**8941/Yorkshire Water**

**HH Deliberative Session Discussion Guide (v1)**

**3 hours**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(I) Introduction** | | **10 mins** |
| **Brief explanation of the purpose of the research** | *Moderator to explain the nature of the research*.   * I work for a company called DJS Research, we are an independent market research company and today we are working on behalf of Yorkshire Water * Our client, Yorkshire Water is looking to speak to their customers about their business plan for the period leading up to 2030, the impact of this plan on the service customers will receive and their bills, and your views on whether the plan is acceptable to you as a customer.   *Moderator to reassure respondents about confidentiality / GDPR compliance.*   * Feedback will be summarised into a report along with other research, we won’t pass names/specific details of who we have spoken to back to our client. * There are no right and wrong answers; we are just interested in your views, opinions and ideas. * Brief explanation about audio/video recording information – we may use anonymised quotes &/or video clips in our report to illustrate the research findings for our client, but these will not be attributed to you personally. * Introduce any client observers. * I am not an industry expert and, so, there may well be questions that you have that I cannot answer. We have representatives from Yorkshire Water present today, who may be able to answer some questions depending on the department they work in. We’ll take other questions away and can send out the answers to those interested. * [Moderator: throughout, note down any unanswered respondent questions, along with response given] | |
| **Introductions** | *Moderator to invite respondent(s) to introduce themselves*.   * Please tell me your name and share a bit about yourself: * If you work what you do? * How do you like to spend your time/any hobbies/key interests? * Who lives at home with you? Any children? Any pets? * How long have you lived in the area/Yorkshire region for? IF MOVED FROM DIFFERENT REGION: What brough you to the area? | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(II) Reactions to the pre-task** | | **10 mins** |
| **Reactions & Recap on the pre-task** | MODERATOR TO SET THE SCENE FOR THE RESEARCH, WHY WE ARE ALL HERE TODAY:   * SHOW SLIDE 2 – Reminder of 5-year Business Planning process run by Ofwat and the process companies have to go through regarding business planning and customer engagement * Thoughts? Any questions?   MODERATOR: a few days ago, we sent out information packs and a one-page summary of Yorkshire Water’ business plan.   * What were your initial thoughts on the materials provided? * **Was there anything in the materials you saw that wasn’t clear or that was difficult to understand?** * **What surprised you most out of the things you have read?** * Why did it surprise you? * Having seen the information pack, what if anything, would you most like to know more about? * Has anything that you’ve seen, heard, or read within the information pack changed your opinion of Yorkshire Water in any way?   How? | |
|  |  | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(III) An introduction to Yorkshire Water** | | **15 mins** |
| **An introduction to Yorkshire Water** | I’d like to move the discussion on now, and spend some time thinking about Yorkshire Water and what they do:   * Had anyone not heard of Yorkshire Water before we invited you to this session? * What do you know about Yorkshire Water? What does it do?   SHOW SLIDE 3 - There are two kinds of water service provider in England and Wales. Some provide water services only (known as WoCs) whereas others provide water and wastewater services (known as WaSCs). This means that some households will have two separate suppliers (i.e. both a WoC and a WaSC). Your water services provider, Yorkshire Water, is a WASC and provides both your water and wastewater services.  **SHOW SLIDES 4-5: THE AREA YORKSHIRE WATER COVERS AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES/ ACTIVITIES AND THE WATER CYCLE**  **SLIDE 5:** On the screen now, is a quick overview of some of Yorkshire Water’ key responsibilities and activities.   * Are any of these surprising to you?   + Which/why? * Is any of this information new to you or something you’ve not considered before? * What are your main expectations of Yorkshire Water as your water and sewerage provider?   + (P) IF NEEDED: e.g., Service, reliability, value for money, environment * How satisfied are you with Yorkshire Water? Please do this on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being the least satisfied and 10 the most.   + MODERATOR ASK A FEW PEOPLE FOR THEIR SCORES AND ASK: Why did you give this rating? * What experience do you have of them? * Is there anything about the service Yorkshire Water provides that you would like to see them improve? * How would you describe your relationship with Yorkshire Water? * Do you feel like a valued customer of Yorkshire Water?   + Why/why not? * What words would you use to describe how you feel about Yorkshire Water? * And how would you rate the value for money you receive for your water and waste water services provided by Yorkshire Water? Please do this on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being the lowest value for money and 10 the highest.   + MODERATOR ASK A FEW PEOPLE FOR THEIR SCORES AND ASK: Why did you give this rating? * **SHOW SLIDE 6 – HOW EACH £1.23 IS SPENT.**   + Thoughts on how each £1.23 is spent? Any surprised? Positives/Negatives? Why?   + Does this change value for money perceptions? Why/why not? | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(IV) Temperature check - household finances/cost of living.** | | **5 mins** |
