

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers
Minutes of Meeting
18 November 2021
Microsoft Teams call**

Attendees:

Andrea Cook	Chair
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
James Copeland	National Farmers Union (in part)
Janine Shackleton	Consumer Council for Walker
John Walker (observer)	Consumer Council for Walker
Melissa Lockwood	Environment Agency (in part)
Chris Offer	Yorkshire Water

Apologies:

Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Pam Warhurst	Independent Member
Steve Foers	Citizens Advice
Tom Keatley	Natural England
Kirstin Hutchinson	Yorkshire Water
Sumayya Mahmood	Yorkshire Water
Paul Chapman	Yorkshire Water

Guests:

Aimee Linfoot	Yorkshire Water
Paul Carter	Yorkshire Water

1) Welcome

- a) Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

2) Minutes and actions of the last meeting

- a) Minutes from the October 2021 meeting were agreed.
- b) All actions were agreed, Miles replacement is still to be confirmed.
- c) Changes to greenhouse gas reporting will be on a future agenda.

3) CCW priorities for PR24

- a) CCW discussed their priorities for making sure that PR24 ensures that customers have a powerful voice at every stage of the price review process. Their priorities are:
- Research delivery through sector collaboration
 - Supporting and assuring local challenge
 - Delivering high quality customer engagement
 - Having the right incentives for fast tracked plans
 - Encourage Ofwat to make it clear how customers influence decisions.

CCW will be providing insight and data to help the forum to benchmark Yorkshire Water against other water companies.

4) PR24 Collaborative Customer Research

- a) In the absence of Paul Chapman due to illness, this agenda item will be rearranged in December.

5) Corporate Affairs

- a) The corporate affairs team was created a couple of years ago, to reform the approach to stakeholder engagement. The company has since moved away from stakeholder engagement being an exercise in minimising reputational risk, to a more proactive approach which is designed to help shape policy.

The aim is to position Yorkshire Water as a key player regionally and nationally to shape the environment the company operates in. To do so, the company is delivering stakeholder engagement, policy influencing and reputation management.

The approach to building national influence is by creating a strong network of regional advocates, recognising strength in partnership. Alongside this is a policy platform to leverage national influence.

Current regional relationships were shared with the Forum, including a new partnership in South Yorkshire due to launch in the New Year, which also aides the current flood risk in that region.

- b) The company are working on different policy platforms, such as PR24 and beyond, river water quality and post covid economic recovery. To influence policy nationally, the company are building new relationships with Defra: they used the Yorkshire Land network partnership and shared this with Defra, providing an opportunity of interest and a relevant issue to open discussions which also benefitted Defra. This has increased land network relationships.
- c) The Forum asked the company why it didn't engage with the Forum on policy matters, to reflect the individual and collective contacts of the Forum. The company accepted there could be a much bigger role for the Forum and, as policies are developed, should ensure the Forum are sighted on this and involved, rather than informed.

The Forum queried if the triangulation of customers' views in the strategies being set, include the customers' voice. The company said it recognised the importance of this and establishing the correct balance between customer research and informing partnerships and funding.

The Forum asked how the company are reflecting what they are doing back into customer research, and if any new customer research is being completed for PR24. The company advised they are carrying out new research to inform partnerships and policy decisions.

The Forum queried if attendance can be provided at the environmental subgroup, and for research to be shared, and these actions were agreed.

The Forum lastly asked if the position statements are available externally; the company advised they are on the public website.

6) Customer communications & winter readiness

- a) The company were in attendance to provide an update on customer communications this year, performance, and an overview on winter plans.

The company has been reviewing the themes and trends derived from CMEX (customer measure of experience) scores, and the brand tracker, to help build content and plans to engage with customers. 187 million opportunities have been created for customers to see and hear messages

in the last 6 months. The company have been working hard to reach a younger audience and have created a TikTok channel to target this audience.

- b) The water saving campaign ran from June to August and created 30 million opportunities to see and hear campaign messages. The company found a key theme from customers was wanting to understand why they need to save water; the company responded using various social media platforms to target all customers. The campaign recall exceeded the target of 30%, with a 52% peak.

