

Your water, your say

Yorkshire Water

Session 2 Final report



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Introduction

This is a final written record of the “Your Water Your Say” session held by Yorkshire Water on Thursday, 23 November 2023.

This online event was held as part of a two-step process requirement from Ofwat for all water businesses to present their 2025–2030 business plans and give our customers the opportunity to pose questions about the issues important to them.

This final report comprises two sections. The first section is the written record of the live session which includes the independent chair’s introduction, the company’s introduction presentation and the questions asked and answered during the event.

The second section covers all supplementary questions and answers (i.e. those submitted by customers and stakeholders that were not answered during the live session).

‘Your water, your say’ session

Speakers

Kevin Johnson, Independent Chair

Nicola Shaw, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Water

Martyn Hattersley, Head of Water Asset Strategy, Yorkshire Water

Ben Roche, Director of Wastewater, Yorkshire Water

Chris Offer, Director of Strategy & Regulation, Yorkshire Water

Attendance

A cross section of household and non-household customers and other stakeholder representatives also attended the session online. Representatives of the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) and the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) were also in attendance.

Independent Chair’s introduction

The Chair advised that this second ‘Your water, your say’ (YWYS) session is part of the price review process, which is known as PR24 in the industry. As part of PR24, water and wastewater companies in England and Wales, including Yorkshire Water have submitted to Ofwat their plans for the period 2025 to 2030 on the 2nd of October 2023. Ofwat is now considering those plans. The purpose of this session is to allow customers, communities and other stakeholders to hear what Yorkshire Water has included in the PR24 submission and ask questions; understand how customers’ and stakeholders’ views have shaped PR24 plans, including views on the acceptability and affordability of the plan; question whether and how the issues that were previously raised are addressed in the submission; raise new issues; and ask questions on new topics.

The Chair reassured the audience that each and every single question that has been submitted either in advance, during or very shortly after the online session will get an answer from Yorkshire Water and will go into the official record of the meeting.

Finally, the Chair also highlighted the Ofwat survey which is already live and the fact that Ofwat is going to stage their own version of these sessions in May or June next year. This will be an additional opportunity for customers to question Ofwat representatives on their draft determinations of company investment plans and pricing controls before they are finalised at the end of 2024.

Company presentation

Nicola Shaw, Yorkshire Water’s Chief Executive, gave a 15-minute presentation introducing Yorkshire Water, describing the diversity of the region, and giving an overview

of the business plan submitted to Ofwat, the results of the affordability and acceptability testing study, the associated impact on bills as well as what support will be made available for vulnerable customers. A major part of the presentation was highlighting the changes to the plan following feedback from the first YWYS session held in June 2023. A copy of the presentation is available [here](#).

Event questions and answers

The Chair confirmed the four themes of the Q&A to be:

1. Secure, safe and clean water supply;
2. Wastewater and storm overflows;
3. A healthy environment including net zero; and
4. Affordable bills and customer service.

Participants could ask questions via the Q&A function in Zoom, by raising their hand or by submitting a question in advance to CCW.

Question No.	Question and Answer
Theme 1: Secure, safe and clean water supply	
1.	<p>There have been challenges for Yorkshire Water. You are not meeting all your performance commitments in this current five-year period and there have been question marks around the financial resilience of the company. How can the people on this call and your customers more generally have faith in the plans for 2025 to 2030 when it has been so difficult up until now?</p> <p>We have been reporting to Ofwat on our progress over the last five years and we are transparent about our performance. You can see what we are doing to improve in our report and on our website. Our service commitment plan is there and available.</p> <p>We absolutely know that we need to focus on continuing to deliver. Ofwat did set us some really stretching targets and on almost every single metric we are improving, and we want to do that more.</p> <p>So, what we have said in our plan for 2025 is that you should take it as a plan in the round. We have set targets we think we can deliver for the money that we think we should spend.</p> <p>Ofwat will then need to take a view on that, and then we will need to take a view on whether what they have set us for the period 2025 to 2030 is deliverable.</p> <p>Touching a bit on where we are at the moment: last year we were described in 2022 as a lagging company and Ofwat published that documentation in July this year. And as a lagging company we looked at where we were versus everyone else and what were the things that we would focus on.</p> <p>First, our treatment work compliance is leading in the industry as a whole, so we are right at the top on that performance. And then,</p>

	<p>secondly, we focused on the things that customers said to us they minded very much about last year.</p> <p>So we protected our leakage performance which is really difficult to do when there is a drought and there is very little water in the soil because of all the movement around the pipes. So we protected our leakage target and we delivered on that; we were the only lagging company to be able to deliver on our leakage target. We knew it was important for our customers, and hence we focused on it.</p> <p>We also continued to improve on pollution. That's been more of a struggle this year during 2023 but we are continuing to work on it. And, as you know, we have a big investment plan that will last up until 2025 in relation to continuing to improve our storm overflow discharges. So we are listening, and we keep trying to improve.</p>
2.	<p>People may feel you are not doing enough on storm overflows by the end of the period and up to 2030, that you don't deal with enough of them quickly enough and that you will stay in the sort of lower end of performance when it comes to a like by like comparison with some of the other water companies. Are you being ambitious enough? Are you giving yourself enough stretching targets to really deal with storm overflows?</p> <p>This is a very big challenge, and we need to get the balance right. We need to make sure that we invest where we think we will have the biggest impact and we focused on those areas in Yorkshire where we think that is the case such as the rivers and the coast and places where we think there's special interest that people want real improvement in the outcomes. We have not worked on just reducing numbers for a game. We have said this is important to us to get outcomes that matter to our customers. And at the same time, we have said we think that's a deliverable programme which is just about manageable within the bill increase. We don't think it was right to go further.</p>
3.	<p>As winter is once again just around the corner and as in most previous years there will possibly be an increase in water leaks. How is the investment going to impact this ongoing problem? Has there been a significant reduction in the number and severity of water leaks over the last three to five years?</p> <p>Customers at times of winter can see additional leaks running down the street in Yorkshire and other areas of England. From the Yorkshire Water perspective, we have a target 15% for this five-year period to</p>

	<p>reduce leakage, and we are on track to do that. So, we have done that in the first 3 years of the five-year period that we are currently in which runs through to 2025. So yes we have seen leaks reduce and performance improve over the past three to five years.</p> <p>Customers will absolutely still see lots of Yorkshire Water teams out and about this winter, and through summers and springs and autumns.</p> <p>We reactively and proactively repair at least 10,000 pipes a year, that be our distribution mains or customer pipes that go to your individual homes across the region. So, we have hit all the ambitions that we had in our five-year period. The impact will depend on the severity of the winter. There is a ground movement challenge that we see when storm events occur, but we have performed really well in that in the last couple of years.</p> <p>Last year we had a challenging winter, which was after what was a very challenging summer from a drought perspective. We still maintained our leakage performance, we responded accordingly then and we will do exactly the same again this year and in the coming years for our customers.</p> <p>As we look forward, we will always look to improve on that. So we have set a further 16% target for the next five-year period from 2025 through to 2030 as well.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>It is well known across the industry that leaks are a challenge and it's one of the most difficult things to do. I'm keen to hear how Yorkshire is looking to use AI as well as advanced technologies to understand how leaks can happen proactively.</p> <p>This question links to our innovation ambition that we have put into our plan moving forward, as well as what we currently have ongoing. Over the past five years we have installed about 50,000 devices in the water distribution network which provide us with a lot of information such as pressure information, flow information and sound information from the pipes. We are also trialling technologies with electricity providers and other partners too.</p> <p>The challenge with that is that it does provide a lot of information and data back but as a business we need to make sure that it creates insights, to create action to reduce the life and the volume of a leak to make sure there is no customer impact from it.</p> <p>A couple of things that we have been doing over the past couple of years is partner up with an organisation which was originally called Idrika, and is now part of Zylum, and they have an artificial intelligence</p>

	<p>tool that listens to all updates and information and pulls it together to allow us to make decisions without having to have an army of people analysing the data. That has provided some real benefits for us and our customers in this five-year period. It is not perfect, and we do have innovation in our plan for the next five years to build upon that as technology grows and for us to build our own database in-house to enable it. Therefore, we will enhance even further to improve the performance that we have seen from those ongoing innovation trials.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Will the data from the 1,800 river water quality monitors be made publicly available?</p> <p>This question relates to the river water quality monitoring that all companies will be required to install downstream of sewer overflows. The intention is that it will be publicly available.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water has a large program with 1,800 high priority locations as our focus up to 2030. This very much builds on the event duration monitoring which has been deployed across the sector and which we have been at the forefront of. We were at 98% monitored in comparison to a sector average at 89% monitored. We will be 100% monitored by the end of this calendar year.</p> <p>We have two really tricky technical installations to do where we will be using cameras to focus on the overflows. We are going to see much more in the way of data and information regarding our waterways, which can only be a great thing.</p> <p>This is technically really difficult to do so since overflows are right in the middle of the rivers and when there's a spate in the river they are subsumed by it. It's almost impossible to see what's going on and it would not be possible to retain a monitor there, and it would be very dangerous too. That is why we have to put a video camera somewhere else, so we can see what's going on from a distance rather than to do it in the sewer overflow itself.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>What are Yorkshire Water's plans regarding non household water efficiency? Specifically how will they work collaboratively with retailers? What incentives are there in the Plan with non-household water efficiency in mind.</p> <p>Our water resource management helps us manage water resources from the supply side and well as demand side to at least 2085. This informs our long-term strategy, as well as our short-term strategy and plan for the next five years.</p>

	<p>In terms of improving water efficiency and demand usage specifically with our non-household and business customers we will be rolling out our smart metering program through to 2030 to all non-household customers.</p> <p>At present, pretty much all non-household customers bar a few are on a meter, so they will be upgrading to a smart metering platform. We will introduce new digital customer platforms which will make them available to you and other retail companies.</p> <p>We will also carry out water efficiency visits. They are not going to be for absolutely every single premises and every non household customer across Yorkshire, because there are hundreds of thousands of those. From the smart metering data and information we will be able to see where we need to target specific sectors or types of industries where we do see high demands which may suggest wastage, low water efficiency or poor water efficiency or potential leakage as well. We have trends for establishments such as gyms, leisure centres, schools, universities, hospitals etc.</p> <p>Another thing that we have put in our plan, and to be completely transparent it is not fully defined yet, because we want to work with MOSEL (market operator services) within this area of the industry to define what that may be, are retail incentives which a number of other water companies have mentioned in their plans as well. Those incentives are to aid large retail users to utilise grey water harvesting, for example, as an alternative to using our main water. So that's one thing that we will be looking to develop between now and 2025 to share alongside retailers, to help them with their customers.</p> <p>Ultimately, in the next period we will look at doing some trials for different types of tariffs that we may look to do in future cycles and periods as well to aid water efficiency through bills.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Can you just explain to people if our smart meters are going to be compulsory? And whether they are or not, what is the sort of rollout program? To what degree will they be rolled out in that five-year period? Give us some very broad milestones for the rate of rollout, and to the degree to which they are compulsory.</p> <p>We are not rolling out a compulsory smart metering program to all customers in Yorkshire in the next five years.</p> <p>We have around 1.4 million customers on a meter at present which is about 60% of our household customers, and pretty much all of non-household business customers.</p>