| **Household finances** | **We’re going to have a quick conversation around the current cost of living and how that might be impacting you and your household at the moment.**   * How are you feeling about your household finances currently and what’s coming in versus what’s now going out? Do you feel quite positive or perhaps quite negative about your current situation?   + How has your outlook of your finances changed over the past 6 to 12 months or so? Better? Worse? How so?   + Which bills or expenses are of most concern/have impacted you most?   + Do you think you’ll find it easier/harder to afford your bills in the next six months than you did in the last six months? What bills do you worry about most?   + Do you feel that you have enough flexibility or a cushion in your finances at the moment that if you had an unexpected bill or something that needed replacing (such as washing machine breaking down or a car repair) that you would be able to afford that immediately?   [Bringing group back as a whole] What were the key points and themes raised covered in your discussion? | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(V) Focus on explaining the long-term picture to 2050** | | **20 mins** |
| **Long-term plan** | Before we take a detailed look at its proposed business plan, I would first like to talk to you a little about Yorkshire Water’ vision for delivering its services over the longer term, all the way up until 2050.  Before I show you what YW plan to focus on, what do you expect to see in a long-term plan by Yorkshire Water? Where do you expect improvements? Any must haves? Nice to haves? Anything less of a priority in your eyes?  **SHOW SLIDE 7**  Across each 5 year planning period from 2025 to 2050 Yorkshire Water’s goals remain clear, they plan to deliver the following:  More Resilient Water Supply: MODERATOR TO READ SLIDE  Enhancing the natural environment: MODERATOR TO READ SLIDE  Protecting against flooding: MODERATOR TO READ SLIDE  Providing a reliable & affordable service: MODERATOR TO READ SLIDE   * What are your thoughts? * What do you like? Why * What do you dislike? Why? * Do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance, in terms of these longer-term goals?   + Why do you say that?   + What do you think is missing?   + What might you like to see them drop? * Are there any specific goals on the screen now that you think are particularly important for Yorkshire Water to aim for?   Next, I’m going to ask you to consider all of the longer-term goals discussed so far from three different perspectives. These three perspectives are:   * As a **customer** of Yorkshire Water: that is, someone who pays a water bill * As a **consumer** of Yorkshire Water’ services: that is, someone who uses one or more of the range of services Yorkshire Water provides, such as drinking water from the tap and flushing the loo * As a **citizen** in Yorkshire**:** that is, as a member of society who thinks about the wider needs of society and the environment over the longer term * Taking the first of these, the **customer** perspective… If you were to consider Yorkshire Water’s long-term plan purely from a bill-payer’s perspective, how would that affect your view of it?   + Would your view change?     - Why/why not?   + Are there any questions you’d like to ask Yorkshire Water in order to make an informed judgement as a bill-payer? * Secondly, the **consumer** perspective… If you were to consider Yorkshire Water’s long-term plan purely from the perspective of someone who uses the company’s services, how would that affect your view of it?   + Would your view change?     - Why/why not?   + Are there any questions you’d like to ask Yorkshire Water in order to make an informed judgement as a service user? * Finally, the **citizen’s** perspective… If you were to consider Yorkshire Water’s long-term plan purely from the perspective of someone who is interested in the long-term needs of communities and of the environment in Yorkshire, how would that affect your view of it?   + Would your view change?     - Why/why not?   + Are there any questions you’d like to ask Yorkshire Water in order to make an informed judgement as a citizen?   NOTE ABOUT PHASING: Yorkshire Water needs to consider the balance of responsibility amongst current and future customers for paying for investments, as not investing now could mean a higher cost in the future as issues may get worse. We won’t discuss this in depth now, but we’ll revisit it at the end of the session. | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(VI) Recap on the pre-task information** | | **15 mins** |
