

Recreation on YW

Land and Waters

Policy Statement

It's part of our
Blueprint for Yorkshire



YorkshireWater

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Definition of Key Terms

Asset Management Plan (AMP) A five year plan for managing infrastructure and other assets to deliver an agreed standard of service. AMP6 covers the period 2015-2020.

Recreation The term ‘recreation’ describes the enjoyment of a wide range of leisure time pursuits from the extreme sport and outdoor activity to the gentle and relaxing pastime.

Ofwat The economic regulator of the water and sewerage companies of England and Wales

Performance Commitments have been developed. These commitments are effectively our promises to customers and we'll be measured against them both by Ofwat and the independent Customer Forum.

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain our policy position on the recreational use of Yorkshire Water's land and waters; a matter that is considered to be of strategic importance to our delivery of water and wastewater services, our responsibility as a business and in meeting the needs of society and our stakeholders. We have developed our policy position following an assessment of the best available information of relevant issues, threats and opportunities.

The policy will be publically available and we will communicate it to employees and interested stakeholders.

We will update our policy in the future as and when new information becomes available. Having published our policy we will now develop our long term strategy to inform our future approach.

2. Policy – Recreation on YW Land and Waters

Yorkshire Water’s vision is “Taking responsibility for the water environment for good” and, as one of the largest landowners in Yorkshire, this includes the responsible recreational use of our land and waters. The majority of our land holdings and reservoirs are accessible to the public and receive an estimated one million visits each year. The land is owned primarily for water quality purposes, however it is also subject to statutory, environmental, social and economic drivers outside of the Water Industry regulatory framework. As a responsible business, whilst meeting all of our regulatory obligations it is also our ambition to work in partnership to implement our recreational strategy to broaden the diversity of recreational visitors gaining benefit from our land, as demonstrated by visitor survey results; providing clarity of decision making in how our land and waters are used for the benefit of both the company and our stakeholders.

In line with our Company Vision and Strategic Business Objectives, our policy is:

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>A trusted company</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work in partnership with others to create and deliver a strategy that ensures an outstanding recreational service that our customers expect and value. • We will be a recognised leader in the recreational use of land and water. • We will continually develop our understanding of the needs of our customers, including those parts of the communities we serve that are harder to reach or are not currently engaged with our recreational provision. • We will develop our strategy in partnership with our stakeholders and proactively seek to partner with organisations where collaboration will deliver mutual benefit. • We will provide quality information regarding our recreational provision to allow people to make informed choices. |
|  <p>Safe water</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure the recreational use of our land and waters will go hand in hand with our work to maintain and enhance the environment and protect public health at all times. • The recreation offer we provide will be safe and fit for purpose. • We will use our land and water for the health and wellbeing of communities. |
|  <p>Excellent catchments, rivers and coasts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will protect our catchments, rivers and coasts and make these available for enjoyment. |
|  <p>Water efficient regions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure our recreational strategy does not compromise our water resources and our ability to use our water catchments effectively. |
|  <p>Sustainable resources</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will seek to procure local products wherever feasible, always use resources, efficiently and minimise waste. |
|  <p>Strong financial foundations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of tenancies to third party recreational providers will continue to be fair and proportionate. |

We will incorporate the above commitments into business-as-usual through our strategies, operations and investment plans to achieve our Strategic Business Objectives. We will communicate this policy to all employees, those working on our behalf, interested parties as appropriate and we will make it available to the public. We welcome comments and suggestions for improvements and will review this policy periodically in light of new knowledge, changing legislation and the views of the public and our stakeholders.

Version 1
Date:

12th May 2016

Signed:

N Muncaster
Director of Asset Management

3. Background

Yorkshire Water owns around 28,300Ha of mainly raw water catchment land consisting primarily of around 125 reservoirs and their respective catchments. The land was in public ownership until the Industry was privatised in 1989 and the enabling legislation made specific allowances to protect public interest in the land. The key relevant elements are a duty on Water Companies around the provision of recreation, access and conservation as well as a licence obligation related to the disposal of interests in land.

The land is managed under 250 agricultural agreements of varying types, 110 recreational lettings that cover a range of activities and commercial agreements. These agreements generate around £1.9m per annum in rent (2015/16). As the prime objective of owning land is to ensure sufficient quantities of good quality raw water, the terms of the agreements focus on water quality rather than the derivation of commercial rental values or wider recreational potential.

