Your Yorkshire Water, Your Say: South Yorkshire event report

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 for South Yorkshire was held on Zoom on 19th 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 46 customers from across the South Yorkshire region signed up to attend the evening and 6 customers joined the online Customers' reasons for not attending centred on changes in personal circumstances.

While questions were invited in advance, additional questions were received during the session via a chat function, 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

Would you rather have no water than go to the expense to fix it?

No, we want to supply water all the time to everybody. We've invested significantly in leakage, for quite some time. Over the last 5 years from 2020 to 2025, we reduced leakage by 15%. We were one of the best performers in the industry.

Over the next 5 years, we've set a target of going down another 12%, because our long-term objective is to halve leakage by 2050. I [Dave Kaye] understand why people are frustrated, because they'll see water running down a street or a hill, and they'll think, why aren't Yorkshire Water doing anything? We prioritise the leakage into the ones that are losing the most water or are most visible. Since April, we've fixed 13,000 leaks and we've done that 36% faster than we have done before. We've put acoustic sensors into the ground. We're doing a lot of mains renewals, working on pressure management. It's not an excuse, but with the rainfall we've had over the last 8 weeks, people have forgotten the 8 months of really dry weather that we had we get soil moisture deficit, so it's the summer equivalent of frozen grounds. All the moisture disappears out of the ground, it bends the pipes, it cracks the pipes, we see a lot of break out and a lot of leakage, but we try and fix that as quickly as we possibly can. We thank customers for reporting leaks, and I know they get frustrated when they report it on a Monday and they don't see it fixed for a while, but we do prioritise things. We also work closely with all the local authorities and sometimes we are told very clearly, you cannot fix that, or you cannot go in and dig that road up until the weekend, or until a certain date, or do it out of hours on an evening; so whilst we try to get there as quickly as possible to fix them, there are times when we can't due to those constraints. I want to see water flowing in the pipes across Yorkshire all the time.

You say sometimes you can't come out and address something straight away, because you've got to liaise with the local authorities, and so on, can we see a leak repair schedule?

We do have on the website an incidence map relating to some of the larger leaks, but they tend to be more those that are in the highway, those that need permission or planning as to when we can go in and fix them as they do tend to impact more customers, generally; so it's these ones where we want to make sure people are communicated to effectively about what's going on, when are we going to fix them and when's the water going to be back on.

We want to be able to show all types of leak, no matter what the size, and that's not something we've got visible on our website at the minute, but it's something that will be taken away to have a look at as to how easy is it for us to do that.

Why does Yorkshire Water only commit to reducing sewerage overspill into our rivers and seas, rather than make it a goal to stop this fully? One drop is too much. Change the system so you recycle drain water and put it into the reservoirs.

I agree, we don't want to put a single drop of pollution out there whatsoever, but we've got a system which has been around for a long time, which we accept, needs to do better and we're investing significantly. We're going to invest £1.5 billion pounds on storm overflows. We did £182 million in the last 5-year spending period.

So, we've got to try and build as much capacity into the system as we can, and we've got to try and do more on rainwater separation. We've also got a big spend on our assets, so we're trying to reduce pollutions as much as possible. We talked about how we're using telemetry and AI to spot things so that we can be proactive and actually before we get a pollution incident reported we can see that we are likely to have a pollution incident and get our people out there to stop it occurring. We're doing, a lot of things to try and reduce the number of spills we get now.

It's difficult when we have a huge bit of rainfall, it does sometimes overwhelm the system, and rather than it go back through the system and into people's houses, it goes into the storm overflows and dispatches into rivers, and that's why we're spending so much on improving our storm overflows. There are also other things that we're doing like looking at the water quality monitors in rivers. We're going to spend £250 million on monitoring, where a storm overflow does go into a river, the water quality both upstream and downstream and we are very focused on trying to stop polluting wherever possible.

The system that we have in Yorkshire, much of it is a combined system, so the same pipes in the ground drain both the sewage and the wastewater from people's houses, as well as stormwater and surface water and runoff. That’s the challenge with storm overflows; when we have extreme weather which is great for the reservoirs, it does rapidly, almost instantaneously fill up our pipes. The storm overflow is almost a safety valve. It is very diluted, so the impact on rivers isn't anywhere near where it would be if it wasn't mixed with surface water and stormwater.

So, the type of investment that we're doing, the type of projects, a lot of those are to separate out the system again, to put in separate drains for surface water so that the wastewater pipes can be kept for just that. One of the projects mentioned earlier, Alport Road was doing just that.

In other areas, we're putting in tanks so that when it does rain heavily, rather than overflow, we can catch that into a big tank and then pump it out and return it to our treatment works for processing. The important thing at the end of all this is always a balance between, how much can we physically invest, and how much would it be value for money to invest. And looking at that with the impact that it has on river health.

We want to make sure that we're making those investments that have the biggest impact on the health of our rivers. That's really the important thing that we're trying to achieve, and reducing storm overflow spills is part of that.

We work very closely with the Environment Agency to prioritise that and make sure that we're getting the best value from the significant investment that we are making.

