# Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say: East Yorkshire event report

November 2025

djs research

YorkshireWater

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# 1 Introduction:
# Report of the Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say event

The Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say event was held on Zoom on 24th November 2025, 6.00-7.30pm. It was chaired by Ali Sims (Research Director) from DJS Research.

**Yorkshire Water were represented by:**

**Nicola Shaw**
**Chief Executive Officer**

**Dave Kaye**
**Director of Water & Wastewater Service Delivery**

**Matthew Pinder**
**Director of Customer, Distribution & Collection**

**Richard Stuart**
**Director of Asset Delivery & Engineering**

A total of 42 customers from across the East Yorkshire region signed up to attend the evening and 16 customers joined the event online.

While questions were invited in advance, additional questions were received during the session via a Q&A box or through live questions. This document provides a thematic response to the questions received. Where questions were similar, a common answer has been provided rather than addressing each question individually.

Additionally, where specific information was requested and Yorkshire Water agreed to provide direct follow up, this has been noted.

The presentation provided is available on Yorkshire Water's website:
https://www.yorkshirewater.com/about-us/your-yorkshire-water-your-say/

## 2 Independent Chair introduction

The Chair confirmed that she had been appointed by Yorkshire Water to act as the independent chair for the Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say (YYWYS) session. The Chair explained that the purpose of the session was to give Yorkshire Water customers and stakeholders the opportunity to hear directly from Yorkshire Water's Chief Executive Officer, Nicola Shaw, on the company's recent performance and future plans, and to allow customers to pose questions related to Yorkshire Water and the issues important to them.

The Chair reassured the audience that every single question that has been submitted in advance, during, or very shortly after the online session, would receive an answer from Yorkshire Water and would be included in the official record of the meeting.

## 3 Yorkshire Water presentation

Nicola Shaw, CEO of Yorkshire Water, opened the session by providing an update on how Yorkshire Water has been managing the ongoing drought and its overall performance. She explained that Yorkshire Water are six months into a five-year planning cycle which includes £8.3 billion worth of investment between 2025 and 2030. Nicola emphasised Yorkshire Water's plan to achieve a thriving Yorkshire for customers and the environment.

The presentation is available on Yorkshire Water's website:
https://www.yorkshirewater.com/about-us/your-yorkshire-water-your-say/

## 4 Event questions and answers

The Chair outlined the structure of the Q&A session, explaining that questions would be addressed by Yorkshire Water directors across the following areas:

- **Clean water and wastewater services:** Dave Kaye handled queries related to water quality, pressure, interruptions, leaks, lead pipes, repairs, consumption, and supply, as well as wastewater, sewage, pollution, and the environment.
- **Investments:** Richard Stuart answered questions relating to company investment and spending.
- **Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers:** Matthew Pinder responded to questions on billing, metering, and affordability.

- **Corporate and company matters:** Nicola Shaw covered working with partners, ownership, structure, profits, dividends, pay, and bonuses.

# 5 Clean water and wastewater Q&A

### Why is the tap water in [my] home so hard, and is it drinkable?

All the water that we supply across Yorkshire is drinkable; we sample it, and we make sure that it meets the drinking water quality regulations. It is harder in the East, because most of the supply there is from boreholes, river, or groundwater supplies. In the West it comes from reservoirs, it's a bit softer, it comes down from the moors. But all the water that we supply across Yorkshire is drinkable and it meets the regulations. If people, think there is a problem with any taste or order, if someone contacts us, we will send someone out to make sure that we sample it at the customer's tap to ensure that it is meeting all the quality standards. But the water on the East Coast is a bit harder than the water in the West because of the way that it's cut from the source.

### Why is the quality of the water so poor in Wetwang? Is it a different issue in Wetwang compared to Hull? (Customer having to use a filter)

I [Dave Kaye] don't know whether we're talking about quality as in taste and odour, which I'm presuming it is. She shouldn't have to use a filter. It's difficult because this is one case; if we get a number of cases reported to us, we go out immediately, we sample the network across a large-ish area, and we deal with it if there is a problem. If it's an individual issue, it could be something to do with supply pipes, but until we've had a look at it and done a sample on it, it's difficult to answer. So, if we can get some details we will send someone out to look at this immediately.

It's worth saying that the Drinking Water Inspectorate requires to keep very close tabs on water quality and also, taste and odour issues with water. Wetwang is not a million miles away from one of our biggest projects from the last 5 years, which was specifically to improve water taste, something we've just brought online at the end of October.

### In respect to “we charge you to take away and treat 95% of the water you use on behalf of Severn Trent”. Can you please confirm that 100% of the water I have been charged for the treatment of has been treated?

All the water that goes out into the distribution network has been treated and is fit for consumption, so there are no issues with any of the water quality that we send out of any of our treatment works into the distribution network, I can assure the customer that it is clean, potable, wholesome drinking water. The 95% comment in the question is about wastewater treatment, and that is because there's a nominal deduction for water that goes into a house but doesn't come back out because it's been used in the garden, or to water plants, or for cooking, etc. So that's a nominal deduction from the volume calculation.

**As the population across Yorkshire has increased, why have no new reservoirs been created?**

Every 5 years, we do our Water Resource Management Plan [WRMP], where we look at ensuring there's enough to supply all customers. Last time we looked, we needed new boreholes and new service reservoirs. We are building 3 new boreholes, and we have a number of new service reservoirs. Now we have to challenge our assumptions [laid out in the last WRMP] because we had droughts in 2022, and in 2025. They were historically a 1 in 25-year event and we recognise that climate is changing.