	<p>By the end of 2030 we expect that to rise to about 1.6 million. So that's either through new housing developments which come standard, or people opting in for a meter because it is more affordable for them to do so in terms of billing practices.</p> <p>Over the period of 2025 to 2030, we have a rollout plan across the region to move from the existing major infrastructure for those 60% of customers to new smart metering devices.</p>
8.	<p>With all things data and digital, people get worried about data being available and how it will interfere with their lives. Regarding smart meters, to what degree has that been a concern? You talked to about 40,000 people that helped in the development of this business plan.</p> <p>What concerns have you had so far around digital intrusion that some people may have. And how can you put people's minds at rest about that?</p> <p>When we started the smart metering programme, we trialled it in the Sheffield area. We had quite intensive conversations with those customers about any privacy concerns and what data and information they could see as an end user on the new digital customer platforms.</p> <p>It would be no more intrusive data than what you may see on a daily gas meter reading or energy meter reading if you had a smart meter in your home at present.</p> <p>We have had conversations with data protection officers around that and ensure that it does not give any sort of concern to customers. We have tested in reality how our smart meters will work moving forward with customers and shown them what data we receive back on a six hourly basis. That information could help us identify a kick up in flow which if maintained for a period of time could identify a leak in customer's home and would give us an alert. It doesn't tell us any more information and data than simply how much water has been used in a period of time. If it is up for a long period of time, it will give an alert and we may want to make contact or send someone to take a look to see if there is a leak on the customer side. So hopefully that shows customers that it is doing the right thing for them and for us, but without being intrusive.</p>
9.	<p>Yorkshire is clearly struggling with consumption. The presentation touched on the post covid water consumption at home issue. But still it's a problem, isn't it? The amount of consumption per person? Smart meters are some of the other things that you've touched on</p>

	<p>around efficiency and time. Is that enough to crack the consumption conundrum?</p> <p>From a UK perspective, we are suffering but we are one of the best. We are top in the industry on demand for individual customers in Yorkshire. So that's really good and is a credit to all of us as customers. Smart metering is not the silver bullet, but it is one of the tools in the armoury that we are implementing because it does give big benefits. If people can see something, understand something, and we can get data back, every single day, every 6 hours, as opposed to waiting 6 months or a year for a water meter reading. It is a far better way of managing the amount of water that is used. However, within our plan, we do have additional implementation techniques to help customers with per capita consumption.</p> <p>We have mentioned water efficiency around non-household customers. One big area that we are looking at to help customers with this are water efficiency visit and home audit.</p> <p>Now that can be in person to give free water efficiency advice and device installation, or it can be virtual like this, where we can give support virtually and offer certain products tailored to helping household and customers with self-installation of different devices at home.</p> <p>We are also looking at a big education program and media campaign, because one thing that we did see through the drought is that it does have an impact. You can't turn it off, we have to keep communicating and talking to all customers, all age brackets, including youth through school programs as well. So it's a multi-faceted program to help improve that.</p> <p>We are pleased to be one of the best currently, but we still have a way to go over and above smart metering.</p>
10.	<p>Your plans for 2025 to 2030 will lead to Yorkshire Water being one of the worst performers for preventing interruptions to the water supply by 2030 when compared to other water companies' business plans. Are you satisfied that you are planning to do enough in this area?</p> <p>Our improvement plan for the next five-year period will reduce supply interruptions by 26%. That means in reality that people would see on average an interruption of supply over a whole year for five minutes and 20 seconds. The industry average mentioned in the question</p>

	<p>across England is five minutes. So, whilst it's not the most ambitious plan in the industry, it isn't too far off.</p> <p>We do have strong investment plans about improving our network resilience, improving and reducing the amount of bursts that occur on our network over the next five-year period through a major replacement program which we've not had in the previous 10 to 15 years. We know we need to do more to improve in this area, and as we do more we will then compound benefits to see a reduction in interruptions to supply over time. The required investment in mains replacement is in the five-year plan but it is at least a 10-to-15-year piece of work that we will need to conduct, to replace post-war pipes that we have across our network. We have a significantly high proportion of those in comparison to the industry.</p> <p>So, whilst on a comparative basis it may seem like we will be behind the rest of the industry on supply interruptions, we do have some catching-up to do to replace our old infrastructure. That is something that we are balancing in terms of customer bills and performance.</p> <p>So, whilst we are behind the pack, we have a strong plan to improve that over the 10-to-15-year period ahead and still making an ambitious 25% reduction in the next five years.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>One of the big users of water nationally is agriculture for irrigation, much needed in drought years for crops like potatoes. We have been pushing for farm reservoirs to be created, because it will take a lot of pressure off your infrastructure. If farmers and landowners can build farm reservoirs and store water during times, as we have now, the wettest October on record for use in the summer. We are going to get increasingly long periods of dry water and we urgently need you. We have an urgent need for the government to step up and help support farmers and landowners to build these reservoirs and give them some grant aid to do it. The whole point of above ground storage is that it will also reduce the need for abstraction by farmers. Lots of farmers and landowners have abstraction licenses and use them, and if they can turn those off because they've got above ground storage then that's a big advantage.</p> <p>One thing that we look at when we do our water resource management is about looking forward to the next 50-year period and beyond regarding what our different options to use water in a different way. What is being mentioned there is an exact example of what is not currently in our plan. We did some work with colleagues over in Israel not so long ago, which looks at that different types of networks</p>

	<p>that they have. So, they have a water supply network to everyone's homes and equally they have a completely different network for agriculture and irrigation because these are the right things to do for areas that are under water stress. So, I think in terms of future approaches, some of the options we have which we will implement in the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years for water resources are absolutely around groundwater, and how we utilise that. But there are different ways that we can look at it as the example you mentioned.</p> <p>We also work actively with farmers across the region to help them with things like different planting and different drill and other techniques to ensure that they can keep the water in the ground for longer. It helps us in 2 ways. First, they don't then need as much water for irrigation, but also it slows the flow coming into our systems downstream.</p> <p>So, we find it useful in both ways. And if you have any colleagues who want detail of that we are very happy to share.</p>
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Theme 2: Wastewater and storm overflows

<p>12.</p>	<p>I live out near Hornsea, in East Yorkshire, and I'm wondering when we're going to be able to fully separate the surface water drains from the sewage drains. I'm an open water swimmer, and I tried to complete the 'one dip a day challenge' set up by Surfers Against Sewage during October. There were many days, unfortunately, where I was unable to because of sewage releases. So, I want to know when we're going to solve this problem once and for all.</p> <p>One of the things we have done is focus our investment in the next five years on our bathing waters because we know how important it is in Yorkshire.</p> <p>We have already done a lot resulting in Hornsea achieving pretty good water quality results. There is obviously more to do, and we have set out targets for improvement over the next five years, and then to 2050, however our targets for bathing waters are coming earlier which will make a huge difference. It is not possible to commit to zero given the nature of our combined sewers, but we have got serious improvements down to less than two per bathing water season.</p> <p>The heart of the challenge is about surface water separation. Re-plumbing Yorkshire is a huge infrastructure challenge for us but also for the North. It is the same across the Pennines: together we have the burden of over half the improvement needed mainly because of the way our towns and cities have developed over time. What we want to do in our overflow program for the next five years is at least achieve</p>
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	<p>20% through nature-based or green-blue solutions which does focus on surface water separation. We think that gives a sustainable benefit for the region; it is the right thing to do, and it frees up capacity. But the solutions do take some time to work. So, we set ourselves a minimum target to get over 20%. This is a long 25-year program, but we aim to make some progress in the next five years.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>In 2011 we gave Yorkshire Water £110m to invest in improving the water on Yorkshire beaches. We were promised the best bathing water in Europe. 10 years on we can see this has failed. We have storm outfalls discharging even in light rain, beaches still rated poor and blue flag beaches testing 1,000's times over safe standards. I run a surf business and if I had known the level of failure ahead, I would have closed years ago. Given this track record how can we trust investments will be effective?</p> <p>First, it is important to set out the improvement that we have made which hopefully will give you that confidence.</p> <p>Great progress has been made since the previous bathing water investment was put in place: 16 of 18 of our Yorkshire beaches are good or excellent, and, in fact in the most recent 2022 classification, the results were the best ever.</p> <p>We have invested the £110 million between 2010 and 2015 to raise standards. But we are down to the two beaches, where we seem to face some sticky multi agency / multi stakeholder challenges.</p> <p>Scarborough: as you know out of the two beaches, one has excellent water quality in the north and poor in the south. And that is similar to Bridlington as well.</p> <p>We cannot do this on our own and that is why we are funding with other partners to investigate the causes of the poor bathing water quality. It is complex.</p> <p>It is difficult to correlate between storm overflows and poor bathing water quality at Scarborough south: looking back at 2022 on some of those overflows, we add a fivefold improvement in spill reduction. Yet the bathing water quality deteriorated.</p> <p>There is more to this than just pointing at a storm overflow. And you know, we have just concluded our assessment of this recent bathing water season in terms of overflow operations on the coast, and despite the July rainfall they were operating on average for less than 1% of the time. So, it is not the case that they are operating all the time. That said, we know that there's a new standard to achieve on coastal overflows. And that is why we are looking to focus our investment on</p>

