

MINUTES OF PUBLIC WATER FORUM MEETING NO. 7

DATE: 13th December 2016
TIME : 11:00 – 14:30
LOCATION : The Spencer Hotel, Dublin

PRESENT:

Dr Tom Collins (Chair), Fergus O'Toole (CER).

Colm Brady, Connie Rochford, David Wright, Eoghan Brophy, Joe Tuohy, Karen Carney, Keith Hyland, Kevin Ryan, Laurie Kearon, Liam Berney, Michael Brophy, Michael Spellman, Mindy O'Brien, Orla O'Donovan, Patrick Gerry McGuinness, Paul McMenamin, Rena O'Herlihy, Suzanne Linnane, Tim Fenn, Vincent Holmes, William O'Neill.

APOLOGIES:

Andrea Ahern, Berenice Phelan, Dympna Morrow, James Grimes, Jean O'Dwyer, John Shine, Liam Tobin, Neil Walker, Philip Tracey, Suzanne O'Keefe, Tom Horan. Aoife Doyle (CER).

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
1.1	Apologies The Chair welcomed the members and noted apologies.	NOTED
1.2	Member Update None.	NOTED
1.3	Introduction & Approval of Minutes from Meeting No. 6 Approved with minor amendment to reflect the discussion on the EU Water Framework Directive and desire to have a presentation to the Forum on the Directive.	APPROVED
2.1	Update on PWF Budget and 2017 Submission The preliminary budget for 2017, as approved by the CER was presented to the members. The Chair explained that work items previously discussed around water conservation, legal advice on ownership and a consumer survey can now be undertaken in 2017. The Chair provided an update on the possible recruitment of two staff to support the Forum. It was outlined that these may be located in the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO). A general discussion was held on the staffing, the main points covered included: - The appropriate level of the staff was discussed as well as the appropriate geographic location. It was questioned whether LAWCO or a University would be the preferred location for the staff.	NOTED

- The Chair outlined his vision for the Executive role, which included being a thought leader and driver for the Forum, undertaking research as well as co-ordinating working groups.

The Chair asked that the relevant members update and refine the two job specs previously drafted. The Chair stated that he would liaise with the relevant members in relation to this.

ACTION

It was agreed that an interview panel would be made up of Forum members, with possibly first and second round interviews. Independent persons may also be invited to join the panel. It is envisaged that the appointments would be made in February, with a decision on the location and appropriate institution to house the staff to be taken after the appointment of the staff.

The recruitment process is to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting on the 25th January, with the process and interview panels to be agreed at that time.

The Chair updated the Forum in relation to a recent meeting with the CER. He outlined the important decisions that would have to be taken in relation to non-domestic issues in 2017. The Chair informed the Forum that he had invited Sheenagh Rooney to present to the Forum at the next meeting. The Chair also expressed the view that the CER consultation process may need to change in future to accommodate the role of the Forum.

A discussion was held on the issues related to non-domestic customers and the Forum recognised the importance of these issues.

3.0 Expert Water Commission Report

NOTED

The Chair outlined that it was not clear yet as to whether the Oireachtas Committee (OC) will be taking written submissions or carrying out hearings. There was a general discussion on the Expert Water Commission's (EWC) report and the implications for the Forum. Some of the main points included:

- There was a need for the Forum to express their views to the OC on the role of the Forum and the ability of the Forum to take on new responsibilities.
- It was questioned by some members whether the Forum had the capacity to undertake the role suggested by the EWC report.
- There is a need to understand the role of the Forum and whether the proposed structure of the regulatory system is efficient.
- One member stated that the Forum should be more focussed on education and conducting pilot programs, with a greater emphasis on public engagement.
- It was proposed that the Forum should play a role in defining how Ireland should interpret and meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

- Some members acknowledged that the report was balanced and broad, but lacked specific recommendations. One observation was that this placed the decision making back in the hands of politicians who do not have the same level of expertise as the members of the EWC.
- One view highlighted that the Forum is representative of the citizen. As such, the Forum should be in favour of incentives to charge those who have excessive usage.
- There was a discussion on the metering program and the potential that the Forum may need to take a view on whether the program should continue. And if so, what the structure and goal of the program should be.

The Chair undertook to revert to the IPA to seek clarification on the difference between the stats in the EWC report. Specifically the different figures attributed to the 2011 European Union in relation to per capita water consumption and the latest data.

ACTION

The Chair also undertook to follow up with the Clerk of the OC to find out what the process will be for making a submission or presentation to them.

ACTION

5.0 A.O.B

No new items were added under A.O.B.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Public Water Forum will be held on: **25th January 2017**

Minutes approved:



Chairperson

Date