

Minutes of the Meeting of the Water Advisory Body

Friday 22 January 2021 10:30am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Video Conferencing

Attended by:

Chairperson Paul McGowan

Members Miriam McDonald Michelle Minihan

Martin Sisk Dónal Purcell

Secretariat John McCarthy Colin Flood

Darren Browne

Apologies Neill Dalton

1. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 7 December were agreed.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest

There was no declaration of any conflict of interest.

3. Review/Discussion of earlier meeting with CRU

The Board held a discussion on the earlier meeting with Bríd O'Donovan of the CRU. Bríd provided a presentation covering the CRU's Revenue Controls 3 Decision, the recommendations from the Scottish Water International Report and upcoming CRU publications. In terms of advice to the Minister, the Board agreed that they would observe and comment on the actions taken by the CRU and EPA but without duplicating their work. Further comment can be made in a future WAB Quarterly report. The Board also agreed to invite a representative of the CRU to attend a future meeting of the WAB to provide an update on the implementation of the Scottish Water International report recommendations.

Irish Water is in the process of making a formal submission to the CRU to revise its Capital Investment plan. Further comment on this and other matters will be made in future WAB reporting.

4. Review of launch of Report 3 of 2020.

The Secretariat discussed the media coverage following the release of Quarterly Report 3 of 2020. The PR company employed noted that coverage was more limited this time but explained this may have been due to a competing busy news agenda at the time. Similarly, the WAB website received limited views during this period. Michelle Minihan conducted a radio interview with Kildare FM. The Secretariat will enquire about obtaining permission to share this interview on the WAB website. The Department's own Twitter account did tweet about the release of the report and the Secretariat will circulate their performance figures. The Board noted the press release by Irish Water following publication.

5. Progress for Report 1 of 2021

The Board discussed the shortening of the Quarterly reports. It was suggested that a summary of the key performance indicators would appear in the reports while detailed KPI data could be found on the WAB website. The Secretariat will progress about establishing a data hub on the website for such purposes. In the meantime, the Secretariat will review the presentation of current KPI data with the aim of providing a more succinct report. The Board agreed to this approach.

For Part 2 of the report, the CRU and EPA will provide updated metrics with a cut-off date of the end of February. Dónal Purcell will revert to the Secretariat with material from An Fóram Uisce (AFU) if available. For Part 3, it was agreed to comment on the *CRU's Revenue Control 3 decision* and the *Scottish Water International 'Investment and Delivery Review'* report recommendations. The Board also agreed to acknowledge the publication of *Irish Water's 'National Water Resources Plan – Draft Framework Plan'* and note the responses of the CRU, EPA and AFU.

The Board agreed to publish the Q1 report at the end of March/beginning of April.

6. Review of Irish Water procurement procedures – draft report

A deliberative draft report by the auditor has been received from Irish Water and circulated amongst the Board. The Secretariat will revert the boards comments back to Irish Water. It was agreed to invite the auditor to discuss the report at the February meeting. The Secretariat will check role of the Public Spending Code

7. Climate Change Action Plan

The Department Minister has written to the Chair seeking contributions on the Climate Action Plan due to be published by the Department in June. A draft reply letter has been circulated to the Board. The Board agreed and the Secretariat will issue the letter to the Ministers office.

8. Future meeting with the Minister

The Secretariat are engaging with the Ministers office to arrange a new date for early 2021.

9. Draft future WAB work programme

A draft 2021 work programme has been circulated amongst the Board. The Board agreed in principle the work programme and agreed to include timelines to complete the actions. The Chair will liaise with the Secretariat and revert to the Board. Once agreed it will be published online and circulated to the Minister, Irish Water, the EPA, CRU and AFU. The Board re-confirmed their interest in seeking preparation training ahead of a future meeting with a Joint Oireachtas Committee.

10. Communications

The Secretariat outlined updates to be made to the WAB website. These included the following:

- Adding Dónal Purcell's Bio and photo
- Replacing group photo from 'Who we are' page.
- Creating a new 'Advice to the Minister' page covering previous correspondence and advice.

- Updating of the 'Useful Information' page. The Secretariat will circulate an email to the Board requesting suggestions for relevant material.
- Data hub – the Secretariat will enquire about establishing a data to track key performance indicators.
- The Secretariat will enquire about including an Irish language version of the website

Website traffic has been limited over the previous year. The website has received 231 new users to the site with 798 sessions during this time. To support and increase traffic to the website, the Secretariat will enquire about establishing a twitter account. It was suggested that short summary animated videos could accompany the release of WAB reports. The Secretariat will circulate examples of these and the viewing figures that can be generated in way of comparison.

It was suggested that members of the Board could also speak at relevant conferences to increase awareness of the WAB. The Secretariat will enquire and revert to the Board.

11. Confirm next three meeting dates

The Board agreed to following meeting dates:

- 17 February at 2pm;
- 18 March at 10.30am;
- 12 April at 10:30am

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Action	Decision
1.	Last meeting minutes	Agreed
3.	Revenue Control 3 and Scottish Water International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed that they would observe and comment on the actions taken by the CRU and EPA in a future Quarterly Report. • The CRU will be invited again to a future meeting to provide update.
4.	Report 3 of 2020 - Kildare FM Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will enquire about obtaining permission to share this interview on the WAB website.
5.	Q1 report of 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will review current KPI data presentation with the aim of providing a more succinct report. • For Part 2, the CRU and EPA will provide updated metrics with a cut-off date of the end of February. • Dónal Purcell will revert to the Secretariat with material from An Fóram Uisce (AFU) if available. • For Part 3, it was agreed to comment on the <i>CRU's Revenue Control 3 decision</i> and the <i>Scottish Water International 'Investment and Delivery Review'</i> report recommendations. Irish Water's <i>'National Water Resources Plan – Draft Framework Plan'</i> will be acknowledged along with the responses of the CRU, EPA and AFU. • Publication at the end of March/beginning of April.

6.	Review of Irish Water procurement procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite EY to February meeting • Ask Irish Water to avoid any potential for misunderstanding between EY audit and the Scottish Water International report. • Secretariat to check role of Public Spending Code
7.	Climate Change Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will issue a reply letter to the Ministers office.
9.	Draft future WAB work programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed in principle the work programme and agreed to include timelines to complete the actions. • Will be published online and circulated to the Minister, Irish water, the EPA, CRU and AFU.
10.	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to be made to the website • The Secretariat will circulate an email to the Board requesting suggestions for relevant material. • Data hub – the Secretariat will enquire about establishing a data hub to track key performance indicators. • The Secretariat will enquire about including an Irish language version of the website
11.	Next Meeting Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 February at 2pm; • 18 March at 10.30am; • 12 April at 10:30am