| **Pre-task overview** | **SLIDES 8-9 RECAP ON CURRENT PLANS, PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS AND REWARDS AND PENALTIES**   * How do you feel about the way companies are monitored?   **SLIDE 10 – HOW DID YORKSHIRE WATER PERFORM IN MOST RECENT ASSESSMENT?**   * What are your thoughts on this? Out of the 12 measures here on the slide Yorkshire Water are at or better than target for 5 measures and are classified as ‘a lagging behind’ company by Ofwat. * Does this match what you thoughts about YW? Why? Why not? * Where did you expect them to be? * Why? What was driving these expectations?   **SHOW SLIDE 11 – Explain that Ofwat have selected 6 areas of service as priority areas of service for customers, these are outlined here….these 6 areas will be the focus of much of this research. The next few slides will cover how Yorkshire Water performance compares to other water companies for each of these 6 areas as well as their goals to improve performance in these areas from 2025-2030.**  Please note to customers that: that what they pay covers many other things that Yorkshire Water deliver to customers such as protecting customers against droughts, carbon reduction schemes, improving biodiversity and providing support to customers in circumstances which might make them vulnerable. For 2020-2025 Yorkshire Water have 44 areas of service for which they have targets, you can read more about their performance across all areas of service on their website  **SLIDES 12-17: Comparative data by improvement measure.**  The graph on the screen just now shows you how Yorkshire Water compares to other water and sewerage service providers in England and Wales in regard to [read out measure and repeat for each slides 12-17].   * Looking at the data on the screen, how do you feel about Yorkshire Water’ performance for this area of service compared to other companies? * Do you feel they are doing enough?   **SLIDE 18: List of six service areas mentioned in the business plan**   * Looking at the six areas of service noted on the screen just now and how they compare to other water companies, which of these matters most to you?   + Why those? * And thinking about how Yorkshire Water invests in its resources in the near future, which of these areas of service do you think are in most need of additional investment or improvement?   + Why those?   [Bringing group back as a whole] Who will be speaking for each group? What came from your discussion?] | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ANNOUNCE 10-MINUTE BREAK** | **15 mins** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(VII) Focus on the shorter-term picture (least cost/must do business plan)** | | **60 mins** |
| **Overview of the six service areas and their targets** | **SLIDE 18: List of six service areas mentioned in the business plan**  Focusing on these 6 priority areas, Yorkshire Water intends to commit to specific improvements to these services. As mentioned, this isn’t everything in Yorkshire Water’ plan for 2025 to 2030, however, it does cover the priority aspects of the service customers receive.  In this next section, we are going to talk through these service improvements, to make sure that everyone is comfortable with what Yorkshire Water is proposing and what that means for water customers in the region.  We’re also going to take a look at each of the service goals on Yorkshire Water’ business plan. We’ll see:   * what the current performance is for this service areas * whether or not YW is hitting its target for this service area and why it might be missing its targets * what service improvements it is proposing from 2023-30 * a description of how Yorkshire Water expects to achieve this increase in proposed performance   One important thing to bear in mind is that these improvements are on issues that the water regulator, Ofwat, says water companies *must* include in their business plans. These six targets for improvement are set by Ofwat. Water companies can choose to go beyond the targets set by Ofwat, if they wish, but this increases the amount companies will charge customers.   * **Point one** of the business plan relates to **Reducing interruptions to your water supply**. * This would cover situations in which, without warning, the water supply is interrupted for more than 3 hours. This would mean that you would not be able to draw water from your taps or flush the toilet. You may have to buy bottled water.   + The proposed plan would reduce the average length of any water supply interruptions that occur without warning and last for over 3 hours to 1 min 34 seconds from 10 minutes 38 seconds if we are looking at the most recent performance.   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDE 19 Detailed overview of water supply interruptions.**  Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * whether or not YW is hitting its target for this service area and why it might be missing its targets * Service improvement description * Current performance * Proposed improvement from 2025-30 * Description of how this will be achieved * In terms of the target for 2025-2030, do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently?   **MAIN MODERATOR TO ANNOUNCE NEXT SECTION:**   * **Point two** of the business plan relates to **Reducing the number of times customers need to contact YW about the appearance, taste or smell of their tap water**. * This relates to reducing the frequency with which its customers feel that the water coming to their house is of an unacceptable standard. For instance, tap water may look discoloured or taste/smell different to usual and, although still safe to drink, people may prefer bottled water as a precaution until it returns to normal.   + The proposed plan would reduce the number of times customers need to complain to Yorkshire Water about water quality issues to 0.5 per 1,000 customers served from 1.09   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDE 20 Detailed overview of business water appearance, taste and smell**  On the screen now is a detailed overview of the [third] point on Yorkshire Water’ business plan. [**Reducing the number of water appearance, taste and smell incidents customers experience**].  [Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * Service improvement description * Current performance * whether or not YW is hitting its target for this service area and why it might be missing its targets * Proposed improvement from 2025-30Description of how this will be achieved] * In terms of the target for 2025-2030, do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently?   **MAIN MODERATOR TO ANNOUNCE NEXT SECTION:**   * Point three of the business plan relates to **Reducing the number of houses affected by sewer flooding *inside* their property**. * An escape of sewage inside properties is highly unpleasant, disruptive and a potential health risk. In bad cases, people need to move out of their properties while things are put right.   + The proposed plan would reduce the number of internal sewage flooding events to 1.37 per 10,000 connections from 2.83.   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDES 21 Detailed overview of sewer flooding inside properties**  On the screen now is a detailed overview of Yorkshire Water’ business plan to **Reducing the number of houses affected by sewer flooding inside in their property**  Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * Service improvement description * whether or not YW is hitting its target for this service area and why it might be missing its targets * Proposed improvement from 2025-30 * Description of how this will be achieved * In terms of the target for 2025-30, do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently?   **MAIN MODERATOR TO ANNOUNCE NEXT SECTION:**   * Point four of the business plan relates to **Reducing the number of houses affected by sewer flooding *outside* their property**. * An escape of sewage into gardens or access points to peoples’ properties is inconvenient and unpleasant and can restrict access.   + The proposed plan would reduce the number of external sewage flooding events to 10.32 per 10,000 connections from 19.32.   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDES 22 Detailed overview of internal sewer flooding**  On the screen now is a detailed overview of Yorkshire Water’ plan for **Reducing the number of houses affected by sewer flooding outside their property**.  Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * Service improvement description * whether or not YW is hitting its target for this service area and why it might be missing its targets * Proposed improvement from 2025-30 * Description of how this will be achieved * In terms of the target for 2025-2030, do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently?   **MAIN MODERATOR TO ANNOUNCE NEXT SECTION:**   * **Point five**  of the business plan relates to **Reducing the amount of water lost through leakage**. * Leaks can affect customers directly if their water supply is affected. They are sometimes unnoticed if underground. But leakage is often seen in the media and has a cost to people on their bills and a cost to the environment.   + The proposed plan would reduce water leaks to 102.52 litres per property served.   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDES 23 Detailed overview of leakage**  On the screen now is a detailed overview of Yorkshire Water’s plan to **Reduce the amount of water lost through leakage**.  [Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * Service improvement description * Current performance * Reason for missing performance * Proposed improvement from 2025-30 * Description of how this will be achieved * In terms of the target for 2030 do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently?   **MAIN MODERATOR TO ANNOUNCE NEXT SECTION:**   * **Point six** of the business plan relates to **Reducing the number of pollution incidents**. * Discharges from sewage treatment or networks can affect rivers and bathing waters. This can have a minimal effect on the river ecology or a major effect depending on the scale.   + The proposed plan would reduce the number of pollution incidents to 13.6 per 10,000km of sewers from 27.36.   We’re going to look at this commitment in more detail now.  **SHOW SLIDES 24 Detailed overview of Pollution Incidents plan**  On the screen now is a detailed overview of the Yorkshire Water’ business plan on **Reducing the number of pollution incidents**.  Moderator to talk through the following:   * Service improvement name * Service improvement description * Current performance * Reason for missing performance * Proposed improvement from 2025-30 * Description of how this will be achieved * In terms of the target for 2025-2030, do you feel that Yorkshire Water is going too far, not far enough, or striking a good balance?   + Why do you say that?   + What would you like to see them aim for, instead? * Looking at Yorkshire Water explanation of how they are actioning this service improvement, does that seem plausible to you?   + Does it seem realistic?   + Do you think this is an acceptable way of going about it?   + Is there anything that stands out as particularly good or interesting in the way they intend to achieve this target?   + Do you have any concerns about the way they intend to achieve this target?   + If you were in charge of planning this improvement, how would you plan it differently? | |
