

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**15 September 2022**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Attendees:**

Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
Melissa Lockwood	Environment Agency
Andrea Cook	Chair
Naila Hussain	Yorkshire Water
Richard Hepburn	Yorkshire Water
Steve Grebby	CC Water
Pam Warhurst	Independent member
James Copeland	National Farmers Union
Tom Keatley	Natural England

**1) Future of the Forum – Draft Terms of Reference  
(Retention of the Forum; Purpose of the Forum)**

- a) The company Lead led this agenda item as an open discussion regarding the high-level draft terms of reference, which are being finalised internally. The Company Lead requested that feedback be given from the Forum so this can be taken on board and considered as developing proposals going forward.
- b) The Company confirmed they wish to retain the Customer Forum as the forum has added high value over the years to the Company.
- c) Ofwat has not mandated customer challenge groups for PR24, however companies should ensure they have challenge and assurance around their customer engagement.
- d) As one of the changes in PR24, Ofwat will engage directly with the other regulators as part of the business planning process.
- e) The company recognised that engagement between them and the forum has historically been good however several changes in the business has meant this has been recently hindered.
- f) This discussion will talk about the proposed relationship with the purpose and Value Committee and where ownership sits within management at the Company.
- g) The Forum expressed being pleased at the company's choice to retain the Customer Forum even though it is not mandatory by Ofwat. The Forum is

happy to see the company acknowledge customer feedback on previous price reviews, and the importance of having a forum to allow for an independent customer view and challenge.

- h) The Company outlined the purpose of The Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers. The first that the Forum provide ongoing challenge on the company's existing performance and delivery against customer commitments. The second that the Forum provide assurance to the Yorkshire Water Board on the quality and use of customer engagement in the PR24 AMP8 business plan.
- i) The Forum Chair clarified there is clarity needed around assurance, what that means, what form that takes and how far the Forum can go in providing that assurance.
- j) Forum members agreed and highlighted if the Forum has an assurance role, it needs to be part of the discussion about the scope of their responsibility.
- k) The Company Lead clarified assurance to mean that the Forum will be providing an independent view or assessment of the customer engagement the company are doing to inform the business plan and giving the Forum a visible line of sight of what happens to the research.
- l) The Forum explained the importance of this being a two-way relationship with the Board, detailing that whilst the Forum will be providing assurance to the Board via the Public Value Committee, the Board could send a representative to attend and work with the Forum. The Forum is keen to welcome further development in this area.
- m) The Forum highlighted that membership should be as broad as possible whilst still returning the dynamic landscape of customers and the impacts which customers have presented through the company's customer research within the forum members.
- n) The Company stated it considers the Forum an important facet of future work.
- o) The Forum expressed that the terms of reference must demonstrate that the Forum is independent of the company.
- p) A forum member explained that the Forum plays two roles, one being a challenge role and one along the lines of assurance, however questioned which provides more value to the company or if they are of equal value.
- q) The Company Lead outlined that the company would welcome challenge relating to all aspects of the plan and customer research as such, alongside assurance as a form of assistance and collaboration in addition to the challenge.
- r) The Forum Chair explained that they have helped identify gaps and explores methods to fill these gaps, which is different from challenges.

- s) The Company Lead agreed that identifying gaps and solutions is an important aspect which can be brought out by challenging.
- t) A forum member highlighted that clarity on challenge in the terms of reference is important as the Forum don't want to be perceived by the wider company as just there to challenge, as the Forum have provided valuable input and driven change in supporting the Company in understanding customers.
- u) The Forum Chair stated the importance of the Forum engaging with Company staff to understand their view and for them to understand the Forum's view.
- v) The Forum highlighted it is crucial to bring in Forum members early on in the research to allow a thorough understanding of what is happening and to allow the correct input to be given by the Forum. Furthermore, for the Forum's input and view to be taken on board and if not, then to understand the different course of action taken.
- w) A Forum member suggested the wording of terms of reference may need to be reconsidered as it could come across as asking the Forum to do what Ofwat are asking around performance commitments, and the Forum may not agree with some performance commitments as in the previous price review.
- x) The Company Lead outlined that the key part of the Forum's role is related to the price control with engagement from the regulation team. The main belief is that it should link into the customer experience team as this ensures that the views of customers through research are properly incorporated into the company's business plan.