	<p>those really sensitive areas: the bathing beaches, the current inland bathing water and potential inland bathing waters. The main part of our investment on the environmental program will be focused on Scarborough and Scarborough south.</p> <p>We will do our bit and we are very much working with others about what else can be done too.</p> <p>We have spent £50 million in Scarborough on pumping capacity at Scalby Mills. We've invested in treatment capacity at Scarborough wastewater treatment works, storage capacity at Wyecroft and at Toll House which are two different storm overflows, and storm water treatment at Scarborough South sewage treatment works to cover all the bases. We have also recently had a meeting with North Yorkshire County Council with the Environment Agency and others in Scarborough to talk about that. North Yorkshire County Council also had some additional work done to see whether they could understand what was driving the challenges in Scarborough South Beach with the University of Durham; and their review has been inconclusive.</p> <p>So, there is more work to be done by all of us to understand what is happening. There are two theories: one is that there's something in the harbour that is discharging, then coming out onto the beach, but this needs further work. The other theory is that stuff is coming round in a swirl somehow. We need to understand more but nobody has the facts. We have spent a lot of money, and we will continue to work with our colleagues and partners to really get underneath this because we, like you, want Scarborough South Beach to be an excellent beach.</p>
14.	<p>I'm particularly concerned about the dry dumping that must have happened last year, which was a drought year, when, just in Richmond - a tiny part of the Swale - there were over 371 dumps of sewage or untreated sewage in our river. On average that was about 3h per dump. Now we have to assume that some proportion of those dumps were actually not lawful, because dry dumping isn't lawful. Therefore, my question is, why should customers in Richmond pay water bills to cover unlawful actions that are being taken by Yorkshire Water?</p> <p>We are with you on this as we do not want to have issues that are not legal. It isn't our approach. So, we will look at the particular data for Richmond.</p> <p>We would find it surprising to find that is not legal. The reason for that is that we have done lots of work on all our storm overflows and put</p>

	<p>together the plan together with the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to analyse and put together the storm overflow reduction plan to ensure that we are staying within our permits and our limits.</p> <p>Regarding dry overflows, one of the things that we found is that sometimes there is discharge several days after a rain event due to the catchment bringing the water to the sewer and the storm overflow later than when the rain comes. We don't know if that is the case specifically in Richmond. But overall, we have found that there is this disconnect between when it rains and when the water comes out of the storm overflows, so it's not always a dry spill as it has been defined. It is because the water comes through later, and we need to understand that in full detail to make sure that all the work we are doing to improve the outcomes does not depend on whether it's a dry day or a wet day.</p>
15.	<p>I live right above Scarborough Bay. So, I would share the concerns of the people that have recorded an awful lot of discharges in the summer when the skies were blue, the beaches were packed, and it was actually hot, warm, sunny days in Scarborough. I would also be interested that data on spillages when it's not actually raining. It is a bit of a sad joke that if it's actually spitting in the slightest that there is always a discharge from North Bay.</p> <p>Actually if you have a look at North Bay, which does have excellent water quality, but you just look at the number of discharges from North Bay, and then compare it with Filey to the south and Whitby to the north, which obviously is getting the same weather: Filey has got 15 discharges this year and Scarborough North Bay has 92? What is the reason for this? I know investment is going in, but there is a massive problem in Scarborough.</p> <p>There is a huge amount of interest in Scarborough as it is a really complicated question. One of the things different about Scarborough is the nature of its topography compared to the topography further down the coast which does make a difference in relation to how the water runs through the town. We hope that these 92 spills still have not affected the quality of the bathing water in the north.</p> <p>We are surprised at the reference to spills when it was dry last summer, so we'll also look at that data specifically around mid-August.</p> <p>Each town is different on the coast. The model that was developed looked at all the potential causes of poor bathing water quality and</p>

	<p>allocated a proportionate improvement. So, it was not the case that all storm overflows at the time had to get to a level of spills per year. Clearly, that has changed now with the Environment Act targets and our investment on the coast will get us there. The reason why North has proportionately more spills is because it has more overflows directly and indirectly coming into the North Bay, but it still achieves excellent bathing water quality.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>I am from the Clean River group. I have a question about de-combination. Over the years when we have been talking to Yorkshire Water, we have been having discussions about various bits of where there would be new housing developments where the rainwater goes down one pipe and the sewer water goes down another pipe, but then combines into the sewer and goes into the river. So we have had discussions about whether it was possible to look at de-combining those. But also, are there any plans, generally in Yorkshire for when big new housing estates are built to de-combine the rainwater from the civil water to try and establish now a better system to reduce the overall flow into our water courses?</p> <p>We have touched upon this a little bit earlier about the re-plumbing of Yorkshire which is quite a big undertaking to do it retrospectively. But we do need to do that and part of our program is to indeed go into some of those overflows and decouple ideally through a nature-based arrangement, such as sustainable urban drainage.</p> <p>Regarding new developments, we want to be more influential in terms of trying to get the surface water out or get the sustainable urban drainage in. We are seeing greater take up and our developer services team is working very closely with developers on how we encourage more sustainable urban drainage, and we are seeing growth in it.</p> <p>We are coming at it from two ends: one is obviously to do it retrospectively for where we have got some challenges but also for the new developments themselves.</p> <p>In terms of new growth investment, we can see local authority plans in the long term where significant developments are going to land and we can plan for that quite easily. In fact, for the next five years, we have about £38m of growth funding, which is to do exactly that: highlight those developments, and make sure that we have a sustainable solution.</p> <p>What's more difficult for us is the urban creep which occurs when property owners want to extend their house or convert grass to paving which creates more surface water into the system. That is a bit more</p>

	<p>difficult to detect. We will have to retrograde and reverse some of that in our infrastructure as part of the overflow improvement program.</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>In order to reduce flooding and pollution from sewerage systems, what measures are Yorkshire Water taking to reduce or remove highway drainage flows from the combined sewer network and replace it with sustainable urban drainage systems?</p> <p>Surface water and highway drainage are key issues, and we have to work hand in hand with local authority partners to identify highway drainage issues of risk and correct those. Yorkshire Water cannot do this on its own, but it is part of the solution toolkit to tackling the overflow challenge that we have in Yorkshire.</p> <p>Within the 243 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) that were getting to the new standard, about 20% will be nature-based solutions. We have a really great example at Roundhay Park from this five-year period where we have introduced Rain Gardens in partnership with Lead City Council as an alternative to deploying storage on the network. It brings some amenity value to the local area and captures some of the runoff from the roads as well as some of the surface water coming from adjacent properties. These are the solutions that we want to see even more of in the future.</p> <p>About working in partnership; we are doing that across the county. Sheffield is another place where we have done a lot of work with the City Council to make sure that when they are doing work on the roads and we are doing work on the water mains for example, we do that together, and we find ways of separating as much as we can at that point.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>I am in Pickering which is very close to Costa Beck. You said that the nature-based solutions would be done where it represents value for money. But that sounds rather like a rather imprecise aspiration to me rather than a costed commitment.</p> <p>The recent high court decision that DEFRA policy has failed in its duty to restore and protect waterways from pollution under the Water Framework Directive, specifically at the Costa Beck. That has huge implications for sewage treatment facilities nationwide. Will this encourage Yorkshire Water to commit to ring-fenced funding for reducing fast runoff of surface water (slowing the flow) through nature-based solutions in your forthcoming Asset Management Period?</p>

	<p>In relation to the nature-based solutions, we are with you and that is what we want to do. However, we are not allowed to commit to it under the way we work with the Environment Agency and with the Department until we are certain that the work that we do will deliver the outcomes that we have to sign up to.</p> <p>We cannot get certainty in the planning period, but we have made a commitment that at least 20% of our work will be done in that way. We also have a commitment with them that we will go back when we have ideas for doing things differently. A good example recently is at Killing Hall, where we designed a new nature-based solution which we got approval for during the period. So, we are hopeful that we will still deliver all these improvements, and in most cases move from a concrete based solution to a nature-based solution.</p> <p>We are really committed to this. We are planning 18 low carbon wastewater treatment plants in the next five years. We have a brilliant case study in South Yorkshire, at Clifton which in comparison to conventional solutions has delivered 55% lower whole life carbon and a 240% increase in biodiversity. So, we want to see much more of those. But it takes a bit of time and a bit more careful planning.</p>
19.	<p>How will this week's landmark finding in the judicial review of the management of Costa Beck River affect Yorkshire Water prioritisation and dedicated funding of Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in the wider catchment as key investments for improvements to river health?</p> <p>In reference to the Pickering Fishing Association against DEFRA and the Environment Agency, it was judged that there had been a failure to reviewing and updating the measures required to achieve the environmental objectives of Costa Beck.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water was not involved in the case, however if as a result regulations and permits change which has implications for Yorkshire Water, we will respond and act accordingly as we always do.</p> <p>From a Costa Beck perspective, the data we have seen from the Environment Agency's water framework directive portal doesn't suggest that storm overflows are a reason for the water quality challenge.</p> <p>We understand that there are implications for the sector as a whole.</p>
20.	<p>We have welcomed the Nature First Commitment document very much. But we felt that we'd like more detail on the plans for the delivery of that, because we've talked quite a bit about funding, but we'd like to hear more about capacity and knowledge building</p>

	<p>within Yorkshire Water. We're aware that you've recently lost a huge number of staff. So is Yorkshire Water going to be able to take a proactive approach and in what timescales?</p> <p>It is true that we have had staff turnover, mostly because the skills we have at Yorkshire Water are market leading and people are using their new skills to attract higher salaries and are moving on. One of the things we are making sure is that we are still a great employer, and we are working really hard to make sure that people want to stay with us in Yorkshire, because the sorts of things we have been doing are innovative.</p> <p>We do things never been done before in the UK such as the example we mentioned at Clifton. And there are others like that where we are making real change. We are going to keep doing that and one of the benefits is having had these experiences, we have got knowledge and learning in the organisation. We retain the really good people who have been driving that and we will work with them to do it elsewhere as well.</p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>My question is regarding storm overflows and the regulatory assessment of those since 2018 to classify them as satisfactory or substandard particularly in relation to the River Swale. I'm assuming those assessments have happened but where could we get the results of those? And what is the plan to then increase any capacity that might be needed or de-combine where you can? And I know you've had some information that you've shared about de-combining, but specifically to the River Swale.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we have not got the answer for every river in Yorkshire tonight, however, we will provide an answer on those overflows for the Swale in reference to the storm overflow assessment framework.</p> <p>The broader question is whether we will be investing where there is potentially a base maintenance challenge. Within wastewater, we have £1.8bn to maintain all of our infrastructure and assets, and where it is demonstrable that we have maintenance challenges - which may or may not include the Swale -we will be looking to direct that base maintenance to those assets to improve their function.</p>

