

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION (THE 'AUTHORITY') HELD ON FRIDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2011 AT 11.30 A.M. AND RESUMING ON WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2011 AT 8.30 A.M. AT QUEENS HOUSE, BELFAST**

Present:

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mr Peter Matthews  | Chairman                       |
| Mr Richard Rodgers | (on 2 March only)              |
| Mr Jim Oatridge    |                                |
| Mr Philip Johnson  | (by teleconference on 2 March) |
| Mr Alan Rainey     |                                |
| Ms Etain Doyle     | (by teleconference on 2 March) |
| Mr Chris Le Fevre  | (by teleconference on 2 March) |
| Mr Bill Cargo      |                                |
| Mr Shane Lynch     | Chief Executive                |

In attendance:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Ms Jo Aston      | Director of Water                                    |
| Mr Donald Henry  | Director of Corporate Affairs                        |
| Ms Tanya Wishart | Acting Director of Electricity (on 25 February only) |
| Mr Greg Irwin    | Board Secretary and Communications Manager           |
| Mr John Mills    | Water directorate                                    |
| Mr John Cooper   | Wragge and Co (on 25 February only)                  |

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Clive Elphick, Richard Rodgers (for 25 February only)

**2. FIRE DRILL**

The Board Members were informed of the evacuation procedures which apply at Queens House in the event of a fire.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

#### **4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY'S INVESTIGATION REPORT**

The Director of Water introduced a draft investigation report for the board's comment and approval. She provided an annotated commentary on all sections of the draft report.

Board members availed of the opportunity to ask questions on the draft report and discuss issues that emerged. The following issues were clarified and discussed: the condition and performance of water network assets, key operational decisions relating to these assets (and in particular the rotation of supplies), the organisation's major incident planning (in terms of benchmarking, testing, implementation and management), the performance of NI Water during the previous freeze/thaw event in 2009-10 and evidence of lessons learnt, the nature and quality of communications by NI Water during the incident, the utilization of communications technologies (e.g. relating to the consumer contact centre) and the communications mix, the performance of services provided to NI Water by third party organisations, the costs of the incident, the company's risk management procedures and processes, powers available to NI Water help the company deal more effectively with the incident, actions to help mitigate against the impact of adverse weather in the future and, the leadership and management of the company during the freeze/thaw incident.

Board members suggested a small number of specific wording changes for consideration in the final investigation report.

A briefing on the options for regulatory action, in the light of the draft report's findings and conclusions, was also provided to the board.

With all of the issues discussed and clarified, the Chairman brought the board's consideration of the draft investigation report to a conclusion. The Board, subject to consideration of a small number of wording suggestions, unanimously endorsed the draft investigation report for publication.

## **5. PREPARATION FOR PUBLICATION OF THE AUTHORITY'S INVESTIGATION REPORT**

The Chairman briefed the board on engagement with key stakeholders. He also provided an update to the board on the plans for the publication and dissemination of the investigation report. In particular, he outlined the process for ensuring that the investigation report - alongside that of the external reviewers' report - would be delivered to the Secretary of the Northern Ireland Executive, on the following day. Finally, he recorded the thanks, on behalf of the board, to those Authority staff that had devoted a significant amount of time to ensuring that a professional and comprehensive investigation report would be produced on time.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business.

The board meeting concluded on 2 March at 10.20 a.m.