



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Water Advisory Body
Thursday 18 March 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 Neill Dalton
Colin Flood Darren Browne

1. Minutes of previous meetings

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting with Bríd O'Donovan of the CRU (22 January 2021) and her amendments following their circulation.

The Board also agreed the minutes of the following meetings subject to amendments:

- WAB Meeting with EY and Irish Water – 17 February 2021;
- WAB Main Meeting – 17 February 2021.

The amendments will be incorporated and circulated to Ernst and Young for comment via Irish Water.

Following a meeting with Minister O'Brien of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 4 March 2021, it was agreed that the minute of the meeting would take the form of a high level summary to accompany the presentation given on the day. This will be prepared for the next WAB meeting.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest

There was no declaration of any conflict of interest.

3. Progress for Report 1 of 2021

A simplification of the Quarterly reports was discussed. For Part 2 of the report, it was agreed to move generic KPI description text and their technical notes to an Appendix. A note will be provided at the beginning of a section indicating detailed notes can be found in the corresponding Appendix. Each updated KPI will have an accompanying graph and note stating its updated status. KPIs not updated will keep their accompanying graph and a note stating not updated this Quarter. For the 'Executive Summary' and Part 4 'Commentary', these sections will only refer to updated KPIs. This arrangement will be reviewed following the release of the Quarter 1 report.

The Secretariat will provide updated text covering the *Scottish Water International 'Investment and Delivery Review'* of Irish Water for Board comment and approval. For the 'Introduction', the Secretariat will provide a summary of Part 3's commentary on '*CRU's Revenue Control 3 decision*' with regards cost reduction and efficiency improvements. Following this, a draft report will be forwarded to the Chairperson for comments before being circulated to the Board again for approval. Acknowledgement will be made to the upcoming release of the CRU Performance Assessment Framework. The Board agreed to make their amendments to the SharePoint draft version of the report.

The Secretariat will organise a PR company to publicise the report and arrange to have the report's release Tweeted by the Department's Twitter account. The Secretariat will prepare an accompanying short summary animation video. Examples of such videos will be circulated to the Board.

4. Progress review of Irish Water procurement procedures.

Following a meeting with Ernst and Young and Irish Water in February, the Secretariat have requested a finalised version of the procurement report noting that the WAB wish to publish and comment as part of a future Quarterly Report. Furthermore, it has been requested of Irish Water to provide comment on the report's recommendations. The minutes of the meeting will be circulated to Irish Water for comment.

5. Irish Water Customer Survey

The Board held a high level discussion on the development of a customer survey but agreed to hold a more in-depth discussion at the next WAB meeting. Discussion was held on the possible format of the survey with options including the use of yes/no questions or focus groups to obtain actionable results. The Secretariat have requested information on previous customer surveys carried out by the CRU and EPA to avoid overlap with a future WAB survey. The Secretariat are due to discuss this material with a CRU representative later this month. This material will be circulated amongst the Board ahead of the next meeting. While it was agreed that external expertise in market research will be sought, it was agreed at the next meeting to first develop a broad scope of what the survey will examine and the questions that broadly may be asked.

6. Data Hub Development

The Secretariat have liaised with the statistical unit within the Department to discuss the development of a Data Hub for the WAB website. Raw data will need to be sourced from the CRU and EPA and so far discussions have been held with colleagues from the CRU. Once data is uploaded to software behind the Data Hub, discussions can be held on how best to present the data.

7. Communications

WAB Website

An 'Advice to the Minister' page has been developed for the website. This will contain all advice delivered to the Minister such as that delivered as part of the Quarterly Report 3 of 2020. The updated WAB Work Programme has now been added to the Corporate Governance page. The government 'harp' logo is now displayed at the bottom of each webpage. Going forward, the Secretariat have made enquiries to develop an Irish language version of the website as part of best practice. A tender will issue to provide translation service while another company will develop the Irish version of the website. The Secretariat will revert to the Board on the costings of this service. In way of updating the 'Useful Information' page, the Board have been encouraged to provide links to relevant webpages and documents. As part of this, it was suggested that a page could be developed to help explain to visitors the work of Irish Water, its structure and how water services work. This Secretariat will enquire with Irish Water to help develop this webpage. Michelle Minihan will enquire within the EPA for useful infographics that set out the responsibilities of Irish Water.

Social Media:

The Secretariat are exploring the use of the Twitter as a means to help publicise the WAB reports. Those Board members part of the CRU, EPA and AFU agreed to help publicise the WAB reports through their own organisation's communications unit.

Joint Oireachtas Committee

The Secretariat will draft a letter to Stephen Matthews of, Chairman of the Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and invite him to a future WAB meeting where he will be briefed on the work of the WAB.

8. Confirm next three meeting dates

The Board have also agreed to the next main meeting dates which include the following:

- 12 April at 10.30am
- 18 May at 2pm

- 15 June at 2pm.

9. Any Other Business

Following the meeting with Minister O'Brien on 4 March, a series of topics and issues to progress arose. It was agreed to make this an agenda item to discuss these as part of the next WAB meeting in April.

Progress has been made in preparing a draft Annual Report. This will be circulated ahead of the next WAB meeting.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Action	Decision
1.	WAB Meeting with EY and Irish Water – 17 February 2021	The amendments will be incorporated and circulated to Ernst and Young for comment via Irish Water.
1.	Minutes of WAB meeting with Minister O’Brien	It was agreed that the minute of the meeting would take the form of a brief high level summary to accompany the presentation given on the day.
3.	Progress for Report 1 of 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Part 2 of the report, it was agreed to move KPI description text and their technical notes to an Appendix. • Each updated KPI will have an accompanying graph and note stating its updated status. • KPIs not updated will keep their accompanying graph and a note stating not updated this Quarter. • For the ‘Executive Summary’ and Part 4 ‘Commentary’, these sections will only refer to updated KPIs. • For the ‘Introduction’, the Secretariat will provide a summary of Part 3s commentary on ‘CRU’s RC3 decision’ • The Board agreed to make their amendments to the SharePoint draft version of the report.
3.	Publication of Report 1 of 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will organise a PR company to publicise the report • The Secretariat will arrange to have the report’s release Tweeted by the Departments Twitter account.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will prepare an accompanying short summary animation video. Examples of such videos will be circulated to the Board.
	Irish Water Customer Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to hold a more in-depth discussion at the next WAB meeting. Previous relevant survey material will be circulated to the Board ahead of the next meeting. Agreed at the next meeting to first develop a broad scope of what the survey will examine and the questions that broadly may be asked.
7.	WAB Website	This Secretariat will enquire with Irish Water to help develop an information webpage covering their work and responsibilities.
7.	Joint Oireachtas Committee	The Secretariat will draft a letter and invite to Deputy Stephen Matthews.
8.	Future meeting date	The board agreed to another meeting date set for 15 June at 2pm.
9.	Minister Meeting topics	It was agreed to make this an agenda item to discuss these as part of the next WAB meeting in April.