	<p>In addition, our public affairs team are in touch with Save the Swale group and will be able to provide further information as we want to be open about this.</p> <p><i>Information added post event:</i></p> <p>We have been increasing our EDM data coverage since 2020. Our interactive map is available on our website here which should allow our customers to get familiar with the data we do have.</p>
22.	<p>As the chair of the Nidd Action group, this question concerns the two river Nidd catchments. It seems clear that the issues we have to do with pollution, and particularly sewage pollution, are connected with the many sewage treatment works which thankfully are there but also the complex sewage network. I'm not convinced that there is knowledge within Yorkshire Water of the underground connections that join all of the sources of sewage and storm water and water for our 55 combined sewage overflows. I don't know about the modelling that's been done and my group would very much like to be reassured that there's a competence and an understanding and validated models. With 55 CSOs and miles of underground pipes there should be a pattern emerging over five years of where the problems occur and what could be put right. There must be a way of linking the demand and the supply with the network.</p> <p>My question is that I'd like Yorkshire Water to engage with groups like the Nidd Action group, who often have previous Yorkshire Water or Environment Agency staff as well as very knowledgeable professionals who'd like to join in, understand and trust Yorkshire Water.</p> <p>We very much want to work in partnership with organisations like the Nidd Action Group. You have heard the focus of our improvement will actually be on the Nidd.</p> <p>We do have a modelling function within the business whose only job is to produce drainage area models and plans which look at all the interconnectivity, the performance, the interactions with the water environment, as well as how our customer and business properties connect to our drainage, sewerage infrastructure and meet up with pumping stations and combined storm overflows along the way</p>

	<p>before ultimately they end up a single wastewater treatment works that discharges to the river.</p> <p>We would be very happy to talk you through that process and go through some of the key features and key bits of information of what the models are telling us about those systems.</p>
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Theme 3: A healthy environment including net zero

<p>23.</p>	<p>We have serious issues in Wetherby with sewage outflows and fish habitats being destroyed. When Taylor Wimpey were talking about building on the racecourse approach site, we asked about the sewage treatment works, and whether there was sufficient capacity and everybody assured us there was sufficient capacity. Well, clearly there isn't if there already are sewage outfalls before the 1,000 properties have been built.</p> <p>The biggest concern in Wetherby is the destruction of the biodiversity in the river. A lot of the spawning grounds have been destroyed by the sewage outfalls. And so, we really want to know what is going to be done to improve the situation in Wetherby before they even start building 1,000 new homes.</p> <p>When we invest in assets and infrastructure, we do future proof our infrastructure to take account of new developments both for climate change and for known development plans as published by the local authority. Our improvements take into consideration both those things, and that is a requirement of the drainage and wastewater management plan that we have had to produce, which is a long-term approach to drainage planning.</p> <p>It is a little bit more difficult for more bespoke niche developments which might cause creep over time. This is an area where we would require using our base maintenance funding if our performance starts to identify that there was potentially capacity issues.</p> <p>For instance, we saw a trend during Covid, where more flow was received at our wastewater treatment works which we were not expecting at the time in dry weather. So what we are going to be doing is investing, improving our dry weather capacity at some of those wastewater treatment works to respond.</p> <p>In relation to Wetherby, we have talked about our overflow program focusing on bathing water areas of the region and the potential new bathing water areas of the country, and we have made a provision within our plan to ensure that the Wharfe at Wetherby has its overflows targeted for improvement to take to the new standards for</p>
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	<p>inland bathing water. Should an application for bathing water status be successful, we will have the investment ready to go there.</p> <p>But how long is that going to take for that improvement? As you will know, we've applied for bathing water status and didn't get it. And we're pretty certain that the reason we didn't get it is because the rules around bathing water status essentially apply to seaside towns, Ilkley being an exception, because it's got a very large beach that can accommodate very large numbers of people whereas at Weatherby the beach is really quite small.</p> <p>If it is successful, then we have got the plans identified and it will be delivered in the next five years. The point about the complexity of bathing water regulation is a question for DEFRA and perhaps the Environment Agency. We know it does feel quite challenging at times to get through it however we are aware that the potential growth of inland bathing sites is causing some reflection in the regulatory circles.</p>
<p>24.</p>	<p>Given the changes in our climate, I have not heard or seen any references with respect to the building of new reservoirs to reduce the need for water restrictions during hot periods?</p> <p>This issue has come up during the 2022 period when the country was in drought for a period of time and there was a very public conversation about reservoirs within the industry.</p> <p>We have written a recent water resource management plan for the next 25 years, which does not necessarily talk about new reservoirs, but talks about new ground water sources that we will require across the next five and 25-year period. We do not have the construction of any reservoirs within our current plan for the next five to 25-year period, however, we do have the introduction of new ground water resources and transfer of river sources from the north of Yorkshire down into our area over the next 25-year period. This is our long-term modelling about growth and demand.</p> <p>First of all, our way to address this is to reduce leakage by 50% by 2050 and ensure customers use about 110 litres per person per day by 2050, so that will help with some of the growth challenges that were mentioned earlier as well. This will put downward pressure on reducing demand from our network. However, we do have forecasting growth of around 700,000 people in the coming decades and we have to make sure we have the supplies available.</p>

	<p>So river sources and ground water sources are one of our future resources that we will be utilising to close the deficit within that plan. We will be doing a lot of new transmission and distribution, so holding treated water within the supply system and having new transmission pipelines across Yorkshire for treated water resources.</p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>There is undeniable evidence of the discharge and its impact on the South Bay One of the questions is that we're all aware that McCain is a major contributor to the problems. And in that series of questions that I posed you is that the element of potato starch that's discharged into the bay and that potato starch is an ideal carrier as a nutrient for bacteria. It's unknown that in that discharge from McCain is [...] and e coli so it's no wonder that the South Bay gets the rating in terms of the blue flag that it's getting.</p> <p>On the video being shown it looks like the slightly browner patch and the blue patch stop halfway down the south beach, and McCains are to the south of the south beach.</p> <p>They are doing a lot of investment themselves and by the end of this year they will have put in place their own treatment of their effluent which discharges to the south of the beach. This illustrates the complexity of the situation that requires all partners to work together. We are doing that because we actively agree with you that we do not want the south beach to be in this position.</p> <p>The Wheatcroft Long Sea outfall, as it is known was replaced in 2015, 2016. Did Yorkshire Water pay for that replaced pipeline or did McCain? For a company like McCain that reputedly makes a profit of £1bn a year, it would be shocking that the people over in Richmond or in Harrogate are paying for a replacement for a private company.</p> <p>The Wheatcroft Long Sea Outfall is a Yorkshire Water asset; therefore the cost of replacement was covered by Yorkshire Water.</p>
<p>26.</p>	<p>I have read in the Ofwat Water Company Performance Report for 2022/2023 that Yorkshire Water had £497m of its wastewater enhancement pot still not spent and I wondered why this would be?</p>

	<p>We currently have two enormous projects for reducing phosphorus going from our wastewater treatment works into the rivers and both projects come to an end this year and next year.</p> <p>We know that the way we provide for the spend is back ended and we have known that for a while. The other reason why it was back ended over the five years is because we worked hard to improve the efficiency with which we were doing the design, and to make sure that we were doing it in the least bad way for the environment with good use of concrete. So we have worked really hard to get the designs much better and more efficient, but they will deliver in the next 2 years, and that is why it is right at the end.</p> <p>So this £497m is that still unspent?</p> <p>We have spent a lot more, and this year we will be spending more than our yearly allowance, and significantly more than the allowance next year, which will catch it up.</p>
<p>Theme 4: Affordable bills and customer service</p>	
<p>27.</p>	<p>My question is about what is going to happen to help disabled people. We had a problem with the water, we were out of water for 2, 3 days. I was given no help at all. So is that going to improve or is it going to stay the same?</p> <p>We are really sorry to hear that you did not receive any help. First, we need to make sure that you are on our priority services register. But we will investigate because that should not have been the case, we should have been there with you.</p> <p>One of the things we have in our plan for the next five years is more of that. We are doing more work to ensure that the quality of our support is extensive. We have two water treatment works that are very large, one for Leeds and one for Bradford. At the moment we do not have the capacity to deal with the distribution of bottled water for people in an emergency situation if either of those go down, so we have worked well on developing our plan, and that is what is included for the next five year period. However, it should not have stopped us getting to you this time, so we will have a look at the details, and we will investigate why.</p> <p>Another issue is that we have been behind on the number of people on our priority services register versus our targets. This year we have caught up and we will be on track at the end of this year. 9.1% of people</p>

	<p>across Yorkshire are on our list, but it means that we also have to provide them with the service that they need when they ask for it.</p>
<p>28.</p>	<p>I want to know why the burden of upgrading the infrastructure should fall on us the consumers after your shareholders still get dividends. Investments should come from Yorkshire Water and its shareholders, and not us the customers.</p> <p>Our current shareholders have not taken a dividend in the last 7 years, and they are not planning to take one over the remainder of this planning period either. However, it is also true to say that the shareholders in the company have to borrow the money to enable us to make those investments, and then we and customers of Yorkshire Water – as we all do when we borrow money to take out a mortgage on our property – pay back those investments over the life of the assets.</p> <p>What we are talking about here is a significant increase in investment over the next five years that will actually be spread out across the life of those future assets. It is worth bearing in mind that in terms of the past five year planning periods – and we certainly cannot speak on behalf of the entire industry and other companies – Yorkshire Water has always invested all of the funding provided through the price reviews which we have recovered from customers. So it is not as though we have reduced the investment and diverted money to investors. All the money that we have been allowed to recover from customers through their bills has been invested in the assets in earlier investment period. The reality is, which we have talked about earlier in the context of storm overflows, that clearly expectations have changed and the requirements on us as a company have changed. We now have legal obligations under the storm overflow discharge reduction plan that sets hard, rigid targets for us to be able to intervene and invest on storm overflows. That is exactly what we are going to be doing.</p> <p>Those obligations did not exist in the past however we were investing in other priorities at the time. That is what we are projecting in the plan, the levels of investment and ultimately paying through customer bills.</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>Given that Finding the Future have reported that “shareholders have taken 15p in every pound paid for water...there was nothing left for reinvestment at all” (June 2023) how can you justify a 40% increase in bill between now and 2030?</p>

It is very difficult to justify an increase in bills. We have to look at it from the perspective of what we have to invest to improve the situation over the long term, and what we have sought to do that in a way that spreads it over time, and also supports the vulnerable in society to be able to pay.

Also, bills have been falling in real terms over the last five years. So it is a real balance, and we recognise that the timing is not optimal, and it would perhaps have been easier if we had had a flat approach over 10 years or less of a steep increase. But that isn't the way the regulation has worked, and we have to find a way to pay for what people want now.

It is being stated that the shareholders are not receiving dividends but it is our understanding that interest payments have been made on intercompany loans. Could you explain this as this seems to be an alternative way of moving money out of the company that could have been invested in improvements?

There are payments which are effectively covering the interest costs for investments that have been made already. Using the house analogy again, borrowing money on the basis of a mortgage, we then repay the money we have borrowed as well as the interest on top of that. Inter-company loan is around repaying the interest or money that has been borrowed to enable the investment to take place and not in relation to any kind of dividends from money being diverted from investment or dividends from out-performance. As we know, we have gone through a challenging period so there has not been dividends from outperformance, because we have been spending all of the money that we have been able to recover from customers to try to improve and make gains in performance improvement.

