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# Appendix

## YKY07\_Nature First commitment



YorkshireWater

# Our Nature First commitment

**For a thriving Yorkshire**  
**Right for customers and right for the environment**



# What is Nature First?

Our new Nature First commitment is to use nature-based solutions as our preferred way to deliver our services.

Our vision is for a thriving region where communities prosper in a flourishing economy. Nature underpins our economy and provides us with services which sustain life.

Through protection, management, and restoration of natural ecosystems, we can deliver a resilient service for our customers, mitigating and adapting to climate change while contributing to a wilder Yorkshire.

As we face into an uncertain future of climate change and biodiversity loss, Nature First can help us tackle some of our greatest challenges.



# What is a nature-based solution?

A nature-based solution either uses natural processes or mimics natural processes to solve a problem or deliver a service.

Nature-based solutions can reduce our carbon footprint by letting nature provide some of our services – which means we're less likely to need new infrastructure. For example, working with farmers to identify opportunities to improve water quality means we can reduce investment in carbon intensive treatment processes. We refer to these types of solutions as **catchment solutions**.

Where we do need to invest in new infrastructure, we can mimic nature by using **nature-based assets**, which provide multiple benefits and support the restoration of natural carbon cycles. For example, we could build a wetland to treat wastewater flows, or use a pond instead of an underground storage tank.

Historically, the water sector has relied on concrete and other hard infrastructure to carry out its services, however, we are rapidly acknowledging that nature can offer us a low carbon and climate resilient alternative.

Putting nature at the heart of our services will deliver low carbon, regenerative and resilient long-term outcomes for Yorkshire – which is great for everyone!



# Nature-based solutions at Yorkshire Water

We already have a lot to be proud of when it comes to leading the way in nature-based solutions. We've been restoring peat bogs and rivers long before the term 'nature-based solution' was around, and we've led the water sector in making sure environmental and social value considerations are a key part of our decision-making processes.

We already have globally significant nature-based solutions:

- 🌿 Our Living with Water partnership in Hull is co-creating nature-based drainage infrastructure at a city scale, to not only reduce flood risk but also to support urban cooling, regeneration, education, skills, employment, and habitat creation.
- 🌿 Our partnership with Future Food Solutions is innovating in sustainable farming practices which protects raw water quality while also delivering the world's first arable soil carbon credits.
- 🌿 Our constructed wetland at Clifton is a case study in the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Federation of Consulting Engineers playbook for sustainable infrastructure.

But we know we can do more...



# How will we do it?





We have decades of experience in the planning and delivery of nature-based solutions. We've learnt many lessons and built many relationships but now is the time for us to step up in our commitment and make a change. Our Nature First plans will see us transition nature-based solutions into business as usual.

To make this change, we know we won't be able to remove all the barriers on our own. We'll need to work closely with regulators, regional partners, and communities to unlock the full potential of Nature First.

At its heart, Nature First is about whole systems, identifying where nature can be managed and restored to deliver regenerative and resilient solutions. We'll need to work closely with our partners across the regions to understand whole catchment and landscape scale systems, to co-create integrated catchment solutions to our combined ambitions and challenges.

We'll also need to work with colleagues, processes, and systems across Yorkshire Water to unlock the grey to green transition in our operational assets.

Our Nature First plans will see us target nature-based solutions where we already know they have the most benefit, while also innovating in new nature-based solutions. Nature First will see us work harder to:

-  **Restore natural river processes** to reduce the impact of our operations on river health.
-  **Work in partnership at landscape scale** to improve raw water quality and bathing waters while also slowing the flow of water through the catchment.
-  **Use sustainable drainage (SuDS)** to reduce flood risk and storm overflow operations.
-  **Construct wetlands** to balance nutrients within catchment and to treat flows at wastewater treatment works.

# Our roots to success



1

We'll work with colleagues, processes, systems, regional partners and our value chain to **unlock Nature First in our investment decision making.**

2

We'll work internally with our value chain and with local communities to **build skills and expertise** in Nature First design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

3

We'll **innovate** in new nature-based solutions as well as new funding and partnership models.

4

We'll work together with regulators, in long-term trusting relationships, to **manage risk and uncertainty** in the performance of innovative Nature First infrastructure services.