We also have data centres across Yorkshire, which are very, very water hungry. We will assess if any additional reservoirs are needed, or if current reservoirs can be expanded. Building a reservoir is complex, and extremely expensive. The one that is being built in the South of England is costing £6.9 billion, and that's just to build, they've got a very extensive planning process. Reservoirs also have an impact on the environment and on local communities as well. Everybody wants a reservoir but not near where they live. We tried to expand a reservoir in the Derwent Valley several years ago, but we weren't able to do that because of the number of planning objections that we faced. The last reservoir that we built in Yorkshire was Grimwith in 1983, so it's 40 years since we built a reservoir. The population is growing, and we are making sure we can supply water from less costly sources, which is the boreholes and the groundwater supplies. We need to assess if we need to expand or build a new reservoir as part of our Water Resource Management Plan going forward.

**I'm concerned about the high consumption of water by data centres. Yorkshire Water has responded to Microsoft's planning application for a data centre at Stoughton, that it would take 2 years to supply the requested 100 litres per second. Could you tell us how many residential customers' water needs are met by 100 litres per second?**

It would be about 30,000 residential customers for 100 litres per second. At the moment everything that we supply to all businesses and all data centres is wholesome, clean, potable drinking water, which is the best standard in the world. Over 99.97% of UK drinking water samples pass safety and quality tests. So, we are supplying great quality drinking water to these places, which could use what we call grey water. So it's water that hasn't come through the treatment centres to be drunk by individuals, but it's of a quality enough to service the needs for the data centre that doesn't need as much work on cleaning and such forth; so we're working to see how we can go about supplying that level of water, which doesn't impact on customers and their drinking water.

**Is it because of the housing expansions that our reservoirs are unable to keep up with demand?**

No, it's because we had the longest dry period and the warmest summer on record. We had extremely high demand that's driven the reservoir levels down, but now they are recharging. Quite a few people will ask, why are we affected so badly when foreign hot countries, aren't impacted? The answer to that one is that quite a lot of the water supplied in hot countries, Spain, Turkey, Greece, is done by desalination. Desalination is very energy intensive, it's very costly, it creates a brine that needs careful disposal, and it's uneconomic. The UK's drinking water, Yorkshire Water, is the best water in the world, but the UK's drinking water in general, is at 99.97% - it is exceptionally good. That can't be said about those countries. There are only 10 countries in the world where water is life-sustaining, and the UK is the biggest one of those. We have looked at desalination it would be very expensive and I [Dave Kaye] go back to what we said before around increasing the groundwater supply. So, it's not because of the housing, it is because of the climate, and it's the climate that we need to look at as part of our water resource management going forwards.

**What are Yorkshire Water planning to do if drought continues into next year? Are we likely to have a hosepipe ban again next year?**

Our reservoir levels now are at 80%, but the Hull aquifer is 16% below where it would be. If you imagine Yorkshire as a ball and cut it in half, on the left-hand side it's all reservoir supply, 44% of Yorkshire's water is supplied by reservoir. On the right-hand side, which includes the East Riding, it's 33% river abstraction and 23% borehole abstraction. So, the reservoirs are filling, the rivers are doing okay, but the boreholes and the aquifers and everything else, that's a bit low. The Environment Agency still regard us as being in drought, despite the heavy rain that we've had and the fact we've got the river levels up. We need to make sure that when we do lift the hosepipe restrictions, we don't see problems reoccurring, because we can model things going forwards and we don't want to see problems reoccurring. I [Dave Kaye] don't think our customers would thank us if tomorrow we took off the hose pipe restrictions, and then next summer we put them back on again, we'd just be described as idiots. So, we've got to model it going forward to make sure that we can supply them.

I can't say what the weather's going to be like in June or July next year, but we model on previous occasions. Are we going to have a hosepipe ban next year? I honestly don't know. It started in February. February is normally very wet in the UK. January was wet, February was dry, and the next 7 months after February were all dry, which is why we ended up with the hosepipe restrictions. If we have a wet winter through to February, March, then we should not have any hosepipe restrictions next year; but I can't legislate that, we might be at 45 degrees every day for 3 months, in which case that's going to have a big impact on water resources. I'm trying to give a confident answer without knowing what the weather's going to be like.

**We have a meter fitted by Yorkshire Water. How can I tell how much of my pipework is lead?**

We could send someone round or ask a plumber to look at it. Until we see it, it'd be difficult to tell. We'd have to do a condition survey to see how much of it was lead and give advice on what a good course of action would be. Now, we could do that, or a normal domestic plumber could do that. We could also have a look at whether we've got anything on our records. Sometimes we do have information that might just help inform whether that's the case as well. We can have a look and see what we can do.

**We have lead pipes supplying our domestic water from the mains into our house. It was there before we moved in. Is Yorkshire Water going to replace it at their expense as a matter of health and safety?**

Where the boundary is to the house, everything on the customer side is the customer's responsibility, everything on the other side is our responsibility, and yes, we have a plan in place, looking forward, to replace all lead pipes on our side of the boundary. Unfortunately, if it's on the customer side, unless it is something serious, that impacts on the quality, is the customer's responsibility to maintain the supply pipe into their property. There's quite a lot of useful information on lead pipes and lead pipe replacement on our website. You can pick it up by a quick search, and it gives some good tips on things to do if you are replacing your own, customer side pipes. There's also an application form if you want to ask for your supply pipe to be replaced as well.

