what Xoserve has achieved since the start of our new strategy, but I am under no illusions that we have a long way to go and a lot of hard work still to undertake in order to be able to delight our customers at every turn. This plan represents our thinking on how we will achieve that over the next three years.

Sian Jones

Chief Executive Officer



Executive Summary

In our 2019 Business Plan (BP19) we forecast that our costs to maintain the business at the end of 2019/20 would be £50.6m and would reduce over the following two years of the plan.

In our BP20 Principles and Approach document we highlighted our focus areas for the coming period. We will continue to build our protection against an ever-increasing cyber security threat and have increased our Maintain the Business (MTB) and Investment forecasts to reflect the increased costs in doing so. We also highlighted the issues we've faced with our ongoing operation and detailed our plans to retain expertise for the full first year of BP20 as a protective mechanism, and to expedite the automation of our processes and the transformation of our workforce.

We forecast MTB costs of £50.7m at March 2020 (£0.1m higher than forecast in BP19), rising to £51.4m by March 2021, £2.6m higher than in our BP19 forecast for this date. We aim to reduce MTB costs to £48.2m (19/20 prices) by March 2023, one year later than forecast in BP19.

The investment trends we describe highlight a natural spike in first year investment costs followed by a decline in identified items as we move into years 2 and 3 of the plan. In reality the level of demand requiring investment rarely decreases, leading us to conclude that whilst MTB forecasts provide a good indication of future spend across the Business Plan period, this is not the case for Investment funding.

Reflective of this, for 2020/21 we are forecasting Baseline investment costs of £30.6m, that are higher than the 2019 budget of £30.1m (£39m including the recommended items detailed in this plan). This is an increase of £6.6m from the BP19 forecast for 2020/21 investment (£24m).



Introduction

In July 2019 we published our BP20 Principles and Approach, which marked the formal start of our annual process to engage with our customers on the strategic direction of Xoserve, and specifically to seek feedback on the initiatives we believe will deliver the greatest value during the period April 2020 to March 2023.

The publication of the first draft of our BP20 marks the next step in this process, consolidating the customer feedback we've received so far and outlining in detail our financial forecasting, investment focus areas, customer engagement approach, and constituency-specific information for consideration.

In line with our Principles and Approach document we have categorised our investment proposals within nine focus areas that represent our priorities for the upcoming business plan period:

- Digitising our business and opening up our data
- Protecting against cyber security threats
- Moving our infrastructure to the cloud
- Realising our vision of Operation Excellence
- Gemini Service
- Re-shaping our business
- Customer Centricity through improved communications
- Central Switching Service Programme
- General annual customer change

As previously outlined, these nine focus areas represent our response to an uncertain and dynamic energy market outlook. However, our core business strategy and the detailed ambitions we've set under each of our strategic pillars remain unchanged during this next business planning period; you can view more information about these on our website [here](#).

Our BP20 plan provides a detailed rationale and plan for our activities in each of our nine focus areas, along with a breakdown of investment activities. We've presented financial information in line with our BP20 and our Principles and Approach, ensuring our information differentiates the purpose of our funding, provides transparency about the funding of historic initiatives, and provides a breakdown by customer constituent of their contribution to the plan.

We've also differentiated between those investments that we consider fundamental to maintaining the integrity of our services (baseline investments) and those that we strongly recommend in order to deliver the additional value customers demand. We've explained the nature of these investments and how they compare with those we proposed in BP19.

This document and the supporting information we've provided to date represents a significant step change in our BP20 customer engagement activities, providing more information for customers earlier in our planning process. We welcome your views on the information we have set out – you'll find a full breakdown of our engagement timeline and opportunities to feedback your views in this report.

Customer Feedback

One of our key aims for this year's business planning process has been to improve our engagement with customers. As part of this we shared our vision for BP20 in our BP20 Principles and Approach document and through existing customer engagement meetings in March 2019.

This section details the feedback we received and our responses.

- **Stability of UK Link** – A number of customers commented on the stability of UK Link, mentioning the increasing number of P1 and P2 incidents and outages.

Response – UK Link has been the focus of our attention over the last few months and we've worked with the SMEs within our business to plan how this platform will evolve and deliver the fit for purpose services the industry require. We are proposing investment to deliver the changes our customers require and to handle increasing capacity and throughput requirements, achieved through moving the system to the Cloud, automating and digitising our solutions. We are also proposing to invest in Service Management Transformation, Improvement to Testing Tooling & Automation and Application Performance Monitoring to ensure ongoing delivery of UK Link systems and services for our customers.

- **Customer Vulnerability** – The industry is placing a greater focus on customer vulnerability, which is being expanded to include other utilities. What engagement does Xoserve have planned to deal with any changes?

Response – We believe customer vulnerability is a cross-sector issue that is not limited to any particular market or single industry, and it needs a dynamic range of industry specific and cross-sector interventions, products and services to ensure that the vulnerable are protected and can benefit from market innovation. We are keen to explore how an 'open data' approach, data analytics and machine learning techniques can be used to tackle the vulnerability challenge.

- **Charging Methodology** – We stated that the charging methodology would remain unchanged for BP20, there was broad agreement over this however a desire to ensure that more detailed information was made available early in the process to enable forecasting for current RII02 plans.

Response – We have listened to our customers and will provide more detailed information earlier in the BP process.

- **Information Security and Cyber Crime** – Our customers supported our proposal to invest in the security of the data we hold, however they highlighted the need for more information on how we will achieve this.

Response – We have included details of investment in this area to ensure future compliance with ISO27001 and to voluntarily align with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

- **Digital and Big Data** – Our customers stated that the growing use of Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies and Big Data can bring benefit, particularly at scale, and could strengthen Xoserve's capabilities to better respond to industry needs.

Response – We see this area as a major benefit to our customers. By removing manual ways of working and exposing our data will mean a reduction in delivery times and the best utilisation for the data we hold.

Provision of Financial Information

In this section we describe the basis of our financial forecasts and how we are presenting financial information to our customers. Wherever possible we've retained the format and structure of our financial information in line with last year's plan to help customers see what's new and what's changed.

The financial information in our BP19 document was stated in 2018/19 prices. To allow a direct comparison with the values in this BP20 document we have stated all values, including BP19 values, in 2019/20 prices, inclusive of the "Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs" (CPIH) uplift of 2.3%. When finalising customer charges for 2020/21, in line with BP19, this year we expect to add a CPIH reflective inflationary uplift (2.0%).

In BP19 we categorised investments into three categories for Customer Change, Market Investment and Xoserve Change. This year, in line with our Principles and Approach document this categorisation has changed, to better reflect our priorities for the upcoming business plan period. We've also differentiated between those investments that we consider fundamental to maintaining the integrity of our services (Baseline investments) and those that we strongly recommend to deliver the additional value customers demand. We've explained the nature of these investments and how they compare with those we proposed in BP19.



