

8 February 2019.

Mr. Eoghan Murphy TD
Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government
Department of Housing Planning and Local Government
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0.

Dear Minister,

You wrote to the unions on the 11 December 2018 setting out your view that engagement should commence on all matters relating to the Irish Water transformation plan. In this letter you referenced the concerns raised by the unions and reiterated your belief that these concerns could be best addressed in a multi-strand process as follows:

- Strand One – would seek to develop an understanding on local government’s future sustainability and revitalisation;
- Strand Two – would be concerned with consulting the unions on the wording and the timing of a constitutional referendum on the future ownership of the public water service;
- Strand Three – would examine the future corporate status, structure and governance of the proposed single public water utility;
- Strand Four – would address all employment and industrial relations issues that arise in the context of the Irish Water proposal.

These strands of discussion have been proposed in the context of assurances that have already been given to the unions which include:

- That there would be not be a predetermined outcome to these discussions;
- That there is a strong commitment to a viable and sustainable future for Local Authorities;
- That there could be a meaningful engagement on the status, structure and governance of the proposed single public water utility;
- A commitment that the Government will support the holding of a constitutional referendum on the future ownership of the public water service;

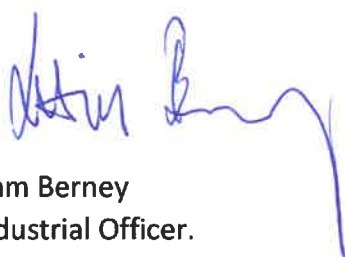
- An assurance that the provisions of Section 19 of the Water Services Act (No.2) of 2013 would not be invoked; and
- That while the discussions are ongoing all existing agreements will be honoured.

Over the last number of weeks, the unions have been consulting with their members on what you have proposed. At this point we are willing to commence engagement along the lines you have suggested. However, it is the position of the unions that any final agreement must deal comprehensively with all of the issues that we have raised. To be clear, we will not be in a position to conclude an overall agreement and ballot until the issues contained in each of the strands are addressed to our satisfaction.

I would suggest that initial meetings of each stand be convened and that discussions on each strand be held in parallel.

I have copied this letter to representatives of management in the LGMA and Irish Water and to the relevant officials in your own department and to the WRC.

Yours sincerely



Liam Berney
Industrial Officer.