A reservoir safety campaign was conducted this year due to the increase in incidents. 42 pieces of media coverage were published across print and broadcast, working alongside emergency services.

A pilot called Wonder Stuff has been running in Huddersfield, aiming to see if the company can impact the CMEX score through customers seeing more of what the company does. The company are building a business case to invest in this approach.

- c) The Q2 performance summary was shown to members. The company have noticed when there is investment in communications the CMEX score increases.
- d) The communications team are currently working on their winter readiness campaign, which will run from the end of November to early March, aimed at practical and useful advice on how customers can get their homes ready for winter. The company have also prepared escalation plans should winter worsen.

Alongside this they are running the priority services register (PSR)/financial support campaign, aimed at raising awareness of PSR and the financial support that is available to customers. It is being supported by a strong PR led media focus.

The company reassured the Forum about the winter readiness of the business. Noting winter presents a risk to the business and can impact operations, it stated that the company is prepared and has processes in place to meet demand, such as;

- 4x4 vehicles to deploy critical teams in and around Yorkshire

- Enhanced leakage and water repair teams
 - Temporary alternate supplies
 - Water ‘watching’ using a range of systems
 - Comms plan keeping customers informed
 - Flooding/freezing plans
- e) The company concluded by summarising other ongoing campaigns and future campaigns in the pipeline.
- f) The Forum queried social media channels and asked if they aren’t popular are, they deactivated; the company advised each channel is active and there is a social media strategy which encompasses all the channels and tracks engagement.

The Forum asked how intelligence is being gathered from customers regarding affordability alongside other energy costs. The company informed the Forum that work is ongoing regarding affordability and value for money and what it would mean for customers and how content plans would need to be changed to address both.

The Forum asked how the company is sharing communications on flooding, considering Defra and others who are sending a different message to customers, regarding customers being more engaged in protecting themselves. The company advised pilots and schemes are ongoing in the company to address flooding. It was noted that there is a balance to be found on what the company can do, but what customers can also do to protect themselves, and there is a sensitive approach.

The Forum queried what is being done differently to send messages to ethnic minorities. The company advised they have worked with a radio station for the Asian community previously where comms was translated into Urdu. Pilots are in place to see how best to communicate.

The Forum made a point that on the videos and images shared today there was not a lot of diversity reflected and for the company to be mindful of this to raise trust and awareness for all customers.

7) Sewer discharge into rivers

a) This item was postponed to a future meeting.

8) AOB

a) The Forum Chair advised that all other CCGs and Forums want to have ongoing meetings and be a collective voice for the sharing of good practice. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of January 2022.

Two task and finish groups have been set up, one regarding Terms of Reference (ToR); the Forum will share the ToR with the wider group as it stands. Any considerations from the meeting will be shared with the Forum. Another group will look at best practice and the principal achievements of CCGs.

Action 1: Forum members requested to see an organigram.

Next meeting

16 December 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Actions

Summary of actions: 13 November 2019

6	Forum member to work with the Company to review and update webpage as discussed	Ongoing
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Summary of actions: 21 January 2021

5	Company to provide feedback	Ongoing
7	Additional feedback on how industry spend on communications compares across various companies to be shared with the Forum	Ongoing
8	End of project reports to be shared with the Forum at the end of the year	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 18 February 2021

2	Company to share the Land Strategy programme with the Forum once developed.	
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Summary of actions: 18 March 2021

1	Company to consider content and attendance from the Director of Customer Experience	Ongoing
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Summary of actions: 17 May 2021

1	Company to consider a partnership section on the YW website	
5	Company to keep the Forum up to date and included in the CCG review process	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 15 July 2021

No.	Action	Status	Due date
1	Company to arrange GIS data/maps update at a future Forum meeting Attending December meeting	Ongoing	December
2	Company to share strategic communication plan with the Forum Post meeting update Attending November meeting	Ongoing	November

Summary of actions: 18 October 2021

No.	Action	Status	Due date
2	Company to advise Forum who will be replacing Miles Foulger's role		
4	Company approach to winter readiness and customer comms	Complete	November

	approach to be discussed at November Forum		
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Summary of actions: 18 November 2021

No.	Action	Status	Due date
2	<u>Company</u> to provide Forum with an organigram		