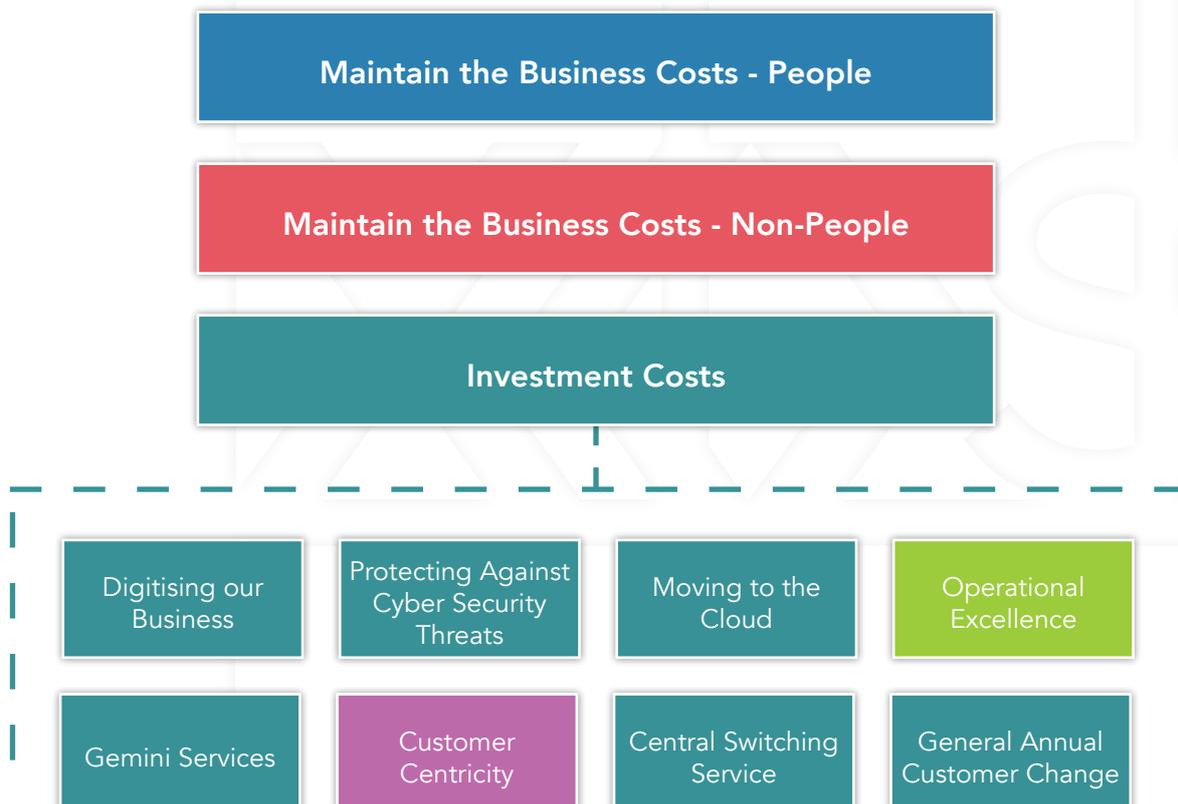
Presentation of Financial Information

As part of our continued focus on transparency and addressing our customers' feedback, we've produced financial information that's accurate and relevant to each of our customer constituents.

Our investment proposals have been gathered and proposed based on feedback received and with a view of the cost constraints that impact a majority of our customers (e.g. RIIO1 allowances, energy price caps).

We've presented information in line with the focus areas outlined in our Principles and Approach. This fulfils three purposes:

1. It differentiates between funding that:
 - a. Maintains the business, retaining the high-quality assets necessary to deliver our services. Maintain the business costs are split by people and non-people costs, following a similar approach to BP19.
 - b. Defines the investments that will help deliver change to meet customer expectation. Our investments have been split by:
 - b.i. Focus areas as specified within the Principles and Approach document
 - b.ii. Investments required to maintain our services (Baseline funding) and those that deliver additional value based on customer demand (Recommended funding).
2. It is transparent about the funding of initiatives that deliver our previously stated strategic goals and builds upon BP19 to continue investments in critical systems and solutions.
3. Provides a breakdown by customer constituent of their contribution to the plan making a differentiation between baseline and recommended investment whilst highlighting previously approved business plan figures (from BP19).



Presentation of Financial Information

The following example table illustrates the approach we've taken to make analysis of our investment proposals as simple as possible:

- We've listed, by investment area, each potential initiative with its estimated costs over the BP20 period.
- We've included the Baseline or Recommended designation to enable easy understanding of cost differentiation.
- We've included the investment amount for initiatives that were included within BP19, to enable tracking between our BP19 estimates and our cost assumptions for BP20.

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
Big Data Platform	Recommended	£0	£630	£840	£300	£1,770
Digital	Baseline	£350	£350	£350	£350	£1,050
Data Access Platform (DAP)	Recommended	£600	£550	£540	£400	£1,490
TOTAL		£950	£1,530	£1,730	£1,050	£4,310

Financial Forecasts

Total Expenditure

This chart illustrates BP20 Total Expenditure. In order to allow a direct comparison between the values in this BP20 document and the forecasts in the BP19 document (which were stated in 2018/19 prices), we have re-stated the BP19 charts in 2019/20 prices which reflect the values in our Annual Charging Statement and Pricing Schedules.

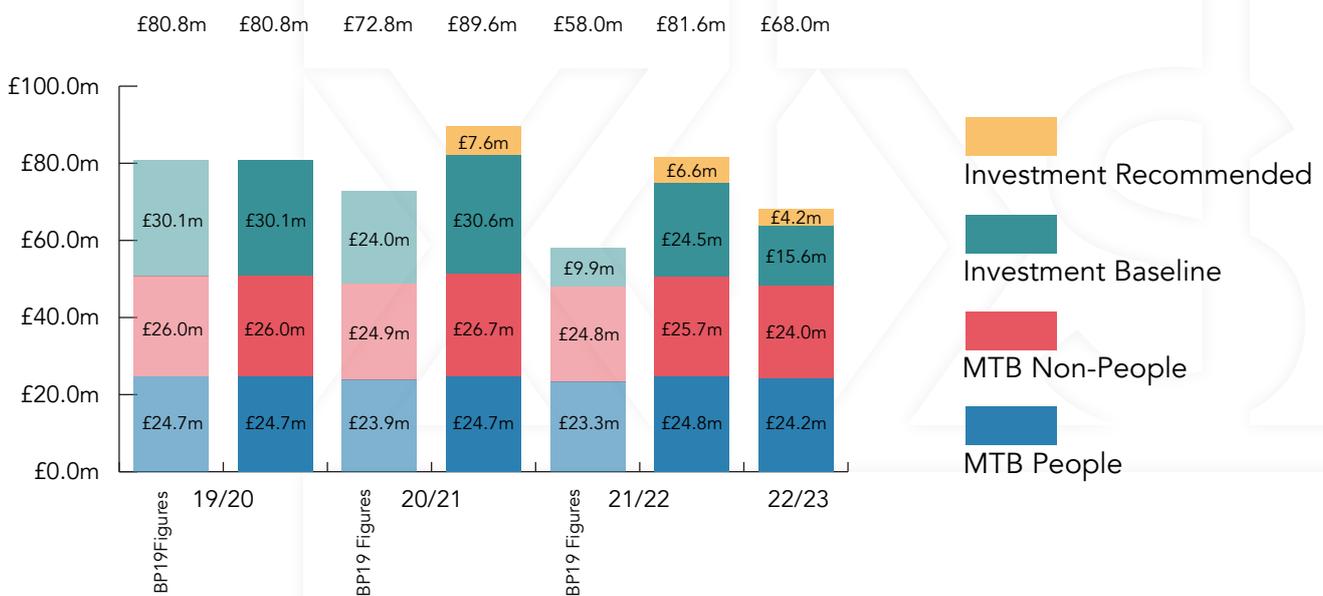
In our BP19 Business Plan we forecast that our costs to maintain the business at the end of 2019/20 would be £50.6m and would reduce over the following two years of the plan.

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We therefore forecast an increase in MTB costs in the first year, rising to £51.4m by March 2021, £2.6m higher than in our BP19 forecast for this date. Reductions are forecast from 2021/22 onwards with our aim to reduce MTB costs to £48.2m (19/20 prices) achieved by March 2023, one year later than forecast in BP19.

