

Water Services Strategic Plan

Issues Paper

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Introduction

Irish Water

In 2012, the Irish Government set about transforming Ireland's water industry through the establishment of Irish Water as part of a wider reform of the water sector. Irish Water was set up under the Water Services Act 2013. In January 2014, Irish Water took over responsibility for the provision of public water services from 34 local authorities.

Irish Water has responsibility for the supply of drinking water to over 80% of the population via more than 1000 separate public water supplies as well as the collection and treatment of waste water from more than 1000 separate agglomerations. Irish Water is regulated by both the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) for economic matters and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for environmental matters.

What is the Water Services Strategic Plan?

Section 33 of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (the Water Services Act) requires Irish Water to prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP). The WSSP will outline the strategic direction for Irish Water over the short, medium and long-term time frames up to 2040. The WSSP will identify what areas of water services require focus and development in order to meet mandate set out by government. It will be a strategic framework which will identify and prioritise the key objectives required to ensure the public water system can meet the challenges of the future. This framework will inform future capital investment plans to be developed by Irish Water and approved by the CER.

WSSP Legislation

Under Section 33 of the Water Services Act, aspects of water services which Irish Water must address in the WSSP are identified as follows:¹

- Drinking water quality;
- Prevention or abatement of risk to human health or environment relating to the provision of water services;
- Existing and projected demand for water services;
- Existing and planned arrangements for provisions of water services;
- Existing and reasonably foreseeable deficiencies in the provision of water services;
- Existing and planned water conservation measures;
- Management of the property of Irish Water.

The legislation also states that the WSSP shall be consistent, as far as is practical, with;

- National and regional planning policy (National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines);
- River basin management planning under the Water Framework Directive and
- Has regard to proper planning and sustainable development at a county and local level².

In this regard, Irish Water considers that supporting balanced social and economic growth is a key objective that needs to be addresses in the making of the plan.

Irish Water's Draft Objectives for Providing Water Services

Irish Water's vision of water services in the future is that:

"Through responsible stewardship, efficient management and strong partnerships, Ireland has a world-class water infrastructure that ensures secure and sustainable water services, essential for our health, our communities, the economy and the environment."

¹ see section 33(4) for exact wording

² see section 33(5) for exact wording

The WSSP will identify how Irish Water will implement this overall vision in terms of a set of objectives relevant to the various aspects of water services identified in the WSSP legislation and will identify the strategies required to achieve these objectives.

The following draft key objectives have been identified by Irish Water following initial consultation with key statutory stakeholders,³ in order to achieve the overall vision and also to comply with legislation:

- 1 Meeting customer expectations
- 2 Ensuring a safe and reliable water supply
- 3 Providing effective removal of waste water
- 4 Protecting the environment
- 5 Supporting future social and economic growth
- 6 Investing in our future

The following chapters address each objective in further detail and identify some of the challenges/issues Irish Water anticipates in achieving these objectives.

³ Key statutory stakeholders identified in section 33(1)(a) of Water Services Act

Objective 1: Meeting Customer Expectations

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives for meeting customer expectations are to provide a quality water service, at an affordable price, together with the customer service levels expected in a modern economy. To ensure that Irish Water are able to contribute to the investment in new infrastructure and services the following must be achieved:

- An effective implementation of domestic customer (predominantly household) charging that generates the required revenue;
- Improvement in the collection of charges from non-domestic customers (predominantly businesses).

It is anticipated that customers' expectations of service will be raised once charges are introduced and it is important that our key objectives reflect this challenge. The anticipated challenges in meeting these key objectives are summarised below.

An effective and efficient Customer Operation

The recruitment of an effective workforce for the provision of water services is a very important part of delivering a competent customer service operation. This also requires Irish Water to establish the structure and governance procedures needed to deliver effective customer services. To ensure that the customer services operations are efficient, flexible long term service contracts with our suppliers will be required which will incorporate robust contract management systems.

Establishment of customer base

Collating an accurate database of customers is critical to Irish Water's revenue generation capability and customer acceptance of water charges. Irish Water is currently validating who its domestic customers are whilst simultaneously working with Local Authorities to transfer all non-domestic customers. This will provide Irish Water with the capability to commence billing as planned and provide quality water services to customers effectively into the future. Maintenance of an accurate database is crucial to Irish Water to enable delivery of an effective water service to all customers.

