



Our Strategy for Recreation on Land and Water

Creating memorable experiences

7th July 2016

It's part of our
Blueprint for Yorkshire

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Contents

Introduction	3
Our Current Commitment and Approach	6
The Future Strategic Approach	7
Recreation Strategy – Guiding Principles	8
Themes and Outcomes	10

Introduction

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain our strategy for the delivery of recreation on Yorkshire Water company land and water. The Strategy supports the Yorkshire Water vision 'Taking responsibility for the water environment for good'.

The strategy gives the framework for the provision of recreational opportunities and the aspirations for the wider provision across the operational region for the next 10 years (2015 -2025). This strategy flows from the 'Recreation on YW Land and Waters' Policy Statement adopted 5/May/2016 and published on the Yorkshire Water web site (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/byelaws#ls4>).

The recreation strategy's focus is the land and waters that are controlled by the company, and the communities that are served by the business's operations.

It is our ambition to be a recognised leader in the recreational use of land and waters by 2020, meeting our Strategic Business Objective 'We manage our land for maximum societal value, and we encourage other land owners to do the same'. Specifically to this Recreation Strategy we will 'Continue to work in partnership to implement our recreational strategy to broaden the diversity of recreational visitors gaining benefit from our land'.

This strategy sits alongside other Yorkshire Water strategies and policies.

Statutory Responsibilities

As an owner of land and water and subject to the provision of legislative duties, Yorkshire Water has an obligation to provide for recreation and access. These duties are expressed in the following:-

1. Water Industries Act 1991 and its code of Practice on 'Conservation, Access and Recreation'.
2. Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000
3. Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 1996
4. Highways Act 1980
5. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and amendments

Those who derive recreation from our land and waters are also expected to act within the law, byelaws, codes of conduct and with respect to those who own, manage, have rights and make a living from the land and waters.

The Context

Yorkshire Water is one of the largest landowners in Yorkshire. Our land and water is part of the essential space within the region for the undertaking of recreation. The vast majority of our land holding and reservoirs, with the exception of some tenanted and operational sites which includes waste water treatment works and water treatment works, are accessible to the public and receive an estimated one million visitors each year. The land we own is held primarily for water quality and treatment purposes which provides water services to 4.7million customers and 140,000 businesses

The Company owns approximately 28,300ha of land incorporating around 125 reservoirs and their respective catchments. The land was in public ownership until the Industry was privatised in 1989 and the enabling legislation made specific allowances to protect public interest in the land. The key relevant elements, are a duty on Water Companies around the provision of recreation, access and conservation.

Our land is managed under 250 agricultural agreements of varying types and 110 recreational lettings that cover a range of activities.

Approximately 77% of the Company's land has one or more environmental designations: 37% lies within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAONB), 53% is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 25% sits inside National Parks (mainly the Peak District, but also the North York Moors and Dales). A further 5% is registered as Common Land and around 65% is designated as "Open Access" land under the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).

Most of the Company's recreation provision is at its reservoirs and includes 30 car parks (700 spaces), 15 picnic sites, 4 toilet blocks, one nationally recognised Nature Reserve (with 14 bird hides plus a wildlife centre and toilets), a game fishery covering 3 reservoirs and a coarse fishery at one reservoir. The Company's provision extends to various sundry items: picnic benches, horse loading and tethering areas, boot or bike washes and signage in addition to information and podcast points.

There are 113 reservoirs with public access as well as the "Open Access" land. Around the reservoirs or on other Company land there are 100 km of permissive routes (29 km of easy access routes), 33 km of permissive bridleway/cycle routes and around 1,100km of statutory rights of way including footpaths, bridleways and county roads. Of these routes, some 240 km are promoted on the Company's recreational micro-site through 18 downloadable walks (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/walks#s8>).

It is estimated that over one million visitors are attracted to the Company's sites each year, and over 100 one-off events (fell-racing to filming) are accommodated each year. In delivering recreation there are many, often conflicting issues involved in managing the land and waters. These conflicting interests need to be managed appropriately.

