

Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers
Minutes of Meeting
18 March 2021
Teams call

Attendees:

Andrea Cook	Chair
Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
James Copeland	National Farmers Union
Janine Shackleton	Consumer Council for Water
Melissa Lockwood	Environment Agency
Pam Warhurst	Pennine Prospect (in part)
Steve Foers	Citizens Advice
Sumayya Mahmood	Yorkshire Water
Wendy Kimpton	Yorkshire Water (in part)

Guests:

Ez Chowdhury	Yorkshire Water
Kathryn Walker	Jaywing
Bob Sanderson	Jaywing
Abbie Gostelow	Jaywing

Apologies:

Tom Keatley	Natural England
Kirstin Hutchinson	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) No comments were received on the February minutes.
- b) Action updates from February are as follows:
- Action 1: ongoing
 - Action 2: ongoing
 - Action 3: complete

- Action 4: complete
 - Action 5: complete
- c) The Forum queried if there was an update regarding the company asking Ofwat if there was an exception on the Education Performance Commitment (PC). The company advised they hadn't spoken to Ofwat yet regarding any of the Covid impacts because they wanted to get to the end of the financial year before engaging about these impacts. The company also advised Ofwat has not yet indicated how they want to receive this information; the company are creating a data evidential pack of all of the impacts, broadly divided into three areas; revenue, costs and impacts on PCs and Operational Delivery Incentives (ODIs). They are also doing work to try and establish any other impacts, separating those from Covid and other events, and any upsides from Covid, ensuring they have just the net Covid position. The company concluded that the Education PC appears to be one of the PCs which has had a significant impact solely related to Covid due to school closures.
- d) The Forum Chair advised that at the private session there had been a brief discussion about complaints and the Forum would like attendance from the Director of Customer Experience regarding complaints handling and overall customer experience.

Action 1: Company to consider attendance from the Director of Customer Experience at a future meeting and the content of her presentation.

3) Environmental subgroup update

- a) Meetings are held bi-monthly and have been focused on the business plan, as well as following up on issues causing concern, specifically serious pollution incidents, Regular reports are being received to the sub-group to monitor such incidents.
- b) Regular updates on the environmental bill are received by the sub-group, and previously the Agricultural Bill, which is now an Act, was discussed at the sub-group. There is a WINEP task force between Defra, Ofwat, the EA and the water industry and the subgroup is monitoring this for any implications for the next Asset Management Period (AMP).

Drainage water management plans and water resource plans are being reviewed. It was noted that issues have been discussed at the main Forum, with reference to the Tunstall beach closure discussion last month. Clean

water and Length of River Improved (LORI) PC and the Working with Others (WVO) PC are being reviewed and monitored as data comes in and will be escalated up to the Forum if required.

The sub-group is trying to move towards a holistic approach regarding Phosphorus and work is continuing with the EA and others to establish a position for the next AMP.

In terms of sewer discharge and effluent, the sub-group has been flagged that there will be a implications over the next AMP in this area which could result in investment requirements; they noted that the company is thinking ahead and acting earlier to handle this appropriately in the next AMP.

- c) The company advised the Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) needs to be republished and this will need to be reviewed at the Environmental Sub-Group and via correspondence to the Forum.
- d) The Forum queried if the company has discussed with the sub-group the green recovery plan in terms of accelerating any PR19 commitments; the company advised an early decision was made that the company was unable to participate in that scheme.

4) CMA update

- a) The Executive Summary had been published the previous day yesterday, the detailed Final Determination (FD) had gone to Ofwat and the CMA had also distributed to appealing companies on a confidential basis. Ofwat will then share the outcome with Defra and then it will be published within the next 2 weeks. The executive summary is available on the CMA website.
- b) The key headline is that there has been increased additional revenues of £148m in comparison to Ofwat's FD. The CMA has put the pay as you go rates back to the natural rates, as opposed to using accelerated revenues from future periods. The weighted average cost of capital (WACC) has been increased to establish the company financeability.
- c) The overall package leads to the average bill being higher than it was under the Ofwat FD but still lower than it is now, so customers are still receiving a bill reduction.

