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Delivering what matters

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**BY EMAIL**

26 April 2023

Dear Paul,

### **PC21 Mid-Term Review Draft Approach**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft PC21 mid-term review approach. We are supportive of the need for a Mid-Term Review and agree with the scope and remit as set out in the draft document. We are also content that it reflects the outcome of our previous discussions, subject to a number of proposed changes which we have set out below.

#### **Section 3 - Approach to specific areas.**

##### **Scope Uncertainty in the capital programme**

NI Water do not intend to submit a fifth batch of schemes but will instead provide you with a Draft Capital Submission which sets out a prioritised list of capital projects which we propose undertaking during PC21. In order to facilitate the necessary NI Water approvals, we plan to submit this to you by 3 July 2023. We would therefore suggest removing the last sentence of paragraph 3.16 to reflect this.

##### **Provision of investment planning information by NI Water for the MTR**

As outlined above, NI Water will submit a Draft Capital Submission in early July. It may be worth amending text in this section accordingly.

##### **Consumer Measures, Consumer Protection and Best Practice Framework**

Given that the Utility Regulator is currently developing proposals for a new Code of Practice to replace and/or update existing licence/code requirements (with consultation planned for the latter half of 2023), we agree with the decision not to set

new targets at the mid-term review relating to vulnerable consumers and the delivery of enhanced customer service to those on the Customer Care Register.

Helping customers who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances is extremely important to NI Water. NI Water provides a range of additional services and support for customers in vulnerable circumstances through our Customer Care Register, which we continually promote and is open for any customer to join. We are also on track to achieve Just a Minute accreditation early in 2023/24 and have commenced work towards ISO 22458.

As noted in the Utility Regulator's PC21 Final Determination, it is important that the work of the Consumer Protection Programme's best practice framework, the Consumer Vulnerability Working Group and the CM/Sat group of stakeholders are fully aligned in the development of appropriate metrics and targets for the protection of vulnerable customers.

We will continue to support the Utility Regulator's Consumer Protection Programme and will work with CM/SAT to monitor and review NI Water's consumer service activities during the remainder of PC21.

#### **Section 4 – Mid term Review Timelines**

In order to facilitate the necessary NI Water internal approval of the Mid-Term Review submission, we would request that the timeline is amended as follows:

- As previously highlighted, NI Water will not now submit a final scope certainty submission. Instead NI Water will submit a draft Capital submission. NI Water proposes that the submission date be amended to 3 July 2023.
- The deadline for NI Water's September submission should be amended to end of September 2023.

I trust that you find these comments helpful. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Michael Mulholland**

Head of Regulation and Business Reporting

cc Ronan Larkin  
Paul Harper  
Barry Nay  
Garth Stewart