**Water leaks in Beverley have been lasting for weeks; they've been seen in the streets around the town.**

In the last 5 years, between 2020 and 2025, we reduced our leakage by 15%. Now, we accept leakage is too high and we are working extremely hard on trying to drive that down. We are one of the best performers in the industry. In the next 5 years, we aim to reduce by 12%, and we are on target for that. We want to halve leakage by 2050. We've fixed 13,000 leaks and we've done it faster as we've got more people focusing on it. We've put a lot of acoustic sensors in the ground and now have additional teams. We're working on the mains renewals, and we've got pressure management, which all helps leakage, but we get the fact that when people see it, it's not good. We have to prioritise the leaks; we will prioritise on how big it is, whether it's visual and impacting on, say, a city centre, a town centre, something like that. If there's a choice, we will do the big ones at the front of the queue and then fix the others afterwards. We're doing things 36% faster. We've also got issues at times where we want to do the work immediately but we've got to get permission from the local authority, and sometimes the local authorities say they don't want any disruption then; so we might find a leak on a Monday, they might say to us 'you can only do it on the weekend, Saturday or Sunday, or you've got to do it out of hours in the evenings' so we've got to plan that in. So, whilst it looks as if we're not fixing it as quickly as possible, we try to respond to

every leak as quickly as we possibly can, but we understand there's been a lot of leaks, particularly in the dry weather, and it impacts on customers.

**Yorkshire Water appeared to be closing roads as the default for roadside repairs near my village. Northern Powergrid use temporary lights and rarely close the road. Why do you choose the closure option when it's so inconvenient for drivers in villages with limited optional routes?**

Most of our water mains are laid under roads. Now, we try and minimise disruption to any motorists, any users at all. We try and do it with minimum disruption, if we have to close one side of a road, we have to put traffic management in there as part of our permit with all the local authorities. A lot of our mains are laid under road, so we've got to close a carriageway, but we try and minimise the disruption that we've got. Northern Powergrid, I [Dave Kaye] think a lot of the fibre optic cables are a lot more under pavements than they are under the road, so they don't have to take as much room to safeguard their employees; which is why they probably can do more with keeping the road open; but we try and minimise it but have to protect the workforce whilst we're doing it.

I would just emphasise that we look to minimise the disruption caused by any time we do need to go into the road. The only reason we'll do that is either for the safety of other people using the road, or for the safety of our own workers. We have increased the kilometres of new mains in the ground; that comes with a commensurate amount of roadworks and street works and it's something that we're in discussion with the local authorities and the highways authorities on to see how we can do that in a more customer friendly way. So, for those people that are using the roads, how can you make sure that it's really clear what you need to do, that you've got good information, and that we're there for no longer than we need to be? And most of all, that it's safe for everyone involved.

**Will Yorkshire Water be able to fund any rainwater storage over this winter, such as water butts for domestic customers, or rainwater harvesting for businesses that can use rainwater?**

In the new year, we will be offering free water butts. We are doing it in Bridlington and Scarborough, but Scarborough's technically North Yorkshire, Bridlington's in the East Riding. So, in the new year we will be offering customers free water butts to try and take water out of the system, and that will eventually end up in the bathing waters.

It's worth saying is that we've got quite a significant investment over the course of the next 5 years into storm overflow discharge reduction, because we want to reduce the number of times our storm overflows operate into the rivers or into the sea. There's a number of different ways that we do that. Our sewerage system can become overwhelmed in heavy rain and those storm overflows act as a sort of relief valve to stop the system backing up and flooding areas that don't want to be flooded. One of

the main ways that we do that is by creating greater storage in the network. Rather than discharging into the river or into the sea, they can fill up these tanks, and then we can pump those back to the wastewater treatment works. But we also are trying to find as many opportunities as we can to actually separate out surface water, rainwater and surface runoff, out of the combined sewer system so that we address the problem at source, and don't have to build huge tanks that need to fill up and be pumped out. Water butts is a great way of taking the spike off storm runoff, but some something else we've found quite successful over the course of the last couple of years is we can work with schools, for example, and where they're near a storm overflow we can put planters in place that not only help us by separating rainwater, but also brighten up the school a bit. Also, it's great when customers can do their bit by having and using a water butt. It's important with water butts that they keep getting regularly emptied so that they can fill up when there's a storm. So, there's a lot of things happening in that space, and we're trying to find new and creative ways of separating stormwater out from our system.

Over the summer, we've actively worked with businesses, even though we don't supply them directly with water (they have another business provider), we've been working with them to think about how they can conserve water. We don't invest in water conservation measures for them, that would go against the nature of the market, but we do talk to them about how they can conserve water and save money. We're also looking at ways where we could supply them with non-potable water, depending on what they're using the water for. If they're using it for cooling, for example, it's possible that they might be able to use effluent from our wastewater treatment works.

And we are talking to customers about that, so that we can, as far as possible, reuse water wherever we can.

## 6 Investments Q&A

**What precautions have been arranged to protect infrastructure from war or terrorist attacks. Answers to include protection of recent or planned drilling for gas or fracking.**

A number of our sites are critical national infrastructure. All our sites come under the Water UK security standards. We have physical and electronic security at sites, and we have full mitigation in place. We also work with the authorities to ensure that response times, if there are any issues, are very quick. So, most of our infrastructure is locked down, or under lock and key. We've had audits, and we are in a very good place for how we manage our infrastructure for protection of terrorism and such forth.

The fracking aspect, we've had a number of people that have raised fracking, particularly from East Yorkshire. There's one on the go at the moment, Foxholes. We've

asked for more information on how to protect our groundwater sources. If we look at the Fordon 1 which we objected to in 2013, that involved hydrocarbons and storage, which could have caused a pollution if there'd been a breach. The Foxholes one is more focused on gas reserves and there's no hydrocarbon storage, so it's a lower risk, and the designs have been changed to minimise risk to groundwater quality, but that's not taking it lightly. We accept that people are, and we've got to be assured ourselves that there is nothing that's going to impact on any of our groundwater sources so we're still seeking information on that.

### Is the infrastructure sufficient to serve the population, in particular, with climate changes?

We think a lot about the future demand on our services, each time we submit a business plan to the regulator we look 25 years into the future. We have a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, we have a Water Resources Management Plan and both of those look at a minimum of 25 years to say what is changing, and what is the demand likely to be over that time. We look at a number of scenarios and those scenarios then inform our investment plans, so we put together our plans for what we're going to build to make sure that we can continue to meet that demand into the future.