We've got around 52,000 kilometres of sewers across Yorkshire unsurprisingly, they all pretty much track either from houses down to the riverbank, and then alongside the river to our treatment works, or through town to the treatment works. We have over 2,000 combined sewer overflows where those sewers can discharge into rivers to make sure that it doesn't go back into somebody's house. It's a huge exercise, and it's a very complex network picture because of the way that the networks have built up over time. You can imagine, when you look at a town, you can see how the houses or the businesses have been built up over time. Our networks have had to change over time to accommodate that. We've got different diameters of pipe, we've got different types of treatment facilities, and so on. So, it is always looking at where are the options to make further investment, and often those options are really limited by the physical geography or the urban environment that we're working in. It's an engineering feat what we're trying to achieve, and they're doing it really well.

What is Yorkshire Water doing to immediately relieve droughts and the hosepipe ban?

We get our water from 3 main elements in Yorkshire. If you split Yorkshire down the middle from top to bottom, on the left, it's all reservoir abstraction, so West Yorkshire, lots of South Yorkshire, 44% of our water comes from reservoir abstraction. 33% of it is from river abstraction, which is on the east side, and 23% of it is from boreholes.

We've had a lot of rain recently. The reservoir levels are increasing; the river levels aren't increasing as much. It comes in, it flows, it goes. And the groundwater - we've got one that we pay big attention to on the East Coast called the Hull Aquifer. The Hull Aquifer is quite low, so we've got to be careful, of that.

We're looking at how much the rain's come down, and where the resource levels are, it's significantly better than it was in September at 31%. We are much higher, so we are in a position now where we can start looking at how we will take off the hosepipe restrictions, but we've got to do that in conjunction with the Environment Agency, because we've got drought permits on to try and protect reservoirs and the environment and they will have to be lifted; so, it will take a few weeks, but when our resources are recharged enough that's when we will lift the hosepipe restrictions. Customers wouldn't thank us for taking it off too early and then in 2026, because we've taken it off too early, being in the same situation. So, we've got to be really careful. We're thinking about the customers, we're thinking about the environment, we're thinking about the water resources.

We learned a lot of lessons from that drought in 2022. We've had another one in 2025, and we've moved water around. We've created a lot more connectivity. We've got what we call the grid system, which operates north to south and east to west and we think we've been able to preserve 13% more in the reservoirs by moving water stocks around to relieve the pressure on certain areas, and to keep customers with a lot of water. We've also created extra boreholes, and we are building a number of service reservoirs out there. They're not the reservoirs that you can see, they're the enclosed ones on the distribution network that act as an additional storage facility as well, but that's clean water, that's wholesome, potable water.

We were offered water butts a while ago, and they would have helped save rainwater over these past weeks. Are they still on offer, or do I need to go and buy my own?

There are three different types of water butt, and we've done various experiments. There's a smart water butt, a leaky water butt and an ordinary water butt. An ordinary water butt is one you look after yourself - you decide when to take water out, you decide how to manage it. A leaky water butt is one where the water dribbles out constantly, so if it rains, the water butt fills up, and then it dribbles out over time afterwards. The smart water butt is one that gets controlled somewhere, and in most cases is controlled by the water companies.

We've found through these trials that the most effective ones are the leaky ones, so ones that just automatically are releasing, because then the capacity is there when there's a storm. What we need people to do is to empty their water butt it so that when we do have capacity in the system, the water is draining away, and then the water butt is able to hold that water when it rains. So, it's been really useful for us in different places, particularly, those leaky ones, where we've got challenges from stormwater into sewers.

However, any water butt is useful for people when they want to water their gardens when we're in a drought, so they work in different ways, and they're good for different things.

And currently the programme we've got is focused on bathing waters and making sure that we're stopping rainwater in storms going into bathing waters, because the standards we want to achieve for bathing waters are even greater than elsewhere in the county. Of course, we want to attract people to come and swim, and to use all the tourist facilities we've got in Yorkshire.

And that means we want great quality bathing water. So that's where we're focusing, and we're working with people in those areas to do it. We are doing a roll out in Scarborough and Bridlington in the new year. If you don't live near a bathing water, if you could get your own, that would be really helpful.

Why were some people allowed to use a hosepipe when there was a ban?

The people that were allowed to use a hosepipe or still are allowed to use a hosepipe whilst the hosepipe restrictions are on are customers on the Priority Services Register, blue badge holders, and businesses.

There are a few other exceptions where people have a specific need. For example, there are some people who just really can't carry the water, or people who've got a very new thing in their garden, like a tree, and they're allowed to use a hose for a certain period.

How many reservoirs have you closed compared to how many you have opened?

The last reservoir that we built was our biggest one, Grimwith, in 1983. Since 2015 we've closed two very small reservoirs, but they were old and had safety issues. One of them had a sinkhole in the middle of it, it was leaking. They were both deemed uneconomic to fix so we took them out of service.

