

Report on	Stakeholder Feedback invited on the Drinking Water Inspectorate's report: Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2020
Date of Meeting	6 th December 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Members of the on the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) annual report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland 2020 and to seek Members' comments and approval of draft consultation response to provide stakeholder feedback on the report.
2.0	Background
2.1	The DWI annual report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland 2020 was published by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in September 2021.
2.2	In Northern Ireland over 99% of the population receive their drinking water from Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water). The remainder is served by private water supplies. This report provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public and private supplies for the calendar year 2020.
3.0	
3.1	The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) recently published their annual report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2020 . The report is attached at Appendix 1.
3.2	Safe, clean drinking water is critical for our health and wellbeing. This has been particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when handwashing has been vital and the criticality of front line health services was, and continues to be to the fore. Many businesses were closed but others, e.g. food producers, increased production, placing additional demands on supplies.
3.3	Overall public drinking water quality for 2020 remained high with 99.94% compliance, a slight increase from 2019 (99.90%). Compliance at private water supplies was 99.24%, a slight decrease from 2019 (99.29%).
3.4	A comparison of compliance with 2019 is difficult in light of necessary changes to sampling regimes due to COVID-19 restrictions. Compliance is normally assessed at the consumers' tap, and in 2020 NI Water requested permission from DWI to use zonal sampling points as access to dwellings was restricted and many businesses were closed. Through collaboration with NI Water, DWI approved the

	use of zonal sampling points. This enabled an effective regulatory monitoring regime to continue to ensure the protection of public health and maintain public confidence in the mains water supply.
3.5	As well as domestic properties, a number of commercial businesses and public buildings such as food producers, hospitals and health care premises use a private drinking water supply. DWI worked with business owners and local council staff to ensure, where sampling could not be undertaken at private supplies that effective risk management was in place to protect public health. As businesses prepared to re-open, DWI published operational guidance and worked to ensure all premises were sampled prior to opening. The revised private water supplies monitoring programme was delivered in full. Environmental Health staff carry out sampling of private water supplies on DWI's behalf.
3.6	The Drinking Water Inspectorate are now inviting recipients of the report to provide feedback so that they can ensure that it meets the needs of the stakeholders who utilise the information contained within it.
3.7	The consultation runs until the 30 th November 2021 and is available online: https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/stakeholder-feedback-on-dwi-water-quality-report/ . A response to the survey has been drafted by Environmental Health and due to the consultation deadline this has been forwarded on behalf of Environmental Health, see Appendix 2. The Drinking Water Inspectorate would appreciate feedback so that they can improve their engagement with Council departments and ensure that future publications are suitable for Council's requirements.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/a
	Human: N/a
	Risk Management: N/a
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the content of the report and to approve the feedback to DWI on the Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland 2020 report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland Report 2020
6.2	Appendix 2 – Draft Stakeholder Feedback on the Drinking Water Inspectorate Annual Report for Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2020