Part of that is to do with being resilient to climate change which is something we're all finding our way with. So obviously availability of water resources is something that's significantly potentially affected by climate change, so we do include climate scenarios in our long-term planning. The other big thing is growth, the government has a huge agenda on growth at the moment, in particular house building. We have a lot of work on the ground at the moment. We're doing a lot of investment, particularly in water mains, but also in our sewerage network to enable growth. We try and work closely with developers, we try and get as much advance notice of where new developments are going to take place, so that we can get the infrastructure in on time and help to unlock that growth across Yorkshire.

### Can Hornsea Wastewater Treatment Plant cope with 700 houses being built at the moment?

We have recently upgraded Hornsea Wastewater Treatment Works. When we do our upgrades, our significant investments in these facilities, we look at not only sizing them for the demand of today, but future demand. Because they tend to be big investments, we want to make sure that we're sizing them right, so we think about the life of the asset that we're building. We're also investing in the next 5 years in Atwick, just up the coast from Hornsea, and so that's a big project to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the final effluent to improve water quality in that way.

Just down from Hornsea in Mappleton we've been reducing the number of discharges from our storm overflows. We finished in February. That was a lot of surface water

separation - we separated out the two drainage systems, which is the best way of doing it. We have increased capacity at Hornsea with that upgrade.

## 7 Bills and affordability Q&A

**Open retail market was introduced for non-household customers. This change allowed businesses in England to choose their water suppliers aimed at fostering competition and improving service quality. When are domestic customers going to enjoy the same benefit?**

I [Matthew Pinder] am not aware there is anything on the horizon in terms of the same for domestic customers.

On the domestic side, we've got a good understanding of what parts of our service we do need to get better at. There are three things that we generally get as feedback.

1) How quickly we get there.
2) When we get there, how well we respond and fix that first time.
3) How well we communicate to customers throughout any experience they have.

Plans that we've been working on are making sure we've got enough people to respond to the right things, that people are capable of fixing it, and we've invested a lot recently in our case management - teams in our central customer service to make sure that we're keeping customers (no matter what they get in touch with us about), updated throughout that experience that they have with us.

**Why does Yorkshire Water think it's acceptable to allow my garden to pump with sewerage since, 2014? Why do Yorkshire Water think this is acceptable for a single mum?**

It's not acceptable. I (Matthew Pinder) don't know the exact details, so I can't give a specific answer, but I'd personally like to look into that and just see what's going on and why that's been going on for so long.

**I noticed my bills have increased a lot recently. Please tell me how you inform customers about price increases, as I do not recall being forewarned.**

Bills have gone up, on average, about 29% across Yorkshire this year and there was lots of different information that was pre-circulated around what was coming.

We worked really hard to try and make sure people were aware, and there was a huge amount of publicity about the water bills across the country going up, because 29% for us is pretty similar to all water companies across the country, and there was significant coverage of that discussion in the media, on social media, in newspapers and on any news broadcast you saw for quite a long time. It's really sometimes quite

hard to get people to think, what does that mean for me? Maybe we could do more in that regard, but there is a lot out there.

We also had a lot of consultation with our customers and with local authorities and other stakeholders to make sure they understood what the plans were and why we were doing them. 80% of the customers we consulted were positive about the plans, even where they understood that there were going to be serious bill increases, because they could see why we needed to do the work.

I'm [Nicola Shaw] sorry that in [this] case, it wasn't clear, we do try and make sure it is clear to people. We try and set that out in letters around our bills. If you're not digitally signed up to us, it would be better for you to get a digital bill and digital communication; that is another good way of making sure that we can tell you things directly. So, if you're not signed up digitally, please do. You can just go online and change your bill to a digital bill, and sign up for marketing and other communications, and then we can send you more information, so please do take that opportunity if you can.

## 8 Corporate matters Q&A

### Why have bills risen when you are fighting leaks, yet still finding ways to pay the CEO a substantial bonus?

Bills have risen in part because we need to do so much work. We're all aware of what hasn't been invested in this network for a long time. Bills have been held down in real terms, so they're no different now than they were 10 years ago and that has led to a lack of investment over time in the network, and when you don't invest in infrastructure, like when you don't invest in a house, or you don't invest in any kind of building, it deteriorates over time. With infrastructure being very poor it means it deteriorates and the quality of the performance of the infrastructure stays low for a long time. It's a well-known phenomenon in infrastructure called the long bath. It takes you a long time to go down, then stay down in your performance for a while before the investments that you make really help performance come up, and that's what we have been seeing on our network. I [Nicola Shaw] am very pleased that people supported our business plan, because it's obviously a lot of money to spend, and we're really grateful for the support we got from customers. We consulted really hard in developing it, and more than 80% of our customers supported the plan that we put in place. So that's what we're doing.

Why is it that we can pay bonuses or pay large sums of money to people leading these businesses? Well, the amount of money that I get paid is decided by our board. I haven't actually had a bonus, but they have paid me large amounts of money, and I recognise that people have been upset by that. The view absolutely is that we need

to have people here who will stick this course and will help us to deliver overall. Half of what I've got paid is paid purely by our shareholders, it's not paid out of income from customers, it's paid by the shareholders. But I understand that there is a huge strength of feeling about that.

**How do you justify your position when not providing the service you are handsomely paid for?**

I [Nicola Shaw] joined Yorkshire Water in 2022, and performance was not good then; we have been working hard to improve things, but there's a lot to do. I justify the position on the basis of, I'm here to work with the team and to deliver for you, and as I explained, when you have poor performance in infrastructure, it takes a while to get it to move. It was only this year that we received the extra money that we believe we need to invest in the network and the services that we're providing to people. It should be that all of the investment we're making through the funding that you're providing will make a difference. I owe it to the team, and I owe it to you, to see that the work we've done in delivering the plan and getting the plan funded now delivers for Yorkshire. It won't be quick, but I think it needs the kind of focus that we are putting on it now, and I'm very grateful to everybody for the support they've given in terms of paying their bills and we look forward to seeing the benefits coming through in terms of outcomes.

