

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers
Minutes of Meeting
18 September 2025
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Attendees:

Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
Fiona Morris	Environment Agency
James Copeland	National Farmers Union
Kursh Siddique	Independent Member
Steve Grebby	Consumer Council for Water

Apologies:

Jodie Hall	Citizens Advice
Kirstin Hutchinson	Yorkshire Water

Guests:

Tim Hawkins	Yorkshire Water
Donna Hildreth	Yorkshire Water
 Rachel Barnard	 Yorkshire Water

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1. Minutes

- a) The minutes from July's meeting have been circulated to Forum members for feedback and approval outside of the meeting.
- b) There was no meeting in August.

2. Actions

- a) Open and in-progress actions were reviewed.
- b) Actions from November 2024:
 - i. *The Company to finalise decisions about the future of the Forum. **In progress.*** With major changes anticipated after the Cunliffe review, a pause will be taken to clarify expectations before reviewing and updating the Forum's operations for AMP9.
- c) Actions from June:
 - i. *The Company to respond on whether mains replacement plans have changed following issues in York (bursts in cast iron pipes within clay soil) and to explain why the Company had not previously addressed these issues, given that the risk was known. **Complete.***
 - ii. *The Company to provide any publicity plan for communication of the reasons for the bursts in York. **Complete.***
 - iii. *The Company to provide health and safety information about asbestos cement pipes, particularly relating to any issues involved in their replacement. **Complete.***
 - iv. *Further detailed reporting on complaints to be brought to July's meeting. Remains **open.** Postponed to next meeting due to availability.*
- d) Actions from July:
 - i. *The Company provide an update in September or October on the regulatory landscape. **In progress.*** On November's agenda.
 - ii. *The Company to provide a summary on the consultation about in-period adjustments. **Complete.*** Provided to members on email.
 - iii. *The Company to provide an update on pollution challenges at the next environment subgroup meeting following the Interim Report publication from the Environment Agency and the Pollution Reduction Plan. Remains **open** due to delay in publication.*
 - iv. *The Company to share the recent Ofwat sewer flooding response submission with the Forum for review, focusing on response times and planned*

*improvements, and present this information at August's meeting. To be covered at the October Environment subgroup. Remains **open**.*

- v. *The Company to share details of the proportion of customers who find their bill unacceptable or responded neutrally to the Bill Affordability question.*

Complete. Shared during the meeting.

- vi. *The Company to provide further details on the differences between metered and non-metered customers in terms of their media perceptions. **Complete.***
Shared during the meeting.

- vii. *Update on LORI AMP7 final position to be brought to the environment subgroup. On the agenda for October's Environmental subgroup meeting.*
Remains **open**.

e) No meeting in August.

f) New actions from September:

- i. **Action 1:** The Company to meet with the chair before October's meeting to discuss building a sustainable future for the Forum.
- ii. **Action 2:** Members to provide feedback or suggestions on the future of the Forum to the chair before October's meeting.
- iii. **Action 3:** The Company to share the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) with members at a future meeting.
- iv. **Action 4:** The Company to provide a breakdown of C-MeX negative drivers at the next Affordability & Vulnerability subgroup.
- v. **Action 5:** Add Cunliffe C-MeX reform review to the next A&V subgroup agenda.

3. Update from the private members session

- a) The Chair asked about the Company's environmental performance with reference to an upcoming report from the Environment Agency (EA), expected to be available by the end of September.
- b) It was proposed that the meeting in October focus on discussing the findings of this report.
- c) The Chair observed that recent news regarding CEO compensation and the need for transparency on this matter should be addressed in the draft APR statement.

4. Business Update

CEO Compensation

- a) The Company addressed criticism received following the news around CEO compensation. Whilst the payments were disclosed, the value was not, and the Company intends to amend this in future.
- b) The Company noted that these flat fees are not related to performance and are not bonuses. Furthermore, they are not funded by customers.
- c) The Company intends to align to the reporting requirements on remuneration required of FTSE100 companies with the aim of increasing confidence.
- d) A twice-yearly report on performance will be produced and shared with stakeholders to make progress easier to track.
- e) The Company will also increase engagement between the Board and key stakeholders via a programme of meetings.
- f) The Chair noted the complex organisational structure of the Company and the offshore location of the parent company and asked whether this would be examined as part of efforts to increase transparency or as part of regulatory reform.
- g) The Company acknowledged the comments and stated that they would communicate them to shareholders.
- h) Members noted that, historically, scrutiny from the Forum around transparency lead to operations being brought back onshore and other financial simplifications. They opined that this new and far-reaching incident raises questions about the Company's commitment to openness.
- i) The Company responded that it aims to increase confidence and transparency and has written to mayors, MPs and other stakeholder groups addressing these matters. It is also due to meet with mayors at the end of October.

