

Water Advisory Body publishes Quarterly Report No. 2 of 2020

Many Irish towns receive no waste water treatment and 33 areas will continue discharging untreated wastewater after 2021

Dublin, Ireland – September 2020: The pace at which Irish Water is fixing the legacy of deficiencies in Ireland's waste water treatment infrastructure is not sufficient. 19 large towns and cities did not meet EU standards set to protect the environment while 33 towns and villages will continue discharging raw sewage after 2021 because they will still not have a waste water treatment plant. 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: "Work around leakage needs to be linked to effective and clear communication around the continuous need for water conservation and this regardless of when the sun shines. The concurrent impact of Covid-19 and the recent drought have given a stark reminder of Ireland's water capacity challenges."

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** - Irish Water acknowledges that leakage from its "water supply networks is at unacceptable levels and well above international norms".
- **First Fix Scheme** - This performance indicator shows a continued and disappointing drop-off in the number of leak repairs completed under the scheme since mid-2016.
- **Remedial Action List (Water)** - Irish Water has an action plan in place to remediate the drinking water supplies that are currently included on the Remedial Action List.
- **Mains replacement rate (for water mains)** - Irish Water replaced or rehabilitated 407km of watermains in 2018 and 333km in 2019. This is a substantial increase compared to 2017.
- **Compliance with microbiological indicators** - Microbiological compliance remains very high.
- **Boil Water Notices** - The WAB notes with concern the trends for long term boil water notices highlighted by the EPA and will continue to monitor Irish Water's progress.
- **Compliance of Urban Waste Water Treatment** - Overall, compliance is very low but there has been an increase in the percentage of urban areas meeting their license standards. Over half of the 75% non-compliance can be attributed to one waste water treatment plant – the plant at Ringsend, Dublin.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, concluded by saying: "*Waste water compliance, leakage and funding have emerged as being critically important in terms of Irish Water demonstrating clear progress to address known deficiencies in the water and waste water systems, but also to demonstrate to the EU, the Oireachtas and the public that concrete progress is being made to address these deficiencies.*"

ENDS

Notes for the Editor

For further information contact Michael Moriarty at FleishmanHillard

Tel: 01 618 8419

Email: Michael.moriarty@fleishmaneurope.com

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 for 2020 and covers the dates April 2020 to July 2020. For further information on the WAB, including this and previous reports, see www.wateradvisorybody.ie