**Money should, for many years past, not have gone to bonus or profit, but been spent on sewage and other pollution to rivers and seas. Why are profits paid when pollution has happened? Bridlington has suffered sewage pollution, and yet bonuses have been paid.**

The general way that the water industry's been set up, like most of the infrastructure sectors in this country, is that we pay, all of us, for the infrastructure that we have and we pay for that to be maintained and operated against certain rules. The rules that were in place have always allowed discharge into rivers at times of lots of water in the system in relation to pollution. The reason for that is that we designed these networks so that the sewage network is not separate, in most cases, from the road runoff, the runoff from other houses, and anything else that isn't coming out of the sewage network; it goes directly into the whole of the sewer system that we have.

We have what are called combined sewers. They take sewers from houses and from buildings, and they take water from the roads and other parts of our built environment. So, when it rains really hard, they get a huge amount more water in them, six times the amount in some cases, and even more than that. The way of making sure that the system isn't overwhelmed is for that to discharge somewhere. It's very dilute if it's sewage at all, very dilute, and it goes out into rivers, or it goes into the sea and that's been the case for many years. What we've realised is that people don't want that to happen anymore. They want the system to be sized that it can deal with that huge

variation. So, we're doing two things; we're first trying to reduce the amount of water that comes in from the roads and isn't from buildings, because then we can handle variation more easily. Secondly, we're building more storage so that we can hold that storm water before, whilst it's raining, and then gradually release it into treatment works so it can be processed before the next storm comes. As we know, in some places, that's more difficult than others. It's been raining a lot over the last few days, and somebody, I think, is talking about how many discharges there have been into the sea this month and that largely is because the amount of water that we're getting from the sky is overwhelming those sewage systems. That's why we're making all these investments.

So how are the investments paid for? They're paid for by a combination of us, through our bills now, and that's about 40% of what the infrastructure costs. New infrastructure that gets built, we pay about 40% upfront. The remaining portion of it gets paid out over about 20-25 years, depending on how long we think that asset will last, so that the people who use that asset over time pay for it later. It's a bit like having a mortgage on your house, you can pay for some of it over the whole of the life of the time that you live in that house. To enable that, we raise debt against the business, which then gets paid down as those bills come in over the next 20-25 years. That's why we have debt. About 70% of how the company is financed with debt, the remaining 30% with equity and equity is expensive, it's what's called 'the gold of the system'. It is more expensive than debt, so that's why we have relatively less of it than we do of debt; but it still requires a return, just if you put your money in the bank, you'd expect a return. And actually, our investors have been getting less over the last 5 years than they might like. They have put more money into the business than they've taken out over the last 5 years. We got £500 million a couple of years ago, which has gone into the business, and we're expecting another £600 million by the end of March 2027, because they recognise that they need to continue to support the business to grow, and improve.

**I think it'd be very useful if you were able to break down what elements of the bill went to what parts of the business. So, for example, fixed costs, debt repayment, actual usage. That would endeavour a little bit more trust.**

We do provide people, and we do, on the bills, show the breakdown of what people are paying goes for different things and we try and make it as simple as possible, because it can get really complicated. We try and make it simplified, standardised for the whole county, but we're always willing to provide more if somebody wants more detail.

**I'm interested to understand what Yorkshire Water's position is on how it intends to tackle debt and reduce it, while simultaneously making attempts to significantly increase capital expenditure. How do you get that balance right?**

Debt will increase over time because we are investing so much.

I'm [Nicola Shaw] not in the world of saying debt in absolute terms is coming down, but we are intending to reduce the gearing over the whole of the five years of this investment period. So, relative to equity, we will have less debt, but the whole thing is growing because of the investments we're making. The goal is for customers to only pay for the proportion of the infrastructure that they use. So, if a piece of infrastructure lasts 100 years, if you're living in your house for 25 years, you'll pay for roughly 25% of that cost and people who are living in it for 75 years will pay for the remainder. So, we try and amortise it over time, and that's why the debt costs are going up.

**What is the target gearing? Because it's currently just over 70%. What are you looking to achieve?**

We haven't sought to have a target. So Ofwat models everything on 55%, but that is not where all of the companies are at all. We haven't set a target. What we're simply trying to do is to make sure that we have a balance that we can maintain, and to reduce gradually.

**Why has Yorkshire Water failed its customers in most aspects? Security of supply, adequate sewage management, and investment.**

It's a combination of issues that has led to the deterioration in the quality of the networks, as I've (Nicola Shaw) been talking about and it's been largely driven off a desire to keep bills as low as possible for as long as possible. I think it just went slightly too far and that's why now we need to make these investments to improve the outcomes.

I think also, attitudes have changed. People don't expect any kind of interruption, and they don't expect any kind of discharge of sewage, even when they really dilute with stormwater into rivers and into the seas. So, there's a level of expectation from customers that's much higher. And the investment we're making at the moment is to try and respond to that, and to seriously improve on the quality of our discharges and the frequency of discharges. So, we're really working to listen to what customers have said.

But it does take a long time and is going to cost a lot of money, and I think it's likely that we'll all want a further conversation across Yorkshire over the next 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, as this programme rolls out, to say 'do we think we're in the right place now? Have we got the right level of protection of the environment for the investment that we're going to have to make?' So, I think it's a conversation that will probably continue for some time.

# 9 Independent Chair closing

The Chair concluded the session by thanking participants for their time and engagement. It was noted that all questions submitted during the session or in advance had been shared with Yorkshire Water, with responses to be included in the official meeting record.