## **2) Future of the Forum**

### **(Ownership within Yorkshire Water – Customer Experience; Relationship with Public Value Committee; Terms of Reference; Role of Statutory Agencies; Membership/Possible Additional Members)**

- a) The company lead confirmed that company member Paul Chapman will be a key contributor to the Forum going forward, as customer research is an important aspect of this.
- b) The forum emphasised the value of research and clearly embedding that within the business plan accurately.
- c) The company explained the ownership of the Forum sits with company customer experience director Zoe Burns-Shore, and linked with the Board and CEO

- d) The Forum and the Forum Chair highlighted the importance of ensuring its independent voice remains independent all the way up to the Board and CEO and is recognised as independent.
- e) The company lead stated support for the Forum Chair to be attending the purpose and value and committee as it allows the Board to directly hear from the forum.
- f) The forum asked whether the Forum Chair will have a seat at the Social Value Committee. The Company clarified this is the Public Value Committee however there has been a change in names.
- g) The forum pointed out there is a need to ensure that all departments of the company understand that it can go to the public value committee and but also to the customer forum.
- h) The company lead confirmed that the company website is undergoing a refresh to have the most up to date information available.
- i) The company recognise the importance of having the Forum linked to the Board therefore the Public Value Committee is the right place for this.
- j) The company assured that having some form of Board cover is very helpful for ensuring that everyone across the company knows about the importance of the forum and its role in the PR24 process, emphasising that the forum is independent and not fulfilling a role of management within the company.
- k) The Forum understand that the public Value Committee has an assurance role with the board, and then working relationship between the Chair of this body and the chair of the Public Value Committee will be interesting therefore would like to understand this at a more granular level at some point, as there is real value.
- l) The Forum pointed out there could be future conversation on having complete clarity around the two terms of reference for the Public Value Committee and the Customer Forum to ensure they complement each other in a working relationship.
- m) The forum Chair highlighted there are two areas in regard to membership. One being in expertise gaps, so to recruit more organisations which actively represent consumers. However, it is acknowledged that this is difficult to achieve as agreed by CCW.
- n) The Forum Acknowledged that statutory agencies have multiple other routes to the Company, however reiterated the increased assurance, and challenge which these members allow the Forum.
- o) The forum further recognised that health is a key component which is not yet represented in their members, and it would also be useful to find the right representative as a younger voice.

- p) The forum also highlighted the value of Environment sub-Committee to the company, and the improvement and development this has brought to company strategy
- q) The Forum voice from the National Farmer Union highlighted that their organizations coming from an agricultural and farming background, are ultimately here to represent business customers, as one of the company's key customer bases. There is also valuable advice and guidance given to the company as they are significant landowners.

### 3) AOB/Close

- a) The Forum mentioned it would be good to have a forward plan or a timetable as such for what point will further interactions start to happen regarding the price review and what form this will take.

**Action 1:** Company Lead (Richard Hepburn) will look into a forward plan and when interactions on the price review are needed from the Forum and feed this back as necessary.

### Next meeting

20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 via Microsoft Teams and Livingstone House

### Actions

#### Summary of actions: 21 January 2021

<b>7</b>	Additional feedback on how industry spend on communications compares across various companies to be shared with the Forum	<b>Ongoing</b>
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#### Summary of actions: 18 February 2021

<b>2</b>	<p><b>Company</b> to share the Land Strategy programme with the Forum once developed.</p> <p><b>Post meeting update</b> Programme to be shared with the Forum in April 2022</p>	<b>Ongoing</b>
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#### Summary of actions: 18 March 2021

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

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

**Summary of actions: 18 December 2021**

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	<b>Forum</b> to feedback to the company regarding if they believe Ofwat capture the greatest importance for customers.		

