



# **Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe**

## ***Galway City Council***

---

### **RE : GALWAY CITY WATER SUPPLY**

Significant progress has been made on all actions relating to the delivery of a solution to the current water supply situation in Galway City.

#### **1. Water Supply From The Luimnagh Water Treatment Plant:**

Galway County Council and Galway City Council have made substantial progress with actions to advance the supply of water to the city from the Luimnagh Water Treatment Plant. The timescale will operate on the basis that 9,800 m<sup>3</sup> per day will be provided from the Luimnagh Treatment Plant to the City from the 8th May, 2007. This will increase to 11,000 m<sup>3</sup> from the 18th May, 2007 and then to 17,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day from the 15th June, 2007. Effectively, the supply from the 15th June, 2007 will allow Galway City Council to commence decommissioning the old Waterworks at Terryland and therefore commence the restoration of safe drinking water supplies to the City. However, the decision on the lifting of the “Boil Water” notice is a matter for the HSE. They have indicated that they will require three conditions to be satisfied relating to the effective treatment of water, the continuous supply of quality water and a reduction in the number of the cases of cryptosporidiosis. It is our position that the combined supplies from Luimnagh and the new Waterworks at Terryland can satisfy the first two conditions.

#### **2. Package Treatment Plant at the Old Waterworks, Terryland, Galway:**

The Brief for the appointment of Consultants to advance the provision of a Package Treatment Plant has been finalised and is now proceeding to tender. The Brief provides for a target implementation date of eight months from the appointment of Consultants for the installation of the Package Treatment Plant at the Old Waterworks in Terryland.

#### **3. New Treatment Plant:**

A Draft Brief for the appointment of Consultants to advance the development of a New Treatment Plant at Terryland was submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government last Thursday.

**4. Water Quality Results:**

The Council continues to take daily samples at the Terryland Waterworks and recent samples have displayed a significant improvement in water quality to levels well below the UK guideline value.

**5. Number of Cases of Cryptosporidiosis:**

The increase in the number of diagnosed cases of cryptosporidiosis in both City and County has begun to decline. The number of new cases last week was less than the number of new cases in the previous week. There is evidence, therefore, that the number of new cases in the community is beginning to reduce and there is also clear evidence that the “Boil Water “ notice is taking positive effect.

**6. Measures to Reduce the Impact on Householders and Local Business:**

Boiling the water makes it absolutely safe for human consumption and food preparation. Notwithstanding this, the Council has introduced measures to reduce the impact of the current situation on both householders and local businesses. In relation to the former, the Council, working with a local water supply company, is now providing free bottled water through retail outlets in the City. The initiative operates on the basis that a free bottle of water is given with each purchase. The Council believes that this is the most effective method of distributing water to households throughout the city.

In relation to provision of water tankers consideration was given at a very early stage by Galway City Council following the issue of the `boil water` notice on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 and a decision was made at that time not to proceed with the deployment of tankers. Galway City Council, having consulted locally with the HSE, was concerned in relation to assuring the quality of this supply and the possibility of contamination. The Council consulted with the HSE in relation to this particular matter and was satisfied that the introduction of water tankers in the current situation in Galway would not be an appropriate response and, indeed because of the possibility of contamination could make matters worse. Other options were, therefore, looked at and the option which has now been put in place by the City Council is to utilise the existing distribution system through the retail outlets to ensure that water is provided for households free of charge throughout the City.

In relation to local business, the Council has indicated that a decision will be made on the 23rd April, 2007 regarding the application of a reduction in water charges for all businesses in the City.

In relation to households on low incomes, the Council made a proposal to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government last Thursday requesting that the provision of vouchers to households on low income through the Social Welfare system be considered in co-operation with the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

**7. Staffing and Resources:**

Emergency staffing teams have now been deployed by the City Council to address this issue and these are in place. Additional staff are also being recruited to deal with the immediate response to this situation.

April 12<sup>th</sup> 2007

In relation to the longer term delivery of the €223m Water Services Investment Programme for Galway City, the Council made a second application to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in February of this year seeking approval for the recruitment of additional staffing resources. It is understood that the Department is considering this application. The first application for 5 additional staff was made to the Department in December, 2005 – approval was given to the recruitment of 2 staff in March 2006 and these were appointed in June 2006. The approval to the staffing requested is critical to the delivery of progress on all of the schemes in the Water Services Investment Programme.

This outlines the current position in relation to water supplies in Galway City. Significant progress has been recorded on all actions and this progress will continue.

## **8. Media Comments**

In relation to the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche's comment on "Today with Tom McGurk", Galway City Council is aware of these comments and has responded directly to the Minister in relation to these comments.

Galway City Council has no further comment to make on this issue at the moment.