The Chair confirmed that the Yorkshire Water presentation would be published on their website shortly, and the written meeting record, including responses to all questions, would be made available within 14 working days.

# 10 Outstanding questions not answered in the meeting.

Questions were submitted both prior to and during the event through various channels, including advance submissions, the chat function (the Q&A box), and live participation via the hand-raise feature. While many questions were addressed during the session, not all could be answered on the night due to time constraints.

The outstanding questions, along with Yorkshire Water's subsequent responses, are listed below for reference.

| Question area | Question | Answers |
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| **Clean water and wastewater (Hosepipe Ban)** | **Why have we still got a hosepipe ban?** | We know it seems strange having hosepipe restrictions when it is raining, but our reservoir levels need some help getting topped up.<br><br>Reservoir stocks have done well thanks to Storm Claudia and are sitting at 80% capacity. However, our groundwater resources still remain low, so despite the recovery hosepipe restrictions remain in place because stocks are not yet at a sustainable level for the coming year; and if we have a dry winter this could be detrimental to water stocks next year. |

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| **Clean water and wastewater (Water Resources)** | **Why hasn't Yorkshire Water built any new reservoirs?** | When we last reviewed our Water Resources Management Plan a few years ago, we identified that we needed new boreholes and service reservoirs to increase the resilience in our water system. We're now on with building those and we'll have them up and ready in the next few years. Those are short-term measures, and in the longer term we've now reflected that with the rapid effects of climate change we're currently experiencing, we need to challenge the assumptions we've made in our Water Resources Management Plan. With the addition of data centres, (which use huge amounts of water), customer demand increasing, and the increased challenges of climate change, we need to think and plan differently for how we meet the future needs of our customers. One of the options we will be considering is whether additional reservoirs are needed. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (River Water Quality)** | **What are Yorkshire Water doing to improve our water quality?** | Our plan will target the overflows we know are operating more frequently and for longer. We are determined to improve our performance and have in place plans to do this. We've invested £180m to reduce their use and improve water quality in our region's rivers by April this year. This is part of the £800m we've invested in our infrastructure across the region last year. We also have our 2025-2030 plans that have recently been reviewed by Ofwat, which includes an investment of £1.5bn into reducing storm overflows. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Water Resources)** | **How come it seems to be beyond your capability to provide us with all the water we need? If the Spanish can do it in the Canaries (where there's very little rain) then why can't you? We must have had enough rain recently to fill an ocean.** | It is true that other countries cope with much drier and warmer periods of weather than we are currently experiencing in Yorkshire. The current weather is, however, very rare for this part of the world. We've had one of the driest springs on record and the levels of our reservoirs haven't increased since January.<br><br>As part of the water resource planning process, we analyse water supply and demand trends to forecast the current and future water needs for our region – we have been doing this periodically since 1990. If extended periods of massively increased demand, above that currently being seen, were forecast to become more frequent, then we would develop plans to ensure that we could meet the demand forecasts.<br><br>In parts of Europe that regularly experience extended periods of hot dry weather, and increased demand from summer tourism, it is not uncommon for there to be water use restrictions applied. This is typically a reduction in water pressure, but it can also result in hours and days of rolling water supply disruption. Many |

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| | | hotels and domestic properties protect themselves from these water restrictions by installing water storage tanks and pumps.<br><br>With the impacts of climate change, we can expect to see dry springs and summers – with exceptionally hot periods – like we've had this year becoming more common. This is a key consideration for our long-term Water Resources Management Planning process. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (xxx)** | **What are you doing to reduce the chances of future hosepipe bans?** | We do our best to plan for these circumstances, through our Water Resources Management Plan and our Drought Plan. This includes storage in impounding reservoirs and groundwater in aquifers (water-bearing rock or soil). However, we also expect that climate change is going to increase the frequency of periods of hot and dry weather, and this is likely to mean that further investment will be required to maintain resilient supplies into the future. We have a robust Water Resources Management Plan, which sets out how we balance supply and demand in the face of future challenges such as climate change, population growth, etc.<br><br>Our Water Resource Management Plan plans for a certain frequency of restrictions, something we have researched with customers when developing our plan. We plan to have temporary restrictions in place no more than once in every 25 years on average. This doesn't mean that we won't have more than one temporary use ban in any 25-year period, just that if we have an average 25-year period we shouldn't expect more than one ban. In reality, some twenty five-year periods could have more, and some could have none, but over time, this will average out to around one in every 25 years. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Leaks)** | **How much water is lost through leaks compared to consumption? We've had a few leaks in Brough, and it took a while for some to be addressed.** | We treat and deliver approximately 1.2billion litres of water every day to the households and businesses of Yorkshire. We know leaks and bursts happen more than we or our customers would like, however currently, leakage only makes us 17.5% of the water demand overall. |

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| **Clean water and wastewater (Bathing Water Discharges /Quality)** | **Why has the issue of sewage discharge onto Bridlington beaches never been resolved after all these years?** | CSO (combined sewer overflows) are permitted to discharge during storm events. We are now working to a new regulatory framework by reducing these spills across all our bathing assets to 2 spills per bathing season (May-September). Following recent investigations by the EA, it was determined that the most dominant cause of detrimental bathing water quality in Bridlington was seagulls, so we are working as part of the Bathing Water Partnership to address ways in which we can educate visitors and residents to refrain from providing food supplies for the gulls which will encourage them back into their own habitats away from the heavily populated bathing waters. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Pollution)** | **I would like to know why raw sewage is being pumped into the sea at regular intervals at Hornsea and Atwick and when will this stop?** | We completely understand the interest in the operation of our storm overflows and launched an interactive Map. We hope it increases transparency for our customers looking to know more about our operations in their local area, and across the region. https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows/live-map/ |
| **Clean water and wastewater (River Water Quality)** | **Water quality in our rivers and streams.** | We've already made enormous progress to improve the quality of our waterways and in the last five years alone, we've invested more than £800m into river health. This includes £182m aimed at reducing storm overflows by 20% and £575m in reducing phosphorus and other pollutants from entering our rivers. We are embarking on our largest ever investment programme over the next 5 years which will deliver significant improvements to river health. This includes over £1billion being invested to reduce the amount of storm overflow occurrence, deploying additional monitors into rivers and further reductions of phosphorus entering water courses from our wastewater treatment works. We are also working to address other aspects of river health such as removing barriers to fish passage though our Great Yorkshire Rivers programme. |