**Summary of actions: 17 February 2022**

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	The Land Strategy programme paper, which is due to be discussed at the April meeting, to be shared a week in advance to members	<b>Will be discussed in April Meeting</b>	April
<b>2</b>	Six Capitals progress update to be provided to the Forum	<b>Ongoing</b>	May
<b>3</b>	The Forum Chair to discuss potential collaboration with local authorities with the company.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>4</b>	Company to share draft ODI paper with members and attend the March 2022 meeting	<b>Ongoing</b>	March
<b>5</b>	Company to provide a timeline for the statement, including the timeline of the PC data, item to be discussed at the March 2022 Forum	<b>Ongoing</b>	March/April

<b>6</b>	Company to advise who will be working on the Forum Annual Statement	<b>Will be discussed in April Meeting</b>	April
<b>7</b>	The Forum requested details on who will be supporting the Forum on key areas of work	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>8</b>	Company to attend and discuss the effect of inflation rates to customers	<b>Ongoing</b>	

### Summary of actions: 17 March 2022

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	Timeline on the Annual Forum Statement needs to be shared to the Forum as priority.	<b>Complete</b>	April
<b>2</b>	The Company to provide feedback regarding the CoG once further information has been confirmed.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>3</b>	The Company to circulate long term delivery strategy draft to the Forum after April.	<b>Ongoing (Danielle Skilton)</b>	
<b>4</b>	The Head of Regulation from the Company to schedule a meeting with the Chair of Customer Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	March
<b>5</b>	Company to circulate the submission once it has gone to Ofwat.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>6</b>	Company to provide an update on ODI Consultation in summer (next diary commitment).	<b>Ongoing</b>	Summer
<b>7</b>	Slides on ODI Consultation to be circulated to the Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>8</b>	Environment subgroup leads from the Forum and Company (Dave Merrett, Polly Hardy) to pick up separately regarding discussion for environment subgroup.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>9</b>	Forum chair (Andrea Cook) and Company Head of Regulation (Richard Hepburn) to discuss regarding Forum membership.	<b>Complete</b>	

<b>10</b>	The Forum chair (Andrea Cook) and other Forum members (Dave Merrett, Janine Shackleton) to work on a draft for Annual Performance Review and circulate to the group when complete.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
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### Summary of actions: 21 April 2022

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	<b>Action 1:</b> Company to work out what is the best way to share view of performance as soon as it becomes available.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Action 2:</b> Forum Chair and members (Andrea, Dave & Pam) requested to have involvement in a brief for the agency to discuss what they would like to see as a finished article from Jaywing.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Action 3:</b> The Company to ensure key issues and information updates are relayed back to the Forum with appropriate timing.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Action 4:</b> Forum member (Dave) will speak to Polly in relation to figures.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Action 5:</b> The company (Richard Hepburn) will bring a Forum Review update on one of the following Forums.	<b>Complete</b>	Possible June Forum
<b>6</b>	<b>Action 6:</b> Forum member (Melissa Lockwood) requested backwards timeline and possibly a forward agenda to use for next year.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Action 7:</b> To pick up on challenge log and decide who this is to be owned by.	<b>Complete (Report Writer Ownership)</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Action 8:</b> Company to continue sharing with the forum in time appropriate manner on further updates, forward agenda, any issues etc. as the information becomes available.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Action 9:</b> Forum members (Chris Griffin) to share terms of reference from other forums (if available) which they consider may be useful for the company to have sight of	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Action 10:</b> Company to explore the possibility of advertising the role for a 'Report Writer'.	<b>Ongoing</b>	



<b>11</b>	<b>Action 11:</b> Company to provide programme / gantt chart indicating the company's internal deadline for producing documents to allow the forum to understand key input dates.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Action 12:</b> The company to share a formal write up of the Land Strategy Initiative-led carbon, operational and public amenity contribution information to the Forum when it is available.	<b>Ongoing (Andrew Prest)</b>	
<b>13</b>	<b>Action 13:</b> The company to inform the Forum of opportunities to visit farm sites as they become available.	<b>Ongoing (Andrew Prest)</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Action 14:</b> Company (Amanda Cross) to check (with Donna) if there is a Yorkshire Young Peoples Climate / Group.	<b>Ongoing (Amanda Crossfield)</b>	
<b>15</b>	<b>Action 15:</b> Forum members (Chris) to organise a date following the one-to-one meeting request from CoG chair, with support from Forum member (James).	<b>Ongoing / TBC</b>	