Customer willingness to pay

Customers need to be satisfied that they are paying a fair amount for the water services that they are receiving. It is essential that Irish Water has an effective tariff structure and customer protection measures in place to achieve this. Irish Water is working closely with the CER and other stakeholders on tariffs and customer protection consultations in order to achieve this objective. Customers expect to be able to pay in a way that best suits their needs. Irish Water will provide facilities and frequency of payments that meets with customer demand.

Customer service channels

With the level of activity, including customer contacts, Irish Water anticipates a high volume of contact from customers. This must be provided using a wide range of customer contact channels. The domestic customer validation campaign and domestic billing will be the largest in scale and the most challenging and these must be delivered in tandem with meeting customers' expectations in relation to consistent standards of service.

Positioning and Customer Engagement

Irish Water must build relationships with both domestic and non-domestic customers, and clearly explain the need to fund investment in water services in order to reach expected standards, including levels of service. Irish Water will be challenged with persuading customers to embrace water conservation and other

good practices. Conveying this message to customers, and making payment for water services the norm, is particularly challenging in the current economic environment. Irish Water is building a lasting brand that aspires to be associated with all the characteristics of a high performing utility.

Objective 2: Ensuring a safe and reliable water supply

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives in ensuring a safe and reliable water supply are:

- Protection of human health through the provision of high quality water supply, and
- Ensuring continued and uninterrupted availability of drinking water to our customers.

The challenges in meeting these key objectives are summarised below. More detailed analysis of current issues with public water supplies is available in [Irish Water's Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016⁴](#).

Condition of Assets

The condition and performance of Irish Water's asset base is highly variable, ranging from exceptionally good to very poor. Assessing the condition of assets and ensuring appropriate operating, maintenance and replacement policies are in place is critical to ensuring a continuous supply of quality water to customers. A data gathering programme is ongoing to collect a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the asset base. This will provide a basis for which the assets can be maintained into the future.

Eliminating microbiological contamination

The present situation is that some 23,000 customers are currently on Boil Water Notices due to potential contamination of supply which is unacceptable. Irish Water will adopt a holistic risk based approach to prioritising actions, based on the World Health Organisation Water Safety Plan model. Irish Water's goal is to eliminate microbiological contamination to ensure human health is protected.

Water quality and hard water

Currently, a significant number of water supply areas have high levels of hardness (lime, iron/manganese) whilst localised issues with taste and colour have also been highlighted. These parameters have no impact on public health. A balance must be made between the costs that would be charged to customers by Irish Water dealing with these problems at the source and the cost that would arise for individuals if they were to, for example, install water softeners themselves.

Complying with regulations

The advent of new lower limits on the concentration of lead, trihalomethanes (THM)⁵ and pesticides⁶ in drinking water presents a challenge to Irish Water Standards will change over time based on emerging knowledge and new technology. Irish Water needs to ensure that our water treatment and water supply network are capable of meeting future standards and that we are proactive in identifying emerging issues and trends.

Supplying enough water to meet demands

Many water supply schemes have insufficient capacity to provide an acceptable protection against occasional loss of supply. For example, there is just 2% spare capacity (headroom) to supply water to the Greater Dublin Area. The vulnerability of this supply was seen in 2013 when water restrictions impacted many areas of Dublin. Accurate and timely interventions are needed so that an adequate supply of water is in place where and when it is needed.

⁴ This document is available at; <http://www.water.ie/news/proposed-capital-investme/>

⁵ THM's are a by-product of disinfection chemicals reacting with minute quantities of organic material present in treated water

⁶ Pesticides may be present in the water we abstract for treatment. These pesticides come primarily from their use in farming to protect crops.

Addressing leakage and wastage of water

High leakage levels place a strain on water resources, reducing the availability of drinking water to customers, increasing operating costs, impacting on treatment plant performance and water quality. Leakage levels in Ireland are estimated to be approximately twice the level reported in the UK, and several times the typical figures in some European countries. The Irish Water Metering Programme affords a significant opportunity for effective management of water supplies, providing a strong customer focus on water consumption. Irish Water will implement targeted leak reduction to increase the amount of water available and reduce costs for customers.

Objective 3: Providing effective waste water management

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives in providing effective waste water treatment are to:

- Protect human health, and
- Minimise the impacts on the Environment.

Irish Water has responsibility for over 1000 waste water treatment plants and associated collection networks. Approximately half of these systems cater for population equivalents of less than 500 whilst the 165 largest account for 92% of the national waste water load, with all plants to be either certified or licenced by our environmental regulator, the EPA. The challenges in meeting these key objectives are summarised below. More detailed analysis of current issues with public waste water treatment and disposal is available in [Irish Water's Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016](#).

