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Mr Iain Osbourne  
Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation  
Queens House  
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: DRD/COR/248/2008

Date: 6 May 2008

Dear Mr Osbourne

Thank you for your letter dated 7 April 2008 to Conor Murphy MP, MLA inviting comments on your ongoing NIAUR consultation on sustainability. The Minister has read your letter and asked me to reply.

The overall aim of DRD is to "improve the quality of life for everyone in Northern Ireland by maintaining and enhancing a range of essential infrastructure services and by shaping the Region's long-term strategic development". Sustainable development is central to this aim and would include the protection of the environment through the provision of modern, high quality water and sewerage services, at the lowest possible cost.

In common with other Departments here, DRD was engaged in the production of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy and the development of the subsequent Sustainable Development implementation Plan. A Sustainable Champion has also been appointed within the Department.

Later in the year, the Minister will issue Social and Environment Guidance to help inform the ongoing price review process for the water industry for period 2010-12 and beyond.



The guidance will highlight how NIW can contribute towards sustainability and target key areas for further improvement including leakage, water conservation, waste management and energy efficiency.

The Minister looks forward to further debates on how we can contribute to sustainable development as the price review process progresses.

*Yours sincerely*

*Lynne McElhinney*

**LYNNE McELHINNEY**

**Private Secretary to Conor Murphy MP, MLA**