The investment trends we describe highlight a natural spike in first year investment costs followed by a decline in identified items as we move into years 2 and 3 of the plan. In reality the level of demand requiring investment rarely decreases leading us to conclude that, whilst MTB forecasts provide a good indication of future spend across the Business Plan period, this is not the case for investment funding.

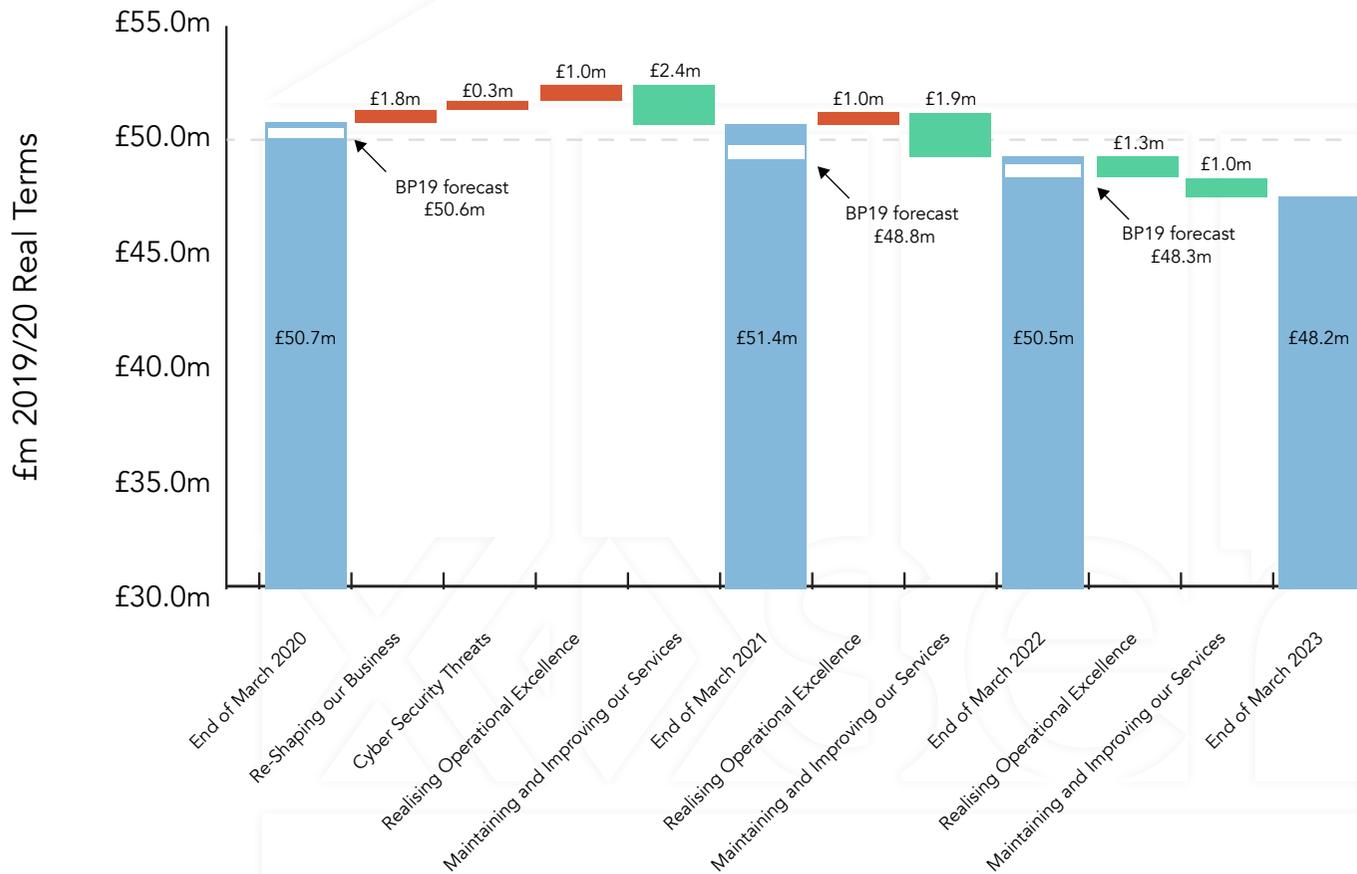
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Financial Forecasts

Maintain the Business

This is our Maintain the Business expenditure. The chart shows the year on year movements in costs from April 2020 through to March 2023, and identifies the drivers for each movement.



MTB Costs

This waterfall chart shows the breakdown of the key elements affecting MTB costs in the coming year:

- Re-shaping our Business (+£1.8m) including the continued automation of key processes and the creation of a sustainable flexible workforce.
- Cyber Security Threats (+£0.3m) increased costs in the provision of core Information Security systems, processes and personnel.
- Realising Operational Excellence (+£1.0m) reflective of the increased focus on tackling the post-Nexus issues currently impacting UK Link systems and processes.
- Maintaining and Improving our Services (-£2.4m) cost reductions primarily resulting from ongoing programmes moving infrastructure away from existing data centre hosting (Gemini, IX, EFT, shared components).

We've shown the impact of these factors on individual constituencies at the end of this document.

Re-Shaping Our Business

The technology platforms that Xoserve uses, manages and evolves were built in an age where technology was capable of assisting humans, making manual tasks easier and providing a single version of data for the industry to transact. At the turn of the century everyone talked of complete automation and the use of robots to do the jobs of humans, but the technology was not yet capable of supporting this vision. As technology has evolved, our industry has been hampered by poor quality data and inconsistent behaviours, which has continued to stand in the way of full robotic automation. As a result, the Xoserve workforce is still disproportionately geared towards people running processes that are assisted by technology, but still heavily dependent on human intervention.

Xoserve will therefore transform its workforce, embracing the latest automation techniques which are now capable of handling complex scenarios and imperfect data. We aim to free up 30% of our operations workforce between now and 2023, redeploying our people into roles focused on data quality, data profiling, technology design, digital and performance assurance. This will dramatically change the shape of our business.

Overall our underlying costs will increase in year one in order to face into delivering our vision of Operational Excellence once and for all. Costs will then reduce by 1% year-on-year through the remainder of BP20. This modest efficiency masks a dramatic change of skills mix which is taking place underneath the aggregate headline; as well as our avoidance of an increasing cost base if we had not recognised and laid down ambitious plans to face into the challenge of our existing processes now.

We want to undertake this in a way that creates sustainable flexibility in our workforce. Large scale leaver and re-hire programmes are expensive, creating a cycle of boom and bust, leaving those with yesterday's skills stranded in a UK economy already suffering from declining levels of productivity. Xoserve intends to set an example in the Energy Sector, by creating sustainable workforce flexibility, which will enable us to reshape our skills base every few years. We will achieve this through world-class training, coaching and accreditation programmes which support our people to completely change career pathways. Such a strategy will ensure we retain the richness of our energy market knowledge and expertise, whilst ensuring we deliver on our promises to digitise our business and open up our data. This will enable us to respond to whatever demands will be placed on us in the future.

Protecting against cyber security threats

Prior to 2017, Xoserve benefited from shared security services provided by National Grid. Since our separation, Xoserve has been steadily building a security team from a standing start and building out the third-party contracts required to support our central position and its associated risk profile. MTB costs to deliver these requirements are higher than previously forecast in BP19.



Realising our vision of Operational Excellence

The first 12 months after Nexus go-live were relatively pain-free versus our collective expectation. We released all of the additional headcount we held back for resolving the expected post launch problems. However, the problems were merely masked and in 2019 we have experienced major challenges with our invoicing processes.