The demands for recreational activities on our land and water are growing both in numbers and scope. Our current provision is being challenged by our customers, recreational bodies and government directives. In particular, the views of our customers have led to a regulatory Performance Commitment for AMP6 (Asset Management Plan 6 year 2015-20) to ensure our visitors are satisfied with our recreational provision. This is measured by an annual visitor survey. The survey also identified which type of customer visits our recreational sites and why, what drives satisfaction with the sites, why customers visit the sites and what influences their enjoyment and what would enhance a visit to a YW recreational site. It is important that our approach to recreational provision is consistent and carefully balances our service delivery needs with a responsible, proactive and positive stance to our recreational offering.

Who is the Strategy For?

Whilst the production of this strategy is led by Yorkshire Water it is for anyone with an interest in recreation on Company land and water. This will be our customers and communities, those with a 3rd party interest, our tenants, organisations and agencies which want to partner to deliver their aspirations.

The strategy will guide decision making when considering the changes and direction that effects recreation.

What is Recreation?

The term 'recreation' describes the enjoyment of a wide range of leisure time pursuits, from the extreme sport and outdoor activity to the gentle and relaxing pastime. Recreational activities are often undertaken for enjoyment, amusement, or pleasure and are considered to be "fun". We define outdoor recreation as encompassing all sport and physical recreation that takes place in the natural environment whether on land, water or air.

A wide range of recreational activity is practiced on Yorkshire Water's land and reservoirs. These may be delivered directly by the Company or through partners, third party owners and tenants. The activities attract people to the land and water with a wide range of interests that include:-

- Walking/running/dog walking
- Horse riding
- Angling
- Watersports incl sailing/rowing/model boats/wind surfing
- Cycling/Mountain biking/trail riding
- Geocaching
- Orienteering
- Wildlife observation
- Rock climbing
- Picnics
- Arts incl photography/painting
- Shooting
- Off road vehicles

The demands for access to land and water fluctuates and changes as does the recreational activity requirements. Participation in recreation rises and falls, following trends or the 'current' high profile activities. Recreation will develop and change as new activities are devised and technologies developed. This strategy aims to cope with those changes that will occur over time.

What our Customers Tell Us

Research at recreation sites carried out in 2004 showed that the majority of customers were satisfied with the recreational facilities provided by Yorkshire Water. More than half of those who took part in the survey were repeat visitors with the majority of the remainder living nearby or encouraged to visit by family and friends.

Walking was by far the most popular activity, followed by picnics and family days out. When asked to evaluate enjoyable aspects of their experience, the majority of visitors rated the scenery, peace and quiet and fresh air as the most important attractions.

Following this research, the Company made significant investment at some of its more popular sites including those in the Washburn Valley near Harrogate, Langsett Reservoir near Sheffield and Tophill Low Nature Reserve in East Yorkshire. Subsequent research showed that this investment in new facilities and information boards, had shifted public perception from being "satisfied with" to "delighted by" the company's offering.

More recent research carried out in 2012, concluded that:-

- YW customers are extremely satisfied with the recreational amenities we provide – 80% visit for less than two hours to simply take a stroll or walk their dog
- A love of the great outdoors and convenient location are the main reasons why people choose to visit our land They think the current level of investment (around 90p/customer/year) is about right or too low
- They see protecting the environment and maintaining access as important duties for Yorkshire Water to fulfil
- People living outside the region are largely unaware of what we have to offer

The surveys undertaken are consistent and reveal that not all Yorkshire Water's customers take advantage of the provision. Surveys repeatedly show that our visitors are generally white, over 35 years old, from the ABC1 economic bands. The wider customer base of Yorkshire Water is not represented in the visitors taking part in the recreation site surveys.

Our Current Commitment and Approach

Yorkshire Water’s Quality and Environmental Policy gives a commitment that the company will “manage our land and catchments in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, balancing the needs of our customers and tenants with our duty as custodian of the natural environment.”

Our guiding principles have been to:-

- Meet our statutory requirements
- Manage the recreational provision so as to safeguard the quantity and quality of our raw water supplies
- Manage the recreational provision so our land and reservoirs delight all visitors
- Develop and support sustainable recreation on land and water to give access to the best provision in all areas of water sports, angling and access for all.