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| **Clean water and wastewater (Discharges/ Blue Flag)** | **1)Why is effluent still being pumped into the sea at Hornsea?**<br><br>**2) How does this affect our blue flag award?** | Foul and combined sewers transport wastewater to the nearest wastewater treatment works where it is cleaned and safely returned to the environment. Surface water sewers usually drain into a local watercourse.<br><br>We all know rainfall in Yorkshire can be unpredictable, so when our network was designed, storm overflows were installed to act as a relief valve when the network is full. Overflows reduce the pressure on combined sewers and stop the system from backing up and flooding homes and gardens by allowing heavily diluted wastewater to discharge into watercourses after the capacity of our storage has been used up. Most of our storm overflows have preliminary treatment such as screens or storm settlement before they operate.<br><br>Hornsea has excellent bathing waters and has secured its blue flag for 5 years in a row. We work hard to maintain this and during bathing season work with partners at the council to encourage all beach users to look after the beach too. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Pollution)** | **What measures are being taken to address the numerous discharges into bathing waters?** | We are investing heavily in the East Riding to reduce the number of discharges into our bathing waters to 2 per season over the next 10 years. Bathing water quality is complex, with many impacting factors, but we are taking positive steps to play our part in reducing these discharges for the future. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Pollution)** | **Yorkshire Water's continual pollution of the North Sea, with regular discharges into it from Mappleton and Hornsea are unacceptable in a seaside town. Why does this continue to happen and what plans do you have to end this practice for good?** | By 2035 all bathing water impacting CSO's (including Hornsea) will have to meet the Environment Act 2021 regulatory target of no more than 2 discharges per bathing water season (May-September). As part of our 2030-2035 investment plans we will be designing a solution for Hornsea to achieve this. The exact solution has yet to be decided, but we will keep all stakeholders updated on our plans and progress for managing water and stormwater in the East Riding of Yorkshire. |

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| **Clean water and wastewater (Flooding)** | **Localised flooding down Southgate in Cranswick** | Thank you for your question, we are still getting you the right answer and we will update this as soon as we can, we appreciate your patience. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (Rainwater)** | **Conserving rainwater** | Thank you for your question, we are still getting you the right answer and we will update this as soon as we can, we appreciate your patience. |
| **Clean water and wastewater (EDM)** | **Please share (or direct me to) the latest Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data for Hornsea outfalls for 2023, 2024 and year-to-date 2025, and the EA's inspection findings from the past year. What specific compliance actions (if any) are underway or planned?** | All EDM reports are available on our website https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows/event-duration-monitoring/<br><br>Please contact the EA for their reports and findings. |
| **Clean water and wastewater** | **Who are the named senior leads for this issue [line above] within DEFRA, the EA, and Yorkshire Water (job titles and contact emails), so residents can correspond directly and track progress?** | Thank you for your question, we do not give out direct contact details for our staff, but we are still getting you the right answer for where you will be able to contact to track progress and we will update this as soon as we can, we appreciate your patience. |

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| Investments (Sewage Treatment) | **Why are sewage treatment plants not brought up to date to cope with quantities especially with new housing going on around the area?**<br><br>**Why are the improvements taking so long?** | We're making a big investment in Bridlington over the next five years, including major upgrades to our treatment works to improve service and protect the environment.<br><br>While water companies aren't official consultees on housing developments, we work closely with local authorities to stay aligned with their plans and make sure our infrastructure supports the community's needs.<br><br>Some of the changes – like reducing discharges or upgrading treatment works – take time to plan, fund, and deliver. We've completed 142 investment schemes on our storm overflows before April 2025. Monitoring and asset upgrades are underway, and we're targeting measurable reductions in pollution and overflows year by year. |
| Investments (Partner issues) | **Ongoing work in Hook, Goole - delays due to sinking sand which YW was aware of, but contractors not informed.** | Thanks for your comment. If this in reference to our Hook Pastures work, we are aware of the issue and are working closely with our contract partners to be able to commence work again in 2026. |
| Investments (Pumping Station Issue) | **Why has Yorkshire Water built a new SPS (sewage pumping station) to accommodate new builds in Pocklington and not built this colossal SPS on anti-vibrating mountings or any insulation to prevent low frequency vibration in the surrounding properties?** | Thank you for sharing your concerns. All pumping stations are built to limited /eliminate vibrations from the pump sets. If you believe a pumping station is a vibration issue, please contact our customer team so it can be investigated further for you. https://www.yorkshirewater.com/get-in-touch/ |