We've strengthened the supply system since then. We have our Water Resources Management Plan where we look ahead 25 years. The last time we looked at it, it said that we needed new boreholes and service reservoirs, which we are already on with. Droughts used to be 1 in 25-year events, and we've had 2 in the last 5 years, so we've got to challenge the assumptions that we previously made. The climate's changing, we've seen that. We've also got an increase in data centres and data centres are very water hungry, so they will need to be supplied. Now, currently we're supplying them with clean, wholesome, potable drinking water. We need to work with businesses to try and supply them with grey water, as in not drinking water, but that is fit for purpose. We need to look at whether we need any additional reservoirs, or if we can expand any of the current ones.

Reservoirs are complex, they cost a lot of money. The one that has just started being built down in the south is going to cost £6.9 billion to build, so they are not cheap. There's a very long planning process involved. It also has a big environmental and a community impact, so we've got to take all that into consideration. Many years ago, we tried to increase the size of the one we share with Severn Trent in the Derwent Valley, and we had to give up because of the number of planning objections that we had.

6 Investments Q&A

Why can't you take advantage of the low water conditions to dredge the reservoirs to restore them to their original capacity? Wouldn't this create additional load on the dam walls and increase the surface area?

It would be difficult; we would have to drain the reservoir in its entirety and that would have a massive impact on the treatment works that the reservoir would supply and it would knock a fair bit of production out. We measure and monitor the reservoir levels and the silt levels in the reservoirs and as it stands, our engineers are confident that we don't need to do any major dredging at this moment in time, but if we did, it would take out quite a lot of storage in the reservoir and supply through the treatment works, so it's one of those balances we've got to do. And, we would have to drain a reservoir for a long time, get the assets to do the dredging and silt removal which is difficult and extremely expensive.

We do invest significantly in our reservoirs, we look after them well, and it's not only the reservoirs themselves and the dams and the embankments, but we've also got a network of channels across the moor tops. Maintenance activities are really key for catching and holding as much water as we can and making sure that our dams continue to be able to operate safely and that our reservoirs can continue to hold water for many years to come.

Are there any plans by Yorkshire Water, or in conjunction with other water companies, or even the government, given that climatologists expect temperatures to continue to rise in the future, to explore some new sites or sources of water in order to protect stocks in the future?

That's something we take seriously, at Yorkshire Water and we have a team whose job it is to look at this. They do water resource planning, and they look into the future across several different scenarios, climate scenarios, to make sure we have enough water. The main period is 25 years which gives us enough time to ensure we build the right plans, make sure we are doing the right design and planning work so any investment we need to deliver meets those water resource needs and we have plenty of time to build those in. But we don't just do it at Yorkshire Water, we do it with other water companies as well. We work closely with Northumbrian Water, United Utilities, and Severn Trent; we have a collaborative group called Water Resources North; we do planning on resources with those other water companies. We look at options for how to share water resources, and what we can do to reduce demand on water as well, because that's an important part of the equation.

Are there plans to create a kind of national water distribution system over the individual water companies to provide a connection to water sources yet untapped, or those with infinite amounts of water, in order to maintain delivery of water throughout the country in times of drought?

It's important that we don't limit ourselves to just the boundaries that are drawn between water companies, and in fact, we already do work with other water companies and share water resources. A good example of that that's been in place for some time with Severn Trent, where we share water that comes out of the reservoirs in the Peak District there. We look at other options, both at where we can tap into additional water resources within Yorkshire, but also Kielder Water in Northumbrian Water's area; how can we make connections up to there? Part of that connection is already there and in place, and one of the potential future things that we could do is connect that up because there's a water surplus there.

Other things that we're doing in Yorkshire are focused on groundwater. In Yorkshire we get our water from a mixture of reservoirs, rivers, and use boreholes to tap into the groundwater. We are drilling new boreholes to create new water sources to help us to meet that ongoing demand.

I have seen some farmlands near rivers that have been flooded. Is there anything that can be done to stop that happening, and can that water be used to help the system?

The water that we see in the fields, will eventually make its way into the watercourse, either into a river or probably into a groundwater supply. It's only the farms at the top of the hills across on the west side, where it will go into a catchment and down into the reservoir, so the water works its way into the water system.

We are working very closely with farmers because we've got to be conscious of the amount of pesticides and various other things that they put on their fields which will end up into the watercourse and into our supply system. This means that we have to do a lot of cleaning of that water to make it wholesome and potable. So, we need to work very closely with farmers, suppliers, and everything else to try and reduce the impact that that has on water quality. Also in the rivers, because, you know, we've spent a lot of money, in the rivers to clean them up. I think it's £250 million pounds to improve 250 miles of river habitat and restoration. And if we look at South Yorkshire, we've had a really good news story in the Don in recent months, where we've found salmon spawning, so that just goes to show that what we, what the Rivers Trust, what our partners are doing is working and showing big environmental benefits.

We are thinking about, in the longer term, how do we work with farmers to stop their waters getting flooded? So, how do we ensure we hold water in different places? And they're doing that, too, with the Environment Agency.

There is one benefit of some of this flooding, which is that it means it's staying on the land and not going into people's houses. And obviously, flooding in people's houses has been a real problem in Yorkshire, and certainly in South Yorkshire, it's one of the big things that we have to consider.