Whilst we expect to have resolved these deep-rooted design problems before the start of this new Business Plan, we would be naive to immediately roll-off the expertise we have had to re-build this year. Instead we propose to retain this resource for the first full year of BP20, as a protective mechanism and to expedite the automation of our processes and the transformation of our workforce.



Investment Area Focus

In line with our Principles and Approach document we have categorised our investment proposals within focus areas that represent our priorities for the upcoming business plan period.

Within each focus area, investment proposals have a 'Baseline' or 'Recommended' designation. Baseline refers to the minimum investment required to maintain Xoserve's operational integrity. Recommended refers to suggested investment topics where customers have expressed a desire for additional functionality.

1. Digitising our business and opening up our data

Xoserve processes and stores large volumes of system data and a small volume of consumer data. We believe there are immeasurable benefits in opening up our system data to our customers and other market participants. This needs to be done carefully, with the right security and access controls; this will necessitate investment and new skills to manage this well over time. Xoserve will likely also be required, through the regulation of our customers, to open up its data more broadly, realising the government's vision of completely open data. But at a minimum we must provide a data platform that provides our customers with self-service reports, data visualisation / exploration, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities.

Of equal importance in a world of open data is the ability for Xoserve to leverage its unique industry expertise to provide an analysis capability to its customers, already an area of increasing demand for Xoserve to realise data's true value we will need to analyse whole market data-sets, which not all participants will have the right to access. This will require whole industry datasets to be aggregated in a safe place, based on common data standards and definitions and often linked with data sources from outside the energy sector.

Last year we laid out our plans for the creation of a Data Access Platform (£600k in 2020/21) and in digitising our business (£350k in 2020/21) and we plan to continue the delivery of these initiatives. In addition to the funds forecast in BP19 we also propose to invest £630k in 2020/21 (£1,770k across three years) to create a data lake accessible to all for research and advanced analytics.

We believe Xoserve must step into the space of analysis and insight because, more often than not, for the very tricky issues, our unique expertise and position in the Industry will make us the only party capable of efficiently finding answers; as has been the case in our analysis of Unidentified Gas (UIG). We will need to be able to deploy machine learning and advanced data science again and again, as we did for UIG, to an ever-broader range of questions.

We are well placed to do this and our workforce transformation, coupled with our investments in data will enable us to offer increasingly industry-wide value and insight.

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
Big Data Platform	Recommended	£0	£630	£840	£300	£1,770
Digital	Baseline	£350	£350	£350	£350	£1,050
Data Access Platform (DAP)	Recommended	£600	£550	£540	£400	£1,490
TOTAL		£950	£1,530	£1,730	£1,050	£4,310

2. Protecting Against Cyber Security Threats

The energy sector faces an ever-increasing cyber security threat. Whether relating to theft, hacking or denial of service to our vital systems, protecting ourselves and our customers against cyber threats has become a major part of what Xoserve does. The risk is only growing and Xoserve expects that the cost and effort of protecting its vital assets will only become more intense.

The security challenge is exacerbated by the open data opportunity and the reality of Xoserve sitting right in the middle of critical national infrastructure. We can only realise the benefits of open data and avoid becoming the weak link in the UK's national infrastructure through continued investment in security. Our investment is directly proportional to investments being made by our interconnected customers.

Xoserve has a contractual obligation to meet certain security standards, some of our customers must meet stricter security standards. Therefore by default we must also meet these standards as we manage our customers' data. Xoserve would like to provide assurances to customers that we are managing their data responsibly. Our investment planning will include a level of voluntary compliance with NIST standards.

Xoserve has the option not to mirror the increasing security standard of our customers, but this creates a cascade of risk which we know some of our customers are unwilling to accept. We will be selective in how we apply NIST controls, seeking to maximise our safety and security, whilst recognising the cost pressures on our customers.

We have therefore proposed two new initiatives that provide flexibility to achieve the desired security standards. The baseline recommendation is to achieve security control adherence to ISO 27001 standards (£1.75m in 2020/21, £6m across three years), and should customers desire, we have recommended further voluntary investment to align with NIST standards (£4m in 2020/21, £9m across three years).

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
Information Security ISO27001 Compliance	Baseline	£0	£1,750	£2,000	£2,250	£6,000
Information Security Alignment with NIST	Recommended	£0	£4,000	£3,000	£2,000	£9,000
TOTAL		£0	£5,750	£5,000	£4,250	£15,000

3. Moving our infrastructure to the cloud

Traditional on-site data centres are becoming a thing of the past. They are inflexible and costly to run and secure. The public cloud is now the de-facto strategic choice for the majority of companies in the UK and Xoserve is no different. Moving one of the largest SAP implementations in the world to the cloud will be no small undertaking.

We intend to use this opportunity to do more than just move the infrastructure. We want to build more flexibility into UK Link, by transitioning away from the aspects of UK Link which are inflexible, onto highly scalable, super-fast and super-flexible alternatives that deliver greater choice and value to the Industry. In addition we will take this opportunity to upgrade all of UK Link to utilise in-memory databases which will provide a platform to combine Xoserve’s historical data with the raft of new real-time smart information about consumption and market behaviour, as well as ensuring we can comfortably in parallel provide real-time, self-service, advanced analytics to the industry based on very large data sets.

This will largely be achieved by following the SAP roadmap, (e.g. upgrading to HANA, S4, SAP 4 Energy) and is consistent with Xoserve’s historic approach of sustaining and upgrading our platforms’ core components to ensure we reliably and safely maintain services to our customers. However, during this planning period we will actively explore and be open to alternatives to a traditional SAP-based roadmap.

The key drivers for our transformation journey onto the cloud are:

- The smart meter roll-out will create exponential increases in data volumes
- Supporting and sustaining our business as SAP support for older versions ceases
- Major change programmes driving requirements which benefit from a cloud-first approach e.g. Central Switching Service (CSS) Programme and Retrospective Adjustments

UK Link will move out of our data centre and into a public cloud, giving us greater infrastructure flexibility, enhanced resilience, and the potential to increase the volume of change we deliver efficiently. It also allows for cost savings through the deployment of environments when needed, standing them down when not in use.

In BP19 we assumed that the movement of UK Link to the cloud would occur beyond the BP19 plan period (2022). We have moved this forward significantly, triggered by events such as Class 3 Migration and now propose to begin work in 2020 starting with migration of development tracks to support change delivery including CSS. In 2020/21 we aim to move development and test UK Link hardware to the cloud (Capacity for Change - £6m in 2020/21, £8m across three years) with the movement of the live system to follow in 2021/22 (Core Platform Migration - £6m in 2021/22, £8m across three years).

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
UK Link Strategic Roadmap - Capacity for Change	Baseline	£0	£6,000	£0	£2,000	£8,000
UK Link Strategic Roadmap - Core Platform Migration	Baseline	£0	£0	£6,000	£2,000	£8,000
TOTAL		£0	£6,000	£6,000	£4,000	£16,000

4. Realising our vision of Operation Excellence

We expected and planned for the worst, when UK Link went live as part of Project Nexus in 2017. Typically, new system implementations of this scale experience major operational challenges and require extensive continual development to correct design problems not caught by pre-launch testing.

Surprisingly for Xoserve and our customers, the first 12 months after Nexus go-live were relatively pain-free versus our collective expectation. However, the problems were merely masked and in 2019 we have experienced major challenges with our invoicing processes resulting in increased MTB costs as described earlier in this document and also highlighting areas for improvement.

