

Minutes of WAB Meeting
Friday 13 July 2018 10:00am

Venue: Withdrawing Room, Custom House, Dublin 1

Attended by:

Chairman Paul McGowan
Members Darragh Page
Sharon Kennedy

Secretariat Lisa Clifford
Neill Dalton
Colin Flood

The Chair opened the meeting by giving the members and the secretariat an opportunity to introduce themselves and give a short background on their current role and experience. The Chair gave an overview on the establishment of the Water Advisory Body and noted that for the most part the Body's brief is clear. The Chair also noted that there is clear advantage in having collaboration between the CRU, AFU and EPA through the combined experience of the members. The Chair acknowledged that two independent members had yet to join WAB and was keen to see these members appointed as soon as possible. The Chair was confident that WAB would work from existing data collected by CRU, AFU, EPA and Irish Water, and would be conscious to not duplicate reports from other bodies.

The Secretariat gave an overview of the PAS appointment procedure for the two outstanding independent members. The Vacancy form and Information Booklet have been drafted. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate these two documents to the members for their input. Members agreed to revert to the Secretariat by CoB on 20 July in order to move the process forward quickly. WAB were advised by the Secretariat that PAS may request a meeting to plan the advertisement and documentation with the Chair. It was advised that the process could take up to 6 months but that PAS would be requested to prioritise the completion of the competition as soon as possible.

Housekeeping & Resources

WAB were advised that as a State Board they are subject to FOI and GDPR. It was agreed that minutes of WAB meetings and WAB reports would be published on a WAB website, which is in the process of being established. It was agreed that this would encourage clarity and transparency. WAB were advised that they may be subject to the Ethics in Public Office policy from DPER; the Secretariat undertook to check with DPER as to whether WAB has been prescribed for that purpose yet.

The location of WAB meetings has been set in Custom House, Dublin 1 for the time being. Once the independent members of the Body have been appointed a discussion on future venues can take place.

WAB's Statutory Functions

The Secretariat circulated a short document outlining the core statutory functions of WAB.

The Chair identified two main areas of focus:

1. Advising the Minister on measures to improve the transparency of Irish Water to the public; and
2. Reporting to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the implementation of Irish Water's business plan which is required quarterly.

It was agreed that each quarterly report to the JOC would follow an agreed structure, focus and format and that the first task of the Body would be to decide the focus and structure of the first report to the JOC. It is intended that each quarterly report would take account of third party reports that issue periodically (quarterly, annually etc) in so far as they speak to the implementation of Irish Waters business plan.

It was agreed that Irish Water's business plan would form the baseline on which the reports are developed. In that context members were conscious that they didn't want WAB to duplicate the work of other bodies. It was therefore agreed that WAB would identify the important factors it wants to focus on in the quarterly reports and ensure that areas focused on are important and understandable to consumers.

In the development of the first report to the JOC the Chair set out the following factors that need to be considered, including:

- the timing of the report
- how the reports will distinguish themselves from other reports on Irish Water
- whether the reports should be published without the two independent board members
- how to measure responsiveness of Irish Water to the needs of community and enterprise and where to focus in terms of reporting on procurement, staffing and remuneration in Irish Water.
- the need to identify information that can be taken from CRU and EPA reports in particular to assist WAB in performing its functions
- the need to identify key milestones/inputs in the reporting schedule (i.e. key reports from EPA and CRU related to the implementation of Irish Water's business plan), and
- the need to identify the key metrics that WAB will focus on in their reports

It was agreed that the members would identify, in their view, the key inputs that would be required to develop the JOC reports with the Secretariat then compiling a schedule for consideration based on these identified inputs.

It was also agreed that the first report would not be submitted to the JOC until the two remaining members of WAB joined and therefore would likely be Q4 of 2018 or Q1 of 2019.

The Secretariat advised the Body that the JOC has requested that WAB's Chair appear before them in September in the context of his appointment as Chair to discuss his vision for WAB and its proposed workplan. This is a standard part of the appointment process for a Chair of a State Body according to the Code of Practice for State Bodies.

Draft Terms of Reference

A draft terms of reference (TOR) document was circulated for consideration by the Members. It was recommended and agreed to split the document into a TOR and the Rules and Procedures document.

Sharon Kennedy raised an issue with Section 5 regarding the Notice of Meetings and asked that it be increased from two to five working days. This was agreed.

The members agreed that all external communications (i.e. media, JOC etc) must be done through the Chair.

While the TOR and Rules and Procedure documents will be circulated to WAB members and reviewed it was agreed that these documents would remain working documents to be finalised when the two independent members join the Body in due course.

WAB were advised by the Secretariat that a Declaration of Conflict of Interest would be a standing item on the agenda for each meeting going forward.

Upcoming Procedures and Governance Issues (to note)

It was agreed that once the TOR and Rules and Procedure documents were revised and agreed, each of the following documents would be circulated to the WAB members for input:

- a. Oversight and Adaptation Agreements
- b. Performance Delivery Agreement
- c. Code of Conduct
- d. Development of WAB's Statement of Strategy and Mission statement, including parameters of WAB's role
- e. WAB's work plan

While these documents could be developed over the coming months, again the final versions would not be signed off until the input of the two independent members, once appointed, had been received.

Date of next Meeting

It was agreed to meet on the 31st August 2018 at 10.00am in Withdrawing Room, Custom House, Dublin 1.

AOB

WAB Branding

The WAB website is in the process of being set up. The Department of Taoiseach is currently considering whether State Bodies should adopt the Single Government ID. A request has been received from DHPLG as to WABs view on adopting the single identity or not for WAB. Following discussion in the matter, it was agreed that the Secretariat would draft a response to the Department outlining why WAB should remain independent of the single government identity.

For now, it was agreed that the Secretariat would develop a temporary logo for WAB to use on correspondence and reports etc.