One of the things that we've done over the last few years is thinking more about catchments in their entirety, and a lot of the time when rivers flood it's because upstream, the water has come down off the moorland too quickly. So, one of the things that we have been investing in and working very closely with other partners is about moorland restoration - re-wetting peat bogs. What we hope to get from that is not only better carbon sequestration, but also more of the water stays up high for longer and doesn't sort of run off so quickly which causes erosion and downstream flooding.

Where we do have areas that do flood and not just agricultural land, but also in urban areas (Hull is a good example of a place that is very prone to flooding) which can obviously be even more devastating, we are looking at how we can work with the Environment Agency, with the local authority, to help manage and mitigate that flooding. We have a program in Hull that's called Living with Water, and we are doing things like putting in aqua greens, which are ponds that can catch and temporarily hold flood water, and then slowly release it, so it's almost a safe way to flood.

7 Bills and affordability Q&A

Will we all be getting a refund or lower bills because we weren't able to use our water for over 4 months with the hosepipe ban?

The answer is no, because you have been able to use your water, the only thing you haven't been able to use is your hosepipe. If people wanted to wash the car, they could do it with a bucket, just not using a hosepipe. If people wanted to water the garden, they could use watering cans, just not a hosepipe. So, the fact that we've put a hosepipe restriction in is because a hosepipe uses a lot more water than someone being water-wise and using a watering can and a bucket to clean the car. So, unfortunately, the answer's no.

I live on my own, yet my bills are greater than my neighbour's, but their property is 3 or 4 bedrooms with en-suites. Why is this?

The way bills are calculated if there is no meter, is around the size of the property and also how many people live within that property. We've mentioned quite a lot today the metering rollout, and we do encourage meters to be installed as it gives more accurate bills but also helps identify if there is a potential problem when it comes to leaks on wherever that might be. So, if we can get your details, I can get one of the team to discuss what that might look like. We also have calculators where we can understand what the bill might look like compared to the bill you pay now, and we can just work that through.

We do also offer a service to revert, so if a meter is fitted and it doesn't work for you, you can change back to how you were before within a certain period of time. It is always something that people look to take up.

What more can Yorkshire Water do, and what help is being offered for disabled people and visually impaired community?

We've got a lot of trained agents in our contact centres able to handle all sorts of different queries and questions from every type of customer. We encourage signing up customers to our Priority Services Register via whichever channel suits them. We sign customers up whether they get in touch or as and when we see that there's a need for that to happen, whether we've visited customers' properties or we're talking to them through our contact centres.

We can provide extra help and support when you need it the most. There’s lots of ways we can help you and these are set out in our By Your Side strategy.

https://www.yorkshirewater.com/about-us/our-vision-and-plans/by-your-side/

This includes our Priority Services Register recording your need for large print, braille or audio letter and bills; a longer notice period for planned works; bottled water or a

priority supply connection, for those that need a constant supply; a password scheme, so you'll always know it's us calling and more.

Our website has more information: https://www.yorkshirewater.com/bill-account/priority-services-register/

We've also got different social tariffs and there's a lot more we can still do as well.

in times of drought, such as 2022, and this year and the future, would it not be beneficial for Yorkshire Water to have everyone on water meters? Scrapping the unmetered tariff would prevent a huge percentage of customers wasting water, as they will be charged for it.

We'll be fitting 1.3 million over the next 5 years, which is a scale that we've not done before, so we've got to make sure we can deliver that. We would love to have everybody on a meter across Yorkshire, because it would give not just more accurate bills and a better service (so people can see what they're using and how often they use it) but also whether there are any problems on our network so then we know we need to go and fix them. But there's a challenge in terms of how much of that we can fit, and with our partners and supply chain. We've got, like we said, 1.3 million to do over the next 5 years.

It's also not cheap, right? So, we've got to go around everybody's property and install a water meter. Most water meters are inside people's houses, some are not. Some are difficult to find, some of the pipes we need to get to are difficult to access, so there is a bit of, let's make sure that we don't waste the public's money, the money that they're trusting us to spend most effectively. And what we're doing is installing them as quickly as we can, but as sensibly as we can, to make sure we spend the money that people want on all the things we've got in front of us. And there's a huge agenda.

We could spend lots and lots and lots of money. What we're trying to do is to focus on the things that are really going to make the difference now. The other thing to say is that there are only a certain number of water meters made, so the capacity of the water meter production is actually one of the challenges that we have across the whole country. And the government has decided to prioritise water companies in the south and require them to fit meters for all of their customers, because they're even more water stressed than we are. And their challenges are long-term. Ours have been, as you know, in 2022 and 2025, but they've got long-term challenges where there can't be any more development unless they find other ways to make water available, or people to consume less water. So, they're working hard there on that.

Why does my business bill come from Scottish Water? It's in the very same neighbourhood, so the next street over is my home, where I pay the bill to Yorkshire Water.

In 2017, the government changed the rules so that there was competition for providing water to commercial customers, and we were required to continue to provide it to domestic customers.