Regulatory Reform

- j) The Company updated on regulatory reform, noting that a White Paper is due later in autumn. Legislation and a Water Reform Bill are expected in 2026, moving towards potential start of PR29 review or a bridging arrangement in 2027.
- k) The Company reminded members of its objectives from the reform and noted many had been secured by the recommendations from the commission.
 - i. Clear policy direction from Government
 - ii. Overhaul of legislative framework
 - iii. Integrated water regulation
 - iv. Focus on individual company circumstances and the regions they serve
 - v. Investability
 - vi. Regional/catchment focus
 - vii. Reset of relationship and narrative
- l) Key recommendations from the commission were highlighted by the Company including
 - i. Price Review reform
 - ii. Ownership, governance and investability
 - iii. Asset health and resilience
 - iv. Affordability and consumer protection.
- m) The Company is now engaging with Defra, other water companies and other stakeholders as the recommendations move towards a White Paper and legislative proposals.
- n) The Company noted that these are sweeping reforms across all aspects of the sector which it expects to bring significant benefits. These will, however, require a lot of work over an extended period of time.
- o) Some form of shadow regulator is expected to be appointed to lead the transition with consideration needed for how to migrate from AMP8 to any new framework. It remains unclear whether this solution would be in place and sufficiently mature for it to be used for PR29.
- p) It was discussed whether the new regulator would be within government or independent, but this is yet to be decided.

Future of the Forum

- q) The Company noted that the Cunliffe report had advocated for customer challenge groups, alongside other customer representation, as part of the overall framework for involving customers in decision making.

- r) A Forum member asked about whether Ofcom's transition in terms of shadow systems, timelines and the aim for seamlessness would be seen as a model which the Company would endorse.
- s) The Company stated that lessons from the introduction of Ofcom could provide insights for setting up a new regulator for water, noting that the situation may involve greater complexity. Other examples of regulatory reform discussed were the Civil Aviation Authority and Great British Railways.
- t) The Company shared its hope that key appointments would be made early so that change can be driven alongside the current regulation.
- u) It was discussed that Ofwat are still supportive of Independent Challenge Groups (ICGs) such as the YfWC; and the Company reinforced the ongoing need for the challenge provided by the Forum.

Action 1: The Company to meet with the chair before October's meeting to discuss building a sustainable future for the Forum.

Action 2: Members to provide feedback or suggestions on the future of the Forum to the chair before October's meeting.

- v) A member noted that, although the current Forum contains varied and experienced sector expertise with good coverage of areas of importance, additional members should be recruited to broaden the experience in future.

Water Resources

- w) The Company reported reservoir levels have risen for the first time since February, but uncertainty over long-term weather means attention to water resources continues.
- x) The implementation of the Temporary Usage Bans in early summer has led to a 10% decrease in water demand. This outcome is at the higher end of projected expectations, indicating that customers have been responsive to the requests from the Company and the EA. A member suggested noting customer contributions and efforts in ongoing communication strategies.

Pollution

- y) A member highlighted a notable cultural shift towards improved pollution reporting, as well as the company's enhanced and more effective collaboration with the EA across various organisational levels.

Action 3: The Company to share the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) with members at a future meeting.

5. Research Update

- a) In response to a question from a previous session, the Company updated that for bill acceptability
 - i. 61% find their bill acceptable (score 7+ on a 10-point scale)
 - ii. 26% respond neutrally (score 4 – 6 on a 10-point scale)
 - iii. 13% respond find their bill unacceptable (score 1 – 3 on a 10-point scale)
- b) Metered customers are marginally more positive than unmetered ones in media perception and trust.
- c) A member asked if customers see a comparison on their bill between their metered charges and what their bills would have been if unmetered. The Company said this is not currently provided.
- d) The Company noted that it would consider a research project examining metered customers attitudes to bill rises and their perceptions of financial savings compared to unmetered costs.
- e) The Company went on to share its regular tracking report on perception, trust and value for money.
- f) A downward trend was noted across all measures over the last 12 – 18 months. Value for money and trust scores are among the lowest seen since tracking started.
- g) Awareness of the Priority Services Register (PSR) has increased and is now remaining above 50%, considerably higher than last year. Awareness of Financial Assistance is also growing.
- h) The Company observed that there has been an increase in awareness of communications, which may be attributed to efforts to inform customers about drought challenges.
- i) The Company reported that satisfaction levels for Waste and Water services remain relatively stable, though there is a slight declining trend. Overall satisfaction and Net Promoter Score (NPS) have reached their lowest point since monitoring began, a decrease that is likely attributable to media-influenced perceptions.
- j) The Company reported on C-MeX, noting that the methodology has changed. Surveys are now conducted online, instead of by telephone. Online surveys tend to yield lower scores, as people are less hesitant to give negative feedback than in direct person to person conversations over the telephone.