This approach informed the SuperSite Strategy which developed categorisation of sites and KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators) for activities and investment. This approach has informed the past 10years of investment and management and is detailed in the table:-

Description and KPI's for Recreation Categories

Site Grade	Gateway 'super site'	Recreational	Explorer	Adventure
Site Description	A gateway to company land, easily accessible to all and likely to attract visitors from across the county with many engineered and visitor facilities.	Attracts visitors from the local area, offers easy access to the countryside for a wide range of visitors, with engineered facilities.	Visitors need a degree of confidence in accessing the countryside, with a higher degree of self-competence, limited engineered facilities.	Visitors need a high a degree confidence in the countryside and self-reliance including skills in navigation & protection from the weather. Few or no engineered facilities.
KPI's				
Key stakeholder interest	Yes	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Tourist road signs	Yes	possible	no	no
Car Park	vehicle capacity for 340 days	vehicle capacity for 250 days	possible	unlikely
Access to public transport	Likely	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Horse box parking	capacity 3 vehicles	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Cycle parking	capacity 20 cycles	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Toilets -YWS or associated	available for all	possible	no	no
Enhance visitor facilities eg boot wash, dog poo/litter bins	Yes	possible	unlikely	no
Refreshments - concession or adjacent private	available for all	possible	no	no
Footpath - YWS Surfaced	3+ miles	possible	unlikely	no
Bridleway - YWS Surfaced	3+ miles	possible	unlikely	no
Cycleway - YWS Surfaced	3+ miles	possible	unlikely	no
Easy access footpath to BT Countryside for All	3+ miles	possible	unlikely	no
Picnic opportunities	Yes	possible	unlikely	no
BBQ opportunities	Yes	possible	no	no
Access to water sports or/and angling	Open days/day access	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Promotional material	Yes	Yes	possible	unlikely
Interpretive/information material	In all car parks	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Community notice boards	In all car parks	possible	no	no
Ranger/warden presence <25%	Yes	intermittent	infrequent	infrequent
Events	6 per ann.	possible	unlikely	unlikely
Enhanced habitats	Yes	possible	unlikely	unlikely
YWS Example	Washburn Valley	Scar House	Beaver Dike	Warley moor
Bench Mark sites	Bolton Abbey, ST Derwent Valley, NT Brimham Rocks	Otley Chevin, FC Sutton Bank, UU Longdendale	FC Stainburn Moor, NT Scarth Wood Moor	NT Malham Moor

Recreation Sites in Categories Post AMP5			
Gateway Sites	Recreation Sites	Explorer Sites	Adventure Sites
A gateway to company land, easily accessible to all and likely to attract visitors from across the county with many engineered and visitor facilities.	Attracts visitors from the local area, offers easy access to the countryside for a wide range of visitors, with engineered facilities.	Visitors need a degree of confidence in accessing the countryside, with a higher degree of self competence, limited engineered facilities.	Visitors need a high degree of confidence in the countryside and self reliance including skills in navigation & protection from the weather. Few or no engineered facilities.
Swinsty/Fewston/Thruscross - Langsett	Blackmoorfoot	Agden	Angram
Scammonden & Deanhead	Boothwood	Baitings & Ryburn	Carlesmoor
Tophill Low	Brayton Barff	Beaver Dyke & John O'Gaunts	Dale Dike
	Broomhead and More Hall	Gorple	Dallowgil
	Cod Beck	Ingbirchworth	Holme Moss
	Damflask	Leeming	Manshead
	Digley & Bilberry	Ramsden & Yateholm	Redmires
	East Ardsley	Rivelin	Warley Moor
	Eccup	Royd Moor	Widdop & Gorple
	Embsay Moor		Withen's Clough
	Gouthwaite		
	Grimwith		
	Haworth Moor		
	Langsett		
	Ogden		
	Scar House		
	Scout Dike		
	Thornton Steward		
	Underbank		
	Winscar		

The Future Strategic Approach

Statement of Intent

Yorkshire Water intends to make our recreation offer part of the service expected by our customers and stakeholders. Our recreational offer will have a significant value to society, our communities, customers and stakeholders in addition to reputational value to the business. The move to an inclusive, positive and proactive approach with partners and like-minded organisations from a reactive and initially 'negative until proven otherwise' will take place.

Central is the principle that our recreational offer will:-

- be safe
- not be detrimental to our operational delivery needs
- work with and protect the natural environment and iconic places
- develop sustainable and 'green' recreation
- seek to create value and not necessarily financial profit

The Recreation Strategy is not about increasing the number of visitors, though this may occur but create an offer and remove barriers so that all can partake.