Supplementary questions and answers

The section below covers answers to the questions that were submitted by customers and stakeholders during our YWYS event which were not answered live, as well as questions that were submitted to CCW following the event.

Question No.	Question and Answer
Theme 1: Secure, safe and clean water supply	
30.	<p>Does Yorkshire Water consider it has submitted a “sensible, balanced plan” in its Draft Determination?</p> <p>This is a very big challenge, and we need to get the balance right. We need to make sure that we invest where we think we will have the biggest impact and we focused on those areas in Yorkshire where we think that is the case such as the rivers and the coast and places where we think there's special interest that people want real improvement in the outcomes. We have not worked on just targeting a spill reduction, instead trying to focus on the areas with the most societal and environmental benefits. And at the same time we have said we think that's a deliverable programme which is just about manageable within the bill increase. We don't think it was right to go further.</p>
31.	<p>How can a member of the public get access to the data generated by river water quality monitors, for example at Killinghall CSO. Is it / will it be monitored and if so when will it be possible to access the data ?</p> <p>We are required by March 2030 to have installed continuous river water monitors at 25% of our qualifying discharges. By the same date we are also required to “develop and implement the ability to publish continuous water quality monitoring data in near-real time in a standardised format”. As part of our business plan submission, we have requested funding to allow us to satisfy this requirement. We are not at a point in the process yet where we have decided which 25% of discharges will be monitored as this will require more detailed investigation and work.</p>
32.	<p>I have a meter, why am I still receiving estimated bills?</p> <p>This should not be the case, we read meters approximately every six months and customers are billed on the water consumed. It may be</p>

	that there is an issue with your meter that needs repairing, please contact us and we will help and repair or replace it if there is an issue.
33.	<p>A lack of metering on many properties handicaps the detection of leaks by all water companies. What can Yorkshire Water do towards pushing the UK government towards compulsory metering, because without these, it is difficult to detect leakage on private supply pipes of non-metered properties?</p> <p>We are supportive of a change in policy to compulsory metering and are working alongside Water UK and DEFRA on consultations to assess the benefits and costs to customers to moving to that position. We forecast to be at 80% metering in approximately 2035 without a policy change.</p>
34.	<p>How are you planning to offer smart meters to those of us who cannot currently get on a standard meter? The house I live in is tied to five other houses, the engineers claim to be unable to find the meter for these houses and therefore cannot separate them to give each house an individual meter. How do you plan to rectify this?</p> <p>Where properties are on a joint supply we are unable to fit a meter outside at the boundary where we would like to, however we can and do fit a meter internally within the property where it is practicable and not disruptive. This is also dependent upon where the pipe runs in the property or building.</p>
35.	<p>Will you ensure any on-farm reservoirs are designed as nature-based solutions that provide additional green infrastructure benefits as well as water storage?</p> <p>We will always look for blue-green and nature-based solutions as part of our six capitals approach, ensuring the right solution and outcome is achieved in the most sustainable manner. As an example, we recently delivered a nature-based treatment wetland in Doncaster delivering improved environmental conditions, biodiversity and a 55% reduction in the whole-life carbon footprint.</p>
36.	<p>You talk about needing water resource for significant numbers of additional people in the next decade. Slow The Flow (STF) submitted a question about water butts (Please can you provide the number of water butts you have installed, or caused to be installed, in the four months since the previous YWYS event) – surely encouraging appropriate use of rainwater and greywater</p>

	<p>would reduce the need for additional treated water? STF would be glad to work in partnership to encourage our audience to participate in a scheme whereby Yorkshire Water provide free water butts. Also how about subsidising other solutions such as use of toilets that use hand washing water to flush the toilet?</p> <p>Since the last YWYS event held in June, we have installed 515 water butts. Our current programme with water butts is working with customers in Hull/the East Coast, Ilkley and Roundhay in Leeds. However customers can contact us to get in touch about free water saving advice and packs with devices for their home.</p>
37.	<p>Are you working with builders of large numbers of new homes to collect rainwater from roofs for us in gardens etc.?</p> <p>Yes, we recently reviewed our environmental incentives for both water efficiency and sustainable drainage that we provide to developers in the Yorkshire Water region. If developers build domestic properties which are proven to consume less than 110 litres per person per day, they receive a 20% discount on their infrastructure connection charges. In addition, if the properties drain surface water to a soakaway or watercourse instead of an existing sewer there will be charged zero surface water infrastructure charges.</p> <p>In the 2025 to 2030 period, we intend to implement incentives for non-household business customers too.</p>
38.	<p>The ‘Living With Water’ programme has been mentioned any number of times throughout the documents as a success story. Why is it confined to Hull and not being rolled out across the region?</p> <p>The Living with Water Partnership is a collaboration between Yorkshire Water, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Environment Agency, each of which have responsibilities for managing different aspects of flood risk in the area.</p> <p>We do want to take the ambition and solutions communities in that area to the wider Yorkshire area, therefore we have created the ‘Connected by Water’ partnership in South Yorkshire with Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley and Sheffield City Council, the Environment Agency and South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority to reduce the risk and impact of flooding through water management and resilience improvements.</p>

Theme 2: Wastewater and storm overflows	
39.	<p>Are there any plans to include partial de-combination of sewage from rainwater in Ilkley?</p> <p>There isn't at the moment, however we are currently rolling out 200 water butts in Ilkley and Addingham as part of the innovation smart water networks project.</p> <p>These include 150 leaky water butts which have an overflow halfway up to allow them to drain back slowly to the network following rainfall, therefore reducing the impact on our network. The other 50 are smart water butts which have a valve that releases water ahead of a rainfall event to make the full capacity of the water butt available to store rainfall.</p> <p>The deployment of the water butts has been targeted around properties where we have monitoring in the sewer network. This will enable us to measure the impact of the installations and quantify the benefits of each type. Customers in these areas have been informed via a letter and Groundwork are doing the installation of the water butts on our behalf.</p>
40.	<p>Given the recent public and political attention given to storm overflows, largely due to the failed performance of those responsible for managing our wastewater systems, what exactly is Yorkshire Waters commitment and motivation to solving this issue and where do nature-based solutions sit within their programme?</p> <p>In relation to the nature-based solutions, we are with you and that is what we want to do. However, we are not allowed to commit to it under the way we work with the Environment Agency and with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), until we are certain that the work that we do will deliver the outcomes that we have to sign up to.</p> <p>We cannot get certainty in the planning period, but we have made a commitment that at least 20% of our work will be done in that way. We also have a commitment with them that we will go back when we have ideas for doing things differently. A good example recently is at Killing Hall, where we designed a new nature-based solution which we got approval for during the period. So, we are hopeful that we will still deliver all these improvements, and in most cases move from a concrete based solution to a nature-based solution.</p> <p>We are really committed to this. We are planning 18 low carbon wastewater treatment plants in the next five years. We have a</p>

	brilliant case study in South Yorkshire, at Clifton which in comparison to conventional solutions has delivered 55% lower whole life carbon and a 240% increase in biodiversity. We want to see much more of those solutions coming forward, but we are mindful that it takes a bit of time and a bit more careful planning.
41.	<p>Does Yorkshire Water lack the skills to implement nature-based solutions, and if so, why are they not working in partnership with landscape architects who do have the requisite skills and expertise?</p> <p>Yorkshire Water and our wider supply chain do not lack the skills to deliver nature-based solutions. We have been delivering peat restoration and working with farmers on sustainable land management for many years. As we have demonstrated during the 2020 to 2025 period, we have been innovatively leading the sector with our use of nature-based solutions right the way across all our activities, from our Future Foods Partnership through to end of pipe wastewater treatment with schemes like the Clifton Integrated Constructed Wetland. With both these examples we have worked with other partner organisations to ensure the schemes are right for the local setting. These are just two examples, our Nature First commitment will see Yorkshire Water increase the level of delivery of nature-based solutions even further, and we already have some exciting schemes coming through to fruition that demonstrate our commitment to this important solution. Keep an eye out for the Pudsey Beck wetland and the Ilkley wastewater treatment works upgrades along with many more. As we look to do more of this type of work, we will need to develop more skills within the local economy to support the nature-based solutions across their lifecycle. We are already working with organisations like the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) to look at developing the green skills the industry needs.</p>
42.	<p>The ‘Nature First commitment’ document notes “Our Nature First plans will see us target nature-based solutions where we already know they have the most benefit”. Please clarify what you mean by this – where do you believe they have the most benefit, and what research/hydraulic modelling have you done/are you embarking upon to inform decision making? Are you able to share any research findings?</p>

	<p>We have been delivering nature-based solutions for many years and we know that they have the most benefit for our customers where we are restoring natural ecosystems, for examples where we restore peat bogs or river systems and where we work with land managers in partnership to deliver catchment solutions. Catchment solutions mean that we build resilience into the water cycle, while also reducing the need for end of pipe infrastructure and the associated carbon emissions. In urban environments we tend to look more to the nature-based assets such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and constructed wetlands. The Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs) are published on our website and include hydraulic modelling of the whole of Yorkshire. The DWMPs are the starting point for identifying where you target sustainable drainage systems specifically and currently, we are building on the DWMPs to develop our 2025 to 2030 investment programme for sustainable drainage systems. In terms of research, we are currently working with UKWIR on two research projects including one which is the researching the best approach to modelling sustainable drainage systems and another which is looking at the carbon emission of the nature-based solutions. We also have our own programme of innovation work which includes property level nature-based solutions as well as learning from our already delivered nature-based solutions.</p>
43.	<p>How much of the planned £7.8bn investment as relates to the River Swale is for base operational capacity (for which we the customer have already paid) and how much is for enhancement?</p> <p>Our base programme is not finalised for 2025 to 2030. We take a risk-based approach to investment across our region as a whole and prioritise service and environmental improvements where the investment provides best value to our customers to manage risk and compliance. Over the next 18 months, we will be building our base plans for the early part of the 2025 to 2030 period so will have more certainty on where we may be investing on the River Swale. The enhancement investment in the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) comprises of 16 treatment schemes on the Swale totalling £46m in the 2025 to 2030 period. The schemes are a mixture of Phosphorous removal and ammonia reduction to remove nutrients and improve the health of the river. There are no overflow spill reduction schemes planned in the 2025 to 2030 period, however in the 2030 to 2035 period there is £69m planned which will be focused on</p>