Approximately 77% of Company land has one or more environmental designations: 37% lies within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAONB), 53% is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 25% sits inside National Parks (mainly the Peak District). A further 5% is registered as Common Land and around 65% is designated as “Open Access” land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).

Most of the Company’s direct recreation provision relates to its reservoirs and includes 30 car parks (700 spaces), 15 picnic sites, 4 toilet blocks, one nationally recognised Nature Reserve (with 14 bird hides plus a wildlife centre and toilets for 10,000 visitors p/a), a game fishery covering 3 reservoirs (1,200 angler visits p/a) and a coarse fishery at one reservoir (1,500 angler visits p/a). The Company provision extends to various sundry items: picnic benches, horse loading and tie up areas, boot or bike washes and signage in addition to on site information.

With regard to informal access, there are 113 reservoirs with public access as well as the “Open Access” land. Around the reservoirs or on other Company land are 100 km of permissive routes (29 km of easy access routes), 33 km of permissive bridleway/cycle routes and around 1,100km of statutory rights of way including footpaths, bridleways and county roads. Of these routes, some 240 km have been promoted on the Company’s recreational micro-site through 18 downloadable walks.

It is also estimated that over one million visitors are attracted to the Company’s sites each year and over 100 one-off events (fell racing to filming) are accommodated on Yorkshire Water land each year. Much of the work related to recreation helps generate a steady stream of “good news” publicity and contributes to the positive media score for the Company.

In delivering recreation, there are many (often conflicting) issues involved in managing the land and these can all impinge on the Company’s reputation. These conflicting interests need to be managed.

The demands for recreational activities on our land and water are growing both in numbers and scope and our current provision is being challenged by our customers, recreational bodies and government directives. In particular, the views of our customers have led to a regulatory performance commitment for AMP6 to ensure our visitors are satisfied with our recreational provision. It is important that our approach to recreational provision is consistent and carefully balances our service delivery needs with a responsible, proactive and positive stance to our recreational offering.



4. Key drivers

SBOs and Performance Commitment

The ambitions of the Company, are set out in the Strategic Business Objectives (SBO'S). The Excellent, Rivers and Coast SBO states 'We manage our land for maximum societal value, and we encourage other land owners to do the same', and we will 'Continue to work in partnership to implement our recreational strategy to broaden the diversity of recreational visitors gaining benefit from our land, as demonstrated by visitor survey results'. Within AMP6, our Performance Commitment is to ensure visitor satisfaction (a qualitative annual measure). A consistent, proactive and partnership approach to our recreational offering is required in order to fulfil our ambition and to stand apart from our peers.

The recreation strategy will provide an opportunity for all colleagues to get involved and contribute to the achievement of this performance commitment and act as ambassadors for the Company.

Health and Wellbeing

Recreational activities have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our customers and communities. As a responsible business, there is an imperative to fully understand the recreational needs of all of our stakeholders and explore how we can meet these needs both directly and through partnering opportunities and tenancies. This allows the Company to provide a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the region.

Societal expectations

A step change in our approach to our recreational provision will allow us to meet the growing demands of our customers and

recreational stakeholder organisations. Customers and stakeholders are increasingly demanding regarding the open access of land and waters and for a whole range of activities to take place on our land. Our default starting position has traditionally been a negative one, but a more positive approach will allow for a full understanding of the opportunities available and how benefits can be delivered through partnership working and collaborative provision. This will allow us to engage with our customers in a new way and provide an emotive and positive connection.

Just as we aspire to diversity in our colleague base and making the best use of our talent, our recreation strategy will allow us to engage with our diverse customer base. In particular, as a responsible business, it is important that we provide a recreational provision which allows enjoyment for *all* of our customer base. We intend to particularly focus on providing recreational choices and enjoyment for those who are not yet engaged with our recreational provision or where we know we can offer an improved engagement experience, such as for visitors with disabilities.

An enhanced provision that aims to engage with all of our customer base provides benefits for the communities within our region and additionally provides the company with good news stories and reputational enhancement.

Retail / wholesale

As the water industry moves towards the introduction of retail competition, the engagement with customers, the emotional connection and the added value from

recreational availability are all distinguishing factors which signal that YW is a responsible business to associate with and align to.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking within the water industry illustrates that the Company already provides many offerings which are on a par with other water companies. Where other companies go beyond what we currently provide, this is usually provided through third parties or in partnership and this is an area which needs further development in order to keep pace with the industry. In order to stand apart from the industry and fulfil our role as a responsible business, a more positive and proactive approach needs to be taken. The recreation strategy will provide the guiding principles to protect the business from inappropriate recreation and adverse impacts yet support the development of the right recreation, in the right location and provided in the most optimal way.

