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Dear Rachel

Thank you for giving Yorkshire Water this opportunity to explain how we protected customers' supplies from the impact of the recent severe weather event. We are pleased to set out the details of how we managed the risks the weather posed and our full response to the request for information can be found in the attached documents.

Our annual preparations for a potential cold weather event commenced in November 2017 with the provision of additional equipment, resource plans, safety briefings and contingency plans for both clean and waste water. We actively recruited more leakage inspectors and obtained increased repair resource from our contract partners.

On 21 February 2018 our executive team studied the long-range weather forecast which suggested a reasonable to high possibility of severe weather impacting our region at the end of February. Based on this, the executive took the decision to prepare further by significantly increasing the deployment of resources to prepare for a predicted increase in leakage and demand. With customer issues starting to escalate and the weather causing significant operational challenges, we took the decision on 7 March to move to the highest level of escalation in Yorkshire Water and a crisis management team (CMT) of the executive was formed and met regularly over the next few days to take a strategic overview of the risks to customers and to oversee the work of the operational company incident management team (CIMT). The CMT took specific interest in the safety of public and colleagues, maintaining security of supply and customer communication.

Amongst the decisions taken by the executive CMT, I would draw your attention to three in particular. The first was to commit to an intense region wide consumer communications campaign which could be easily adapted and localised to deal with any interruptions to supply in particular areas. The total investment for the campaign was in the region of £300,000 and it involved a range of traditional, digital and social channels.

The second was to increase the resources in our customer contact centre to ensure that any customers encountering problems would always be able to receive information whether by telephone, social media or other digital channels. We also moved to 24-hour operations in the contact centre and ensured that we had the capability to update our website promptly should the need arise.

The third was to proactively deploy alternative water supplies to areas we judged to be at significant risk. This was implemented at scale and involved the distribution of one million litres on a contingency basis over a 24-hour period. Clear priority was given to ensuring that customers with specific needs would be catered for in the event of any interruptions. We ensured that we had a process in place to keep this level of provision constant should we have experienced a significant loss of supply incident. This has been one of our key learnings from the incident and we will endeavour to have a million litres of alternative water supply available at all times.

Looking after our most vulnerable of customers is a priority for Yorkshire Water. Our approach to helping support vulnerable customers during an interruption to supply is tailored depending on the customer's own needs. We assign each vulnerable customer who is on our priority services register with their own single point of contact within the organisation, so they can be kept up to date, have bottled water delivered to their doorstep and be provided with any additional support that they might need. Should we have experienced a widespread or prolonged interruption to supply, we had the support of the British Red Cross on notice to help us support our vulnerable customers as well as the ability to share information with our local resilience forums.

The majority of issues reported by our customers during this period (26 February to 11 March 2018) were caused by frozen private supplies or isolated bursts on our network. Although we saw roughly double the number of leaks and a significant increase in demand as the temperatures rose following the cold weather, our earlier decisions to increase resources meant that we had more than double the normal level finding and quadruple resources fixing those leaks. This enabled us to minimise the impact on our customers by responding quickly to any service interruptions. Alongside this, we balanced our water production and network demand throughout the period to ensure that we didn't see a depletion in levels that could impact our ability to supply water to our customers. This is part of our water management modelling which provides us with an extra level of resilience alongside our region-wide distribution grid.

Considering leakage performance, we have provided the most update information we have at this time, in the form of a graph within the data collection spreadsheet. This indicates that leakage performance for the year is likely to outturn close to the target. At this stage, there remains significant uncertainty, due to the need for the input data to be finalised, validated and assured through our annual reporting processes. However, we can be confident that our leakage performance will be within the deadband agreed with our customers, and that the three year rolling performance will be within the target. This is consistent with our response and the low levels of impact experienced by our customers.

Our escalation plans were supported by our communications approach which helped customers by providing our advice for resolving frozen pipes. We utilised our customer segmentation data to tailor our communications and engagement with our customers to inform them of the actions they could take. This received an impressive audience amongst our customers, with approximately 558,000 people seeing our social media messages, and our advice being circulated to local media and stakeholders. Alongside our response to the severe weather, we have had an ongoing customer campaign to encourage reporting of leaks. By using digital, radio and billboard advertising, we have provided seventeen million opportunities for customers to see our messaging. This has ultimately helped boost the number of leaks we have reported directly to us so these can be fixed as quickly as possible with a reduced impact on our customers.

As with any incident of this nature, there are always lessons for organisations to reflect on and take learnings from. One of the key ways we will be reflecting is by listening to how our customers who were impacted during our period of escalation felt we responded. To this

end, we have commissioned an independent insights agency to survey four hundred customers experienced no water supply due to either frozen private supply pipes or burst water mains.

This will be integral to developing our approach to future incidents particularly around setting expectations for our timescales to repair burst water mains. We know experiencing an interruption to water supply can be very disruptive, and over half of those surveyed said that their recent water loss had a significant impact on their day to day life. On reflection this emphasises the importance of listening to how our customers feel we can improve on the service and communication we provide. The customers who were surveyed also highlighted issues with updates being provided on our website and the time it takes us to deliver bottled water to isolated main bursts. Our incident team will review this feedback and incorporate this learning into our current ways of working so we can continue to improve on the service we provide our customers based on the things they tell us are important to them.

We received some positive reinforcement from those customers who were surveyed as seven out of ten respondents were satisfied with the level of communication they received from us during their interruption to supply but this does not make us complacent and we are committed to reviewing our communications activity.

I hope the information we have provided fully explains our approach taken during the severe weather event. If you need any additional information, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Flint', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Richard Flint**  
**Chief Executive**