Identifying and rehabilitating deficient sewers

Much of our sewer network and many of our pump stations are over 100 years old. As sewers age they deteriorate and the risk of collapse increases which can lead to flooding and possible pollution incidents. Sewers in poor condition may also be subject to ground water ingress, which has a significant impact on sewer capacity. Investment is required to replace sewers that are at the end of their service life (especially in the larger cities) and we need to have in place effective means to identify and prioritise required remedial works.

Delivering best practice approach to sewer refurbishment and replacement

We need to develop a better understanding of the probable lifespan of our assets and the associated risk so as to minimise cost of asset renewal. We also need to investigate, develop and adopt best practices and technologies for the rehabilitation and replacement of underground infrastructure. This will assist minimising impacts on customers and road users and address the significant costs associated with conventional approaches.

Maximising capacity of existing sewers

Many of our older sewers are combined sewers, meaning that they carry both foul sewage from properties and surface water arising from rainfall. During heavy rain excess flows discharge through Combined Sewer Overflow structures (CSOs) when the capacity of a sewer is exceeded or when blockages occur in networks. These discharges impact on the environment and water users such as swimmers. Our challenge is how we best address unsatisfactory intermittent discharges from sewers taking into account social and environmental benefits. Where our sewers are laid below the groundwater table infiltration can occur if joints are not watertight or pipes have been damaged, thereby taking up sewer capacity. To maximise the use of existing capacity we require initiatives to eliminate infiltration and other sustainable solutions.

Pre-treatment of sewage

On occasions it may make more sense for customers to treat or partially treat sewage at source rather than conveying untreated sewage to a central treatment facility. Irish Water will need to develop strategies to ensure that optimum economic and environmentally beneficially solutions are implemented in terms of accepting discharges to our collection systems.

Addressing overloaded waste water treatment facilities

Many of the discharges from our waste water treatment systems do not comply with standards as specified in their licence/certificate due to overloading, changes in standards imposed after their construction or other issues. This poses a significant legal and financial risk to Irish Water including a current European Court of Justice Infringement case. Our challenge is how to best address the treatment compliance issue to get the best outcome for both the environment and our customers in an appropriate timeframe.

Balancing Cost and benefits of investment in waste water

Most investment in waste water treatment is driven by environmental compliance requirements. However, the upgrading of treatment facilities impacts on costs to customer and our carbon footprint arising from increased energy consumption. Equally, treatment works upgrades can generate benefits through habitat development and enhancement such as development of wetland habitats or using treated effluent for irrigation. Thus there is a need to develop a balanced basis for prioritising investment which takes account of all social, economic and environmental costs and benefits in the assessment process.

Challenge of current and future standards

Current licence standards are designed to cater for maximum load on treatment plants and minimal flows in receiving water occurring simultaneously, yet both load to be treated and receiving waters systems operate in a dynamic way. A challenge will be whether standards can be developed linking pollution load discharged to available assimilative capacity in receiving water based on real time status of plant and receiving waters leading to greater resource efficiency. Also we need to consider how we provide solutions that can be adapted to take advantage of evolving technologies on the one hand and increased regulatory requirements on the other.

Maximising the value of sludge

There is a deficit of sludge management facilities nationally. Facilities are required to manage sludge generated by both water and waste water treatment processes. The proper management of sludge presents a challenge to Irish Water in terms of identifying an appropriate management strategy and identifying options that can potentially generate revenue and reduce management costs. Particular challenges include maximising energy recovery in the short term and the development of sustainable products and channels for re-use of by-products in the medium term.

Impact of increasing environmental constraints

The standards that we must treat waste water to are getting stricter⁷ and pose serious constraints on further developments located in or adjacent to sensitive or protected areas. Stricter standards will also impact significantly on treatment costs⁸. The on-going identification of further “protected areas” under Habitats, Bathing Waters and Shellfish Directives will place additional constraints on the location and quality of waste water discharges. Our challenge is to develop innovative approaches so as to minimise impact of discharges on protected areas at least cost to our customers.

⁷ Priority Substances Directive and stricter implementation of existing EU and national environmental legislation

⁸ Examples include Dublin Bay, Cork Lower Harbour, Galway Bay and Mallow.

