

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers  
Minutes of Meeting  
20 November 2025  
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Attendees:**

Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
Fiona Morris	Environment Agency
Kursh Siddique	Independent Member
Steve Grebby	Consumer Council for Water

**Apologies:**

James Copeland	National Farmers Union
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**Guests:**

Kirstin Hutchinson	Yorkshire Water
Polly Hardy	Yorkshire Water
Mark Evans	Yorkshire Water
Victoria Dart	Yorkshire Water
Rachel Barnard	Yorkshire Water

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## 1. Minutes

- a) The minutes from the October meeting will be circulated to members for review.

**Action 1:** Members to review the minutes from the October meeting by 12<sup>th</sup> December.

## 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. Remains in progress.*
- c) Actions from July:
  - i. *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. Presented at the November meeting. Complete.*
- d) No meeting in August.
- e) Actions from September:
  - i. *The Company to share the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) with members at a future meeting. Presented at the November meeting. Complete.*
  - ii. *The Company to provide a breakdown of C-MeX negative drivers at the next Affordability & Vulnerability subgroup. Presented at November's A&V meeting. Complete.*
- f) Actions from October:
  - i. *Members to provide any feedback on September's minutes by 31st October. Complete.*
  - ii. *The Company to issue a poll to determine preferences for future meetings. Complete.*
  - iii. *The Company to offer guidance on how the Forum can most effectively advocate for increasing the Company's ambition regarding the ISF/ESF response time target. Open.*
  - iv. *The Company to clarify its ISF/ESF commitments in 2020 and address the apparent non-delivery. Open.*
  - v. *The Company to share the Complaints slide deck. Open.*

- vi. *The Company to return to the Forum with further details on regulatory changes when they are known. **Open.***
- g) New actions from November:
  - i. **Action 1:** *Members to review the minutes from the October meeting by 12th December. **Open.***
  - ii. **Action 2:** *The Company to share link to published Water Company Performance Report. **Open.***
  - iii. **Action 3:** *The Company to update the Forum about its ongoing efforts to manage customer engagement as water resource levels recover at varying rates throughout the region. **Open.***

### **3. Update from the private members session**

- a) The Chair provided an update on the recent publication from Ofwat concerning consumer involvement in water companies' decision-making.
- b) Points highlighted by the Chair included
  - i. Ensuring the views and preferences of customers are included continuously and not just at select points in an Asset Management Period (AMP).
  - ii. Companies must involve consumers in decisions which are likely to have a material impact on them.
  - iii. Operational planning incorporates customers' feedback on their experiences.
- c) The Chair suggested that consumer representatives, like the Forum, may handle areas where consumer input requires substantial background knowledge or preparation.
- d) It was agreed that particular consideration should be given to these requirements when establishing future terms of reference for the Forum.

### **4. Update from the Affordability and Vulnerability Subgroup**

- a) The subgroup Chair provided an update from the recent Affordability and Vulnerability subgroup meeting.
- b) The subgroup Chair stated that the company is meeting Social Tariff targets and other support schemes are performing well, but emphasised that support levels should also be evaluated to ensure effectiveness. They also conveyed the Company's intention to evaluate the impact on customers, now that the scheme has been in operation for over six months.
- c) The subgroup Chair relayed an update on the National Social Tariff noting that despite an expectation to have this in place from April onwards, appropriate guidance from Government has not yet been provided. It is now expected that this will instead be implemented in October or April 2027. Consequently, the Company's social tariff will continue until the National Social Tariff is introduced.
- d) The subgroup Chair expressed their support for the Company's innovation in starting an auto-enrolment scheme with councils in Barnsley and the East Riding meaning qualifying customers do not need to apply for financial assistance.
- e) The subgroup Chair commented that Priority Services Register (PSR) reach, PSR checking levels and PSR attempted contacts are all above their targets reflecting a turnaround in performance from several years ago. As a result of more customers than ever needing support, the Company has implemented a

tiered system for bottled water distribution to ensure those with the greatest need are prioritised.

- f) The subgroup Chair shared an update on changes to Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) payments. Some adjustments are straightforward, but others are harder to put into practice. The Chair also pointed out that one unintended consequence is the Company has stopped updating credit reference agencies, which may affect customers who have few other ways to keep their credit file up-to-date and demonstrate their ability to pay.
- g) The subgroup Chair noted that while the update on C-MeX score factors was thorough, it could not separate low scores caused by disaffection with the current state of the water industry, to those caused by poor service. However, since all water companies are similarly affected, comparative performance remains a valid indicator of customer experience. They concluded that the subgroup should continue to monitor C-MeX performance.
- h) One member observed that several specific concerns highlighted by customers when assigning low scores for wastewater have been known for a considerable period. It was suggested that the Company should carefully evaluate its capabilities and timelines before making commitments to continued improvements and changes.

