

2 April 2007

Katherine Russell

Director of Customer Service and Corporate Affairs

The Water Industry Commission for Scotland

Ochil house

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Dear Ms Russell

### **2010-14 Price Review – A Consultation**

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the above consultation.

Scottish Enterprise (SE) is the main economic development agency for Scotland covering 93% of the population from Grampian to the Borders. Our organisation consists of SE National and 12 Local Enterprise Companies. Working in partnership with the private and public sectors (including Scottish Water), we aim to build more and better businesses, to develop the skills and knowledge of Scottish people and to encourage innovation to make Scottish business internationally competitive. SE's activities focus on the three priority areas laid out in the Scottish Executive's 'A Smart Successful Scotland': Growing Businesses; Global Connections and Skills and Learning.

SE believes that in order for Scotland to compete internationally, businesses in Scotland should have access to an affordable and reliable system of water and sewerage provision. At present, water charges are higher in Scotland than in other competitor locations. As a general point, SE would therefore be encouraged to see the issues addressed by the review expanded to consider economic competitiveness in an international context, in keeping with the principles of 'A Smart Successful Scotland'.

In response to the key questions posed in the consultation the following responses are offered:

**Are there any other ways that stakeholders would like us to communicate with them?**

The use of focus group workshops is a tried and tested approach to achieving the broadest level of discussion. Recently this has been successfully implemented by the Scottish Executive in consultation on the forthcoming second National Planning Framework. SE has been working in partnership with colleagues in the Scottish Executive Development department to share our strategic investment priorities and the views of our practitioners and would be happy to investigate similar approaches to support the WIC in their consultation work.

**How can we ensure that stakeholder information days are as useful as possible?**

As your consultation paper sets out, the importance of providing straightforward explanations of each topic covered is paramount and experience has shown that this is often best achieved through the description of case-studies and scenarios.

**Are MSP updates and briefings the most effective way to communicate with MSPs, as representatives of customers?**

A process of MSP updates and briefings will be a very valuable approach to gathering a broad range of views but this should not be the only channel for seeking the views of customers. A balanced representation of a varied range of customer groups should be included in briefings and workshops, including business groups.

**Are there any other key issues that should be examined as part of the price review?**

As set out in the general point above, SE requests that the principles within the Scottish Executive's strategy "A Smart Successful Scotland" should be considered in the review, in particular the issue of international competitiveness of Scotland as a location for business.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

Yours sincerely

Jack Perry

Chief Executive

