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**Sent via email**

Dear Mrs Woodside,

Thank you for sharing the Council's motion with us regarding sewage and river water quality.

We understand the public's dissatisfaction with sewage discharges. Increased monitoring of combined sewer overflows is part of the reason why this issue has come to the forefront of public attention. Nationally only 7% of overflows were monitored in 2010, and by the end of 2023 all sewer overflows had monitoring equipment installed. However, between 2010 and 2023 Yorkshire Water were industry leaders in installing monitoring equipment and we had more of our overflows recording spill data than most other companies. Therefore, we had more data, which lead to it appearing as if we had more discharges per overflow on average.

All British water companies are heavily regulated by a number of bodies. Our economic regulator, Ofwat, is the overarching one which oversees our business planning process and is responsible for setting out what they expect of water companies. This business planning process is done in 5 year periods, known as Asset Management Periods (AMP). We are currently in AMP7, running April 2020-March 2025.

The Government issues a Strategic Policy Statement before the start of the business planning process, which outlines to Ofwat and the Environment Agency (our environmental regulator) what they expect to see from Ofwat and subsequently water companies for the upcoming AMP. During our planning for the current AMP (circa 2018) we were directed to focus on removing more phosphorous

during the wastewater treatment process. We have therefore been delivering this driver throughout the current asset management period as per the directions we were given by our regulators. For example, at Dewsbury Wastewater Treatment Works we are investing £18m to remove more phosphorous before treated effluent is returned to the environment.

However, during this asset management period public scrutiny has increasingly focused on storm overflow discharges. Therefore, we are working closely with our regulators and within the regulatory processes, to drive down discharges and achieve the best results for our customers. This is why, in 2022, Nicola Shaw (Chief Executive of Yorkshire Water) issued a public apology letter to all customers and announced £180m of additional funding for reducing storm overflow discharges. ~£99m of this funding is new investment from our shareholders, and the target is to reduce discharges by at least 20% by the end of March 2025 (the end of this AMP).

We are using this additional funding to invest in the most frequently discharging overflows, where we can have the biggest impact. Works have already begun on the ground at several sites including £1.8m of investment at Bog Green Lane overflow, near Colne Bridge, and investigations continue at other sites. We have a number of sites in Kirklees under investigation including 2 sites in the Dewsbury area and 11 in the Huddersfield area, including in Colne Valley and Holmfirth.

We also understand that our customers expect more transparency from us, therefore later this year we will be launching a near-live event duration monitoring map. This map will be accessible to the public and will show all of our overflows across the county, including information for each one including if it has recently discharged, has not discharged recently, or is under maintenance.

In addition, we applied to our regulators for permission to accelerate funding and bring forward investment that we had scheduled for next asset management period (AMP8) and complete the works this AMP. This application was successful for both Ilkley and Scarborough.

Longer term investment is being agreed through the business planning process for next AMP. We submitted our draft plan for 2025-2030 in October 2023 which include £1.3bn of investment in overflows for 2025-2030. During this period, the regulator has specified that we must focus on priority water courses in line with the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP). Furthermore, to ensure we reach the targets set out in the SORDP, we have started to outline our investment plans for all storm overflows across Yorkshire between now and 2050.

We are working closely with Ofwat to answer any queries about our draft plan prior to their draft determination this spring, and final determination in December. We will continue to amend the plan according to their feedback in line with the regulatory process.

We hope that this letter has given you a clear overview of our progress and plans for improving storm overflow management in Yorkshire. We are committed to protecting the environment and providing the best service to our customers and stakeholders. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Ashman

Head of Strategic Planning

Yorkshire Water