Objective 4: Protecting the environment

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives in protecting the environment are:

- working towards environmental compliance,
- playing our part in the protection of our national water resources,
- protection of species and habitats and
- ensuring that our activities are consistent with Ireland's objectives under the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

In the development of our strategies we must include engagement with planning policy makers, Irish Water's environmental regulator the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER, our economic regulator). In addition, we will engage with other water resource users who have a stake in the wellbeing of our environment. We will ensure that the "sustainable use of water resources" is the corner stone of policy development and implementation.

Water Framework Directive

In response to the increasing threat of pollution and the increasing demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches, the European Union (EU) has developed the WFD. This Directive establishes an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. The key objectives of the WFD are protection of aquatic ecology and habitats, drinking water resources and bathing water.

Under the WFD we must control all impacts, be they physical, polluting or otherwise, on our water resource. Irish Water is committed to the principles and objectives of the WFD and we recognise that its implementation presents both opportunities and challenges for Irish Water.

A key objective of the WFD is the protection of drinking water sources and this will assist Irish Water in providing a safe and secure supply of drinking water. However, there is clearly much to be done in improving the level of waste water treatment in place in some parts of the country to meet WFD objectives and this will require significant investment.

Irish Water will work with all stakeholders involved in the WFD process to ensure that the investment that we make delivers the maximum environmental benefit possible. We must also ensure that Irish Water customers are not unfairly burdened with the cost of achieving environmental objectives disproportionate to our potential impact and as such will work with all stakeholders to ensure that we achieve the objectives of the WFD in the most cost effective way possible.

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate predictions for Ireland indicate that we will be subjected to much more unpredictable weather patterns in the future. The EPA have reported that changing patterns of precipitation will impact on water services provision and on levels of pollution and contamination, with significantly wetter winters particularly in the west, and drier summers particularly in the south east and storm occurrences of a greater intensity.

Potential impacts due to climate change include damage to water infrastructure due to cold snaps in winter or water shortages in summer leading to greater pressures on water sources. The most significant

potential impacts on waste water infrastructure is likely to be a reduction in the capacity of receiving waters to assimilate waste water discharges and flooding of sewers due to high rainfall events.

Irish Water must develop adaption and mitigation strategies to meet the challenges of climate change. Climate Change Adaptation will require action to both manage the risks and to make adjustments to reduce Irish Water's vulnerabilities.

Energy and Natural Resources

The EU has agreed to reduce greenhouse gases by 20% by 2020 and will increase the target to 30% if a global agreement is reached. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 states that the public sector should achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to a 33% saving in energy use by 2020. In line with this requirement, Irish Water has a corporate objective to achieve a 5% reduction in energy use per annum over the next 5 years.

To keep using resources of any type, be they water, energy, human, materials or equipment as if there were an endless supply is neither sustainable nor responsible. We must consider our responsibility to the environment and future generations. When considering building assets or purchasing equipment or in the operation and maintenance of our assets we must do this efficiently, not only in cost terms but also in terms of our impacts on the environment.

Irish Water must consider strategies to promote efficient use of resources, the protection of water resources to ensure a high quality water supply, and the provision of energy efficient treatment options and effective pumping and pressure management in our water supply system.

Objective 5: Supporting future social and economic growth

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives in supporting future social and economic growth are:

- Provision and expansion of water services in line with demographic change;
- Support the economic development of the nation.

Fundamental to supporting social and economic growth is the delivery of infrastructure to meet the resultant demand where and when it is needed. Irish Water must assess where the demands for water services are most likely to arise and plan to ensure continuous service to all Irish Water's existing customers whilst providing additional capacity for future population growth and industrial development.

Current Demographic

Some 62% of Ireland's population currently live in urban areas⁹, with Dublin and the Mid- East being the most urbanised regions. The Dublin Metropolitan Area is the most significant area in terms of population concentration. However, in overall terms, the population is considerably dispersed and water services are provided via over 2000 water supply and waste water collection systems.

Supporting National and Regional Planning Policy

Our current national planning policy¹⁰ aims to achieve a balance of social, economic and physical development across regions. This policy seeks ways to unlock potential for progress, growth and development in a balanced way across Ireland, underpinned by proper planning and sustainable development. The recently published Regional Planning Guidelines Indicators Report indicates that there is/will be a deficit in water and waste water infrastructure in many of the regions. Overall, 37% of the identified 'Gateway and Hub' settlements lack capacity to cater for planned populations in 2016 in terms of water supply and waste water infrastructure. The highest deficit of water capacity infrastructure will be in the Dublin Region and the highest deficit of waste water capacity will be in the Southwest Region with the Dublin Region a close second. Irish Water is committed to supporting national planning policy for balanced regional development which is sustainable. This presents a challenge in terms of providing water services to rural communities in a cost effective manner without over burdening existing and future customers with high water services charges.