- k) The Company showed that its C-MeX scores had fallen, moving them from 8th in the industry in Financial Year (FY) 2021 to 14th in FY26. It explained that in FY25, the closing position was just short of the Performance Commitment meaning no reward, but no penalty. FY26 performance so far indicates the Company could receive maximum penalty.

Action 4: The Company to provide a breakdown of C-MeX negative drivers at the next Affordability & Vulnerability subgroup.

Action 5 : Add Cunliffe C-MeX reform review to the next A&V subgroup agenda.

- l) The Company provided insight into issues affecting C-MeX scores including
- i. Affordability of the bill
 - ii. Lack of clarity on the reasons for bill increases
 - iii. Communication, updates, advance notice of work
 - iv. Delays and wait times
- m) The Chair asked if the data could be refined to focus solely on customer service, excluding factors like drought or bill increases. The Company clarified that the data covers customers with recent service experiences, but respondents sometimes include broader concerns in their feedback.
- n) The Chair questioned why the Company was hit harder than other water firms. The Company cited drought measures, price hikes, and CEO pay as contributing factors.
- o) The Company reminded members of their invitation to the upcoming Water Efficiency project debrief, which will also be recorded and made available to members.
- p) The Company is running four Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say online sessions in November covering the region. Members will be invited.
- q) It was discussed that the Company's CEO has attended a number of in-person events to engage with members of the public directly.

6. AOB

- a) No other business was raised.

Actions tracker –

September 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	The Company to meet with the chair before October's meeting to discuss building a sustainable future for the Forum.	Open
2	Members to provide feedback or suggestions on the future of the Forum to the chair before October's meeting.	Open
3	The Company to share the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) with members at a future meeting.	Open
4	The Company to provide a breakdown of C-MeX negative drivers at the next Affordability & Vulnerability subgroup.	Open
5	Add Cunliffe C-MeX reform review to the next A&V subgroup agenda.	Open

August 2025

No meeting in August.

July 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	The Company provide an update in September or October on the regulatory landscape.	In progress
2	Dan Chubb to provide a summary on the consultation about in-period adjustments.	Complete
3	The Company to provide an update on pollution challenges at the next environment subgroup meeting following the Interim Report publication from the Environment Agency and the Pollution Reduction Plan.	Open
4	The Company to share the recent Ofwat sewer flooding response submission with the Forum for review, focusing on response times and planned improvements, and present this information at August's meeting.	Open

5	The Company to share details of the proportion of customers who find their bill unacceptable or responded neutrally to the Bill Affordability question.	Complete
6	The Company to provide further details on the differences between metered and non-metered customers in terms of their media perceptions.	Complete
7	Update on LORI AMP7 final position to be brought to the environment subgroup.	Open

June 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	The Company to respond on whether mains replacement plans have changed following issues in York (bursts in cast iron pipes within clay soil) and to explain why the Company had not previously addressed these issues, given that the risk was known.	Complete
2	The Company to provide any publicity plan for communication of the reasons for the bursts in York.	Complete
3	The Company to provide health and safety information about asbestos cement pipes, particularly relating to any issues involved in their replacement.	Open
4	Further detailed reporting on complaints to be brought to July's meeting.	Open

May 2025

All actions completed.

April 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	The Company to clarify whether the proforma response to the Cunliffe enquiry can be shared with members as well as the written report.	Complete

March 2025

All actions completed.

February 2025

All actions completed.

January 2025

All actions completed.

December 2024

All actions completed.

November 2024

Ref.	Action	Status
5	The Company to finalise decisions about the future of the Forum.	In progress

October 2024

All actions completed.

September 2024

All actions completed.

August 2024

All actions completed.

July 2024

All actions completed.

June 2024

All actions completed.

May 2024

All actions completed.

April 2024

All actions completed.

March 2024

All actions completed.

February 2024

Ref.	Action	Status
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5	The Company to share data tables detailing benefits with The Forum [Working with Others PC]	Complete
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