



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Water Advisory Body (WAB) and the Minister for Housing,
Local Government & Heritage**

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	

By Invitation:

Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Mr Darragh O'Brien T.D.
Minister's Office	Niamh Drew.

The Chairperson of the WAB welcomed the Minister and delivered a presentation covering the background of the WAB including its functions, membership, quarterly reports, indicators, advice to the Minister, meetings with Irish Water and other stakeholders, and the WAB Work Programme for 2021. The members of the WAB introduced themselves and gave the Minister some background relevant to their membership of WAB. It was noted in the presentation that the WAB welcomes the Government Policy Paper: *Irish Water - Towards a national, publicly-owned, regulated, water services utility*.

The WAB Chairperson gave a background to the decision to produce a report on the procurement policies of Irish Water. As Irish Water has a significant procurement framework it was seen as an area that the WAB under its legislative remit, should review. The first half of the review has shown that Irish Water are broadly compliant in their procurement policies.

The Chairperson of the WAB advised that WAB is conscious of the Scottish Water International review of Irish Water which identified fluidity in its capital investment planning. It believes that the more certainty Irish Water have in capital planning, the more confident the public will be in the delivery of results. The WAB welcomes the commitment to funding of Irish Water and the backing of the major programme ahead to address deficiencies.

The Minister thanked the Chairperson of the WAB for the presentation and for its support for the Government Policy Paper. He noted that the WAB was a relatively new organisation, and from a government perspective, has a really important role and that the WAB and its expertise will be crucial in the provision of clean water.

A discussion took place on a number of matters as follows: -

- WAB engagement with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
- The Programme for Government and balanced Regional Development,
- Irish Water funding, particularly in the context of COVID-19.
- Ongoing works relating to water services in the context of COVID-19 where water infrastructure is seen as essential service.
- Water capacity and the National Water Resource Plan.
- The Leixlip Water Treatment Plant.
- WAB monitoring of capacity,
- Progress on addressing Boil Water Notices,
- Leakage reduction and water conservation,
- Lead pipe replacement,
- Wastewater Treatment Capacity and progress to address capacity issues particularly in Dublin,
- Management of Risk within Irish Water,
- The role of the WAB in Communicating on Irish Water story to help build confidence within the system and in the public and the need to communicate regionally,
- IW customer interaction and its use of social media,
- WAB advice to the Minister.

The Chairperson acknowledged the WAB's development of its website and social media. The WAB is carefully monitoring this and recognises the need to build its profile including the use of social media presence and develop an Irish version of its website.

The Minister thanked the WAB members for a very informative meeting and thanked the WAB and the secretariat for their good work to date.

It was considered that it would be useful to meet again and that a further meeting could take place after the release of the next WAB Quarterly report.

The meeting was brought to a close.