We plan to continue our investment in Testing Tooling & Automation (increased to £200k 2020/21, £300k across three years) and Infrastructure General (£500k 2020/21, £1.5m across three years). We need to invest in Application Performance monitoring (£400k in 2020/21, £700k across three years), Software Asset Management (£283k in 2020/21, £593k across three years) and Service Management Transformation (£300k in 2020/21, £500k across three years) to ensure continued reliable delivery of UK Link systems and services for our customers.

We also propose to invest in the automation of CMS processes (£200k 2020/21, £500k across three years), People Platforms Evolution (£500k 2020/21, £1.1m across three years) following the migration from National Grid; and Customer Service Centre (£300k 2020/21, £500k across three years) to redesign the customer contact experience.



		Investment Amounts (£k)					Total BP20
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Service Management Transformation	Baseline	£0	£300	£200	£0	£500	
Improvements to Testing, Tooling and Automation	Recommended	£100	£200	£100	£0	£300	
Application Performance Monitoring	Baseline	£0	£400	£200	£100	£700	
Infrastructure General	Recommended	£500	£500	£500	£500	£1,500	
Software Asset Management	Recommended	£0	£283	£155	£155	£593	
CMS Re-write	Recommended	£0	£200	£300	£0	£500	
People Platforms Evolution	Baseline	£0	£500	£300	£300	£1,100	
Customer Service Centre	Recommended	£0	£300	£200	£0	£500	
TOTAL		£600	£2,683	£1,955	£1,055	£5,693	

5. Gemini Services

As we enter the BP20 period, we will build upon our historic support of Gemini by undertaking activities to refresh, re-platform and sustain the platform, in addition to delivering the functional change required by industry.

Given the fact that Gemini has been deployed for 15 years, we are also looking at the best long-term options for the operation of the system; this includes sustaining the current platform, but also the delivery of enhancements to provide a next generation Gemini system.

Investment in the next sustain activity and modernisation will start in 22/23, following investment to confirm health, approach and solution in 20/21 and 21/22.

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
Re-platforming Gemini	Baseline	£1,895	£3,228	£0	£0	£3,228
Gemini Enhancements	Baseline	£2,265	£2,265	£2,627	£2,627	£7,519
Future of Gemini	Baseline	£0	£100	£2,400	£2,500	£5,000
TOTAL		£4,160	£5,593	£5,027	£5,127	£15,747

6. Customer Centricity through improved communications

The transformation of Xoserve has seen wholesale change of the business that wasn't previously structured or positioned to support a broad customer base. From the transformation of our governance arrangements, the restructuring of our business and the creation of explicit targets and programmes to deliver customer centricity. We have made great progress – in fact we were the UK's second most improved company for customer service in 2019, exceeding our own target and almost achieving our stretch target on customer satisfaction.

However, this masks how much more there is to do, particularly around communication, which is the main area we intend to invest in during the next business planning period.

Our communication is inconsistent, immature, sometimes unreliable and frustrating for our customers. We have heard you and we intend to invest deeply in resolving and improving this critical aspect of how we operate our business.

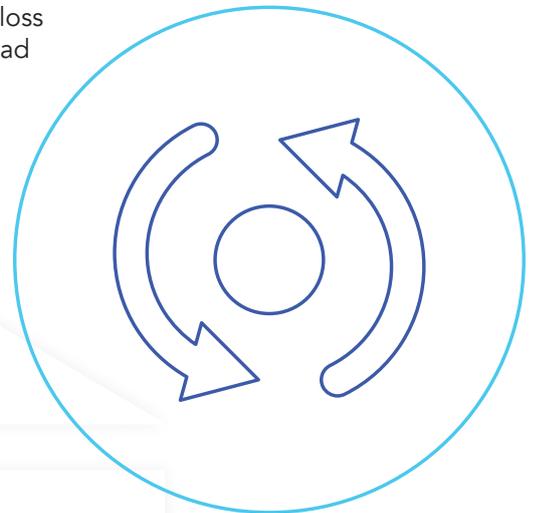
We recognise that during such an intense period of cost pressure and cost scrutiny, we need to make this investment through delivering savings elsewhere. In our BP20 Principles and Approach, we outlined that we did not intend to ask to for additional investment in customer centricity above the forecast in BP19. Instead we intended to get more out of the investments we have already made and in-fill capacity where we need to through efficiencies delivered via the reshaping of our workforce. On review and reflecting the continued feedback that there is much to do in this area that offers significant value to our customers, we have opted to include a Recommended investment for Improvement in Customer Communications (£250k in 2020/21).

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	BP20
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
Customer Training and Education	Recommended	£163	£163	£163	£163	£489
Customer Journey Continuous Improvement	Recommended	£50	£50	£50	£50	£150
CRM Rant & Rave	Recommended	£100	£100	£100	£100	£300
Improvement in Customer Communications	Recommended	£0	£250	£200	£150	£600
TOTAL		£313	£563	£513	£463	£1,539

7. Central Switching Service Programme

In 2017, we set out our case to Ofgem to leverage the UK Link asset to provide the Central Switching Registration Platform (CSRP), as an alternative to procuring a third party to build a new system, which would in-turn require us to artificially break apart UK Link (which already performs switching for the gas market) in order to interface with this new system. It was with great disappointment that we learnt earlier this year that we were unsuccessful in our bid to become the Central Registration Service Provider. The consequence of this loss is that we will not be able to realise the £4m to £8m reduction in charges we had previously intended to pass on to customers in BP20.

Furthermore, the consequential changes to our systems as a result of the introduction of the CSRP are significant, as we outlined in last year's business plan. As the largest incumbent with a vertically integrated platform, which now needs to be broken up, we have the largest amount of change to deliver within what is already a complex programme. The Programme is already experiencing delays and we are assuming a significant re-plan will be required within this business planning period. We have forecast an additional £6.8m in 2021/22 to reflect the revised delivery date of June/July 2021.



		Investment Amounts (£k)					
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20		
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20	
Central Switching Service	Baseline	£12,100	£12,100	£6,800	£0	£18,900	
TOTAL		£12,100	£12,100	£6,800	£0	£18,900	

8. General Annual Customer Change

Xoserve, at the request of its customers, maintains an annual budget for bi-annual releases of customer driven change (DSC Change Budget) and small unplanned changes to software and infrastructure. We expect the levels of customer change to follow a similar profile to previous years, although this assumption may change as we engage customers more deeply through the BP20 process. We plan to continue our investment in non-standard data items for Reporting (£110k 2020/21, £220k across three years), forecast to be required until the Data Access Platform is fully operational.

