



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Chris Philp MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

28 September 2021

Dear Minister

Re: Fibre in water – support for Yorkshire Water’s pilot project in my constituency

I am writing to give my full support to Yorkshire Water’s ‘fibre in water’ proposal between Barnsley and Penistone as part of the Government’s £4million fund. This is a fantastic opportunity to use this innovative approach to help connect homes and businesses in my constituency to fibre.

Homes and businesses in Penistone do not have access to fibre, and I am regularly approached by residents living near Penistone who have serious connectivity problems. I was therefore pleased to learn of Yorkshire Water’s proposed scheme, which seeks to use fibre in water to bring fibre from Barnsley to Penistone.

Yorkshire Water have worked with Arcadis to plan the project, and they have sought to maximise benefits from the project, including increasing connectivity at the Digital Media Centre in Barnsley and Dodworth Business Park within my constituency. This scheme therefore has the potential to support economic growth in my constituency and the wider South Yorkshire area.

Communications providers face significant challenges when looking to connect rural communities across the UK, including geographical barriers and balancing capital expenditure against potential commercial returns. The proposal from Yorkshire Water seeks to overcome those challenges by allowing multiple partners to benefit from using existing cleanwater infrastructure.

Yorkshire Water have assured me that they are keen to collaborate with government and wider stakeholders on this innovative project, including working together to assess challenges and share learning. Yorkshire Water share the Government’s aim of discovering the viability of fibre in water, with the view that a successful pilot could encourage widescale adoption of fibre in water across the country. I know they are in communication with other water companies, who also support their proposed scheme.

The bid from Yorkshire Water has support from regional stakeholders and has the potential to increase connectivity and economic opportunities for my constituents. I am happy to support Yorkshire Water’s bid and hope that you will look carefully at their proposal, which I believe has many merits.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Cates MP
Member of Parliament for Penistone and Stocksbridge