

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers
Minutes of Meeting
19 October 2023
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Attendees:

| | |
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| Andrea Cook | Chair |
| Dave Merrett | Independent Member |
| John Walker | Consumer Council for Water |
| Kursh Siddique | Independent Member |
| Steve Grebby | Consumer Council for Water |
| Chris Griffin | Independent Member |

Apologies:

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| Jamie Ashton | Citizens Advice |
| Melissa Lockwood | Environment Agency |
| Tom Keatley | Natural England |

Guests:

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| Richard Hepburn | Yorkshire Water |
| Angeliki Stogia | Arup, on behalf of Yorkshire Water |
| Kirsty Novis | Arup, on behalf of Yorkshire Water |

1. Previous minutes

- a) Minutes from the September 2023 meeting are still pending and will be circulated in advance of the next meeting.
- b) Previous minutes from 2023 are now on the Company's website.

2. Actions

- a) Actions 'open' or 'in progress' were reviewed.
- b) Actions from August:
 - i. *August, action 7: Company to share the draft YWYS materials for Forum's review and feedback.* The Company noted that this item is on the agenda for this meeting.
- c) Action from September:
 - i. *September, action 1: Subgroup meetings to be scheduled.* Dates are currently being agreed for the Environment Sub-Group meetings.
 - ii. *September, action 3: Forum members requested to share YWYS event with their networks.* This action will remain open until the YWYS event is held on 23rd November.

3. PR24 Business Plan: Review and next steps

- a) The Company confirmed their business plan was submitted to Ofwat on 2nd October, and the Forum published their report at the same time.
- b) A Forum member reflected that it was a difficult process in terms of support and getting a report writer agreed for their report, and what lessons can be learned from it. The suggestion was to have a programme in place for next time (in four years' time), to make sure that the right information is given to the Forum at the right time.
- c) The Company agreed that a plan for Forum engagement is needed, and a critical path of activities is produced for the next planning round.

Action 1. A plan for Forum engagement and a critical path of activities to be produced and discussed at a future meeting.

- d) A Forum member asked about the Forum's responsibilities around delivering the business plan, noting that last time several performance commitments required assurance from the Forum.

- e) The Company agreed that the Forum have an assurance role within AMP7. The Company are working on a proposal about how they ensure they are enabling the Forum to fulfil the assurance role.
- f) The Company view the Forum has having an ongoing role holding them to account for delivering their commitments and delivering against the performance standards.
- g) The Company stated they need to consider how best to keep the Forum informed throughout the year, allowing the Forum the opportunity to question and challenge the Company.
- h) The Company provided an update on the timeline of the business plan submission:
 - i. They are currently in a phase of receiving questions from Ofwat, to which they have two days to respond. The Company have received seven relatively minor questions so far. The question phase will continue for the next few weeks.
 - ii. The next milestone on the timeline is the second Your Water Your Say (YWYS) event, being held on 23rd November.
 - iii. Draft determinations from Ofwat are expected in May/June 2024. This is the initial view of what the overall package is going to look like for the PR24 period.
 - iv. The Company will respond to Ofwat's draft determination. The final determination is expected in December 2024, with implementation starting 1st April 2025.
- i) The Company noted that there is an opportunity to appeal Ofwat's final determination.
- j) A Forum member asked whether the Company had an update about how the November YWYS event will factor into the process, noting the timing of the event is after the business plan submission.
- k) In response, the Company summarised the objectives of the second YWYS event:
 - i. To explain why they believe their plan is the right plan
 - ii. How the plan has been influenced by customer research
 - iii. It's an opportunity to present 'you said, we did' to customers. That is, discussing specific issues that were raised in the first YWYS event

and explaining how they have been incorporated into the themes of the plan (or not, as the case may be) submitted to Ofwat.

- l) A Forum member reflected that the YWYS event does not feel part like of the business plan timeline, because it is now too late to give customers a say in the plan.
- m) Another Forum member commented that the second YWYS event is about closing the circle but should be done with the customers who participated in the first event. The Company agreed.

