

L111109



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

05 NOV 2009

Utility Regulator

Parliament Buildings  
Belfast BT4 3XX

3 November 2009

The Utility Regulator  
Queen's House  
Queen's Street  
Belfast BT1 6ED

**Re: Northern Ireland Water**

To the Regulator,

RECEIVED		
UTILITY REGULATOR ELECTRICITY GAS WATER		
NIAUR WATER GROUP		
For		
KW		
05 NOV 2009		
To Act		
Reply		File
To See		OC

I welcome the opportunity to comment on Northern Ireland Water's 2010-13 PC10 Business Plan, which will determine NI Water's priorities for 2010- 2013.

As you know, East Belfast has suffered from decades of underinvestment in infrastructure, which has resulted in consistent and persistent flooding over the last several years.

A Baseline Ecology Report recently completed by Scott Wilson concluded that *'the rivers in the Connswater system are only of fair to poor water quality, believed to be attributable to organic enrichment resulting from the combined sewer outfalls.'*

Action is clearly needed to address this system. To this end, I would request that the regulator prioritise the Loop, Knock and Connswater Systems in East Belfast in order to maximise and build on the investment from other stakeholders, including government agencies, during this period : Big Lottery Fund £23.5m, Belfast City Council £4.2m, the Department for Social Development £3.3m, Rivers Agency £16m, Queens University Belfast £1m.

The implementation of the East Belfast Drainage Area Plan should be given the highest priority and a programme of works for the area must be developed to address the internal sewer flooding and unsatisfactory discharges and spills from combined sewer overflows.

During consultation undertaken by NI Water, consumers expressed a clear priority for improvement to pollution from sewage discharges to inland waters over pollution of coastal waters. Consumers also recognised the impact of discharging to small inland waters where there is less dilution. The impact of pollution on wildlife and tourism was



a concern. Some consumers spoke of the impacts of developments in areas where infrastructure could not cope.

Construction on the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) / Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) will commence in September 2010. The joint project includes the construction of a combined Community Greenway and, in partnership with Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Rivers Agency, major Flood Alleviation works.

The CCG / FAS will address critical needs in the area, protecting homes, the environment and mitigating against climate change. It will also enhance local biodiversity and provide a key amenity for local people. The scheme will involve replacing a number of major road culverts, construction of flood walls, flood earth embankments and river realignment.

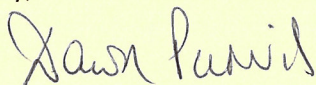
Works undertaken by NI Water will have a considerable impact on the sustainability of the CCG / FAS project and the ongoing management and maintenance costs, incurred by Belfast City Council and its rate payers.

Whilst the Rivers Agency will be undertaking substantial works in the area to address out of river channel flooding, NI Water should assist to address flooding issues and the management of surface water drainage, and flooding problems attributable to the NI Water sewerage network.

Such a partnership would also comply with Government policies on joined-up government and achieving value for money. Ideally, both agencies working together would minimise the disruption caused to the local communities affected by the works.

I thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawn Purvis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dawn" and the last name "Purvis" clearly distinguishable.

Dawn Purvis MLA