	<p>green approaches such as surface water separation, infiltration reduction and sustainable urbane drainage systems.</p>
<p>44.</p>	<p>How confident are you in being able to deliver to schedule the proposed improvements, given the national resource challenge around overflows?</p> <p>We are investing £180m in the next two years to drive forward a big reduction in spills from our overflows. We are focusing this investment on the overflows that we know are spilling more than they should. This is in addition to the £1.27 billion investment we have outlined in our business plan for 2025–2030 to tackle overflows, which are subject to approval by Ofwat.</p> <p>Almost 100% of our overflows are monitored and that helps us to identify which ones we need to focus on.</p> <p>There are four options that we use for reducing discharges; creating storage in the system for the stormwater, separating surface water out, stopping infiltration, or making changes to other assets like our pumping stations so that we are passing forward the right flows. Separating surface water out could include creating SuDS, like in Roundhay, slowing the flow of water. We are also looking at water butts so that we can disconnect drainpipes from roofs and store the water for watering gardens instead of it going into our sewer system. We are going beyond the government’s storm overflow reduction plan, and we are already planning our largest ever environmental investment programme between 2025 and 2030.</p>
<p>45.</p>	<p>Why have you set your improvement in storm water overflows at 35% - why have you not been more ambitious – this is a key concern to people.</p> <p>This is a very big challenge, and we need to get the balance right for all customers. We need to make sure that we invest where we think we will have the biggest impact in the first five years of our improvement programme, hence why we have focused on those areas in Yorkshire such as the rivers, the coast and places where we think there is special interest that people want real improvement in the outcomes. We have not worked on just targeting a spill reduction, instead trying to focus on the areas with the most societal and environmental benefit. We have said this is important to us to get outcomes that matter to our customers. And at the same time, we have said we think it is a deliverable programme which is just about</p>

	manageable within the proposed bill increase. We don't think it was right to go further in this first five-year period.
46.	<p>Current levels of sewage discharges into all watercourses indicate that current capacity of sewage treatment facilities (STFs) is well short of that required. What will be Yorkshire Water's policy on allowing new connections for often significant housing development without commensurate increase at STFs capacity.</p> <p>From a networks perspective: as a sewerage provider, Yorkshire Water have a duty to accept foul only flows (dry weather) into the current sewer network. If a new connection to the network is likely to cause detriment, this is placed on a database for further investigation. If the investigation determines further work is required to allow capacity in the existing network, this is then put forward for capital investment. In relation to storm overflow operations during wet weather, developers are required to manage their wet weather flows by discharging these to a watercourse or attenuating flows on site.</p> <p>From a sewage treatment works perspective: we are consulted on developments and assess the increased predicted flow from population against our consented Dry Weather Flow permit and the impact of the additional biological load that would be received at sewage treatment works. If the Dry Weather Flow permit will be exceeded and/or if the biological capacity is insufficient, then capital investment will be planned and delivered as required.</p>
47.	<p>With reference to sewage overflow monitoring, there was mention of event duration monitoring. Will this also include quantity of discharge?</p> <p>No, it will not include quantity of discharge. Policy makers have decided against the requirement to install volumetric measurement on overflows, possibly because of a lack of direct benefit to customers and the fact that the overflow spill standard is consistent for overflows regardless of size.</p>
48.	<p>More detail please about what work is being undertaken at Killinghall CSO ?</p> <p>Killinghall CSO is not included in the AMP8 list for improvements as part of the Storm Overflow programme. However there are planned works at Killinghall wastewater treatment works (WwTW) in the current investment period. The project is to upgrade Killinghall</p>

	<p>WwTW to comply with regulatory requirements for WINEP and address the hydraulic flow overloading.</p>
49.	<p>Thousands of sewage overflows in Ryedale last year was reported how is that going be sorted?</p> <p>Ultimately, any overflow that spills more than the new regulatory target of ten times per year for inland rivers will be required by 2050 to be improved. As mentioned, we are investing £180m in the next two years to drive forward a big reduction in spills from our overflows. We are focusing this investment on the overflows that we know are spilling more than they should.</p> <p>This is in addition to the £1.27 billion investment we have outlined in our business plan for 2025-2030 to tackle overflows, which are subject to approval by Ofwat.</p> <p>By the end of this calendar year, 100% of our overflows will be monitored and that helps us to identify which ones we need to focus on.</p>
50.	<p>With regard to the stated, planned 50% reduction in sewage pollution, how is this measured? Is this by number of EDM spills, or by volume discharged? Where do you anticipate the 50% reduction coming from, sewer overflows or spills from treatment works? How does this fit in with the discharge consent compliance review which Nicola promised in summer 2022?</p> <p>It is measured by the number of pollution incidents that are either self-reported to the Environment Agency and/or by the Environment Agency to Yorkshire Water. Discharge events from storm overflows are in the vast majority of cases not deemed as pollution incidents, the definition of what constitutes a pollution incident is decided by the Environment Agency. The improvement will come from a combination of improvements to wastewater treatment works, sewage pumping stations and the wastewater sewer network.</p>
51.	<p>Have Yorkshire Water built any new wastewater treatment plants in the West Yorkshire area in the last 50 years and if so where were they built?</p> <p>We have not constructed any new sewage treatment works on green field sites in the last 50 years in the West Yorkshire Area.</p>

	<p>If not have they increased capacity at existing sites?</p> <p>Yes, we have had an ongoing programme of capital investment over the last 50 years to increase the capacity of our sewage treatment works based on projected population growth and where our discharge permit consents have become more stringent.</p>
52.	<p>I understand that water companies have a licence to discharge sewage into the sea in “extreme circumstances “but nowhere on either the environment agency or Yorkshire Water websites can I find any reference to a definition of what constitutes these extreme circumstances. Nor indeed is there any reference to the terms of these licences in relation to use of operating procedures, any mitigations employed or any assessment of impact after the event. So what is the process involved in deciding to discharge untreated sewage into the sea?</p> <p>Wastewater assets have an environmental permit which sets out the conditions in which they can operate. If they have a storm overflow, the permit should set out the conditions in which much be followed to use the overflow. Typically, storm overflows set out a flow that must be passed forwards to the wastewater treatment works before a discharge of untreated wastewater can occur and be associated with rainfall and/or snow melt.</p>
53.	<p>Please can you explain how the proposal for Ilkley meets the innovation promised on p.12 of the Business Plan ('by considering innovation and efficiency, we will be able to deliver the outcomes our customers have asked for through innovation and efficiency to accelerate our performance improvements') as the current plans seem to be based solely on concrete storage and not to include membrane-based solutions as previously discussed? The original submission in March was for £71million which has decreased to £61.5million, what does this cover exactly?</p> <p>The proposals submitted within our PR24 submission and Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery Project continue to evolve throughout the detailed design phase where we continue to explore opportunities to incorporate innovation within our solutions. Our solution at Ilkley is required to include both storm overflow discharge reduction as well as increased and enhanced treatment capacity. Once we have developed our solutions for site, we will update the community.</p>

	<p>The reduction in costs referenced in the question reflects the removal of further upstream tertiary treatment installations at Grassington, Draughton and Beamsley sewer treatment works (STW). Ultra-violet disinfection units have been installed within our current investment period 2020-2030, and any further requirements for these assets will be investigated through our proposed bathing water investigation on the River Wharfe.</p>
<p>54.</p>	<p>Please can you provide details of the plan for phosphorus stripping in Ilkley?</p> <p>Phosphorus removal will be provided at Ilkley sewer treatment works during the 2025-2030 period under the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) as the waterbody is to be designated as <i>sensitive to eutrophication</i> due to phosphorus combined with the fact that the population served by Ilkley STW is greater than 10,000. The requirement is that the final effluent shall contain no greater than 2mg/l phosphorus as an annual average. This is most likely to be achieved by the installation of single point chemical dosing. This scheme has a regulatory date of 31/03/2030.</p>
<p>55.</p>	<p>Since the implementation the Sewerage Sector Guidance and Design & Construction Guidance in 2019, has Yorkshire Water actively engaged developers to design sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that meet the criteria of a sewer?</p> <p>And if so how many SuDS designed as sewers has Yorkshire Water adopted under s.104 Water Industry Act?</p> <p>Has Yorkshire Water and its capital delivery partners designed any SuDS that qualify as sewers as part of any capital schemes?</p> <p>In consultation responses to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) we expect developers to use sustainable surface water drainage systems in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the requirements of H3 of Building Regulations 2010. We include standard comments in our consultation responses which encourage the inclusion of SuDS.</p> <p>We have engaged with our developer customers to educate them on the SuDS Manual (CIRIA) since the introduction of the Code. When designs with SuDS are submitted, we do work with them to ensure they meet the relevant design criteria. We do require the developer to</p>

	<p>design and present a SuDS system at planning which fits the constraints of the development site and the proposed development.</p> <p>Due to the length of the end-to-end process (the whole life cycle of a development), since the introduction of the Code in April 2020, we have not yet formally vested any SuDS on new development sites. Since January 2021, we have received circa 450 S104 applications, of which circa 60 have had SuDS included in their design which are predominantly basins.</p>
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Theme 3: A healthy environment including net zero

<p>56.</p>	<p>Is the treatment of wastewater dependant on investment from McCain PLC? What input has Yorkshire Water had into that improvement?</p> <p>Has anyone considered investigating the impact of wastewater into our seas as well as considering the huge volume of waste since the commissioning of the pipelines?</p> <p>McCains promised a study into the impact back in 2012 (Bill Bartlett) however it never happened - why not?</p> <p>Are McCains as an environmentally conscious company comfortable with their contribution into the ongoing pollution flowing into our local seas? and the impact on both tourism (well known) and fishing as an unknown!</p> <p>It is known that McCains contribute to E.coli and other bacterial elements yet the EA tell me they have no idea as to the complete contents of the discharge? Comments please?</p> <p>Your tidal model for South Bay is well known for being flawed. You have never listened to local knowledge since day 1.</p> <p>How do you expect those who pay their water bills in Richmond to pay for an upgrade that will benefit McCains?</p> <p>There was a meeting held on 30th January 2013 attended by myself, Mr Bill Bartlett of McCains accompanied by Mr Steve Wellbeloved, Mike Cohen of Holderness Fishing Industry Group and Malcolm Ward a local trawlerman.</p> <p>Malcolm Ward explained the issue from a trawlerman's perspective fishing for fin fish whilst myself explained the static gear issues also facing fishermen as a result of their belief that the waters in and</p>
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	<p>around Cornelian Bay were being polluted as a result of the discharge.</p> <p>The main item to come from the meeting was a need for a better understanding of the tidal flows inshore. Malcolm Ward explained that very little tidal flow exists between Scarborough piers and Filey. This results in an almost circulatory motion of water that fails to allow for dilution of effluents.</p> <p>Sulphides, hydrogen sulphide particularly was and possibly still is a concern. Is that still the case, your comments please?</p> <p>Is ammonia part of the potato processing process?</p> <p>We have liaised with McCain UK for this question, please see their response below:</p> <p>There are many factors impacting water purity in the area, and Yorkshire Water recently stated that tackling storm overflows is its key priority for improving coastal bathing. However, as a proud local business in Scarborough for over 50 years, we take our role in the community extremely seriously. That’s why we test the quality of our water on a daily basis – and why we have been undertaking extensive building work for the past few years to upgrade our wastewater treatment plant to be one of the most sophisticated of its type in the UK and are on track to be fully operational in Spring 2024 as planned. This technology will reduce organic material, including starch, in our water by over 97% and filter out bacteria, among many other benefits.</p>
57.	<p>You’ll see that BOD and COD for the discharge from the Wheatcroft Long Sea outfall exceeds that from the Scarborough wastewater treatment works by a factor broadly of 100. In other words, the effluent from the Wheatcroft outfall is likely to have a bigger impact on the ecology of the receiving water quality. Your comments please?</p> <p>Looking across the data, it seems that broadly the same pollutants have been discharged in the same sorts of quantities since 1997 at Wheatcroft and 2001 at Scarborough wastewater treatment works. There doesn’t therefore appear to be an obvious correlation between the discharges and recent deterioration in the local marine ecology. The exception is the introduction of various types of nitrogen-based compounds from the Wheatcroft outfall since 2006. Ammonia content has jumped noticeably since February but again this maybe within consented levels. I’d ask the EA. Nitrate compounds can cause ecological problems associated with a</p>

