

Civic Offices, limerick Road,
Nenagh, County Tipperary



Darragh O'Brien, T.D.,
Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage
Custom House
Dublin 1

12th July 2024

Dear Minister O'Brien,

Under the Water Services Act 2017, the Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) has a statutory role to advise the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage on rural water in Ireland. The Forum has developed a piece of advice/position paper for your attention and that of your Officials in the Water Division focused on the delivery of drinking water services by the group water sector, which is an agreed position of all Members of the Forum. A series of additional pieces of advice will be made on other aspects of rural water (including private wells) later in 2024.

In order to develop this policy advice, Members of the Forum's Water Services Standing Committee received presentations on rural water services from the Rural Water Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and also the National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS). Members participated in a fieldtrip organised by the NFGWS to a number of Group Water Schemes to learn about work on the ground to produce potable water and initiatives of community engagement and source protection. Learnings of the Tobin Report on the Review of the Rural Water Sector were also considered for the development of this position.

The policy recommendations presented in this position paper are very much aligned with the request from your department on the 8th of July, which requested the Forum's views of governance, administration, and oversight of the rural water sector. We are available to meet with you or your officials in relation to our advice and look forward to continuing to work with you to help strengthen the delivery of high-quality rural water services.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Matt Crowe
Chair

Cc: Mr Fintan Towey, Assistant Secretary, Water Division
Mr Douglas Kelly, Principal Officer, Rural Water.