

WATER INDUSTRY COMMISSION

PRICING REVIEW CONSULTATION

- Supportive of the opportunity to influence the consideration of the pricing strategy for water services.
- Need to recognise the lead-time for change and the longer-term strategy for water services. If these extend beyond the review period then must ensure appropriate steps are taken within 2010-2014, to achieve these goals.
- Given the scale and complexity of water expenditure and revenue, there are some issues which may be specialist/technical and a general viewpoint may not be relevant due to the lack of knowledge. In interpreting the feedback, need to be aware of such issues and potentially '*weight*' the importance of some responses. It may be appropriate to consult different groups for different aspects of your considerations.
- It would be helpful in considering the respective issues if the preferred option of WIC were highlighted amongst the options considered, allowing a clear understanding of the reader as to the likely proposal and the alterations considered. Otherwise there may be wasted time from consultees considering issues/outcomes which are unlikely to be implemented. Need to make effective use of open/closed questions within the consultations.

Questions

- a) The range of communication methods seems extensive enough. The use of the website to provide access to consultation documents, supporting analysis, minutes, etc, would enable stakeholders ready access to information relating to the pricing review. The engagement of the general public and voluntary sector may need better targeting regarding information and awareness of the consultation process. This may require greater use of press, TV and radio to reach such sectors.
- b) To enable attendees at the information days to be able to contribute there is a need to ensure that information relating to the theme being considered is available prior to the day. To allow reasonable consideration it would be preferable to have access to the info 1 week prior. Otherwise, the stakeholders' days may be more a '*lecture*' rather than a '*discussion*'. I think the Stirling offices are geographically central and accessible for the majority of attendees from the business community. For the general public the accessibility issue is probably most important and it may be worth considering staging events in major cities, eg, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, etc.

- c) I would suggest there is a need to ensure that the consultation is accessible (in terms of language, explanation, information) to the general public for them to be able to engage in a dialogue with their MSP, MP, Councillors, etc. The active promotion of this with the public will then enable their elected representative to represent the public's informal view. In terms of whether the updates and briefings are effective in communicating with MSP's then I would suggest that surveying them directly is a better means of determining this than a general response from this consultation indirectly informing this.

- d) The review should consider or recommend for consideration elsewhere whether the funding of Scottish Water, in terms of revenue raising and capital expenditure is sustainable at a reasonable level in the long term whilst ensuring that there is sufficient investment in the capital assets and infrastructure to provide water services in the future that are sustainable at the standards expected. Whilst the pricing review is for a 4 year period this is a relatively short period considering the useful life of the infrastructure.