



Environment and Water Services,
Limerick City and County Council.

24th July, 2015

To: The Mayor and each Member of Limerick City and County Council

**Re: Eastern and Midlands Region – Proposed Water Supply Project
Options Working Paper.**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

I wish to advise the Members of Council that Irish Water recently published an Options Working Paper on the proposed Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project (WSP). This Options Working Paper includes an independent review of all previous studies undertaken on providing a new source of water supply for Dublin and the Eastern and Midlands Region. Irish Water has confirmed that finding a sustainable new source of drinking water to cater for population and economic growth in this area has been a key priority for the past decade.

Earlier this year Irish Water published the **Project Need Report** and **Project Road Map** for public consultation. The Project Need Report (PNR) identified that a new source of water (supplying 330 Mld by 2050) is required for Irish Water's Eastern and Midlands Region to ensure the security of future water supply. The PNR identifies that projected demand for water in Dublin alone is expected to increase by over 50% by 2050. Irish Water is of the opinion that this projected future demand is well beyond the capacity of the existing sources which serve the region.

Irish Water has further confirmed that ten options identified to date have already been evaluated as part of Strategic Environmental Assessments process (2007-2011) which looked at environmental, technical, risk, economic and socio-economic perspectives.

Four of the ten options were identified as being technically viable and Irish Water, having independently validated the four options, is now bringing these forward for further consideration in the planning process. No decision on a preferred option has been made to date.

The four technically viable options confirmed by Irish Water in no particular order of priority, are as follows:

- DESALINATION
- LOUGH DERG (DIRECT)
- LOUGH DERG AND STORAGE
- PARTEEN BASIN (DIRECT)

Public consultation will form a key part of the decision making process to identify an emerging preferred option by late 2015. Following detailed environmental assessments on the emerging preferred option, a planning application will be submitted by Irish Water to An Bord Pleanála in mid-2017. See Appendix 2 for the Irish Water Project Road Map outlining the consultation stages.

In order to begin the process of identifying an 'Emerging Preferred Option', Irish Water has identified a range of '**Constraints**' that need to be considered and also '**Assessment Criteria**' which will enable decisions to be made for narrowing down options in the next phase of the project.

Currently Irish Water is looking in detail at the four options in terms of a list of Constraints which will define the positioning of infrastructure (e.g. pipelines, treatment plants etc.). It

has also identified the 'Assessment Criteria' which will be used to assess each of the four options relative to each other. This work forms the basis for the Options Working Paper.

Public Consultation

Irish Water is inviting members of the public and interested groups to give their views on the proposed Constraints and Assessment Criteria (and the approach to their use) to identify an emerging preferred option whilst minimising the impact on people and the environment.

The proposed Constraints and Assessment Criteria are listed in Appendix 1.

Irish Water is now inviting submissions on the following:

- What other national, regional or locally important constraints should Irish Water take into account when locating the infrastructure associated with each water supply option?
- Have you any comment on the proposed constraints and the approach to their use?
- Are there any Assessment Criteria other than those proposed which should be used in the next phase of options appraisal?
- How would you like to be communicated with as the project progresses?

The Options Working Paper is available to view in County Libraries and at Local Authority Planning Counters within the project study area and can be downloaded from www.watersupplyproject.ie.

Feedback from the consultation process is being obtained through stakeholder meetings and written submissions which can be made by email to watersupply@water.ie or by post to Water Supply Project, Merrion House, Merrion Road, Dublin 4. All issues raised from this consultation will be reviewed and considered as part of the next phase of the process which

will result in a Preliminary Options Appraisal Report (detailing an Emerging Preferred Option) due for publication and consultation later in 2015.

Closing dates for receipt of submissions is 4th August 2015.



Gerard Dillon,

Acting Director of Service.

Environment and Water Services.

Appendix 1 - Constraints and Assessment Criteria

What are the constraints being examined?

A *Constraint* is a limiting factor on site selection for locating (water supply) infrastructure.

Typical constraints would include human settlements, environmental (Designated Areas etc.) or technical / physical factors (mountains/ rivers / lakes etc.).

The location of infrastructure sites and pipeline routes is determined primarily through the avoidance of impacts on these constraints. This method plays a key role in minimising potential environmental impacts arising from development. This approach involves the preparation of a constraints map which identifies the areas to be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible, minimisation of impact through design will be employed.

Constraints which have been identified to date include, but are not limited to:

Ecology

European designated sites which include SPAs, SACs, Annex 1 Habitats (i.e. habitats that fall outside the SAC designations) and RAMSAR sites; National designated sites which include NHAs and pNHAs; Local Authority designations which include Tree Preservation Orders.

Cultural Heritage

National Monuments, archaeological sites as identified in the Record of Monuments and places (RMP); structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures in each county development plan; Architectural Conservation Areas and candidate Architectural Conservation Areas as identified under each county development plan; National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

Geology

Geological Heritage Sites and Regionally Important Aquifers.

Water

Protected water bodies which include Salmonid Waters; designated shellfish-waters; water dependent habitats which include SACs, SPAs and NHAs; recreational waters which include designated bathing waters; designated nutrient sensitive waters, public water sources and flood risk zones.

Landscape

Highly Sensitive Landscapes and Certain Landscape Types

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors which include resident hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, education facilities, childcare facilities, historical sites / buildings, museums and gardens.

What are the proposed Assessment Criteria?

Assessment Criteria would typically include Environmental, Economic, Social, Technical and Risk Factors.

They will be used in further options appraisals and in evaluating options relative to each other.

The Assessment Criteria identified by the project team include the following Environmental, Technical and Risk criteria:

Environmental & Socio-economic Criteria

- Biodiversity,
- Flora and Fauna;
- Fisheries; Water;
- Air / Climactic Factors;
- Material Assets (Energy);
- Cultural Heritage

- Landscape and Visual;
- Material Assets (Land use);
- Tourism;
- Population;
- Human Health;
- Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology.

Technical and Risk Criteria

- Safety
- Planning policy
- Engineering and design
- Capital and operational costs
- Sustainability
- Risk

Appendix 2 – Project Road Map