## **5. Business Update**

- a) The Company provided an update regarding a recent organisational restructure. The structure changes from a Water/Wastewater system to Above Ground and Below Ground directorates. Below Ground covers Customer, Distribution and Collection. Above Ground covers Control, Production and Process. Asset management will all sit on one team. This will enable end-to-end process management. Communications and stakeholder management are being combined as a new Corporate Affairs and Partnership directorate.
- b) The Company explained that there continues to be discussion about where accountability for the Forum now sits, whether in Regulation, Customer or Corporate Affairs and Partnership. Once this is resolved, work can continue on Terms of Reference and other Forum developments.
- c) The Company went on to discuss the recent Water Company Performance Report published by Ofwat. The report now assesses performance across the entire AMP instead of yearly, allowing long-term improvements to be seen. While leakage and sewer collapses have improved, challenges remain with water supply interruptions, customer satisfaction, and pollution. Ofwat rated overall performance as mixed, noting that the improvement in performance

seen in 2023/4 was not maintained. Quarterly performance management meetings with regulators are planned in.

**Action 2:** The Company to share link to published Water Company Performance Report.

- d) The Company updated on Water Resources, noting the recent wet weather in the region including Storm Claudia. Overall, reservoirs are close to the expected 80%-full mark, but this is not an even picture across the region with some areas still lower than required at this time of year. Aquifers and groundwater levels in the east of the region are yet to recover.
- e) The Company noted the difficulty of urging customers to continue to save as some reservoirs have overflow from recent heavy rain.
- f) The Company remains in talks with the EA about ending drought restrictions, while emphasising the ongoing need to conserve water.
- g) A member enquired about the possibility of removing restrictions in certain areas while keeping them in place in the eastern part of the region. The Company explained that restrictions are managed at the Water Resource Zone level, and, except for some areas of Whitby, the entire region is considered one Zone. However, they mentioned that ongoing discussions with the EA are addressing how to balance environmental concerns, resources, and customer needs.
- h) Members talked about strategies to engage customers, such as using straightforward messages about recovery times and the region's interconnectedness. However, they acknowledged that these messages are often overlooked because they lack dramatic appeal.
- i) The impact of freeze/thaw events during winter on leakage were also noted.

**Action 3:** The Company to update the Forum about its ongoing efforts to manage customer engagement as water resource levels recover at varying rates throughout the region.

## **6. EA – 2024 Performance and Changes to EPA Methodology**

- a) The member from the Environment Agency (EA) presented the 2024 Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) and commented on 2025 performance indicators.

- b) They highlighted the Company's performance in terms of total pollution incidents and serious pollution incidents, comparing performance since 2016. The performance for self-reporting of incidents was also noted.
- c) It was noted that the Company's change in incident attendance and inspections has meant that the year to date figure is substantially up on 2024 performance, which was noted as positive and reflective of a change in culture and behaviours.
- d) It was observed that the Company's revised approach to incident attendance and inspections has resulted in a significant year-to-date increase in self-reporting compared to 2024 performance. This improvement demonstrates a positive shift in organisational behaviours.
- e) The member for the EA noted that there was only one 4 star company across the sector last year, and one 1 star company. Other companies all achieved 2 star ratings.
- f) The member for the EA highlighted changes in the pollution reporting from January 2026 for all water companies.
- g) Changes in the methodology of the EA's reporting were also detailed, including a new 5 point rating system.
- h) The Company and Forum members discussed preparation for the changes and the potential impacts on consumer understanding.
- i) The phosphorus removal metrics was discussed in further detail with the Company commenting that this is measured in Length of River Improved (LORI) and Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) performance assessment.
- j) A member asked if the metrics would be contextualised by reference to named storms or other extreme weather. The representative from the EA responded that since pollution incidents related to named storms have been included for the past two or three years no impact on measuring incidents is expected.
- k) The impact of changes around third party action resulting in incidents was discussed, with the conclusion that it is challenging to determine how much these changes will actually affect the number of incidents.

