



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

**Tuesday 18 May 2021, 2pm**

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Video Conferencing

Attended by:

Chairperson Paul McGowan

Members Miriam McDonald Michelle Minihan  
Martin Sisk Dónal Purcell

Secretariat Neill Dalton Darren Browne

Apologies: Colin Flood

**1. Minutes of previous meetings**

***WAB Meeting with EY and Irish Water - 17 February 2021***

The Board reviewed the amendments by Ernst and Young and Irish Water. A final amendment by the Board will be communicated with all parties before being agreed and published on the website.

***WAB Board Meeting minutes – 12 April 2021***

The Board agreed the minutes of the last meeting of the WAB subject to editorial amendments.

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

There was no declaration of any conflict of interest.

## **3. Annual Report**

The Annual Report was submitted to the Ministers office by the deadline of 30 April 2021. A copy was also issued to the Joint Oireachtas Committee and has been published on the WAB website.

## **4. Release of Report 1 of 2021**

### ***Media Coverage***

Following the release of the WAB Q1 2021 report, the report had coverage in two national print publications and a radio broadcast interview with Michelle Minihan. This coverage has resulted in a modest increase in traffic to the WAB website. In the period since the report was released, the website has had 19 new users of the site with the 'Quarterly Reports' pages the most accessed. Similarly, there has also been greater interest in the 'Other meetings' page and the 'Members' information page. Going forward, the Board will retweet the Quarterly report releases via their respective organisations.

### ***Meeting invite to Minister:***

As part of the letter to the Ministers office accompanying the Quarterly 1 report, the WAB welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Minister at his convenience. The Secretariat will contact the Ministers Office regarding his plans for a future meeting.

## **5. Progress of Report No.2 of 2021.**

As previously agreed, the end of May is the data cut-off date for Quarterly Report No.2, 2021, with a June release of the report. The Chairperson confirmed he has requested updated CRU key performance indicator (KPI) data and commentary on the First Fix Scheme be forwarded

to the Secretariat. Updated EPA KPI's have been requested by Michelle Minihan. The report will comment on the recent Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development review which suggested that domestic water charges should be implemented in Ireland. The report will also welcome the recent publication of the Single Public Utility Paper. The CRU's Irish Water Performance Assessment Framework is expected to be released in June and may form part of the Quarterly report's commentary. The Stage 1 Review of Irish Water Procurement procedures will also be published with commentary featuring in the Quarterly report.

It was agreed to have the first working draft of the report by the 4 June.

#### **6. Progress review of Irish Water procurement procedures**

The Board agreed to publish the Stage 1 Review of Irish Water Procurement procedures and Irish Water's corresponding letter alongside the release of the Quarterly 2 report. As part of the Quarterly 2 reports commentary, the Board agreed to state that the WAB expect Irish Water to implement the findings and recommendations of the report.

#### **7. Progress of Irish Water Customer Survey**

A draft request for tender document as part of a framework contract has been prepared by the customer survey working group. This document covers the background of the WAB and the survey's scope. The Board agreed to invite Irish Water to attend the meeting scheduled for 15 June to discuss past customer surveys they have undertaken and their subsequent findings to assist the WAB in determining the areas of focus. The Secretariat will prepare a letter of invite.

The Board held a discussion on the focus of the survey. It was agreed that the survey would focus on the public perception of Irish Water's operations and communications rather than their brand awareness or customer complaints procedure. This may involve surveying regional areas that may or may not have received 'Boil Water Notices'. The Chairperson will revert with the CRU's plans for consumer surveys in relation to water customers. It was

agreed to issue the final tender following the June meeting. It was agreed that tender will seek the market research company to:

- (1) develop the survey plan for 1 year with the option to extend to a further 2 or 3 years and
- (2) to administer the survey over the period.

The tender will request details for what work if any has been outsourced and how that data has been managed. Discussions were held on the marking scheme for the tender. The working group will revert to the Board with an updated tender document prior to the June WAB meeting. Final agreement to be made via email if required. Final survey results to be shared with Irish Water and will indicate WAB's intention to publish the findings of the survey.

## **8. Communications**

*Twitter, tender for website translation and social media policy:*

The WAB twitter account will be operational before the release of Quarterly Report 2. Work is ongoing in developing an Irish language version of the WAB website.

The Board adopted the social media policy.

*Joint Oireachtas Committee*

The Secretariat have received acknowledgement from the JOC of the receipt of a meeting invite.

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

Forthcoming meeting dates are:

- 15 June at 2pm and IW to join at 2pm.
- 14 July at 2pm
- 31 August at 2pm

The Secretariat will issue Save the Date reminders.

**12. Any Other Business**

Michelle Minihan will circulate the registration link to the upcoming June EPA Water Conference.

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

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EY/WAB Minutes (17 Feb) – Make amendments and issue to EY/IW</li> <li>• Meeting Minutes (12 April) – Board approved subject to amendments</li> </ul>
4.	Qtr Report 1 of 2021 – Media Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CRU and EPA will continue to re-tweet future reports.</li> </ul>
4.	Future meeting with the Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretariat will contact the Ministers Office regarding his plans for a future meeting.</li> </ul>
5.	Q2 2021 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from the CRU/EPA by first week in June.</li> <li>• Comment on OECD review</li> <li>• Welcome Single Public Utility Paper</li> </ul>
6.	Release of Stage 1 report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish when publishing Q2 report.</li> </ul>
7.	Progress of IW Customer Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat to draft invite letter to Irish Water for June meeting from 2pm.</li> <li>• IW to present on any customer survey's they have conducted, their results and their tracking of outcomes over time.</li> <li>• Survey to focus on public perception of Irish Water's operations and communications rather than their brand awareness or customer complaints procedure.</li> <li>• Tender will issue thereafter.</li> <li>• Tender to have flexibility option for additional years of a survey.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender to disclose outsourcing of survey.</li> <li>• WG to return with updated tender document with agreement via email if required.</li> <li>• Final survey results to be shared with IW with intention to publish.</li> </ul>
8.	Twitter Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be available for release of Q2 report</li> </ul>
8.	Social Media Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted</li> </ul>
11.	Meeting Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New meeting date of 31 August 2021 at 2pm agreed. Secretariat to issue Save the Date</li> </ul>
12.	EPA Water Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michelle Minihan to circulate registration link</li> </ul>