Business customers have a retailer, so the way it's regulated is different from domestic properties There are a number of different retailers, and they interact with the business customers about bills and so on. Businesses will still contact Yorkshire Water for a burst or a leak or flooding. We still look after the infrastructure, all the pipes and all the treatment works. The retailers talk to businesses, so if it's Scottish Water in this instance that provide that bill for that business, even though you're on the next street, it'll come through from them, but it's still Yorkshire Water who will be resolving any issues that you might have reported.

8 Corporate matters Q&A

How do you justify charging the people of Yorkshire an increase of over 57% over 4 years when you, as CEO, have a base salary of more than half a million pounds, plus multi-million-pound bonuses? Plus, in 2024 alone, £345 million was distributed to your ownership group, despite rising customer bills and ongoing environmental concerns. It's a scam, isn't it?

Bill increases were so significant in April because, we'd been held back for so long that the increases were only taking us back, in real terms, to the same bill level as 10 years ago. It just shows you how much we've had to hold prices down when the costs of supplying clean water and taking away wastewater have been going up and demand has gone up, hence the big investment programme that needs to be made. And that's why Yorkshire Water consulted really hard across the county to say, 'What you want from us?'

About 95% of the investment we're making in the next 5 years is to keep up with legislation. What people have said is really important for Yorkshire ranges from doing a bit more on storm overflows more quickly, doing some things for our National Parks which will improve the river quality there, and doing more on bathing waters, particularly at beaches on the coast, that we would otherwise have had to do by 2030. Those are all great things, and they need more money.

The decision about how much I [Nicola Shaw] get paid is made by our remuneration committee and, they take the view that that's important. Obviously, I benefit from that decision but I'm also here to work on your behalf, working very hard to make sure the plan is delivered. I think the plan is really good and will improve the outcomes for the

county over the next 5 years and I want to work with the team to do that. So, we're looking forward to seeing the improvements.

It takes a long time to see improvements in infrastructure, unfortunately. What happens is, if you don't invest, the deterioration in the quality of the infrastructure means performance is low for a while and takes a while to come back with the investments being made. But we will see them, and the improvements will come.

Why are you putting up my annual bill by 60%?

I [Nicola Shaw] wonder whether they are using a lot of water or they've found that they've used more water and maybe that's a reason? If the bill has increased that much, it is really worth you getting in touch with us, because it may be that we can help to think of ways to reduce your consumption, or it may be that you've got a leak somewhere in your property, and if we knew about it, and could help you to find out whether or not you've got one, you can then tackle that. It's really worth getting in touch with us because that's a very high increase.

Why are shareholders not shouldering some of the increase in investment?

The shareholders are bearing some of the increase in investment, in the sense that we don't pay them as much dividend as we might have paid them. Ofwat sets a cap on how much dividend any water company can pay to their investors, and we haven't been paying them as much, in part because we haven't been performing as well.

Last year, we paid dividends of £52.5 million; in 2023, our shareholders paid £500 million into the company. We're expecting a further £600 million investment in March 2027. Of course, if you invest, you want to see a return, so as we improve, we are hoping to continue to pay them a dividend. It's important, it's part of the way that they're willing to put the money in. They put money in we will pay them a return on that money.

You said that Yorkshire Water has improved to 11th in the customer experience ranking, but is this just because the others are worse?

No, there are various things that we get measured on; people's actual experience with us in how we deal with a clean water question; how we deal with the wastewater question; how we deal with billing, and what's their general perception of us.

We got better in each of the actual experience categories, better by far more than our colleagues did in other water companies. The one area we got worse on was people's perception of us. So that's not people who have actually experienced what Yorkshire Water has done over the last 3 months, it's just people who've heard about what we've done, or seen what we've done, and how they perceive us.

Would a national water distribution system be a step beyond our present engineering capabilities due to distance or the enormity of such an enterprise, or simply a case of finance? If finance was an issue, could the water industry not emulate the gas industry's 'Tell Sid 'Privatisation scheme to invite people and businesses to invest in the water companies and the water needs future?

It is really expensive to move water around because you have to pump it and it's heavy; we can't just run it all downhill from the north of Scotland to the south of the country, unfortunately. That would be great if it was a gravity-fed system from one end to the other. Unfortunately, we have to pump it uphill as well and that costs money and you have to use energy to do it. We are increasingly able to do that with renewable sources, and we're making sure that when we produce gas, for example, in our treatment of wastewater, we turn that gas into gas that gets used on the network for providing gas to homes. Or we turn it into energy as well, so we can use it in multiple different ways, and that's a great option. But nevertheless, it is expensive.

In terms of 'Tell Sid,' actually all of the water companies are already in private hands, so they are raising more money. I explained that we're raising more money from our shareholders through more equity coming in by April 2027; similarly, Seven Trent, for example, raised money in 2024 - they brought more money in from shareholders. It is something that's happening across the country to make sure that we do have the equity in these businesses that we need to support that long-term investment for the country.

Are there any talks to renationalise the water sector?

