

Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers
Minutes of Meeting
23 April 2020
Teams call

Attendees:

Andrea Cook	Chair
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Pam Warhurst	Pennine Prospects
Melissa Lockwood	Environmental Agency
Janine Shackleton	Consumer Council for Water (CCW)
Tom Keatley	Natural England (in part)
Wendy Kimpton	Yorkshire Water
Sumayya Mahmood	Yorkshire Water
Gemma Hanson	Yorkshire Water (in part)
Amanda Crossfield	Yorkshire Water (in part)

Apologies:

James Copeland	National Farmers Union
Alistair Maltby	Rivers Trust
Kirstin Hutchinson	Yorkshire Water

1) Welcome

- a) Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

2) Minutes and actions of the last meeting

- a) Minutes from the last meeting were agreed.
- b) Current outstanding actions from the last meeting were discussed:

Action 3: Ongoing, how engagement due to Covid-19 and lockdown measures has been affected
Action 6: Ongoing
Action 9: Ongoing

3) PR19 – CMA update

- a) The business has submitted its Statement of Case to Ofwat, with a note about the current Covid-19 pandemic. Main aspects of the statement include the efficiency of the company; looking after its assets and working hard to provide a service required by customers, which is reflected in the final business plan.

As well as the business submitting their Statement of Case, as above, the company has also given a first presentation to the CMA, held via Skype conference call due to current Covid-19 restrictions. The presentation was delivered by several colleagues in the business, including the CEO.

A virtual site visit will be held with the CMA in early June. There has been a call for third party submissions by 3 May 2020. Several third parties have been contacted, including the Forum. The Forum needs to consider the views of CCW and EA and how these link to Forum submissions. .

Full completion of the CMA process is expected by December 2020.

4) Working with others performance commitment (PC)

- a) The working with others PC is the number of solutions (projects) delivered through working with multiple agencies, organisations or individuals. The target is to deliver three per year and four in the last year of the AMP. The company advised this is a reward PC only.

The company provided a brief overview of what counts as an intervention, such as a joint delivery of a project, investigations and feasibility studies, and contributions in kind. Those that don't count are Yorkshire Water research and development activity, 'business as usual' and repair and maintenance work.

The purpose of the PC is to drive cultural change within the organisation and encourage partnership working.

11 projects have currently been delivered against a target of 4 for 2019/20. The company has contributed £2.2m, across 25 different partners. The company discussed an important multiyear project which they noted is a first for a water company, the Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum, which provides strategic coordination to map and treat invasive species across Yorkshire.

The company continued to give an overall update regarding the remaining 10 projects, outlining the purpose of each, the business contribution and the total year cost.

Project benefits were outlined to the Forum. One scheme presented to members was the planting of 102,000 trees to prevent downstream flood risk.

The Forum queried two projects, where the company has financially contributed near to the full cost. The company advised that some project or partner contributions are in staff time or other resources, not necessarily financial.

The Forum asked if there is a reason why recreational use of landscape was not included, the company advised the woodland heritage project is use of landscape, which is one of this year's 11 projects. The company advised the Forum that these are just the 2019/20 results and there are four years' worth of projects, which do include landscape projects and others which have specifically focussed on recreation.

The Forum queried these other projects, the Company advised it is captured by attending the Forum yearly, and it is also in the end of year annual performance report (APR). The Forum noted there is no ability to look back at previous years, side by side, which would be an opportunity for the company to showcase their work.

Action 1: Company to review year on year performance of WWO PC

- b) The company proceeded by explaining how the PC does generate a reward, which it intends to reinvest in the working with others (WVO) PC. It advised it is exploring if, and how, this expenditure could support third parties who have struggled due to Covid-19. It advised it currently has a list of organisations who can make a bid (those who have helped the business earn the reward, as well as more ethnic minority groups). The business advised it will keep the Forum up to date with this.

The Forum advised it would like input on the bidding criteria and process.

Action 2: Company to send bidding criteria to the Forum.

The Forum queried the procurement process, and the difficulty with smaller organisations joining as partners. The business advised it is working to 'smooth' this process.

- c) The WVO PC continues into AMP7. The eligibility criteria for which projects would count towards this OC in AMP7 were provided to the Forum. Three main areas of partnerships are planned; flooding partnerships, raw water quality partnerships and environmental quality partnerships. The projects within each of these were briefly discussed with Forum members.

Action 3: Company to discuss land and property and environmental partnerships and feed back to the Forum

5) Customer complaint

- a) Update to be provided offline.

6) Terms of reference review

- a) Amended version will be sent to Forum members for review and sign off.

Action 4: ToR to be sent to Forum members for sign off.

