

MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2008

## **REVIEW OF WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES: STRAND TWO REPORT**

Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MP MLA, today welcomed the publication of the Independent Water Review Panel's second report.

The report contains the panel's recommendations for the second and final part of the independent review into water and sewerage services. Strand one of the review, published in October 2007, addressed the costs and funding of water and sewerage services. The second strand focuses on the structures necessary to deliver these services.

Asked about the report the Minister said:

**“The Executive has already agreed that the Panel’s first report has provided a way forward for the fair and sustainable funding of domestic water and sewerage services, through its recognition of the contribution households already make through regional rate. No double charging will mean significant savings for households compared to the Direct Rule water charges and a commitment to keep water in public ownership will ensure that services work for people here, not for private profit.**

**“I welcome the publication of the second report by the Independent Water Review Panel. They were set a task of helping to build public trust and confidence in the future arrangements for water and sewerage services. I would like to congratulate the Panel on carrying out this challenging and wide ranging review in the demanding timescale that the Executive set.”**

Asked about the way forward the Minister said:

**“The Executive will now have to take decisions on the Strand Two report taking into account the views of the Regional Development Committee and other statutory stakeholders. Once the Executive’s proposals are agreed, they will be subject to consultation in Spring 2008.**

**“Our objective remains to secure the best services for the people of the north as efficiently as possible.”**

### **NOTE 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 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.
3. The aims of the review were 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.
  - To help ensure that there is public trust and confidence in the future arrangements for financing and delivering water and sewerage services.
  - The review had two strands. The first strand focused on the fundamental issues of financing these essential services while the second concentrated on the wider aspects of the management and governance arrangements for water and sewerage services. The Independent review's strand 1 report [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/iwrp\\_strand\\_1\\_report.pdf](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/iwrp_strand_1_report.pdf) was published on 12 October and the Regional Development Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 22 October setting out the Executive's decisions <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2007/071022.htm#2>

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. Media queries for the Independent Review Panel should be directed to Corinna Turtle of Carlton Baxter Communications on 02890 9040 8312 or email [corinna@carltonbaxter.com](mailto:corinna@carltonbaxter.com)
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