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| Investments (Pollution) | **Upgrade plan & timeline (Hornsea STW & pumping station): Is there an approved upgrade scheme for Hornsea in the current regulatory period (AMP8, 2025–2030)? What is the scope, funding status, and the start/commissioning dates? If not approved, what steps will you take to require Yorkshire Water to bring forward an urgent scheme?** | In 2025 we recently carried out £1.5m of essential capital maintenance on Hornsea CSO, including replacing the outfall pipe from the pumping station to prevent seawater ingress to the asset and prevent premature discharges and pollution to the environment. Hornsea is currently an excellent bathing water, but we know there is always more to do. By 2035 all bathing water impacting CSO's (including Hornsea) will have to meet the Environment Act 2021 regulatory target of no more than 2 discharges per bathing water season (May-September). As part of our 2030-2035 investment plans we will be designing a solution for Hornsea to achieve this. The exact solution has yet to be decided, but we will keep all stakeholders updated on our plans and progress for managing water and stormwater in Hornsea. |
| Investments (Fracking objections) | **With drought and lack of clean water supply becoming a more pressing issue does it make sense to put the water supply at risk to the whole of East Riding and beyond by not objecting to proposed plan to drill through the aquifer to tap into a gas supply when previous applications were objected to by YW?** | We have reviewed the planning proposal as a non-statutory consultee. We have requested further information on some aspects of the proposal and have asked for some conditions to protect groundwater. At this stage, considering proposed mitigation and pending further information and our conditions being agreed, we consider the residual risk to our groundwater assets is to be low.<br><br>The Fordon 1 application in 2013 sought to investigate potential hydrocarbon resource. Our main concern was the storage of potentially significant volumes of hydrocarbons on site, and the potential to cause groundwater pollution from any breach of storage. The Foxholes development is seeking to investigate potential gas reserves, and as significant hydrocarbon storage is not required, the resultant risk profile is much lower.<br><br>The well design has also changed between the two applications. The well design for the Foxholes application cases out all of the Cretaceous (Chalk) and Jurassic deposits and into the Triassic Mercia Mudstone using multiple casing strings. This minimises the risk of groundwater quality deterioration from mixing of |

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| | | different groundwaters or from leaks from the borehole and thereby increases protection to the Chalk aquifer. |
| Investments (Capacity for New Housing) | **Has DEFRA asked the Environment Agency (EA) and Yorkshire Water to confirm, in writing, that current permitted capacity is adequate for the additional 500 properties [in Hornsea] by the end of -2026? If capacity is not adequate, what interim mitigation (e.g., temporary storage, network optimisation, tankering) will be put in place, and by when?** | For new developments, the local authority and developers are required to consult with Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency to assess whether existing water and wastewater infrastructure can support growth. If capacity is found to be insufficient, Yorkshire Water typically works with stakeholders to agree on interim solutions—such as temporary storage tanks, network optimisation, or tankering—until permanent upgrades are completed. |
| Investments (Capacity for New Housing) | **Will you support the East Riding of Yorkshire Council in applying a Grampian condition or temporary pause on new connections until sufficient capacity is built and proven?** | Yorkshire Water isn't a statutory consultee on housing schemes, but we do ask for conditions to protect our assets where needed. If there are capacity challenges in the network, we may raise concerns. However, we're working hard behind the scenes to avoid local authorities having to impose Grampian conditions by aligning our investment with areas of growth. |

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| **Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Leakage and Bills)** | **Given the amount of leaks, how can you justify the huge price increases this year?** | We understand that leakage can be a frustrating issue for our customers. Our team has been working hard to improve our performance and we're proud to say we've reduced leakage by 15% over the past five years. This puts us among the top performers in the industry, but we're not stopping there. We're continuing to work hard to improve and do better. |
| **Corporate/company matters (CEO Pay)** | **Why does the chief executive earn so much money when you are failing to meet standards?** | We are determined to make improvements to our performance so we can deliver our part in creating a thriving Yorkshire, doing right for our customers and the environment.<br><br>We regularly test our pay levels from all areas of the business against benchmarks across our industry and for similar roles in other industries. We want to pay fairly so we can attract the right people for roles to help us deliver the right outcomes for Yorkshire. The remuneration we pay our colleagues will reflect the challenge of the role and the expertise and experience required to deliver the performance we want to see. |
| **Corporate/company matters (CEO Pay)** | **Why did the CEO feel it necessary to use a "creative" manner to have her bonus paid?** | The pay at Kelda is not a performance related bonus. As part of her CEO role at Yorkshire Water, Nicola Shaw also does some work for the benefit of Yorkshire Water's parent company, Kelda Group, including investor engagement, financial oversight, and management of the Kelda Group, which is recognised by an additional fee paid for by shareholders. We do not believe that work done on investor-related activities should be paid for by Yorkshire Water customers' bills. |
| **Corporate/company matters (CEO Pay)** | **Why does the CEO believe she deserves a bonus considering the poor performance of the company?** | Our CEO, Nicola Shaw, had already made the decision that it would not be appropriate for her to receive an annual bonus this year due to the company's performance on pollution and a recognition that we need to do better for the communities we serve and earn trust. She has also taken the decision to waive her entitlement to an additional bonus that would have vested under our longer-term incentive scheme.<br><br>We are determined to make improvements to our performance so we can deliver our part in creating a thriving Yorkshire, doing right for our customers and the environment. |
| **Corporate/company** | **Bonuses despite poor management** | We are determined to make improvements to our performance so we can deliver our part in creating a thriving Yorkshire, doing right for our customers and the environment. |

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| **matters (CEO Pay)** | | Bonuses are determined by our independent remuneration committee who take into account the robust and varied performance measures of our bonus scheme, including customer service and environmental measures, as well as considering the wider performance of the business in the round. |
| **Corporate/company matters** | **How are Yorkshire Water dealing with residential management companies? Are they aware that some residents are being charged for maintenance of YW land (such as basins)?** | Not all surface water drainage systems are adopted and owned by Yorkshire Water for maintenance; this could be either because the system doesn't meet our adoptable standards or the developer's choice to keep it as private land.<br><br>There are certain things that are mandated for Yorkshire Water to own such as the points at which things such as basins enter into public sewer, however if a development company chooses to keep certain drainage solutions as private land, they will employ residential management companies to carry out the maintenance. |

# Thank you.

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