Ofwat's gearing sharing mechanism has been removed by the CMA.

The CMA supports Ofwat's upper quartile comparative performance approach, but it has accepted the principle that some service improvements require additional expenditure.

Overall, the company feel the balance of risk is more appropriate and the allowed Totex makes it a more enduring adjustment which is a better position overall, both from Ofwat's FD and the CMAs provisional findings.

5) The role of Occupational Health in Yorkshire Water

a) Occupational Health have been providing a service within the company since the early 90's. The company provided an overview of who the team are.

b) In 2019 there were 1900 new management referrals to Occupational Health, and last year there were 1213. Colleagues also have the option to self-refer confidentially, without their manager or any third party being informed.

Most referrals came from the customer contact centre and service delivery (clean and wastewater services).

c) Prior to the pandemic, 35% of referrals were in relation to mental health, last month the percentage was 46%. The other larger category is for muscular skeletal issues, which has been impacted for some working from home. Absence reported figures due to Covid-19 is 9% and is managed by HR.

d) Colleagues are offered counselling, which can be due to work and non-work-related matters, most counselling referrals are due to depression and anxiety. There has also been an increase in relationship issues and bereavement counselling.

e) The company has future projects and trials planned. For example, at the beginning of the year the company began working with a company called LYS to review the type of light colleagues are subjected to at work, and the impact it can have on sleep, wellbeing and moods. Findings have been helpful in changing the habits of colleagues. One of the ideas is to reconduct this in winter months for those who are affected by seasonal affective disorder.

Other trials are ongoing and planned and workshops have been conducted - some in relation to sleep and anxiety, depression and suicide and childcare and home-schooling.

There are also several support groups across the business for colleagues to join.

- f) The Forum asked if there is anything in place remotely for support for colleagues who usually would be in the office with the ability to speak to colleagues one to one, the company advised there is a portal to speak to counsellors confidentially. Work is ongoing to address this very matter and the company have seen an increase in calls from customers in distress due to various matters, such as loss of work due to the pandemic. Work has started on vulnerability and self-care, supporting colleagues who deal with vulnerable customers either on the phone or face to face operationally.
- g) The Forum queried if there were any opportunities to share learnings and pilots more broadly, the company advised they are reviewing what a training package would look like and this is also being discussed with the Board about how this can create a positive cultural shift. The company also advised how they plan to run free mental health training in vulnerable communities.

The Forum queried the resilience training the company offer to colleagues. This is a personal course to learn techniques and skills in remaining resilient and understanding when things may be out of their control. The company invited a Forum member who displayed interest to attend a future workshop.

The Forum asked if the operational side of the business is referring at a comparable rate to the management referral side. The company advised it hasn't, and the self-referrals are for colleagues who are not off sick and don't want to talk to their managers. Mental health training has been mandated for all managers, to provide a wider understanding, and the company have found self-referrals dropped off as management capability increased. Stress risk assessments are now mandatory for teams also.

The Forum praised the excellence the company's Occupational Health services.

6) Forum membership

- a) The Forum Chair discussed appointing a deputy chair and invited interest from members, expressions of interest are required by 1st April 2021, if there is more than one application then members will be invited vote.

- b) Members were informed that two interviews are planned for Forum recruitment, with a Recruitment Panel of Andrea, Chris and Pam..

7) Forum Annual Performance report (APR)

- a) Jaywing were in attendance to discuss the Forum APR they are creating alongside the Forum with an aim to create an independent look and feel for the Water Customers 2021 statement. They noted from previous discussions that content needs to be accessible with a clear and clean look and feel. It was highlighted that photography is a must and can display the diversity of the Yorkshire Water region.

The company noted it is important that landscape shots are captured from all the Yorkshire region, rather than just the scenic areas of Yorkshire.

