

Water Advisory Body publishes Quarterly Report No. 1 of 2020

- Ireland's leakage rate is unacceptable and needs to be a focus for Irish Water in the future -

Dublin, Ireland – 10 March 2020: Ireland's level of unaccounted for water continues to be very high and has continued to rise for the last two years. There has also been a disappointing drop-off in the number of leak repairs completed under the First Fix Scheme from mid-2016. These are just two of the findings in the latest quarterly report by the Water Advisory Body (WAB) published today.

Established in June 2018, the purpose of the WAB is to advise the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government on measures needed to improve the transparency and accountability of Irish Water. WAB is also required to report on a quarterly basis to an Oireachtas Committee on the performance by Irish Water in the implementation of its Strategic Funding Plan.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, noted: *"There is a history of under-investment in water and waste water in Ireland and much of the recent focus by Irish Water has been on the provision of high-quality public water. However, despite only three months passing from the first WAB report, there has been significant updates to our 11 key performance indicators. Regrettably, a number of those metrics show a deterioration in performance. Also, the Boil Water Notices arising from two separate incidents at the Leixlip Water Treatment Plant are a concern."*

The WAB has selected eleven performance indicators, each measuring the performance of Irish Water under a different heading. Some of the key findings in the report include:

- **Leakage** - By any measure, Ireland's leakage rate is unacceptable and needs to be a focus for Irish Water in the future.
- **Remedial Action List (Water)** - The issues at the Leixlip Water Treatment Plant have exposed the vulnerability of Dublin's water supply, which is also replicated across the country.
- **Priority Urban Area List (Wastewater)** - The WAB accepts the EPA's view that Ireland is not addressing the deficiencies in its waste water treatment infrastructure at a fast enough pace.
- **Mains replacement rate (for water mains)** - WAB agrees with the Commission for Regulation of Utilities view that Irish Water's replacement rate will need to be higher given our older infrastructure.
- **Overall compliance with microbiological indicators for drinking water** - In general, the WAB notes that compliance with the microbiological standards is high.
- **Boil Water Notices** - Two short term boil water notices were imposed on the Leixlip water treatment plant. This was the single largest boil water notice imposed in Ireland, with more than 600,000 consumers affected.
- **Irish Water Customer Complaints Management** - Irish Water has demonstrated good performance against this metric and it is close to Irish Water's stated aim in its "Water Services Strategic Plan" to resolve (or have outlined steps taken towards resolving) 100% of complaints within five working days.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, concluded by saying: *"It continues to be the WAB's view that the management and improvement of the drinking and waste water infrastructure and network requires significant and sustained action, particularly in the areas of leakages, mains repairs and waste water treatment. The WAB is of the view that current investment levels need to be maintained, coupled with a strong organisational*

focus, to enable and deliver a substantial improvement programme. It is firmly our view that increasing public confidence in Irish Water is dependent on visible action in these key areas.”

ENDS

Notes for the Editor

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About the WAB

The Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is an independent statutory body established under Part 7 of the Water Services Act 2017. The WAB was formally established on 1 June 2018. Irish Water’s Strategic Funding Plan is a public document and available on Irish Water’s website www.water.ie. Every three months the WAB prepares a report on Irish Water. This report sets out the WAB’s view on how Irish Water is performing against its own Strategic Funding Plan. Each report is prepared for the Oireachtas and is published on the WAB’s website. This is the second quarterly report of the WAB and covers the dates October 2019 to February 2020. For further information on the WAB, including this and previous reports, see www.wateradvisorybody.ie