	<p>process called eutrophication (algal growth leading to oxygen depletion in the water) but in this case BOD and COD haven't noticeably changed in recent months so I am not sure that there's a new problem there.</p> <p>The discharges have different upstream processes and therefore it is expected that the discharge quality will be different. The Wheatcroft overflow will be part of our early investment programme to reduce the frequency of operation.</p>
58.	<p>Millions of people enjoy paddling for their health and wellbeing and to connect with nature. How are you prioritising reducing the adverse impacts of sewage discharges on public health, particularly on rivers, of which the majority are not classed as bathing waters?</p> <p>Our plan proposes an investment of £1.7bn, our largest ever environmental improvement programme to improve the quality of storm overflows at our most sensitive sites, our bathing waters on the coast and inland (current and potential), we are also focusing on the overflows that discharge into other high priority areas, this is to ensure we make as big an impact as we can as well as attempting to make bills fair for all. We are also planning to improve our pollution incidents by 50%.</p> <p>Some points to explain why it's not a quick and easy issue to resolve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The scale of the challenge – we would need to replumb the whole of Yorkshire. This would be very disruptive to customers and require a large amount of planning and considerable cost. - Affordability – we need support from customers and regulators to get this in our business plan. Therefore, it needs to be affordable. There is a cost-of-living crisis which reduces our customer's appetite for increasing bills. - We need regulatory drivers to secure investment. - Blue/green solutions are better for the environment (carbon impact) but take more time to be installed as we need to work closely with partners to divert water away from our network and find a safe and resilient place for it to go. For example, highway drainage. <p>That said, our investment in the next five years will focus on our bathing waters because we know how important it is in Yorkshire. We have set out targets for improvement over the next five years, and then to 2050, however our targets for bathing waters are coming</p>

	<p>earlier which will make a huge difference. It is not possible to commit to zero given the nature of our combined sewers, but we have got serious incidents down to less than 2 per bathing water season.</p>
59.	<p>Some of our best beaches consistently have a big red cross over them in the Surfers Against Sewage App which helps people who swim and surf (all year round). This stops people taking trips to those coastal areas to enjoy their chosen hobbies directly affecting their mental health.</p> <p>Do you have a date or year in mind when we will stop seeing these red crosses and start getting the green light?</p> <p>As it stands it's an insult to pay for water and sewage services when they don't work properly and actively stop you from taking part in blue mind activities.</p> <p>In the 2023 bathing season, storm overflows operated for 0.9% of the time. In other words, you should be seeing a green tick on the Surfers Against Sewage map for 99% of the time.</p>
60.	<p>I have tried to understand your business plan, but it is either a very high-level summary, or a huge amount of detail. I want to know what is going to happen on the River Ure across all your programme and what that will look like in 2030, rather than how much you are spending across Yorkshire or what % CSO reduction there will be. Where can I find out in a single place about your plans for my particular river?</p> <p>There isn't a single source that will give information about activity on the River Ure in the 2025 to 2030 period. However, we can state that in the Water Industry National Environment Plan there is one planned Phosphorous removal scheme at Leyburn sewer treatment works at the value of £3m. There are no overflow spill reduction schemes planned in the 2025 to 2030 period, however in the 2030 to 2035 period there is £18m planned which will be focused on blue green approaches to reduce the volume of water in the network such as surface water separation, infiltration reduction and sustainable urbane drainage systems.</p>
61.	<p>Why has no nature-based systems / green infrastructure been incorporated into a carbon intensive scheme at Ilkley?</p> <p>What exactly does the 48% investment relate to - investment in the sewerage network or is it really part of a bigger programme of works at wastewater treatment plant schemes to reduce phosphorous and ammonia?</p>

	<p>We are continuing to review opportunities for nature-based solutions within the design of our solutions for the Ilkley catchment. Once we have developed our solutions for Ilkley, we will update the community on these solutions.</p>
62.	<p>What programme or programmes of activity is the “20% of the programme using nature-based or Blue-Green methods” part of? What actual monetary budget does that equate to?</p> <p>This relates to our storm overflow discharge reduction plan (SODRP) which was developed to meet the requirements set out by DEFRA in August 2022. This incorporates some of our Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) and company aspirations. Our plan for the period 2025-2030 is for greater levels of investment than we have made in previous price control periods and sets out our ambition to deliver 20% of SODRP interventions with components of blue/ green solutions, rising to 50% from 2030. Specific budget details are still in development however you can find out more on what our plan will deliver in Chapter 8.2 of our business plan here as well as in our Coastal bathing water overflows enhancement case appendix here.</p>
63.	<p>How is the funding for nature-based solutions anticipated to be spread across Yorkshire e.g., is it heavily concentrated on specific projects like Living with Water in Hull, or part of a much more distributed approach applied to all catchments?</p> <p>The 20% is targeted on the storm overflow programme but we would like to do more. As we approach the design process for projects within our environment programme, we will be seeking to maximise nature-based solutions within the overall programme budget.</p>
64.	<p>Do you anticipate the proportion of nature-based projects rising, compared to grey infrastructure; and if so, at what rate?</p> <p>We do expect to see more nature-based solutions. In this current five-year investment period, typically less than 5% are nature based. This will look to increase fivefold in the next period (2025-2030).</p>
65.	<p>On the call, Yorkshire Water representatives said that nature-based solutions would be funded and delivered where it represented value for money - or words to that effect, yet there is ample evidence that NFM works effectively and cost effectively. What additional level of evidence do you need?</p>

	<p>Each project is different, urban projects are different to rural ones, therefore it isn't correct to say all NFM projects are the most cost efficient. We have to deliver all of our programme within a budget that customers have agreed to pay. Clearly, we would like to do as many nature-based solutions as possible.</p>
<p>Theme 4: Affordable bills and customer service</p>	
66.	<p>What part of the bill increase is the cost of servicing debt?</p> <p>The costs of capital (WACC), which is set by Ofwat, sets the allowance that customers pay for debt and equity.</p> <p>During 2025-2030 we estimate that approximately 22% of the average bill is used to cover the financing costs of borrowing used to invest in past and future assets.</p>
67.	<p>Why should we pay higher bills to improve sewage treatment when Yorkshire Water was debt free when it was privatised and has paid £billions in dividends to its shareholders and also accumulated debts.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water's external shareholders have not received dividends for the last seven years and we are not expecting to pay dividends during this current five-year business plan period which ends in 2025. We are committed to improving our performance and all the money we spend is focused on delivering those improvements.</p> <p>Our shareholders are committed to investing in improved performance at Yorkshire Water, to protect the environment and to ensure the financial resilience of the business into the future.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water customers are not directly impacted by Yorkshire Water's actual level of debt, Ofwat sets the parameters that determine the revenue that can be charged to customers, which includes an allowed return that Yorkshire Water can earn on the regulated capital value (RCV).</p>
68.	<p>Why is my monthly bill £34.00 for a two-bedroom single person with Yorkshire Water. My son his girlfriend and son in a three-bedroom house only pay £26.00 for water a month.</p> <p>In order to be able to give you an accurate response, we would like to find out more about your circumstances. Please get in touch with us by visiting https://www.yorkshirewater.com/get-in-touch/</p>
69.	<p>Yorkshire Water is looking to change staff pensions to a defined contribution one and considering changing the inflation rate used</p>

	<p>on the closed pension pots from RPI to CPI , which will save them a very large amount of money and transfer the risk to employees. This does not seem fair or equitable and demonstrates a preference for investors and shareholders.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water is committed to offering pension arrangements which are both sustainable for the business and fair to all colleagues. We are currently consulting with colleagues in the defined benefit pension scheme on the closure of the scheme to future build-up at the end of March 2024. From 1 April these colleagues' pensions will build up in our defined contribution scheme. At the same time we are proposing that the contribution structure for the defined benefit scheme would be improved and simplified so that the majority of colleagues would receive higher levels of employer contributions.</p>
70.	<p>In the past 18 months, Yorkshire Water has shed some 300 members of staff through voluntary severance.</p> <p>Does Yorkshire Water have sufficient human resources to deliver its Business Plan?</p> <p>Does Yorkshire Water have any plans for shedding more staff after the final determination?</p> <p>Yorkshire Water has no current plans to reduce total headcount across the organisation. Our business plan is built on a number of factors including the number of resources that are needed to deliver it. This is delivered both by colleagues employed directly by the business or via our supply change partners.</p>
71.	<p>I live on the coast and am an open water swimmer. In the last year there have been more occasions when I couldn't go in the sea due to sewage release than when I could. Can you explain why shareholders/investors and top-level bosses can receive large payouts when clearly investment is needed urgently to not only save our seas and rivers but also help businesses that rely on clean water to make a living? Scarborough is dying as a water sports venue and you can no longer pretend that you are not to blame.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water shareholders have not received dividends for the last seven years and we are not expecting to pay dividends during this current five-year business plan period which ends in 2025. The salaries of our directors are set by an independent remuneration committee and are comparable within the industry. Any bonuses are linked to company performance in variety of areas and will be</p>