| **Enhanced areas of the business plan** | **SHOW SLIDES 25-27: Enhancement Areas**  **As part of its business plan for 2025 to 2030, Yorkshire Water must adhere to the laws and regulations in place that affect how all water companies in England and Wales must act. These cover environmental legislation, as well regulations regarding their drainage, wastewater, and storm overflow infrastructure.**  **Many of these are new requirements or areas where Yorkshire Water haven’t needed to invest previously e.g. increasing water supplies through new sources or investing to reconfigure how wastewater is managed in the environment.**  **These are mandatory requirements for all water companies, we won’t be evaluating them in this session. However, they will provide you with useful background information to Yorkshire Water’ wider plans especially where costs are concerns.**  **This is enhanced spend in this area, Yorkshire Water are investing in these areas in different ways to how they were funded before. This additional investment is required by law**    **READ CONTENT ON SLIDES 25-27 WINEP, WRNP, STORM OVERFLOWS AND FOR EACH DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:**   * What are your thoughts on this enforcement and impact on your bill? * Would you like to have a say on this or are you ok with this being legislative increases in costs? Why? | |
| **Acceptability and affordability of the proposed plan** | **SHOW SLIDE 28-29 - PLAN BILL IMPACT**  **Hand out price increase reference sheets and inflation description**   * On this slide, there is an estimated increase in customers’ bills that would cover the cost of putting all of the improvements in this plan into place. * You can use the reference sheet that you’ve been given to estimate how much this would increase your annual water bill.   + Does this increase seem acceptable to you?     - Why/why not?   Would this increase affect how affordable your water bill is for you?  Given all that has to be delivered for each of these service areas and all of the other aspects of service YW has to deliver, do these bills feel fair to you? Why? Why not?  How do you feel about this potential increase in bills?  SHOW SLIDE 30 – FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED  Just so you are aware YW currently helps more than 90,000 customers to pay their bill, plans for 2025-2030 are hoping to support almost 150,000 customers to pay their bill.  There is a look at the different support options available. This will be included in bill shown today.   * What do you think to the financial support available to customers who are struggling to pay their bills? * Does having this support for customers struggling to pay their bill make you think differently about the potential increases to your bill from 2025-20-30? | |
| **OPTIONAL INVESTMENT CHOICES** | **SHOW SLIDE 31– OPTIONAL INVESTMENT CHOICES**  Yorkshire Water would like to go over and above just meeting the statutory requirements as outlined in its ‘least cost’ plan. To do this, they need customer support. The slide outlines 3 additional options Yorkshire Water would like to invest in, however they need customer support for this spend as it impacts their bills.   * What are your thoughts on the 3 areas of investment put forward by Yorkshire Water? * Are these areas that need additional investment in your eyes? * Which is most important and why? * What are your thoughts on the cost of delivering these investment schemes? * Do you support the investment? For one scheme or all 3? * Should these be included in Yorkshire Waters final business plan? | |
| **Review of phasing** | SHOW SLIDE 32  As noted previously, Yorkshire Water needs to consider the balance of responsibility amongst current and future customers for paying for investments, as not investing now could mean a higher cost in the future as issues may get worse.  There is a potential option to make additional investments to ‘future proof’ now so that the benefits can be experienced sooner and fewer problems arise in the future. An increase in bills would start sooner, spreading increases across different generations of bill payers.  Alternatively, Yorkshire Water could invest less in ‘future proofing’ now and tackle any future issues as and when they arise. The increase in bills and benefits experienced would start much later (i.e. years down the line) and would cost more to fix.   * What are your thoughts on the phasing of the cost of investment and the impact on your bills? Which would you be happiest to see Yorkshire Water implement? Why? * Which do you think is fairest to future generations of people living in the Yorkshire? | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(VIII) Wrap-up including the post-task** | | **10 mins** |
| **Wrap-up**  **(Guidance section 10)** | In this last part of the discussion, I want us to return to reviewing the plan as a whole.   * Knowing what you do now about the business plan put forward by Yorkshire Water, to what extent do you believe that it represents a credible plan for water management that would be acceptable from the following perspectives:   + Customers (bill-payers)   + Consumers (service users)   + Citizens (those with a social and environmental interest in the region)   + For each perspective:     - What benefits would it bring?     - What concerns would you have? * Before we finish, do you have any other thoughts or remarks about the topics we’ve discussed? * Do you have any questions about what we’ve discussed or anything you’re not quite clear about?   **Before you go, there is a quick survey that we need you to complete.** | |

**Any final questions from the clients/observers**

**Thank & Close**