



Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D.
Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government
Housing, Planning and Local Government
Custom House,
Dublin 1, D01 W6X0.
12 November 2021

RE: - Water Advisory Body Quarterly Report No. 3 of 2021

Dear Minister,

Please find the attached report, which will be published on the Water Advisory Body (WAB) website on Tuesday 16 November 2021, and has been produced in accordance with Section 44 (1) (b) of the Water Services Act, 2017.

In submitting the report, the following are of note: -

- The report seeks to address in so far as possible the performance of Irish Water in the implementation of its Strategic Funding Plan 2019-2024;
- It is based on information that has been published; and
- It seeks to present the information using plain, jargon free, language, as far as practicable.

I set out below some points of note in this report.

This report shows a decline in the number of leak repairs completed since Quarter 1 2020 under the First Fix Free Scheme. The WAB supports the earliest introduction of the Household Water Conservation (Excess Use Charges) Policy. The WAB anticipates that this will encourage customers to avail of the First Fix Free Scheme, which has been expanded to capture unmetered customers, and that these two measures together will lead to higher numbers of leak repairs in the future.

The WAB is concerned that at the end of Quarter 2 2021, the Remedial Action List contained 53 water supplies, which is an increase of five supplies since our last report. Nevertheless, there was a welcome decrease in the population served by supplies on the Remedial Action List (566,302 consumers, mainly due to the removal of Leixlip from the list).

While Irish Water expects to exceed its 2021 target for replacement of lead connections. While welcome, we note that it is highly unlikely that Irish Water will be able meet the targets it set in its' "Lead in Drinking Water Mitigation Plan" to replace all lead services by 2026.

The WAB also notes with concern that the majority of boil water notice at the end of Quarter 2 2021 are long-term (in excess of 30 days).

The WAB welcomes the Commission for Regulation of Utilities' review and update of the Irish Water Performance Assessment Framework 2020-2024 (detailed in Section 3). It sets out the service areas, specific metrics and target levels of performance that the Commission for Regulation of Utilities' will use to monitor Irish Water.

On 14 July 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency published the Water Quality in 2020: An Indicators Report, which provides an assessment of the quality of Ireland's rivers, lakes, estuaries and groundwaters. The WAB notes the concerns expressed by the Environmental Protection Agency that Ireland's water quality is currently under threat with nitrogen pollution from agriculture.

Finally, the WAB notes with concern, two significant incidents that affected drinking water in August of 2021 in the Ballymore Eustace and Gorey drinking water treatment plants. Section 3 of this report contains a review of the Environmental Protection Agency audit reports on the incidents.

Further to the above, the report contains eleven metrics which measure the performance of Irish Water. The report, along with other information about the Water Advisory Body, can be found on the website, www.wateradvisorybody.ie.

The WAB welcomes the opportunity to meet you and update you on its work and is available to do so at your convenience. We will also send a copy of the report to the Joint Oireachtas Committee and will seek to engage with them on our work and the content of the report.

Yours sincerely



Paul McGowan,
Chair, Water Advisory Body.