5. Our conclusion

The offering of recreational activities on our land and waters is no longer an added benefit but part of our service expected by our customers and stakeholders. Our recreational offerings have the potential to generate significant value to society, our communities, customers and stakeholders in addition to reputational value to the business. A move from a reactive and initially 'negative until proven otherwise' approach to an inclusive, positive and proactive approach with partners and like-minded organisations is required.

The policy primarily seeks to create reputational enhancements for the company. Commercial benefits are not the primary driver, but these will be investigated where there are win wins be gained. This could be through the commercial supplier of recreation by leasing land, water or property owned by YW, eg third party rental accommodation like log cabins, adventure centres, sports rental, catering etc.

Our policy for recreational management is in line with the company's strategic objectives, customers priorities and is central to our vision: 'taking responsibility for the water environment for good'. Central to this policy is the principle that our recreational offerings will not be detrimental to our operational delivery needs and that we will not seek to financially profit from our offering.

We commit to ensuring a more strategic approach to recreation, based on increased understanding of our stakeholder and customer wants and needs, different delivery mechanisms and economic judgement. We will proactively seek partnerships for mutual benefit and engage our colleagues as ambassadors in a recreational capacity.

6. Future action

We will take a long term view on how to manage our land and water for recreational use that is sustainable and beneficial for the company and our customers and stakeholders.

The next stage is to fully develop the recreation strategy which will define our approach, to include:

- Using our colleague base as ambassadors for our approach and connecting with organisations and activities where we have existing links through our colleagues.
- Proactively approaching like-minded individuals and organisations to fully understand the needs of our communities and how these can be met through partnership working.
- Delivering both quick wins and longer term outcomes which are directly managed by the business or through third parties.

- Piloting our offerings if appropriate before extending their scope or geographical location.
- Measuring our visitors' satisfaction.
- Developing a decision making tree based around key principles to ensure the consideration of new ideas whilst also protecting the business.

7. Facts and figures

Survey summary Nov 2012

- 99% of customers who visit YW recreational sites are either very or quite satisfied with their overall experience.
- The majority of customers said it is important for YW to manage the land and make the sites accessible to the public but that this should be done in a way which does not harm or inhibit the environment or biodiversity of the area.
- Awareness of YW recreational sites is low amongst non-visitors, indeed this is the reason for never having visited them.

Key findings

Both visitors and non-visitors feel it is important that YW plays an active part in the following:

- Managing the countryside, woodland and pathways around reservoirs (98% visitors, 93% non-visitors)
- Providing recreational access for the public to their land (95% visitors, 83% non-visitors)
- The key driver to visiting YW recreational sites is the beauty and love for the area. This is also the main element driving such high satisfaction levels (100%).

Visitor profile:

The profile of visitors to sites is similar to that of previous studies:

- Over 35 years old
- ABC1
- White
- Most likely visiting with their partner and without children
- Most are walking or dog walking. Those at Tophill Low are most likely to be bird watching.

8. Risks and opportunities

A number of risks have been considered; health and safety risks associated with all recreational activities, implications for drinking water quality and potential for increased pollution incidents, reputational risks, the risk of non maintenance of our recreational facilities, financial cost, the inability to meet expectations and the negative association with some organisations.

A number of opportunities have also been considered, many of which are the upsides of the risks considered and show that the careful management of risk can in fact deliver an opportunity for the business. Opportunities to provide health and wellbeing enhancement to our communities, provide good news and positive reputational enhancement, opportunities for relationship enhancing partnerships.

So visitors to our land reflect the diversity of the customer base of YW we will seek ways to break down barriers to ensure all YW customers can access the recreation on offer through good design, information and communication.

Opportunities for great recreation could be present on land and water not yet considered for recreation. By reviewing the potential of WTW, WWTW and other assets in areas close to communities and customers this potential could be realised.

We have a key opportunity to make a difference to society, provide enjoyment and truly be a responsible business.

If no action is taken, there is potential to not meet our performance commitment for recreational visitor satisfaction and to not meet our aspiration to be a leader in this field. There would additionally be a missed opportunity in engaging in an emotional connection with our current and future customer base and playing a key role in our communities as a responsible business.