The government set up a commission to review the way that the water industry is structured and regulated last year. What they said in the setting up of that commission was they didn't want it to review the opportunities for renationalisation and that's largely because they don't want to take the debt that exists on all the companies back into the public sector. The reason we have the debt is that we don't pay for all the assets in these 5 years. We're investing £8.3 billion - about 40% of what we invest gets paid for in the next 5 years. The remaining 60% gets paid over about 20 years. So, basically, it gets paid for by the people who will use the asset over its life, instead of us all paying now for something that we might not use, because we might not be here in 60 years' time.

What we do is we raise some debt, and then we pay that down over a period; it's that debt that is quite a lot, and that the government doesn't want to take on to a government balance sheet.

Are Yorkshire Water incentivised to respect environmental standards?

In most cases, we are required to respect them. So, we have a license, and we have permits, and the permits are issued by the Environment Agency, and we have to abide by our permits. If we don't, we get penalised and obviously nobody wants to be

penalised, nor would we like to harm the environment, so our objective is to remain within the confines of our permits. Unfortunately, we haven't always done that, and you've probably seen there are a few times when the Environment Agency has told us that we've breached those permits, so they take us to court, and then we're required to pay a fine. That process is quite slow at the moment, so we got taken to court, in South Yorkshire actually, this year for something that happened right back in 2017 and 2018, so you can see how long that process takes.

The other route for us to be incentivised is to pay, what's called, an environmental undertaking. So, if something like that happened, we would pay money to a local charity, most often a river trust, so, a group of people who are working in the area of the particular river, and then they use that money to improve the river quality.

We've got a number of those schemes that we're working on with river trusts across Yorkshire, and in particular, we're focused on what we call the Great Yorkshire Rivers, and our goal there is to put in fish passes, so fishes can move up and down the river, and to remove man-made obstructions, because those are often causing harm to the quality of the river; so it's teamwork between us and the river trusts.

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
Clean water and wastewater (Leaks)	**What are you doing to ensure that burst pipes are sorted within hours?**	We are working harder than ever to repair leaks - because of the ongoing drought, the ground has been exceptionally dry, and this causes movement which creates more leaks on our pipes than usual. We've repaired 15% more leaks than we typically do—and we are fixing them 36% faster than before. In fact, a leak is repaired every 26 minutes in Yorkshire. In total we have fixed 13,000 leaks since April
Clean water and wastewater (Water Quality)	**Why aren't water quality tests made public? I've requested these and failed.**	This information is available for customers. Annual Summaries of Water Quality sample performance across each of our 125 Water Supply Zones are available on our website. Customers can also access all data results via Stream (https://www.streamwaterdata.co.uk/pages/about-stream)
Clean water and wastewater (Water Quality)	**Why is the water leaving an orange residue and turning everything orange? In my shower it turns my sponge orange and there is an orange residue all in the bottom of the shower and also turning the shower curtain orange**	This can be caused by naturally occurring iron deposits and can often be fixed by running the cold water tap for five minutes to let the incoming supply through. We have some more information about how to fix this and why this can sometimes happen on our website > https://www.yorkshirewater.com/your-water/my-water-looks-different/ If the colour of your water is caused by work we're doing or a burst pipe, you should be able to find the incident and the status of it on our map > https://www.yorkshirewater.com/your-water/problems-in-your-area/
Clean water and wastewater (Water Quality - PFAS)	**What monitoring is happening to identify PFAS chemicals in the water? What proportion of water exceeds the levels of potential health risks? What is**	We test for PFAS compounds as part of our routine sampling schedule for treated and raw water as well as risk assessing all our raw water sites to make sure our drinking water meets the high standards set by our regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). We are investigating options available to mitigate PFAS compounds if this ever becomes necessary however our sample results to date show it is considered to be at a low risk level. Of course, we take water quality very seriously and we're continuing to

	being done about this?	monitor and reassess this risk whilst working closely with the DWI and following their guidance.
Clean water and wastewater (Water Consumption)	**Best and worst areas of water consumption?**	Highest consumption: Bradford, Calderdale, Harrogate, Halifax, Huddersfield Central, Huddersfield West, Ilkley, Keighley, Northallerton, Otley, Sheffield, Skipton, Thirsk, Wensleydale
Clean water and wastewater (CSO)	**Why don't CSOs (Combined Sewer Overflows) have sensors to show discharge in real time? With times and dates made public information.**	Over the past few years, we've been installing monitors on our overflows to help us gain a better understanding of our network and any impact the overflows might be having on the environment. All our overflows are now monitored. Every year, we collate all this data and publish our it on our website after sharing it with the Environment Agency. If you'd like to see our data, we have a dedicated page where you can look through the data and read the summary results > https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows/event-duration-monitoring/ We know it's really important to our customers that we're transparent about the operation of our overflows, and our data team have built a live map so customers can check when a particular overflow last operated, here's the link to it > https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows/live-map
Clean water and wastewater (River Water Quality)	**What is Yorkshire Water's plans to improve water quality in our rivers?**	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 in the 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.
Clean water and wastewater (River Water Quality)	**Why do you dump sewage into water courses?**	The use of combined sewer overflows is essential although not ideal. During heavy rainfall, they allow highly diluted wastewater to enter watercourses rather than flooding customers' homes. The entire process is permitted by the Environment Agency. We are committed to playing our part to improve water quality in rivers and seas around the region and it's important we work in partnership with other organisations to help make our rivers and seas healthier. Accidental discharges are very rare. This is monitored by the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water. Please advise the customer more information about our data monitoring of storm overflows can be found at https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows-and-event-duration-monitoring/
Clean water and wastewater (Sewage)	**How much sewage have you released into the local rivers & sea in m3 this year?**	Thanks for your question. We do not currently report this, and it is not a regulatory requirement to do so. All of our storm overflows are monitored to help us gain a better understanding of our network and any impact the overflows might be having on the environment. This information is fed into our near real-time map so people can view the current status of each individual overflow, and the last time is discharged to the watercourse. We also provided monthly validated data of every individual discharge, so people don't need to wait until the annual returns data to understand how overflows are performing. https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/storm-overflows/event-duration-monitoring/
Clean water and wastewater (River Water Quality – algae blooms)	**Please tell us about the algae blooms in South Yorkshire. How is this affecting aquatic ecosystems?**	We are aware that blooms do occur in South Yorkshire, mostly in standing waterbodies (including reservoirs) and to a lesser extent in rivers. Where we see algal blooms in reservoirs, sometimes the algae will release compounds that leave a musty taste and odour in the water. These can be removed by advanced forms of water treatment that include activated carbon and ozone. However, most of the