Projecting/forecasting growth

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) publishes national population projections looking at a range of population growth scenarios and timeframes. These and other projections are ultimately used to derive projected growth figures at regional, county and town levels and used in development plans as appropriate. A key challenge for Irish Water is to align these projections with actual growth by developing processes to monitor and project demand. Currently all scenarios indicate that the Dublin and Mid East Regions will continue to grow significantly faster than other regions, with the Border and Western regions having the slowest growth. The development of models to predict population and economic growth and associated demands will be a major challenge for Irish Water. Whereas water demand can be predicted relatively

⁹ Regional Indicators Report 2014

¹⁰ The National Spatial Strategy 2002 - 2020

accurately the nature and volumes of waste water requiring treatment can vary hugely, primarily due to variations in industrial discharges and impacts of rainfall. Seasonality of demand also poses significant challenges in tourist resorts. Projecting future demands, particularly industrial loading, is complex and has a significant bearing on optimal use of resources.

Meeting the demand for water services

Irish Water are committed to providing strategic capacity to cater for domestic demand arising from population growth and domestic type demand associated with this growth (e.g. demand from education, hospital and commercial facilities serving these populations). Planning policies coupled with the activities of the Industrial Development Authority, Enterprise Ireland and the agricultural sector support investment in our economy, however, there will always be uncertainty in determining when and where development will take place. We will need to assess how growth can be appropriately supported within existing funding constraints.

To effectively plan to meet demand short, medium and long term forecasts of population and economic growth must be developed, including 25 – 30 year long term forecasts which will inform the strategic design of schemes. Intermediate and short term needs will be met by specific projects to ensure a match between capacity and demand. A key element of Irish Water's strategy for meeting demand is likely to be the maintenance of an acceptable level of headroom (available capacity over current demand) in our systems to allow for growth. Once this headroom falls below a specified level this will act as a trigger to provide a further increment of capacity. Determining the appropriate level of headroom for various locations presents Irish Water with a significant challenge.

Ensuring that water services are provided in a timely and cost effective manner

All Irish Water assets will be required to provide an appropriate return on investment to ensure that charges to our overall customer base are kept as low as possible. If infrastructure is provided too far in advance or oversized it will lead to excessive capital and operational costs being incurred and would be considered a "stranded asset". The investment used to build the underutilised infrastructure could be better spent in reducing costs or constructing infrastructure elsewhere. Thus a balanced approach to meeting existing and emerging demands is required to ensure that investment is not wasted on the development of premature and oversized water services.

In addition, Irish Water must ensure, through our Connection Pricing Policy, that the cost of developing and connecting to an Irish Water network is equitably apportioned and that Irish Water customers are required to pay only for planned and sustainable development.

Objective 6: Investing in our future

Introduction

Irish Water's key objectives in investing in our future are to:

- Manage our water services assets to ensure the delivery of high quality water services at an affordable cost;
- Implement innovative technical solutions to drive efficiencies.

This objective is to be achieved against the backdrop of historic under-investment in our water and waste water networks and treatment facilities which in turn means that we have to catch-up to achieve compliance, particularly with the Urban Waste water Treatment Directive. The transfer of responsibilities for the provision of water services to Irish Water from the 34 Local Authorities presents certain difficulties, particularly around the knowledge of the assets. It does, however, present an opportunity for radical transformation in the water services planning and delivery model in Ireland. The main challenges are summarised in the sections below:

Engagement with Customers and Stakeholders

Irish Water has a diverse customer base, ranging from households, commercial and industrial customers and also a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore wider and earlier engagement with customers and stakeholders will help us in developing a balanced picture of stakeholder and customer concerns, issues and priorities to inform our strategy and deliver optimal outcomes.

Thirty four to one

The approach to the provision of water services in Ireland prior to the creation of Irish Water was delivery of services via 34 local Authorities all with differing priorities, systems and processes. A very effective service was delivered despite significant financial and organisational constraints. Current Service Level Agreement arrangements have been set up with Local Authorities who will operate water services assets for a 12 year transition period on behalf of Irish Water. Irish Water faces major challenge in integrating the vast experience and knowledge across these Authorities into a single, effective and efficient utility to provide consistent levels of service to customers at minimum cost.