### Summary of actions: 19 May 2022

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	<b>Action 1:</b> Summary of actions to be circulated to the Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	
	<b>Action 2:</b> Company to look at creating opportunity to allow further discussion and dialogue for forum members in regard to six capitals, separate to the forum (with Pam / Dave).	<b>Complete</b>	
	<b>Action 3:</b> Forum requested to have clarification from the company on the figures and the increase in employee expenditure (Richard Hepburn will clarify).	<b>Complete</b>	June Forum
	<b>Action 4:</b> Forum Chair indicated it would be helpful to have a paper on asset replacement in the future	<b>Ongoing</b>	
	<b>Action 4:</b> Forum Chair indicated it would be helpful to have a paper on asset replacement in the future	<b>Ongoing</b>	
	<b>Action 6:</b> Company (Charley Ellis) to arrange someone from the Water Supply	<b>Ongoing</b>	

	Interruptions to attend a future meeting to discuss Storm Arwen further. the majority of this is in relation to Storm Arwen.		
	<b>Action 7:</b> Company Lead (Richard Hepburn) to look at bringing a presentation from the executive management team regarding long term strategy and company performance for the coming months.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
	<b>Action 8:</b> Company (Charley Ellis) to look into bringing the appropriate person onto a future forum to explain further regarding the narrative of what is happening in the Priority Services for Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances area.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
	<b>Action 9:</b> Company (Charley Ellis) to possibly bring Helen Slinger onto a future forum to further discuss the Operational Carbon performance commitment following the completion of report (if the Forum still requires).	<b>Ongoing (requested hold by Forum Chair)</b>	
	<b>Action 10:</b> Company to confirm with the Forum (Pam Warhurst / Andrea Cook) to meet with Jaywing between 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> May.	<b>Complete</b>	
	<b>Action 11:</b> Company to provide a PR24 timeline for the next June Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	
	<b>Action 12:</b> Company Admin (Naila Hussain) to follow up with members who would like to be a part of the research, provide an update on the progress of the research after liaising with Lindsey.	<b>Complete</b>	
	<b>Action 13:</b> Company Admin to check with Forum members what dates work best for the June Forum meeting.	<b>Complete</b>	

**Summary of actions: 20 June 2022**

No.	Action	Status	Due date
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<b>1</b>	<b>Action 1:</b> Ahead of the July Forum meeting, Company to follow up with Andrea in terms of where current position and the next steps.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Action 2:</b> The Company provisionally on having a future agenda for specific performance commitments to allow an opportunity to discuss further.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Action 3:</b> Company will take steps to use better photographs or go with suggestions from Forum Chair Andrea Cook and Forum member Pam Warhurst to use the photograph from the previous year on page 10. Further to remove comments as suggested by Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Action 4:</b> Company to push-back to Jaywing that the document is not up to standard and relay feedback from Forum.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Action 5:</b> Company Admin to circulate the updated slides presented by Charley Ellis.	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Action 6:</b> The Forum would be interested to know then reasons behind drop in priority services awareness when this is available.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Action 7:</b> The company can put a forward agenda to look at its submissions and thoughts on moving forward with the draft methodology.	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Action 8:</b> Company to look at bringing the Willingness to Pay update to the Forum earlier than December (Paul Chapman).	<b>Ongoing</b>	

### Summary of actions: 15 September 2022

No.	Action	Status	Due date
<b>1</b>	<b>Action 1:</b> Company Lead (Richard Hepburn) will look into a forward plan and when interactions on the price review are	<b>Ongoing (Richard Hepburn)</b>	

	needed from the Forum and feed this back as necessary		
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