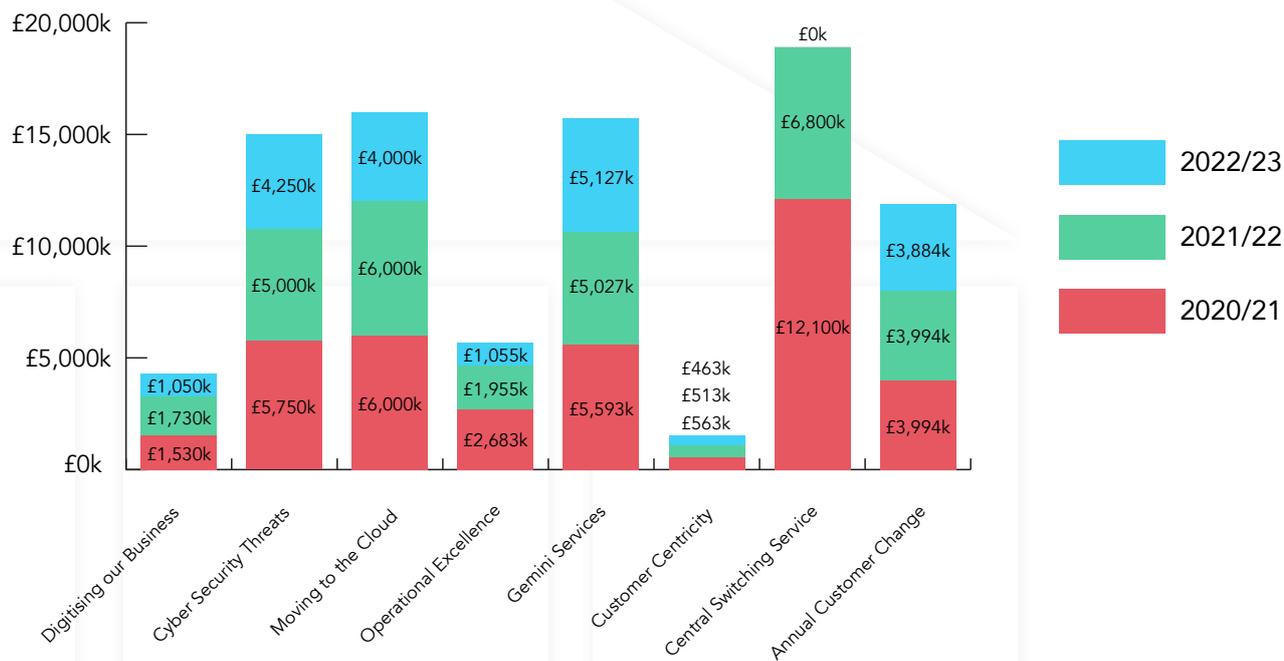
In addition to the funds proposed to cover major and minor release of change through the period, we have also included funding for two further initiatives.

Market Reform (£200k 2020/21, £600k across three years) will enable Xoserve to use our influence to generate better market outcomes for our customers, through participation within industry debates and by providing a centralised view on potential market changes. Industry Performance Insights (£200k 2020/21, £600k across three years) will pro-actively manage industry data quality and performance issues, for example, those highlighted during meetings of the Performance Assurance Committee (PAC).

		Investment Amounts (£k)				
		BP19	BP20	BP20	BP20	
Description	Investment Choice	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total BP20
DSC Change Budget	Baseline	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£9,000
Minor Release Delivery	Baseline	£484	£484	£484	£484	£1,452
Non-Standard Data Items for Reporting	Baseline	£110	£110	£110	£0	£220
Market Reform	Recommended	£0	£200	£200	£200	£600
Industry Performance Insights	Recommended	£0	£200	£200	£200	£600
TOTAL		£3,594	£3,994	£3,994	£3,884	£11,872

Spend by Investment Focus Area

This chart highlights our spend by Investment Focus Area, we've stated total costs including baseline and recommended investment, MTB People and Non-people costs by year.



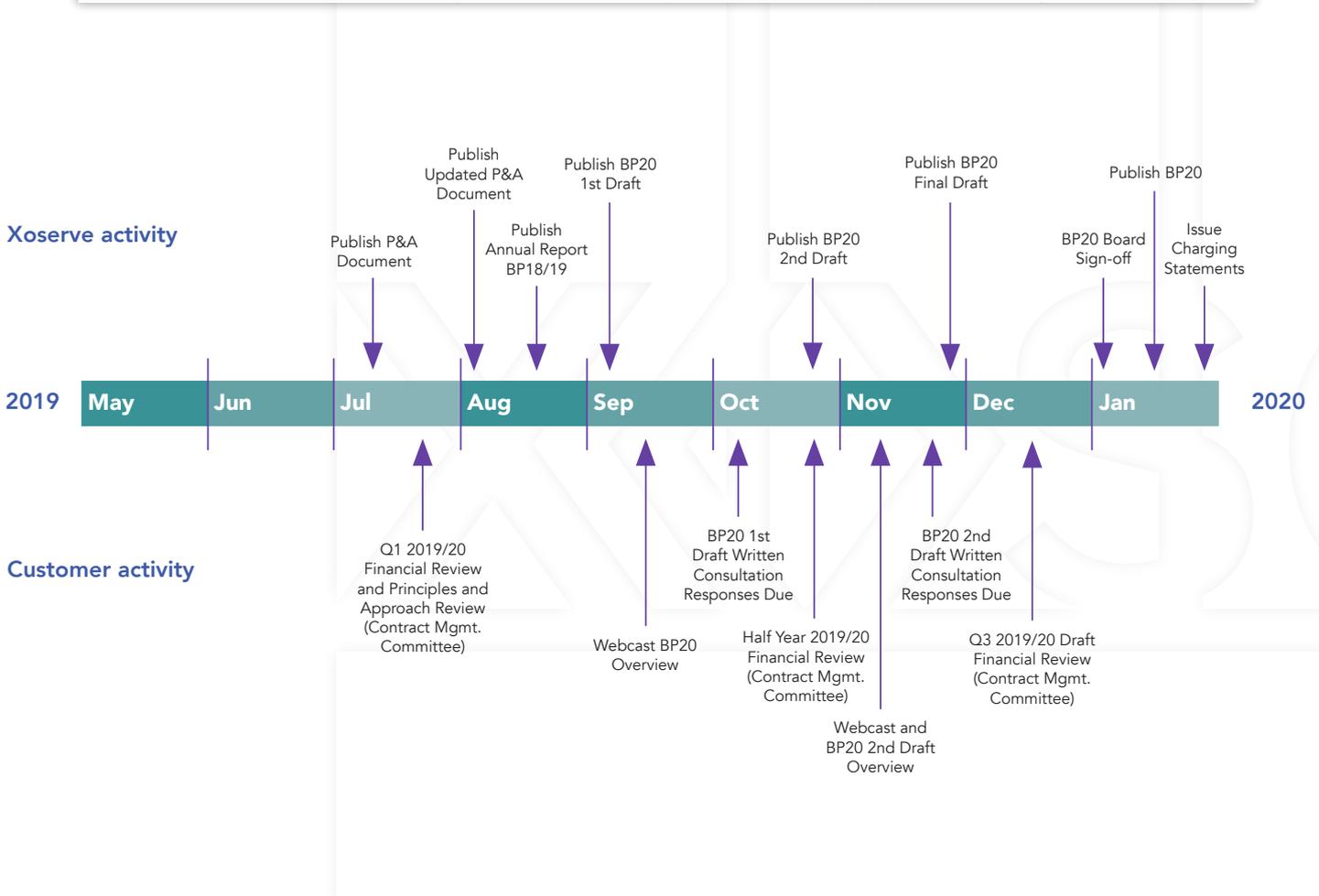
Customer Engagement

We are keen to offer as many opportunities as possible for all of our customers to provide us with their feedback on this draft plan. To enable this, we are making use of three particular engagement channels:

- Publishing written consultation documents and inviting customers to respond in writing.
- Meetings with customer organisations to conduct in-depth reviews of the draft plan content and associated funding requirements to help customers understand what the draft plan means for their organisations.
- Provision of updates to customers and receipt of feedback via DSC Contract Management Committee meetings.

We have set out below a summary of the engagement phases, their timings, and the different forms of engagement that we will use.

