

## **Final Minutes of the Meeting of the Water Advisory Body**

**Friday 4 September 2020 11:45am**

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Video Conferencing

Attended by:

Chairperson Paul McGowan

Members Miriam McDonald Michelle Minihan  
Martin Sisk Tom Collins (joined at agenda item 8)

Secretariat John McCarthy Neill Dalton  
Darren Browne

### **1. Minutes of meetings from 9 July 2020**

The minutes of the WAB meeting were agreed.

The minutes of the WAB meeting with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Water Division were agreed subject to an edit. The Chair asked the Secretariat to circulate these minutes to the Water Division for comment.

### **2. Declaration of any conflict of interest**

There was no conflict of interest reported.

### **3. Discussion on Irish Water meeting/presentation to WAB**

The WAB discussed today's meeting with Irish Water. The following points were noted by the Members:

- The impact COVID-19 will have on Irish Water's Strategic Funding Plan in respect of capital project delivery;
- Irish Water's provision for €100m in contractor claims may not be sufficient. An understanding of the level of contingency provided is required and due to the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19 it is separate to general provisions. The WAB noted that the CRU expects reasonable estimates in this area;
- Public perception of contractors on some larger sites living together without appropriate social distancing. It was noted this issue is not unique to Irish Water;

- The importance of the WAB understanding Irish Waters priorities so it can focus its reports accordingly;
- The importance of a stable baseline from which the performance of Irish Water can be monitored;
- The stimulus package dedicates €30m in funds to leakage reduction; and
- The WAB will focus on Irish Waters delivery plan and its ability to deliver on it.

The Secretariat asked the WAB to consider when it would next like to meet with Irish Water. The Chair confirmed it would be best to wait until after the next two meetings as it is expected a stable baseline for Irish Water will be in place by then.

#### **4. Review of Irish Water procurement procedures – update**

Package 1:

The Chair confirmed that the representative of WAB was satisfied with the tender process in respect of procuring package 1. The Secretariat drew the WAB's attention to the note produced from its meeting with Irish Water on 31 August 2020 where Irish Water requested written confirmation from the WAB that Irish Water should fund the work. The Chair asked the Secretariat to contact Irish Water and let them know that it was discussed at the meeting and the published minute confirms the WAB has agreed Irish Water should fund the work. The Secretariat will advise Irish Water and ask it to acknowledge if this is sufficient for the Ervia Board.

Package 2:

The Secretariat explained that it was apparent from its meeting with Irish Water this week that it was hesitant to proceed with package 2 at this time. The Secretariat also noted the WAB's statutory role, that of other bodies and that the package is intended to follow on from the Scottish Water International Report. It also notes that specific mention is made regarding the development of KPIs for Irish Water.

The Chair noted the CRU has an interest in the Scottish Water International Report and the 12 recommendations contained within it. Particular attention was drawn to the recommendation around "Reporting and Change Control". The Chair agreed there is merit in allowing Irish Water implement the recommendations contained in the report and suggested to the WAB that before any decision is made it might be useful for a

representative of the CRU to come and present to the WAB about the Scottish Water International Report. The members agreed this would be beneficial.

Michelle Minihan and Miriam McDonald noted that it is likely to take some time (approximately 2 years) before Irish Water have implemented the recommendations. Miriam McDonald highlighted that if package 2, following review, does not appear feasible the WAB should consider commentary or advise to the Minister as appropriate.

The Secretariat drew the WAB's attention to the relevant parts of the Water Services Act 2017 and commented that if the KPIs mentioned on the Scottish Water International report were developed earlier they could be used to track the performance of Irish Water during the implementation of the report's recommendations.

#### **5. WAB Quarterly Report No.2 of 2020.**

The Secretariat noted the original target publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WAB report of 2020 was the middle of August. It issued up to date drafts of the report to the Members once text and data had been received and tracked the outstanding pieces using an excel tracking sheet.

The Members noted the report was broadly complete with some minor updates required primarily by the Chair and Michelle Minihan.

Comments raised by Miriam McDonald were addressed at the meeting and the members agreed the Chair and Michelle Minihan should input the final amendments by email. The report will then be furnished to the Secretariat to arrange desktop publishing. Once this is complete, it will be sent to the WAB members for final approval by email.

It was agreed the cover letter to the Minister will draw attention to the foreword contained in the report along with the usual updates on the KPIs.

#### **6. Planning for Report 3 of 2020**

The Chair noted it was likely that some of the KPIs will not be updated in the report.

The Secretariat confirmed it will advise if the cut off for data in the 3<sup>rd</sup> report of 2020 is 31 October 2020 and stated the report should be published in November 2020. The Chair agreed this publication date was important to avoid the publication drifting into January

2021. It was agreed that the first draft should be ready for circulation by the end of October and noted gaps would exist around certain KPIs such as the RAL until the data was available.

The members agreed the meeting of the WAB on 18 November 2020 would be dedicated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> report of 2020 and no external parties or presentations should be included on the agenda for the meeting. Michelle Minihan asked if the Members would be agreeable to new graphical displays around some of the KPIs she provides the data for. It was agreed Michelle Minihan would work with the Secretariat on the production.

SharePoint Update:

The Secretariat informed the Members that the SharePoint facility should be ready for use in the next week or so. It provided a short demonstration of how it works and asked the WAB to consider whom and what access rights various people should have aside from the WAB members and the Secretariat.

## **7. Ministerial letter**

The Secretariat confirmed the response to the Minister's letter has issued.

## **8. Confirm next three meeting dates.**

Tom Collins joined the meeting.

The members agreed to the following dates:

- 1 October 2020
- 18 November 2020
- 7 December 2020
- 7 January 2021

## **9. Any Other Business**

The Chair noted Irish Water's National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) is now subject to the Irish Language Act and its publication is now likely for December 2020. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Secretariat will circulate the latest draft of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WAB report of 2020 by COB today.

**The meeting was brought to a close.**



<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Amendment to minutes of meeting with DHPLG from 9 July 2020.	One amendment agreed, Secretariat to circulate to the DHPLG Water Division for comment.
3.	Next meeting date with Irish Water	The Members to consider and revert to the Secretariat.
4.	Invite member of CRU to present Scottish Water report to the WAB	The Chair to arrange.
4.	Members agreed IW to fund package 1.	Secretariat to confirm with IW that minuted confirmation is sufficient for Ervia Board.
5.	Completion of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Report 2020.	Secretariat to send most up to date draft of report to members. The Chair and Michelle Minihan to agree final text by email and send report to Secretariat for desktop publishing.
6.	Confirm cutoff date for 3 <sup>rd</sup> report of 2020 data.	Secretariat to review previous minutes and confirm.
6.	Sharepoint facility	Secretariat to roll out facility to members once ready.