## **7. Pollution Incident Reduction Plan 2025 (PIRP)**

- a) The Company delivered an overview of the PIRP focussing on performance over the initial 6 -12 month period. The Company noted that despite facing some challenges, steps have been made in strengthening operational response and improving environmental resilience.

- b) Earlier this year, the Company identified pollution risks at small treatment works serving under 200 people, known as descriptive works. To assess asset conditions, inspect outfalls, and survey watercourses, over 300 site visits were conducted. This identified some immediate risks, a silver incident was initiated and targeted action was taken to resolve the issues.
- c) While these efforts provided valuable insights and addressed urgent concerns, they also highlighted the need for a more comprehensive strategy. Pollution levels remained above the Company's target, indicating that challenges at descriptive works made up only a segment of the broader issue. In response, the Pollution Recovery Plan was broadened from an asset-specific approach to a more strategic, system-wide framework.
- d) The Company detailed the activities which span 4 areas: Networks, Sewage Pumping Stations (SPS) and Rising Mains, Sewage Treatment and Descriptive Works.
- e) The Company then gave an overview of the ongoing PIRP including
  - i. Increasing the suite of mitigation equipment and vehicles available when attending network incidents
  - ii. Conducting a power resilience assessment of the highest-risk Sewage Pumping stations (SPS) and Sewage Treatment Works (STW), and using an AI tool to evaluate storm resilience more broadly.
  - iii. Activated Sludge Plant (ASP) funding released for standardisation at 55 sites.
  - iv. Refurbishment of 11 Inlet Works.
  - v. Over 2300 monitors have been installed (as at end October 2025) with the programme target of 7312 installations by the end of the financial year, improving operational intelligence.
  - vi. 66 rising mains have been surveyed with work now in plan for full intrusive investigations and remedial work.
  - vii. Practical Pollution Response training for Frontline staff is underway with plans in place to allow for 95% delivery by the end of the financial year.
  - viii. A dedicated route cause analysis team has been established in River Health.
- f) The Company pointed out that the PIRP is a dynamic plan, designed to adapt to evolving risks, covering 3 themes: Asset Health, Operational Intelligence and Operational Effectiveness. It is tracked daily, and reviewed weekly.
- g) The plan is also being refined from the outcome of the Water Industry Regulation Incidents (WIRI) meeting to ensure the Company are prepared for any changes.

- h) A member asked whether the PIRP was able to accommodate the changing standards detailed earlier in the meeting by the EA. The Company replied that the PIRP will adapt, driven by data and the requirements from regulators.
- i) In response to a member's question, the Company explained that the longer term initiatives are planned to be delivered throughout the five-year period, with some being delivered in year 1. The Company has prioritised the initiatives with greatest impact on performance. Performance will be monitored and reported.
- j) The Chair asked when performance improvements would be visible. The Company replied that a drop in run rate since April/May shows progress and stability, though a resolution date is hard to predict as data and risks are still being tracked. Regular meetings are held, including with the EA, to align plans for the new year. While some risks persist, the Company remains focused on improving pollution and environmental performance to be ready for future changes.

#### **8. AOB**

- a) The Company reminded members of the upcoming Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say events.

## Actions tracker –

### November 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	Members to review the minutes from the October meeting by 12 <sup>th</sup> December.	Open
2	The Company to share link to published Water Company Performance Report.	Open
3	The Company to update the Forum about its ongoing efforts to manage customer engagement as water resource levels recover at varying rates throughout the region.	Open

### October 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
1	Members to provide any feedback on September's minutes by 31 <sup>st</sup> October.	Complete
2	The Company to issue a poll to determine preferences for future meetings.	Complete
3	The Company to offer guidance on how the Forum can most effectively advocate for increasing the Company's ambition regarding the ISF/ESF response time target.	Open
4	The Company to clarify its ISF/ESF commitments in 2020 and address the apparent non-delivery.	Open
5	The Company to share the Complaint slide deck.	Open
6	The Company to return to the Forum with further details on regulatory changes when they are known.	Open

### September 2025

Ref.	Action	Status
3	The Company to share the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) with members at a future meeting.	Complete
4	The Company to provide a breakdown of C-MeX negative drivers at the next Affordability & Vulnerability subgroup.	Complete

### **August 2025**

No meeting in August.

### **July 2025**

Ref.	Action	Status
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

### **June 2025**

All actions completed.

### **May 2025**

All actions completed.

### **April 2025**

All actions completed.

### **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