Engagement Phase	Start	End	Duration	Status
Principles and Approach	10th Jul 2019	26th Jul 2019	2.5 weeks	Completed
Draft Plan	11th Sep 2019	11th Oct 2019	5 weeks	Open
Updated Draft Plan	28th Oct 2019	15th Nov 2019	3 weeks	Not yet started
Final Draft Plan	29th Nov 2019	6th Dec 2019	1 week	Not yet started



Consultation Timelines

Step	Date	Action	Provider	Receiver	Deliverable
1	11th Sep 2019	Issue draft Business Plan for consultation	Xoserve	All customers	Draft Business Plan
2	TBC	Xoserve hosts webcast (Questions and Answers)	Xoserve	All customers	Webcast presentation
3	18th Sep 2019	Provide feedback at the Contract Management Committee (CoMC) meeting	CoMC	Xoserve	Feedback notes and actions
4	11th Oct 2019	Provide written feedback	All customers	Xoserve	Written feedback
5	23rd Oct 2019	Issue feedback report	Xoserve	Board	Feedback report
6	23rd Oct 2019	Consider feedback report and agree updates for draft Business Plan	Board	Xoserve	
7	28th Oct 2019	Issue updated draft Business Plan for consultation	Xoserve	All customers	Updated draft Business Plan
8	30th Oct 2019	Xoserve hosts webcast (Questions and Answers)	Xoserve	All customers	Webcast presentation
9	15th Nov 2019	Provide written feedback	All customers	Xoserve	Written feedback
10	19th Nov 2019	Issue feedback report	Xoserve	Board	Feedback report
11	22nd Nov 2019	Consider feedback report and agree updates for draft Business Plan	Board	Xoserve	

Questions and Participation

This document represents a significant step in our BP20 customer engagement activities. By listening to customer feedback, we have aimed to provide more information earlier in the process. We welcome your views on the information we have set out and on anything that you think we may have missed. We will review thoroughly all the responses that we receive and will issue a Customer Feedback Report alongside an updated draft plan by Friday 29th November 2019.

We have set out below some key questions, where we would appreciate your comments. Please send these to xoserve.customeropscomms@xoserve.com by Friday 11th October 2019.

1. What are your views on the levels and timing of Baseline investment?
2. What are your views on the levels and timing of Recommended investment?
3. Do you agree with our view on the change initiatives being proposed, are these initiatives necessary to deliver the improved levels of service that customers have asked for?
4. Do you think any initiatives are not needed or should be scheduled for later in the plan period?
5. What knock-on impact would the proposed initiatives create within your organisation, would your organisation be able to support the level of change being proposed? If you have capacity constraints, which initiatives would you prioritise and why?



Customer Constituency Funding

The schedules of customer constituency funding reflect the ongoing application of the prevailing Central Data Service Provider (CDSP) Charging Methodology and Cost Allocation Model.

For each constituency we have provided graphs showing:

1. A view of prior and current year funding, plus three years forecast.
2. The BP19 three year forecast inflated by CPIH (2.3%) to show 2019/20 prices.

Within each graph we have also shown total spend including all investment topics as well as values for baseline spend only.



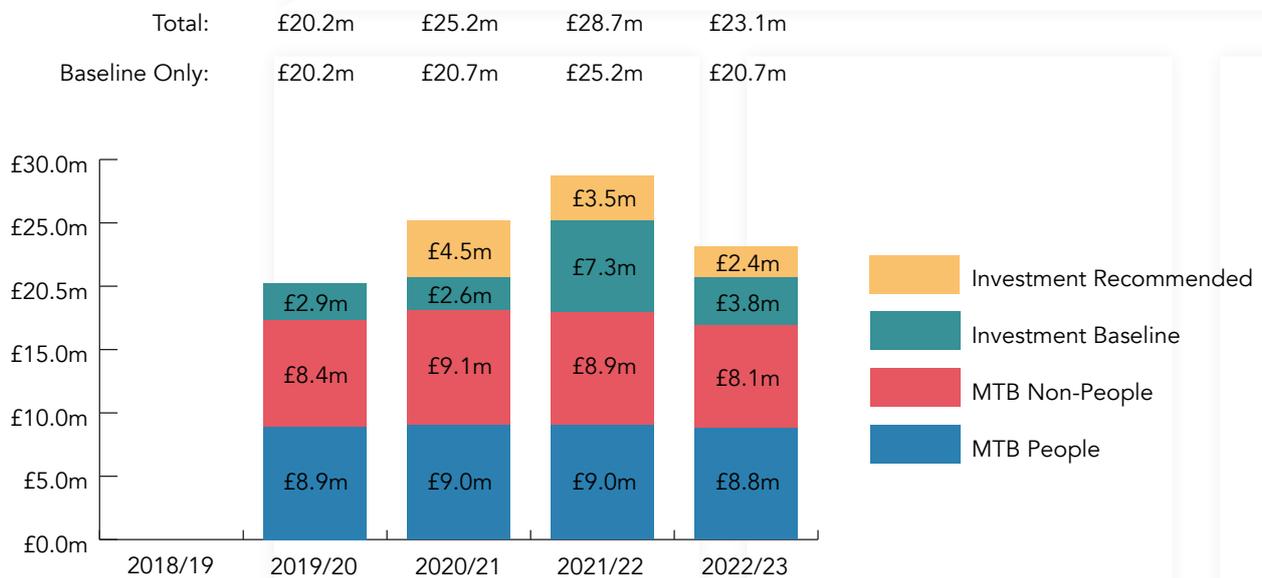
Gas Distribution Networks

For our Gas Distribution Network (GDN) customers, the projected MTB expenditure for 2020/21 is forecast to increase by £0.8m from the 19/20 position. The additional costs for reshaping our business, cyber security and realising operational excellence are attributed to all customer groups including GDNs. The savings associated with Maintaining and Improving our Services include a significant hosting saving for the Gemini system (c£1.0m), the costs (and therefore savings) of which are attributed to National Grid.

The investment profile for GDNs shows a Baseline investment forecast of £2.6m for 2020/21 compared to the £2.9m spent in 2019/20. This is an increase from the BP19 forecast of £1.9m for 2020/21, and is increased by a further £4.5m when including Recommended investments.

As with our previous plan, the funding requirements are shown net of funding provided prior to the start of the Plan period for the development and delivery of a Retrospective Adjustments solution.

GDN Funding



BP19 at 19/20 Prices



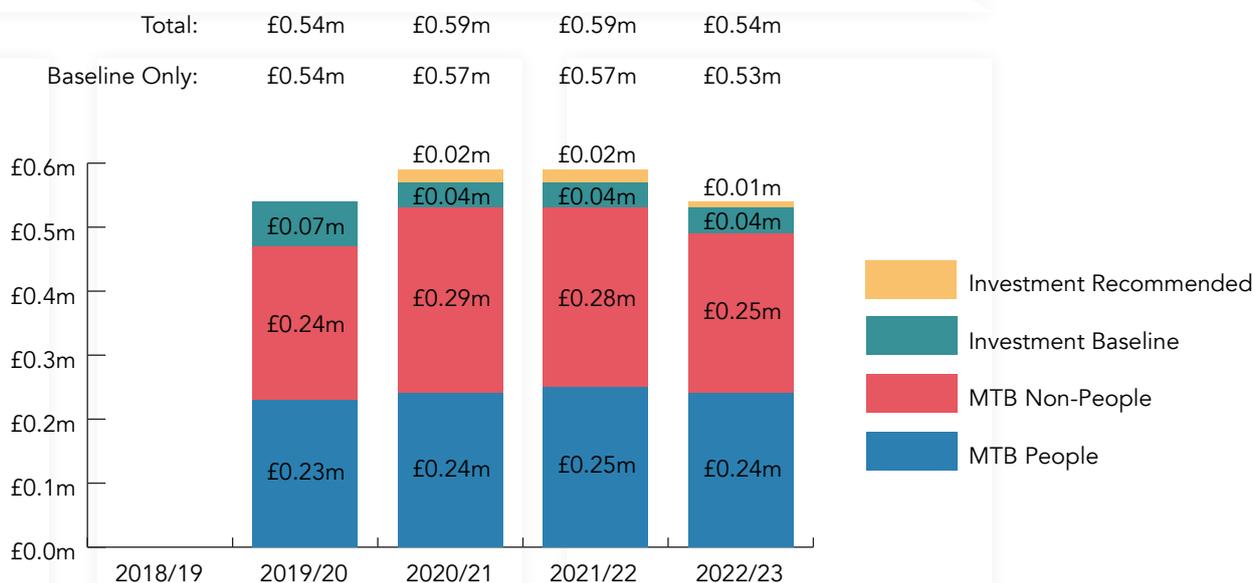
IGTs

For our Independent Gas Transporter (IGT) customers, the projected MTB expenditure for 2020/21 is forecast to increase by £0.06m from the 19/20 position. The main factor contributing to this is the increased market share for IGTs which has risen from c.9% to c.10%.