Asset Management Culture

Prior to January 2014, Local Authorities provided and managed water services within the resources and limitation that were available to them. In many cases these resources were insufficient and Irish Water has inherited water services systems much of which are aging or in a bad state of repair. Irish Water now has the opportunity to drive an asset management based approach at local, regional and national level. Irish Water must look at strategies to embed the Asset Management culture across all of our activities in order to optimise the performance of assets, through appropriate operation processes, maintenance and replacement regimes and performance monitoring.

Emergency response

Irish Water is required to provide a 24/7 emergency service 365 days of the year. In addition, we must provide an emergency service for significant events such as extreme weather events, catastrophic leaks, breakdown of treatment or distribution systems. Developing on the excellent work of Local Authorities in this area, Irish Water working in conjunction with other agencies must address these challenges. Irish Water will do so by putting appropriate strategies in place to address such situations including early

identification of potential problems and developing appropriate responses to minimise impact of incidents where they arise.

Balanced Approach to Investment

Due to the historic deficit in investment in Water Services, investment needs are likely to outweigh the money that will be available. Achieving the most equitable balance between various competing demands on resources will be critical to our future success. We will need to maximise return on investment by holistically considering benefits accruing to customers and wider social, economic and environmental benefits. We will also need to consider timing of delivery of objectives, balancing requirements to address urgent issues with the need to address important longer term issues.

Holistic solutions

The previous multi-authority approach to delivering water services in Ireland had a focus on local issues and solutions relevant to their functional area. Issues outside of Irish Waters remit have capacity to impact on our operations, such as surface water drainage and catchment management. We now have an opportunity to promote a wider focus through working with relevant stakeholders to develop holistic solutions such as shared policies and co-funded initiatives where mutual benefits arise.

Innovation and new technology

The water services sector has been slow to adopt new processes, procedures and technologies that may offer cost reduction and efficiency gains. In the drive to become more efficient, Irish Water faces the challenges of developing and fostering an innovation culture both within the organisation and across its stakeholders. We need to identify and actively pursue Research and Development in areas relevant to our business and to track opportunities to develop and adopt new technologies. To facilitate this we must engage effectively with academia and industry. We must develop a knowledge management capability and implementation processes to maximise delivery of beneficial innovative solutions and customer value options.

Strategic Partnerships

The efficient delivery of solutions to national issues such as the Water Framework Directive will require the development of effective partnerships across many organisations tasked with delivery of required outcomes. A key challenge is to develop effective working relationships to drive efficiencies and where possible strive to identify and harness win-win opportunities and deliver them in a creative and efficient manner.

Achieving value for money

As an organisation we must continually strive to identify and implement optimisation and rationalisation opportunities. Issues such as improved supply chain management and working with suppliers and stakeholders to develop better solutions are examples of the above. Irish Water must also be cognisant of the impact of investment decisions in the short term, such that they do not provide an undue economic burden on it or Irish Water's customers in the future.

Performance measurement and reporting

Under the new model for delivering water services there will be a greater expectation on the measurement and reporting of performance to customers and the wider public. Irish Water is therefore challenged to collect this data, use it to measure and continually improve its services and be transparent in its reporting.

Next Steps

Irish Water is now inviting submissions on this Water Services Strategic Plan Issues Paper in addition to the SEA Draft Scoping report and non-technical summary of the SEA Draft Scoping report until Monday 1st September 2014. This represents the first phase of consultation on the WSSP and is a non-statutory consultation phase. Statutory consultation will take place in late 2014.

This document (WSSP Issues paper) and the SEA Draft Scoping Report and Non-Technical Summary will be made available to the public through the following means:

- Irish Water website at <http://www.water.ie/about-us/project-and-plans/future-plans>
- Planning counters in your Local Authority office
- County libraries

Submissions can be made to Irish Water in the following ways:

- By Email: WSSP@water.ie
- By Post: Water Services Strategic Plan, P.O. Box 860, South City Delivery Office, Cork City, Cork
- Online: By clicking the following link <http://www.water.ie/about-us/project-and-plans/future-plans/>
- By Phone: 1890 278 278

All submissions will be reviewed by the Project Team and taken into account when preparing the WSSP and when finalising the SEA Scoping Report and throughout the SEA process for the WSSP.

Following this, the draft Water Services Strategic Plan, an SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement will be prepared. There will be further opportunity to have your say at this stage when a second round of public consultation will take place. The second consultation is the statutory phase of consultation and will take place in late 2014. To sign up for email updates on this project, please visit <https://www.water.ie/about-us/project-and-plans/future-plans/form/index.xml>