7) AOB

- a) The company provided an update regarding Covid-19 and advised Forum members it has a strong incident governance, linked to the national and regional response. This is linked from Water UK into Defra and also working relationships with councils. The company's crisis management team meet daily, alongside a series of incident management teams who manage the day to day running of the business.
- b) The company reported stable performance across the business and noted the Covid-19 related absence rate is now at 4% from an original figure of 8% at the start. Customer-facing activities are performing well. The company advised that it locked down a week before the official government lockdown, which it believed has helped towards the sickness rate, alongside robust processes within business.

Two colleagues have been hospitalised due to Covid-19 but are reported to currently be doing well. There is support in place for colleagues to assist with financial hardship. The company have made a commitment that no colleague will be harmed financially if they become ill and has also committed to no colleagues being furloughed.

- c) Social media activity is ongoing, informing customers that some colleagues are key workers, therefore they can expect to see operations in their local area. Call centres are operating, with some colleagues working from home. Billing lines were originally closed to focus on operational matters and information was available online to advise why the business have made this decision, a form was available for customers if they needed to contact the business with a bill related query. Billing lines have now reopened.

The company stated some customers had requested a one-month payment holiday, the business has responded by offering a 3-month holiday, so far customers are generally requesting a month. It was noted that the company is receiving 1300 calls a day about this.

The company proceeded to discuss ongoing work to offer payment holidays to retail market customers.

- d) In terms of performance, the business runs a red, amber and green status review across key services. Service is provided to customers as needed, with no status in red currently.

Impact is expected on performance commitments and the capital programme. The company is logging all of its decisions and the new task for the regulation team is to plot performance against planned performance to identify where Covid-19 has affected the plan. Two communications have been received from Ofwat, one letter acknowledging the Covid-19 position, however, Ofwat cannot say what the impact will be but will review after the event. Communications are ongoing to support the household retail market. There is pressure on non-household retailers due to businesses closing, with some reported to have closed due to bankruptcy. Ofwat has asked wholesalers to provide liquidity to retailers and to accept reduced payments to retailers for a period of time.

- e) In conclusion, operating under lockdown is going as well as can be expected, with colleagues and customers supported. The company advised there are no PPE concerns, and extra PPE the company had available has been sent to two hospitals in the region. The company is trying to keep social media activity positive, including sending activity kits for children at home, seed kits to residential homes, and there has been a demand from customers to stream pictures from the reservoirs.

Next meeting

18 June 2020 – teams call

Actions

Summary of actions: 14 June 2018

No	Action	Comment
4	<p>Company to project the level of investment and timescales to display how discolouration will be reviewed to help the Forum understand the plan and resources.</p> <p>Post meeting update 06/06/2019: To be reviewed when received Final Determination (FD).</p>	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 13 December 2018

No	Action	Comment
3	<p>Company to consult the Forum on the risk analysis regarding pollution and ISF alongside the EA and CCW (in 3 months' time).</p>	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 24 July 2019

5	<p>Company to circulate the result from the blockages campaign.</p>	
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Summary of actions: 20 August 2019

4	<p>Company will send a communication regarding totex and bill impacts.</p>	
6	<p>Company to set up a meeting with a number of Forum members to discuss initiatives, speed and products of National Trust.</p>	Ongoing

Summary of actions: 18 September 2019

2	<p>Company to share Economic Insight paper with Forum members</p>	
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Summary of actions: 13 November 2019

6	<p>Forum member to work with the Company to review and update webpage as discussed</p>	Ongoing
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Summary of actions: 13 December 2019

1	Forum members to review and update their personal profiles for the website.	Ongoing
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Summary of actions: 19 March 2020

1	Company to circulate a copy of the customer complaint letter to the Forum chair Post meeting update Copies of the letter to the customer and CCW sent to the Forum chair	Complete
2	Company to provide a quarterly update on complaints to be provided to the Forum Post meeting update Added to the forward agenda	Complete
3	Company to assess setting up specific engagement Forum regarding land strategy	
4	Company to circulate CMA referral timetable Post meeting update Sent to the Forum on 6 April 2020	Complete
5	Company to circulate statement of case for information Post meeting update Sent to Forum members on 6 April 2020	Complete
6	Company to provide a process for the steps between Company and Forum in the management, review and assurance of the PCs	
7	Colleagues to provide written additions to the chair by 1 April	Complete
8	Company to liaise with the Markets team and feedback to the Forum Post meeting update Update sent to the Forum on 01.04.2020	Complete
9	Company to investigate river pollution Post meeting update Yorkshire Water cleared the debris from the River Ouse on 14 and 15 April 2020, investigation on going into reported debris in the River Aire	

Summary of actions: 23 April 2020

1	<u>Company</u> to review year on year performance of WWO PC and to think about how it can present this to the Forum	
2	<u>Company</u> to send bidding criteria to the Forum.	
3	<u>Company</u> to discuss land and property and environmental partnerships and feed back to the Forum	
4	<u>Forum chair</u> to send ToR to Forum members for sign off	