Guiding Principles

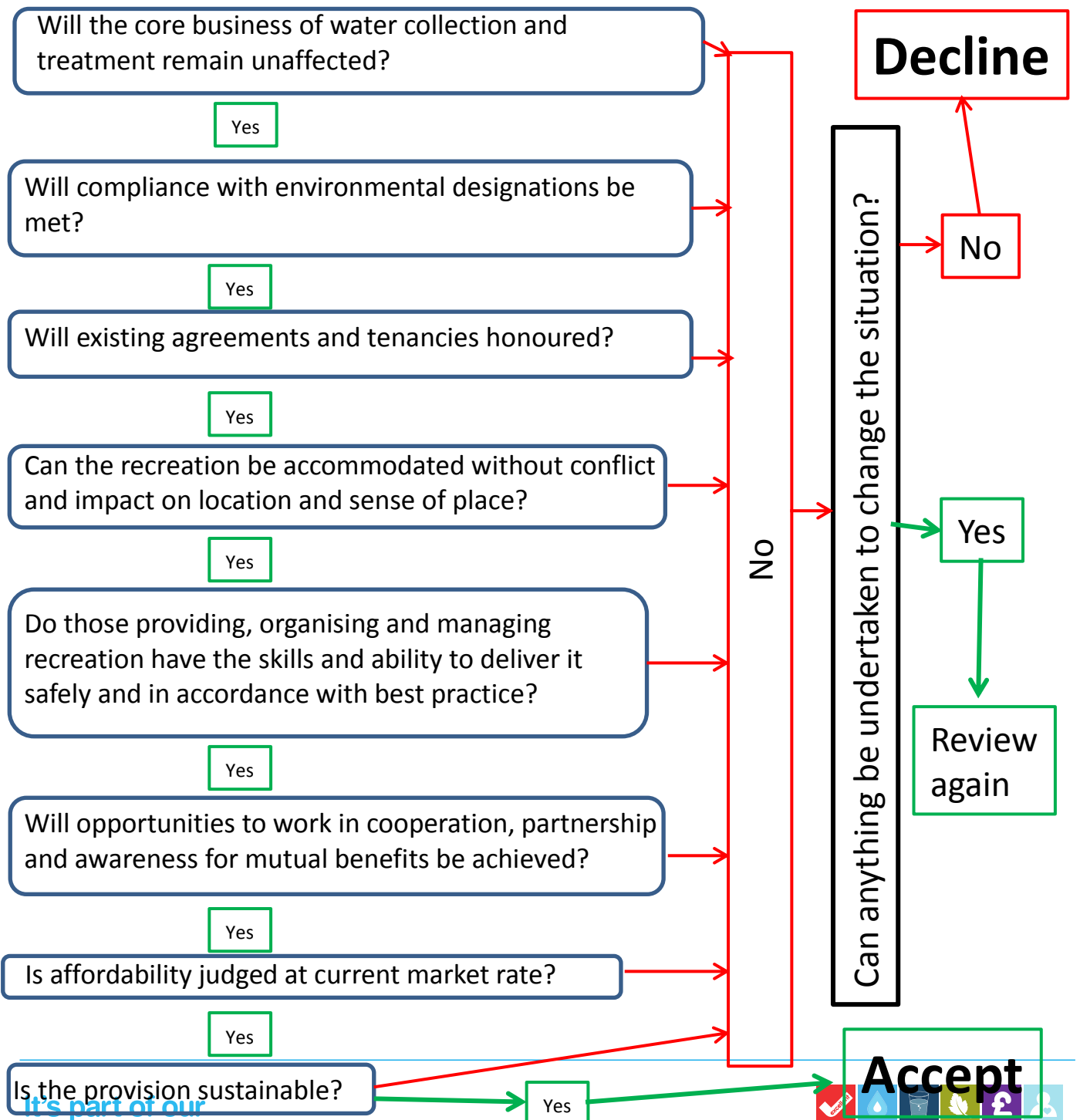
The Guiding Principles will be used to support decision making, when individuals and groups visiting Yorkshire Water land and water for the purpose of taking part or the development of recreational opportunities. They are relevant to Yorkshire Water's land and water. The guiding principles give a framework for decision making when engaged with tenants, in partnerships and when responding to or exploring new opportunities. Recreation must be able to satisfy the guiding principles which are contained within a decision tree.

