



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

22 December 2021

RE: - Water Advisory Body Quarterly Report No. 4 of 2021

Dear Minister,

Please find the attached report, which has been produced in accordance with Section 44 (1) (b) of the Water Services Act, 2017.

The report will be published on the Water Advisory Body (WAB) website on **Tuesday 11 January 2022** and a press release issued on the same day.

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.

In this report, we highlight changes to four of our Performance Indicators. We also review reports produced by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

The WAB notes with concern that at the end of Quarter 3 2021, the Remedial Action List contained 55 water supplies, which is an increase of two supplies since our last report on 16 November 2021. These 55 supplies serve 455,097 consumers, which represents an increase of 11,282 consumers from Quarter 2 2021.

We also note in this report that Irish Water expects to exceed its 2021 target for replacement of lead connections. While the WAB welcomes this, we note that it is highly unlikely that Irish Water will be able to meet its targets to replace all lead services by 2026.

Compliance with the microbiological standards in drinking water remains high. The indicator covers the year 2020, where three public water supplies showed samples which failed to meet the standards for E. coli. One of these failures was deemed to be a localised issue with one property and a customer advisory letter issued to that property, while issues with sampling technique or locations were suspected in the remainder.

There was another increase in the number of people on a boil water notice at the end of Quarter 3 2021. We share the continuing concern at the trends for long term boil water notices as highlighted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The WAB welcomes the introduction of the Non-Domestic Tariff Framework (NDTF) for Irish Water's non-domestic customers, which went live on 1 October 2021. It introduces harmonised water charges for businesses across the country. It provides clear, transparent, cost-reflective and equitable charging arrangements for every business regardless of location. This is a welcome and key development for Irish Water.

Finally, the WAB notes a significant compliance investigation by the Commissioner for Regulation of Utilities into Irish Water's handling of issues arising at Bailieborough Public Water Supply Scheme. Regrettably, the findings highlight some significant failings in Irish Water's customer protection service. 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.