The Forum commented on the colour scheme proposed and agreed with the look and feel proposed, expressing preference for particular colours.

The Forum asked if the colours and font is accessible for everyone, specifically those with reduced visibility. Jaywing advised the font is taken from google who are known to be 100% accessible. Regarding colours, they will ensure the way the colours are used meets all needs.

The Forum Chair noted there are areas of customer detriment, which need to be considered in the report, and the Forum need to ensure they listen and encourage the company to act upon all those areas. Jaywing advised they will liaise with the company to obtain digital images, the Chair referenced the experiences of customers in Hull, regarding flooding, Jaywing noted the importance of balance throughout the report.

The Forum queried Jaywing's experience with other companies and accessing reports on different platforms impacting font, colour, and imagery, ensuring everyone can access it. Jaywing advised they have experience with digital PDFs ensuring they will be mindful to the report size when creating it.

The final report is to be completed by July 2021.

Action 2: Visuals to be circulated to the Forum for feedback.

Action 3: Company to liaise between Jaywing and the Forum in collating feedback.

8) AOB

- a) The final assurance plan and Yorkshire Water's quarterly reporting information up to the end of December is due to be published before the end of March 2021. As with previous publications, the company will ensure these are circulated to the Forum for feedback.

Next meeting

15 April 2021, Microsoft teams meeting

Actions

Summary of actions: 14 June 2018

No	Action	Comment
4	<p>Company to project the level of investment and timescales to display how discolouration will be reviewed to help the Forum understand the plan and resources.</p> <p>Post meeting update 06/06/2019: To be reviewed when received Final Determination (FD).</p>	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 13 November 2019

6	<p>Forum member to work with the Company to review and update webpage as discussed</p>	Ongoing
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Summary of actions: 19 March 2020

9	<p>Company to investigate river pollution</p> <p>Post meeting update Yorkshire Water cleared the debris from the River Ouse on 14 and 15 April 2020, investigation on going into reported debris in the River Aire</p>	
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Summary of actions: 22 October 2020

1	<p>Company to report on Avoiding Drain Blockages Campaign at November Forum meeting.</p> <p>Post meeting update Update sent via email</p>	Complete
2	<p>Company to report on Stakeholder engagement at a future Forum meeting.</p>	Complete

Summary of actions: 21 January 2021

1	<p>Company to circulate output from the Jury when complete</p> <p>Post meeting update Updated expected in April 2021</p>	Ongoing
2	<p>Company to feedback on Ofwat session</p>	Complete
3	<p>Affordability and Vulnerability subgroup to arrange a team meeting</p>	Ongoing
5	<p>Company to provide feedback</p>	Ongoing
6	<p>Company to involve the Forum on the community engagement pilot</p> <p>Post meeting update Meeting arranged for 8 March 2021.</p>	Complete
7	<p>Additional feedback on how industry spend on communications compares across various companies to be shared with the Forum</p>	Ongoing
8	<p>End of project reports to be shared with the Forum at the end of the year</p>	Ongoing
9	<p>Company to attend the July 2021 meeting to provide an update on the complaint's tracker</p> <p>Post meeting update</p>	Ongoing

	Added to the July future agenda	
10	Colleague support during Covid to be presented at the next meeting, specifically regarding Occupational Health Post meeting update Company attending the February 2021 Forum Rescheduled for March 2021 meeting	Complete
11	Internal review of subgroups and memberships across all, including Forum Post meeting update Planned for March meeting.	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 18 February 2021

1	Forum to provide the company with a statement of support regarding the Education PC	
2	Company to share the Land Strategy programme with the Forum once developed.	
4	Discussion regarding climate change to be added to a future agenda Post meeting update Item will be discussed when the long-term strategy supporting PR24 is developed.	Complete

Summary of actions: 18 March 2021

1	Company to consider content and attendance from the Director of Customer Experience	
2	Jaywing to circulate visuals to the Forum for feedback.	
3	Company to liaise between Jaywing and the Forum in collating feedback	Ongoing