Recreation Strategy – Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles Decision Tree:-

These guiding principles apply to individuals and groups visiting Yorkshire Water land and water for the purpose of taking part or the development of recreational opportunities. They are relevant to YW land and water. Visitors include people engaged in informal recreation as well as participants in various sports and activities. The guiding principles give a framework for decision making when engaged with tenants, partnerships and when responding to or exploring new opportunities. Recreation must be able to satisfy the guidelines.

A risk based approach will be followed, and there will be a presumption that the activity can be undertaken and everyone is welcome.



Themes and Outcomes

The Recreation Strategy flows from the 'Recreation on YW Land and Waters' Policy Statement which was based on the Yorkshire Water vision, the Strategic Business Objectives and Performance Commitments. It shows a commitment to maintain the best of the current activities, and to seek new opportunities to connect with our customers.

We aim to achieve our strategy through the following key themes:-

1. Creating Memorable Experiences
2. Building Inclusive Partnerships and Communities
3. Making Places Accessible

Creating Memorable Experiences

Aim:- To provide the setting and opportunity for an experience that connects visitors with the landscape through recreation.

Outcome:- Emotional connection with the special qualities of a place to increase wellbeing, give physical and mental benefits, leading to a greater care of the environment and recognition of Yorkshire Water's stewardship.

Actions:-

1. We will manage and develop the setting, activity, visitor services to harness the opportunities available whilst protecting natural and iconic environments
2. We will promote positive messages to encourage positive actions and participation
3. We will conduct site audits and reviews to deliver safe and healthy experiences
4. We will develop methods to capture customer feedback and comments on recreation through the annual visitor survey
5. We will engage with the 'wellbeing' programs of Health Services and Yorkshire Water
6. We will align with other Company Blueprint programs

Building Inclusive Partnerships and Communities

Aim:- To use the skills and opportunities of others in society to increase participation, diversity, and improve the quality of recreation and its management for all.

Outcome:- A more diverse range of customers become aware of and have the opportunity to experience and get involved with recreation whilst having a positive experience of Yorkshire Water.

Actions:-

1. We will develop appropriate partnerships
2. We will use our land and water to influence and to provide, promote and develop opportunities for all
3. We will encourage, provide, promote and develop opportunities for the underrepresented recreational Yorkshire Water customer
4. We will establish mechanisms to address the potential issues of conflict
5. We will work with others to plan and develop the opportunities that can be gained from partnership with other landowners, recreational providers and governing bodies
6. We will increase community engagement through volunteers and 'community champions'

Making Places Accessible

Aim:- Yorkshire Water offers a diverse range of sustainable recreation that is accessible, and affordable.

Outcome:- All people will have more opportunities to participate in recreation, giving the opportunity for Yorkshire Water to get closer to its customers.

Outputs:-

1. We will have a positive attitude to new ideas and participation
2. We will conduct a Gap Analysis of the current and potential provision and develop zoning of activities, particularly for robust and adrenaline activities
3. We will use our landholding to seek new and underutilised locations particularly near communities where provision is lacking
4. We will tackle the barriers that restrict access
5. We will increase the range of opportunity in all areas of recreation for all sectors of society, from the most vulnerable to elite athletes
6. Affordability will be judged at current market rate
7. Quality, accurate information in appropriate formats will be provided so visitors can make the right and informed decisions
8. We will support the development of a national standard for accessibility

Success will be measured

Success will not be measured by total numbers of visitors but by the delivery of changes in the real world for our visitors.

It is our ambition to be a recognised leader in the recreational use of land and waters by 2020:-

- We will have an approved recreation policy and recreation strategy
- We will have a recognised regional presence in the provision of informal recreation for all
- We will have partnered with organisations that recognise the part we play in the health and wellbeing of individuals our communities
- We will be recognised as playing a key role in the provision of outdoor recreation in Yorkshire

GEOFF LOMAS
CATCHMENT AND RECREATION MANAGER
7/7/16



@yorkshirewater



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yorkshirewater.com