	What is Yorkshire Water doing about this?	Water Treatment Works (WTW) in South Yorkshire do not have this capability, so if the levels of taste and odour reach an intolerable threshold, we need to invest and extend the capability of these water treatment work. This is what we are doing at Ingbirchworth WTW. Impact on ecosystem - Variable – there can be no minimal/no impact, or with severe blooms it can lead to fish kills - this is rarely due to direct toxicity, more often due to very low oxygen levels as algae a) die off and decay, or b) respire overnight. Treatment - if it's a supply reservoir we treat everything out so nothing harmful or taste impacting. We don't try to directly control algae in reservoirs - we have undertaken numerous trials (e.g. Barley Straw in Scout Dike) and research through our innovation team, with ambiguous results.
Clean water and wastewater (River Pollution)	**When will you stop allowing companies to pollute the rivers?**	Like all UK water companies, we are committed to reducing sewer overflows as much as possible. The reason we cannot promise to stop them entirely is because the current sewer system in most towns and cities is a "combined" system, meaning it carries both rainwater and wastewater in the same pipes. During heavy rain, these pipes can fill up quickly, and if they weren't allowed to overflow, it could cause sewage to back up into homes and streets. Completely stopping all overflows would require rebuilding the entire sewer network, which would be a huge and disruptive project costing many billions of pounds and taking decades to complete. That said, we are investing heavily in upgrades, new storage tanks, and nature-based solutions to reduce the frequency and impact of overflows.
Clean water and wastewater (Reserves)	**How are the reserves now?**	Our reservoirs have been on the rise for the ninth consecutive week! We've now reached 65.3%, which is a great improvement from the rather worrying 31.7% we saw back in July, and that isn't counting the impact of all the rain we saw at the weekend from Storm Claudia. Results from that will be in tomorrow, we look forward to learning about that! While we've made great strides, it's important to recognise we're still below the usual average of 74% for this time of year. That's because whilst it's raining now, we are still only getting the average for the time of year.

Clean water and wastewater (Water Resources)	**What has been done whilst the reservoirs have been so low?**	We know we have the biggest part to play when it comes to water efficiency. We look after 32,000km of clean water pipes (that's enough to stretch between Leeds and Brisbane in Australia – and back again!) which means we get leaks and bursts on our network as we're pumping water around to peoples' homes. We're investing £16m this year to reduce leaks on our pipes, including hiring an additional 100 colleagues to come and work in our leakage team so we tackle our leaks as quickly as possible.
Investments (Future Bill Rises)	**What are the future annual increases likely to be say over the next 5 years**	• Bill increases fund the investment step-up needed after two decades of under-investment. • Even after these rises, customers still pay slightly less in real terms than a decade ago. Year Average household bill (£ nominal) 2015/16 £446 2024/25 £467 2025/26 £602 2026/27 £648 2027/28 £697 2028/29 £729 2029/30 £763 All real-terms values expressed in 2023/24 prices (CPIH-adjusted) for consistency across the pack.
Investments (Investment Following Bill Rises)	**Given the massive rises this year how will this money be spent**	Over the next five years, we'll be delivering our largest ever investment programme, totalling £8.3 billion. This will allow us to make important changes to the way do things and invest in our infrastructure, making it more resilient and reliable. This investment was approved by Ofwat in December. Our £8.3 billion investment includes: £1.5 billion to invest in storm overflows to drive down discharges across the county. £360 million to prevent nutrient pollution in watercourses. £327 million rolling out smart meters to help customers save water and reduce their bills. £51 million to increase our asset resilience. £98 million to install water quality monitors in rivers so we can identify and respond to pollution reports quicker.

