

## **PRESS RELEASE**

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

12 October 2007

### **PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT ON STRAND 1 OF THE REVIEW OF WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES**

Regional Development Minister, Conor Murphy MP MLA, has acknowledged the publication by the Independent Water Review Panel of its first report on the review of water and sewerage services.

The Report published today (12 October) contains recommendations for Strand 1 of the Review which focuses on the fundamental issues of financing water and sewerage services and the level of funding required.

The Minister said:

**“I have received the report from the Independent Water Review Panel on Strand 1 of the review into the delivery of our water and sewerage services and am in the process of assessing the recommendation with my Executive colleagues, the Regional Development Committee and statutory stakeholders.**

**“I expect the Executive to take decisions on the report shortly and I will make an announcement to the Assembly after that.**

**“As I said when I announced the terms of reference for the review in a statement to the Assembly on 11 June 2007, this review has a wide ranging remit with a challenging timescale. I am satisfied that the Independent Review Panel has conducted this stage of the review in an open and professional way. The panel was given full access to all relevant documents required to support this work and made themselves available to anyone who wished to express a view on the subject of funding for water and sewerage services. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the panel and secretariat on its success in achieving the first challenging objective it was tasked with.”**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

1. On 10 May 2007 The Northern Ireland Executive confirmed that proposed new annual charges for water and sewerage would not be imposed in 2007-08 and that they would establish a comprehensive review to address the longer term approach that should be adopted in relation to financing water and sewerage services.
2. On 11 June 2007, in a statement to the Assembly, the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MLA, announced that the Executive had agreed a terms of reference for a comprehensive review of existing arrangements for the delivery of water and sewerage services – and that the review would be led by an independent panel.

The aims of the review are to:

- Carry out an independent and comprehensive review of the costs and level of funding needed for water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, to review how these costs should be met and how the service should be managed and governed within a public ownership model.

- Help ensure that there is public trust and confidence in the future arrangements for financing and delivering water and sewerage services.
3. The review has two strands. The first strand focuses on the fundamental issues of financing these essential services while the second will concentrate on the wider aspects of the management and governance arrangements for water and sewerage services.
  4. The Independent Water Review Panel (IWRP) is completely independent of Government and Northern Ireland Water Limited and it is serviced by an independent secretariat. Professor Paddy Hillyard chairs the Panel and other members include Joan Whiteside, Charles Coulthard and John Fitzgerald.
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