	<p>reviewed in line with those at the end of the year. Our shareholders are committed to investing in improved performance at Yorkshire Water, to protect the environment and to ensure the financial resilience of the business into the future. All the money that we have been allowed to recover from customers through their bills has been invested in the assets in earlier investment periods. Our plan for the 2025 to 2030 period includes investment of £580 million in improving coastal and inland bathing waters. We have already made significant progress since the previous bathing water investment was put in place: 16 of 18 of our Yorkshire beaches are good or excellent, and, in fact in the most recent 2022 classification, the results were the best ever. We are down to the 2 beaches, where we seem to face some sticky multi agency / multi stakeholder challenges which includes Scarborough South. At Scarborough out of the 2 beaches, one has excellent water quality in the north and poor in the south. We cannot do this on our own and that is why we are funding with other partners to investigate the causes of the poor bathing water quality. It is complex. It is difficult to correlate between storm overflows and poor bathing water quality at Scarborough south: looking back at 2022 on some of those overflows, we have had a fivefold improvement in spill reduction. Yet the bathing water quality deteriorated.</p> <p>There is more to this than just pointing at a storm overflow. We are looking to focus our investment on those really sensitive areas: the bathing beaches, the current inland bathing water and potential inland bathing waters. The main part of our investment on the environmental program will be focused on Scarborough and Scarborough south. We will continue to work with our colleagues and partners to really get underneath this because we want Scarborough South Beach to be an excellent beach.</p>
<p>72.</p>	<p>How come you are still paying out dividends to your shareholders when you are still heavily polluting the rivers? Dividends are paid on a company's profits. How can you be making profits when you have been so neglectful in under-investing in the sewage infrastructure for so many years? You are putting profit over the environment and the rivers my children play in, and as a consumer, I am deeply upset by this.</p> <p>Yorkshire Water shareholders have not received dividends for the last seven years and we are not expecting to pay dividends during this current five-year business plan period which ends in 2025. Delivering our performance commitments to our customers is our primary focus,</p>

	<p>and our dividend policy is explicitly linked to the performance delivered to our customers. In December 2022 Ofwat noted that our dividend policy and its application met their expectations. Our shareholders are committed to investing in improved performance at Yorkshire Water, to protect the environment and to ensure the financial resilience of the business into the future.</p> <p>All the money that we have been allowed to recover from customers through their bills has been invested in the assets in earlier investment periods. Our plan for the 2025 to 2030 period includes £580 million in improving coastal and inland bathing waters.</p>
73.	<p>Given the many thousands of incidents where raw untreated sewage has been discharged into the sea off East Coast and particularly Scarborough bays how can it possibly be justified that it will take until 2025 for you to publish any plans you might have to tackle this environmental and public health issue? You have had years to deal with this issue at the same time as paying vast sums of money in dividends to the most opaque of shareholders yet we are being told that the very customers who paid this misguided money to Yorkshire water are now being told it's us that will have to pay for the infrastructure costs to improve this situation.</p> <p>Please see our answer to the above question.</p>
74.	<p>Does the bill price increases include inflation? On p.272 there is a chart showing 'real' and 'nominal' prices. If you take the 'nominal' prices the bill becomes much higher a £701 not £585 which is a rise of 67 percent. Please can you define 'nominal' prices and 'real' prices and in what circumstances the assumption about bill increases should be 'nominal'.</p> <p>Our business plan is presented in 2022/23 prices (real prices) and shows average bills increasing from £442 in the 2020 to 2025 period to £553 in the 2025 to 2030 period. This does not include inflation.</p> <p>On p. 272 we set out the level of customer bills by year. This shows bills increasing from £438 in 2024/25 to £585 in 2029/30 (in 2022/23 prices -real prices) i.e. excluding inflation, and a forecast of what bills will be with inflation included (nominal prices), based on current forecasts which shows bills increasing from £475 in 2024/25 to £701 in 2029/30.</p>
75.	<p>According to the business plan, operational costs remain static but financing costs escalate in PR24. Please can you explain this and</p>

	<p>also what proportion of our bills is going towards financing shareholders?</p> <p>Financing costs are based on the allowed returns determined by Ofwat. In our plan we have estimated that these returns for 2025-2030 have increased compared to returns in 2020-2025 (which were set by Ofwat as part of the last price review in 2019). This reflects wider changes in the economy and finance markets in terms of inflation and interest rates. The increases ensure we offer a fair return to investors so they will continue to lend money for increased investment to deliver for customers and the environment.</p> <p>During 2025-2030 we estimate that approximately 22% of the average bill is used to cover the financing costs of borrowing used to invest in past and future assets. This allows the costs of investment to be spread over time rather than being paid for in full during the year in which the investment is made.</p>
76.	<p>"Shareholders have committed to supporting the aims of the business through further funding to deliver plans to help Yorkshire thrive. This includes £100m before end of March 2025 and £440m (half a billion) before end of June 2027. Is this a loan or investment? Does this incur any costs to consumers i.e. are there any implications in terms of the increases in bills?"</p> <p>These planned capital contributions by our shareholders relate to the repayment of intercompany loans. They will enhance financial resilience and help fund our investment programme for the 2025 to 2030 period. They do not impact customer bills.</p>
77.	<p>What is the cost model that you use in the business plan for the nature-based solutions, and is it cross-referenced to costs from outside the Water Authority sector? As a local knowledgeable group with a track record of delivery we would be well placed to validate the costs and ensure that you are building a cost-effective business plan that reflects accurate costs of nature-based solutions, and therefore gives the nature-based solutions the best chance possible of coming across as the most cost-effective solutions that they are.</p> <p>Solutions were sized for 30-year return period events. The makeup of the SuDS features was based on housing density and the proportion of green space available within the sub-catchment area. A costing</p>

	<p>model was developed by Stantec using their engineering expertise and experience gained throughout the industry and the Spon's price guides". Further details can be found in the WINEP Enhancement Case here (p.178)</p> <p>We would also welcome you to share any data or experience you may have as we move forward with the programme.</p>
78.	<p>Why have you written your plan focusing on the numbers around how much money you are going to throw at each issue. "We did" should not be what money you are devoting but what is actually going to be achieved - this is not "the detail" but the most important aspect.</p> <p>Our business plan sets out what we intend to deliver for customers and the environment over the next five years and into the longer term. As the plan is prepared in line with Ofwat's guidance – the water industry's economic regulator – it needs to include specific details of investments and costs. A key component of our plan is however the outcomes we will deliver for customers; these are our 'performance commitments'. Details of these can be found in chapter 7 of our business plan here.</p>
79.	<p>On p90 of the plan you mention the Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers - what is this and who is on it? You say you talked to 30,000 (0.5%) of your customers (p89) please provide details of how you recruited them and the sample data as you have not specified the diversity of the respondents.</p> <p>The Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers (the Forum) is an independent group of customer and stakeholder representatives brought together by Yorkshire Water under the guidance of the Independent Chair to support the company to manage its business in the best interests of its customers. You can find out more about the Forum and its members on our website here and PR24 statement here.</p> <p>We had over 55,000 quality interactions with customers through over 80 projects. Each of these studies had defined sample criteria – majority of which was regionally representative i.e. the sample of the customers selected was the same make-up of customers across the region for age, gender, area of the region they live in (north, south, east, west Yorkshire, urban, rural, coastal) IMD (indices of deprivation) decile and socio-economic groupings. Given we have over 1 million</p>

	<p>customers living with illness or disability in Yorkshire, again depending on the study, we tended to capture customers in vulnerable circumstances in our surveys rather than needing to target specific customers to capture the opinions of this cohort. We find this approach lends itself to a strong representation of customers in vulnerable circumstances in our survey samples. Many of our studies also capture or target different ethnic groups to ensure our customer base is represented especially where opinions or needs/wants may be different. We also engage with professional bodies such as charities and councils to ensure we capture the views of customers who are unseen or difficult to reach via traditional research to ensure they have a voice to represent them. If for any reason our samples were difficult to achieve, representative weighting of the region was also applied to research data to ensure fair representation of results.</p> <p>Our customers are recruited in a whole manner of ways, this depended upon on the timescales of the projects and the objectives in hand. Currently we have our own online community called 'Your Water Online Community' which has a representative sample of 3000 customers, many of these customers provided multiple contributions to our surveys. For bespoke research, outside of our online community, we use independent third-party panel providers, we also used face-to-face and telephone methodologies to recruit those who would struggle to access the internet or attend a focus group in person. For PR24, Ofwat prescribed the research approach for our Affordability and Acceptability Testing study: this was a postal letter with an invite to an online survey or the option to request a paper version of the survey. Our customers appeared to be very engaged versus other areas of the country as we achieved higher response rates to our Affordability and Acceptability Testing study.</p>
80.	<p>Please provide the survey questions and analysis on designated bathing water as your survey suggested that designated bathing water is a low priority, but our survey suggested it was a high priority.</p> <p>When we explore designated bathing water with customers in isolation, customers are without doubt supportive of investigations and improvements to bathing waters and even supportive of undertaking work now on rivers with interest for future designations. However, when we rank designated bathing waters alongside other</p>

	<p>service areas we see that bathing water sits lower down the list of priorities – behind clean, continuous safe drinking water, reducing internal and external sewer flooding, reducing the use of storm overflows, followed by affordable bills. Ofwat and CCW conducted a similar study exploring customer preferences and when ranked amongst other service areas, bathing water sat in the lower priority group. All of our research undertaken for PR24 is available to read on our website here (our specific priorities research is called Valuing Water) and the Ofwat/CCW preferences research is available on the Ofwat website here.</p>
<p>81.</p>	<p>Why is recording denied?</p> <p>The YWYS event is covered by UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection regulation. Event participants were advised at the start of the event that the meeting would be recorded, and that the recording would only be used for the purposes of ensuring the accuracy of producing the record of the event. Participants were advised that the recording would be available to the Independent Chair, CCW and Ofwat until the written record of the session is agreed, and it will then be deleted. We were therefore unable to allow an event participant to record the event.</p>
<p>82.</p>	<p>Can we have which company agencies are represented here on this call please? Anyone from McCains, MMO/ EA?</p> <p>We will not be providing a list of organisations who have registered to attend the event. While the YWYS event forms part of the PR24 process, it is not a compulsory event for companies and agencies to attend. This means that while we have engaged extensively with the wider stakeholders and promoted the event across Yorkshire, we cannot compel companies, agencies and wider stakeholders to attend. Ofwat has acknowledged this in their guidance which states “We acknowledge that it may not be reasonable to expect the profile of stakeholders and customers at ‘Your water, your say’ sessions to be fully reflective of the population the company serves. This is due to the voluntary nature and unpredictability of attendance or contributions by customers and wider stakeholders. Instead, we consider the sessions to be opportunities for engagement between a company and its customers and stakeholders rather than robust and representative research.”</p>