

Water Services Department,
Dooradoyle,
Limerick.

12th September 2014



To/ The Cathaoirleach and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Re: The Limerick Rural Water Monitoring Committee

In 1998 a major policy initiative at National level was implemented which led to the Government, through the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, committing significant new financial resources to a Rural Water Programme and devolving greater autonomy to the local authorities. As a result Limerick County Council assumed responsibility for the operation of a range of schemes as follows:

- Grants for new group water and sewerage schemes
- Grants to remedy deficiencies in existing schemes
- Subsidy towards the operational cost of group water schemes
- Grants for the provision or improvement to individual well supplies.

One of the key aims of the policy was to devise a Strategic Plan for the development of a rural water infrastructure in the County and, to achieve this, it was seen to be essential that the local authority work in partnership with organisations that would have a keen interest in this area.

In order to foster the spirit of partnership, Limerick County Council formed a County Rural Water Committee which comprised of 3 members and 3 officials of Limerick City & County Council, 2 representatives of the County Federation of Group Schemes and one member each from the I.F.A and the I.C.M.S.A.

While under the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 responsibility for the management and development of the public water services network transferred to Irish Water the responsibility for the development of the private Group Water Scheme network remains with the Local Authorities under the auspices of the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.

The committee acts as a forum for consultation at County level on issues facing the group water scheme sector and is appointed for the duration of the elected Council. It's main role is advising on policy with regard to water supply within the council area and monitoring the implementation of the various schemes for improvement and provision of new and upgraded water supplies to rural households. The committee meets approximately four times each year.

Some of it's key functions are

- Advising on the development of Limerick's Strategic Rural Water Plan
- Overseeing the operation of the devolved programme locally



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- Providing input the National Monitoring Committee

The Limerick Rural Water Committee provides a forum for consideration on the implementation of the Rural Water Programme locally. The difficult task of improving the quality, reliability and efficiency of rural water supplies must be properly planned and must embody a true spirit of partnership and co-operation between the private and public sector. To this end, the committee adopts a Strategic Rural Water Plan.

Since it's first meeting on 12th October 1998 some of the diverse issues that have been raised at committee level include:

- ✓ Inventory of Group Water and Sewerage Schemes
- ✓ Strategic Rural Water Plan
- ✓ Design Build and Operate Project – Disinfection and Water Treatment.
- ✓ Adoption of the annual works programme
- ✓ Water Quality Analysis and Monitoring Programme
- ✓ Public Liability Insurance
- ✓ Road Re-instatement charges
- ✓ Take up of Operational Subsidy by Groups
- ✓ Drinking Water Regulations
- ✓ Ground Water Protection Plans

I would now request the Members of Limerick City & County Council to nominate 3 members to the Limerick Rural Water Monitoring Committee.

Kieran Lehane,
Director, Water Services
& Environment.