The additional costs for reshaping our business, cyber security and realising operational excellence are attributed to all customer groups including IGTs. The savings associated with Maintaining and Improving our Services include a significant hosting saving for the Gemini system (c£1.0m), the costs (and therefore savings) of which are attributed to National Grid.

The investment profile for IGTs remains similar to the values forecast in BP19 for 2020 (£0.05m) with Baseline investment of £0.04m and Recommended investment of £0.2m.

IGT Funding



BP19 at 19/20 Prices

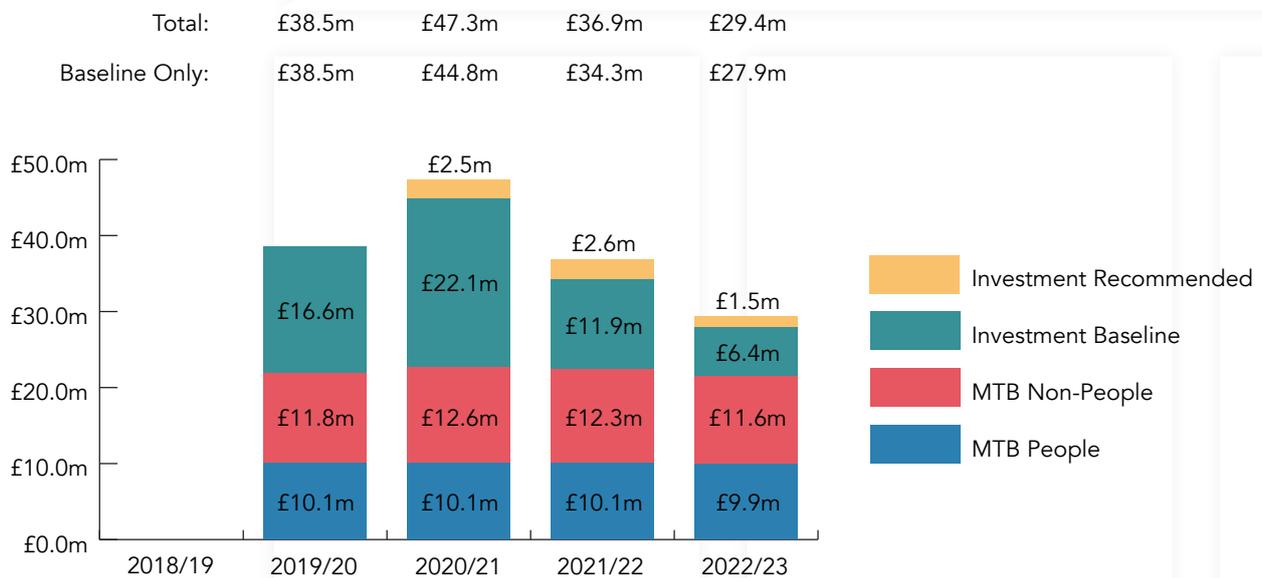


Shippers

For our Shipper customers, the projected MTB expenditure for 2020/21 is forecast to increase by £0.8m from the 19/20 position. The additional costs for reshaping our business, cyber security and realising operational excellence are attributed to all customer groups including Shippers. The savings associated with Maintaining and Improving our Services include a significant hosting saving for the Gemini system (c£1.0m), the costs (and therefore savings) of which are attributed to National Grid.

The investment profile for Shippers is dominated by CSS which remains at £12.1m for 2020 as forecast in BP19, but extends into 2021 (£6.8m). The Baseline investments proposed result in a further £5.5m increase from the BP19 forecast (UK Link Strategic Roadmap Capacity for Change £6.0m), rising to £8.0m with Recommended investment.

Shipper Funding



BP19 at 19/20 Prices

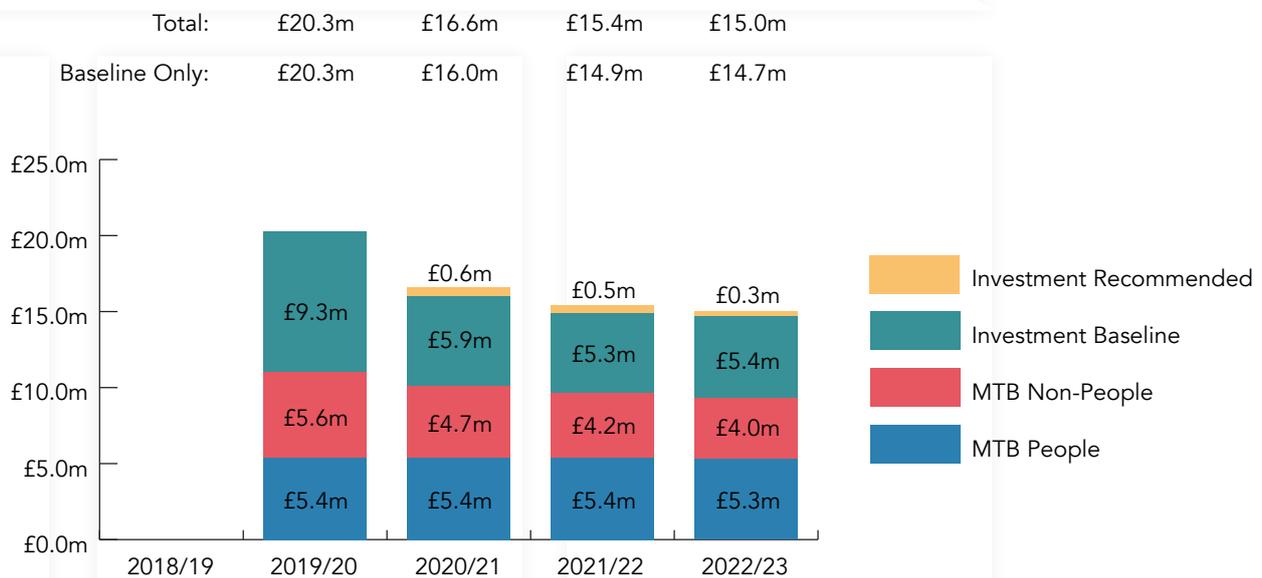


National Grid

For National Grid, the projected MTB expenditure for 2020/21 is forecast to reduce by £0.9m from the 19/20 position. The additional costs for reshaping our business, cyber security and realising Operational Excellence are attributed to all customer groups including National Grid. The savings associated with Maintaining and Improving our Services include a significant hosting saving for the Gemini system (c£1.0m), the costs (and therefore savings) of which are attributed to National Grid.

The investment profile for National Grid includes the remaining costs of the Gemini Re-Platforming programme, as well as investment in Gemini Enhancements and the Gemini Change Programme. There is also a small investment (£0.1m) in 2020 to begin the next phase of modernisation for the Gemini system and services.

National Grid Funding



BP19 at 19/20 Prices