4. Your Water Your Say promotion and planning

- a) The Company explained that the second YWYS event is important because CCW and Ofwat will be considering how the Company has incorporated the outcomes of the first session and how it has shaped their thinking.
- b) The Company commented that the Forum has an opportunity to shape the second YWYS session.
- c) The Company presented the overall timeline for the second event:
 - i. Mon 23 Oct: Event registration will open.
 - ii. Mon 6 Nov: A planning meeting with Ofwat, CCW, and the independent Chair (of the YWYS session) will be held. The meeting will be to discuss the event platform, logistics, and the running order for the event.
 - iii. Thu 23 Nov: The second YWYS event will be held.
 - iv. Fri 22 Dec: Deadline for the publication of the full account of the event.
- d) The Company presented the updated promotion plan for the event. Promotion events discussed were:
 - i. Weekly social medial posts (Facebook, X, LinkedIn).
 - ii. A banner will be displayed on the Company's website.
 - iii. The Company will write to Forum members, asking for the event to be shared with their members and networks.
 - iv. Promotion of the event via the 'Your Water' online community.
 - v. Promotion via household retailers
 - vi. Promotion to key stakeholders though their Corporate Affairs team.
 - vii. Previous attendees will be emailed.
 - viii. Details of the event will be included in all PR24 communications. For example, it is mentioned in the PR24 press release and the PR24 document itself.

- e) The Company are seeking to understand whether other water companies are hosting YWYS events in their own offices. To date, the Company have not found any other companies who are making this offer. Based on previous experience, such hosting of the first event was not well attended and those companies are therefore not offering to host the second event.
- f) Taking onboard the Forum's previous suggestion, the Company will be sending the event information to members of the public who have contacted the Company or made enquiries. The Company will ensure a quick response to any enquiries in the run up, during and after the event.
- g) After the October Forum meeting, a Forum member shared a proposal for an engagement pilot in Bradford. The Company have reviewed the proposal and agreed that it contained some good ideas. The Company thanked the Forum member for sending the information.
- h) The Company outlined the Ofwat guidance on information to be shared with customers in advance. They explained that each water company should provide materials to every person who registered to attend the event, about one week in advance. The customers will be advised that the information is "optional pre-reading" material. Pre-reading materials are:
 - i. Customer-friendly summary of the PR24 business plan.
 - ii. 'You said, we did' summary.
 - iii. A link to the notes on the first event (on the Company's website).
- i) For the customer-friendly summary, the PR24 submission already includes a 12-page high-level overview of the plan, which was designed to address accessibility requirements. The Company propose to use this document as their 'customer-friendly summary'.
- j) In addition, the Company plan to provide the link to the 3-minute PR24 introduction video that is currently on the PR24 page on their website.
- k) The Company shared the outline of the 'You said, we did' summary. The approximately 70 questions (received from the last YWYS event) have been grouped into key themes and sub-themes. Where the questions have been addressed in the plan (for those that have been) is also provided.
- l) A Forum member commented that the way they are grouped by theme and sub-theme does not give the reader a clear indication of what the questions were. The Forum member suggested a more user-friendly format would be examples of the types of questions customers were asking, alongside the Company's response.
- m) The Company agreed and suggested that a summary of the types of questions could be included alongside how it has informed the Company's business plan.

- n) Another Forum member agreed and commented that because the questions were not provided and neither were the Company's answers (a location of where to find the answers is provided but not the answers themselves), that the 'You said, we did' summary needs to be revised.
 - o) For accessibility purposes, a Forum member suggested the Company create a podcast of the Company talking through the 'You said, we did' summary. The Company said there was a plan to do a podcast about PR24, and they will find out whether that is being provided.
 - p) The Company are now working to create a succinct summary of the 'You said, we did' to include in the CEO's presentation for the event.
 - q) The Company explained that the YWYS presentation (15 min duration) should include (according to Ofwat's guidance), the issues that the business plan and LTDS are addressing, the Company's proposed actions, the outcome that should be achieved, and the bill impact for customers.
 - r) The presentation should address the following themes (from Ofwat's guidance):
 - i. Long-term outcomes and how the five-year plan delivers the first part of the LTDS
 - ii. Environmental outcomes
 - iii. Affordability
 - s) However, the Company sought (and were given) Ofwat's approval to focus on the following points in their presentation:
 - i. Customers' priorities and how the plan addresses these.
 - ii. Key issues raised at the first event and how the Company has responded.
 - iii. High level results of acceptability and affordability testing, and potential average bill changes.
 - t) The Company asked for Forum members feedback and approach to the pre-reading materials.
 - u) The Company asked for Forum members suggestions for improving the accessibility of the materials.
- Action 2:** Forum members to provide any feedback on the YWYS pre-reading materials; and to provide suggestions for improving their accessibility.
- v) The Company asked for Forum members support for promoting the event.
- Action 3:** Forum members to support in promoting the YWYS event.
- w) The Company will share the YWYS draft presentation for comments in early November.

