

Minutes of Public Water Forum Meeting No. 2

Date: 20th April 2016
Time: 11:00am – 4:00pm
Location: The Morrison Hotel, Dublin

Prsent:

Dr Tom Collins (Chair)

Andrea Ahern, Berenice Phelan, Colm Brady, David Wright, Dympna Morrow, Eoghan Brophy, Karen Carney, Kevin Ryan, Laurie Kearon, Liam Berney, Mindy O'Brien, Neil Walker, Orla O'Donovan, Patrick Gerard McGuinness, Paul McMEnamin, Paul Sigamoney, Rena O'Herlihy, Dr Suzanne Linnane, Tom Horan, Vincent Holmes, William O'Neill, Dr Jean O'Dwyer, Brian O'Donnell

In Attendance:

John Sherwin Room Three Design (Present for Agenda 1 to 4) Fergus O'Toole (CER), Aoife Doyle (CER)

Apologies:

Connie Rochford, Mary Flanagan, Michael Brophy, Geraldine Stewart, Jason Davis, James Grimes, Michael Spellman, John Shine

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
1.1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>The chair noted apologies and introduced the new domestic member Dr. Jean O'Dwyer, who briefly introduced herself.</p>	NOTED
1.2	<p>INTRODUCTION & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 09TH MARCH 2016</p> <p>The minutes from 09th March were approved with the following amendment:</p> <p>09TH MARCH 2016 – AGENDA No 9 - CONSUMER SURVEY</p> <p>A brief presentation was given by the Secretary on the experience of the CER in conducting consumer surveys. <i>The Forum decided that it would not undertake a consumer survey at this time as the benefit would not match the expenditure.</i></p>	NOTED
2.1	<p>UPDATE ON PWF BUDGET</p> <p>The Secretary provided a presentation on the PWF Budget and the expenditure incurred to date.</p> <p>The Forum approved the cost of purchasing Browsealoud for the PWF Website.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that a protocol for small amounts of expenditure be developed to reduce delays in procuring items.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>AGREED</p>

2.2	CORRESPONDENCE	NOTED
	<p>The Secretary reminded all of the Expense claim policy and advised all members claiming mileage that CER Finance department has requested a map accompany all claims. After some discussion where a number of members objected to this it was agreed that the Chair would send a note to the CER to request that this requirement be waived for the members.</p> <p>The Chair advised members that invitations have been issued to political parties to provide a submission to PWF by May 15th, 2016 on their respective policy positions regarding affordability, cost recovery, polluter pays principle and optimal organisational structures for a safe and efficient water delivery and management system.</p> <p>The Chair informed the members that the MoU's for IW and CER have been sent and an acknowledgement received.</p>	
3.0	LAUNCH OF PWF WEBSITE	NOTED
	<p>John Sherwin, Room Three Design attended the Meeting to provide an update to the members on the website. He discussed the functionality of the website and outlined the flexibility in updating by adding or removing pages as the Forum develops. He indicated that the members' section would be active by the next meeting.</p>	
4.0	ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP FOR WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT	NOTED
	<p>A working group was established to develop procedures for quality control, content control and an approval process for the website. It was agreed that the website content would be a standing item on the agenda for future meetings.</p>	
	<p>The following members agreed to join the working group for an initial period of one year</p> <p>Tom Collins Órla O'Donovan Paul Sigamoney Eoghan Brophy Paul McMenamin (Post Meeting)</p>	NOTED
5.0	AFFORDABILITY WORKING GROUP – TOR AND PLANNED OUTPUTS	NOTED
	<p>Paul McMenamin presented the draft Terms of Reference on behalf of this working group. He indicated that the concerns of the members included ,inter alia,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the volume of Free Allowance • How payment for excessive use might be structured • Affordability, in particular how less financially secure families would be protected • How to structure incentives for Conservation • The applicability of the polluter pays principle 	

Considering the wide ranging scope of this working group, it was agreed that the most realistic output objective would be to review the free allowance model and cubic ltr models and research alternative options. Additionally, the group are reviewing the Customer Handbook in relation to the vulnerable customers and first fix policies.

6.0 HEALTH WORKING GROUP – TOR AND PLANNED OUTPUTS

Presenting on behalf of the group, Colm Brady outlined the main concerns of this working group as:

- Chlorination of water
- Lead pipes
- Fluoridation of water
- Consolidation of Information

He drew attention to the fact that members of the working group were concerned with the burden on health as a result of water related issues and advised that the group will focus on prioritizing this concern.

The group are currently reviewing available information from a range of agencies with a shared concern for public health and water with a view to consolidating this information and making it more accessible to the public and also to gain some insights into the cost issues in the domain of public health and water.

Jean O'Dwyer was co-opted onto this working group.

7.0 CONSERVATION & INNOVATION – TOR AND PLANNED OUTPUTS

The presentation outlined the priority concerns of this working group, including;

- The apparent disconnect between IW and the EPA on issues such as source protection and water conservation
- The respective merits of source protection v's treatment in securing a safe supply
- Septic tank contamination
- Financial incentives for conservation

He indicated that alongside these themes that the group would also focus on the IW Parteen Pipe Project and, in this regard, have arranged a meeting with IW to discuss the project and to update the Forum.

8.0 OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE – TOR AND PLANNED OUTPUTS

On behalf of this working group, Vincent Jennings, highlighted the priority issues as follows;

- The need to protect and guarantee the public ownership of the Irish water resource
- The ambiguity of legislation regarding ownership
- The possibility that EU Directives may impact on the ownership issue and override Irish legislation in the area.

The group proposes to review existing legislation in terms of its capacity to ensure ongoing public ownership .It will formulate a range of questions to be put to a constitutional lawyer for a legal opinion on this issue.

9.0 SUPPORT FOR THE WORKING GROUPS

There was some discussion on the support needs of the working groups as they progressed their respective agendas.

The Chair has undertaken to research availability of an online library and legal support.

The Chair allocated a discretionary budget of €500.00 to each of the working groups. It was confirmed that the overall budget for external consultancy support for 2016 is €107,750 (ex vat).

It was decided that future meetings of the Forum would allocate the first hour for Working Groups to meet and progress their work streams.

AOB

It was decided that an agenda item for the next meeting would be a discussion on the establishment of a Working Group on public engagement and/or consultation.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Public Water Forum will be held on Thursday, 2nd June 2016.

Minutes approved:



Chairperson

02nd June 2016

Date