		£75 million for environmental protection and improvements £99 million to improve drinking water quality
Investments (Flood defences)	**Have flood defences been installed in the areas that need them and can we see the benefits of price increase**	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.
Investments (Flood repairs)	**How far are Yorkshire Water with flood repairs etc**	We would love to answer your question but need a little more information to be able to. Please get in touch with our Customer Team
Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Water Meters)	**Why was I not given the choice where my meter is situated**	Technical Constraints: Water meters must be installed where they can accurately measure all water entering the property. This is usually at the point where the water supply pipe enters the home or at an external boundary box. The chosen location ensures reliable readings and easy access for maintenance. Regulatory and Safety Standards: Regulations require meters to be fitted in locations that are safe, accessible for meter readers, and compliant with water industry standards. This often limits the options for placement. Operational Efficiency: For large-scale meter installation programs, standardising the fitting location (such as external boundary boxes) helps streamline the process, reduce costs, and minimise disruption. It also ensures that meters are accessible for future upgrades or repairs.
Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Water Meters)	**I read on the Internet that siting my meter on busy road could tête-à-tête the readings**	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.

Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Bills)	**Can someone explain why my bill is so high?**	We're working hard to make sure that your water bill remains one of the lowest in the country whilst continuing to deliver the services you need every day. Bills have increased to fund the biggest investment in our history — £8.3bn over the next five years, an increase of £3bn on the last five years. Please get in touch with a member of our team if you have any specific questions about your bill by contacting us on 0345 124 7247.
Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Bills)	**We already paid with a direct debit and how come they still send us a letter and charge again? Paying double bills is not fair!**	Please get in touch with one of our team to discuss this further.
Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (Help & Support)	**Is there more you can do to help people?**	There are a number of ways in which we help our customers where possible. Depending upon the size of the household, many customers will benefit from installing a water meter and only paying for the water they use. There is also a 2-year period to revert to previous charges if it isn't saving the customer money. We also offer social tariffs to help our customers who may struggle to afford their bills. If the customer is in debt there are a number of debt schemes available, even if the customer isn't eligible for a social tariff reduction.
Billing, affordability, vulnerable customers (App)	**Why has the Yorkshire Water App been cancelled?**	We took the decision to remove the App and focus on improving the online MyAccount. This is however something we will revisit in the future.
Corporate/company matters (Pay and bonuses)	**What proportion of income goes on Directors renumeration packages, including bonuses, on shareholder payouts and on reinvestment in infrastructure?**	The salaries of our directors are set by an independent remuneration committee and are comparable within the industry so we're attracting and retaining the right expertise to manage complex infrastructure and customer services

Corporate/company matters (Penalties/fines)	**Did you receive a fine?**	Yes. We have received multiple fines, including a recent £40 million enforcement package from Ofwat for serious failures in sewage works and networks, and a £1.5 million fine in October 2025 for sewage leaks and, our largest fine of £865,000 in 2025 for polluting a dike. We are investing heavily in environmental improvements, with a planned spend of £8.3billion from 2025–2030, the largest programme in its history. This includes upgrades to wastewater treatment works, reducing storm overflows, and improving river water quality.
Corporate/company matters (CEO)	**When will you get rid of Nicola Shaw as your CEO?**	Nicola joined the business in 2022 to help us improve our performance and make sure the company is ready for future challenges. We've seen improvements across the majority of our performance metrics and Nicola is committed to making sure we drive all our performance forward while we deliver Yorkshire's largest ever environmental investment.
Corporate/company matters (Performance)	**Performance schedules register**	We do report on our performance every 6 months - please visit 'our performance' page of our website - November and July
Corporate/company matters (Partnerships)	**Why don't Yorkshire Water make contact with landowners and riparian owners of rivers (such as fishing clubs and river keepers) as a first port of call? These people spend their life in these places. Surely they would have a wealth of information and views that would be helpful?**	Our river health improvement team have been formed in the last 2 years, and they interact with rivers trusts, local action groups and others to work together in order to improve our rivers. This includes working together on citizen science initiatives which is gathering additional information about the health of our rivers, which is supports us to identify issues and shape our future investment requirements.
Corporate/company matters	**I would like to know why a bunch of sharks are now running**	The revenue generated from these car parks will be reinvested into nature conservation, countryside management and our first ever in-house Ranger team. Our

(Car Parking Charges)	**the reservoirs car parks around Harrogate**	Rangers are a friendly face to greet on site and will be helping to keep our sites clean, safe and enjoyable for all. We hope that during the trial we will see incidents of fly tipping and antisocial behaviour decrease, making these sites safer and more enjoyable for people.
Corporate/company matters (Car Parking Charges)	**I would like to know how it is acceptable to have a company managing them that you can't contact/Why is it acceptable for them to send threatening letters when you have paid for your parking but accidentally keyed in a wrong digit for you registration number/Why providing proof you have paid isn't enough and prompts another threatening letter?**	All enquiries relating to purchase of permits, tickets, fines/disputes, or any technical questions about how to purchase or how to use the equipment must be directed towards Bransby Wilson Enquiries@bransbywilson.co.uk
Electrofishing	**Why are electro fishing results not shared with the public. I've requested these and failed.**	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.

Thank you.

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