Action 4: Forum members to comment on the YWYS draft presentation, once circulated in early November.

- x) A Forum member asked whether customers can easily request a printed or large print version of the pre-reading materials? The Company agreed with this idea and will put something in place for customers to request the materials in different formats.
- y) A Forum member asked whether customer have an opportunity to ask pre-questions? The Company replied that, should there be pre-question, the guidance says to point them to CCW. Information will be provided on the registration link and on the webpage.
- z) The Company provided insight from a YWYS event run by another water company. A key outcome from the event was customers wanting reassurance that the water company will deliver what the plan says they will deliver, how the company will implement their plans, and how they will communicate that they have achieved their outcomes.
- aa) The Forum Chair asked whether the Company's YWYS presentation will referred to the Forum's report? Given the report was produced for the benefit of customers, the Forum Chair recommended making customers aware of it and signposted to it. The Company agreed and said they would include it in the CEO's narrative.

AOB

- a) The Company announced that their Director of Strategy and Regulation is moving on from the Company in mid-January 2024. The new Director will be joining the Company in January.
- b) The Forum Chair confirmed that the Forum have received an email containing this news, alongside information on the who the new Director will be.

Next meeting

30 November 2023 via Microsoft Teams

Actions

October 2023

| Ref. | Action | Status |
|------|--|--------|
| 1 | A plan for Forum engagement and a critical path of activities to be produced and discussed at a future meeting. | Open |
| 2 | Forum members to provide any feedback on the YWYS pre-reading materials; and to provide suggestions for improving their accessibility. | Open |
| 3 | Forum members to support in promoting the YWYS event. | Open |
| 4 | Forum members to comment on the YWYS draft presentation, once circulated in early November. | Open |

September 2023

| Ref. | Action | Status |
|------|---|----------|
| 1 | Forum Members are requested to disseminate the YWYS event details to their network and contacts, and via their social media channels. | Complete |
| 2 | The Company to arrange a meeting to discuss ideas for reaching underrepresented groups | Complete |
| 3 | The Company to provide information about proportion of green measures (for waste water) in the final programme. | Open |
| 4 | The Company to share the findings report of WaterSupport Enhancement research. | Complete |

August 2023

| Ref. | Action | Status |
|------|--|----------|
| 1 | The Company to brief Exec Summary copywriters on plain English requirements (reading age, intellectual age), with the aim of making it more readily understandable. | Complete |
| 2 | The Company to find the optimum time to share the report chapters – at a point when their content can still be influenced by the Forum. Key areas are: financeability and gearing, the environment, vulnerability and low- | Complete |

| Ref. | Action | Status |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| | income households, and any other areas the Company's Board believe are important. | |
| 3 | The Company to share the updated business plan when it becomes available (following any revisions in TOTEX and bill impact figures). | Complete |
| 4 | The Company to share the acceptability and affordability scores, when they become available (during w/c 11 Sept). | Complete |
| 5 | The Company to share the results of the LTDS research, and the WaterSupport tariff enhancement research. | Complete |
| 6 | The Company to share the draft Customer Engagement chapter at the end of August. | Complete |
| 7 | The Company to share the draft YWYS materials (communications materials, Chair's briefing, and attendees pre-reading) for the Forum's review and feedback. | Complete |
| 8 | The Company to circulate the revised Ofwat YWYS guidance. | Complete |
| 9 | The Company to consider changing the date of the November Forum meeting, which is the same day as the YWYS event. | Complete |