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Environment Services Training Group

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONFERENCE - 2024

# CCMA Business Case Review of Local Authority Natural Water Functions & Resources.

Basil Mannion

Project Officer – Business Case

Senior Community Water Officer, Midlands East Region,  
LAWPRO



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## Presentation Summary

- Background to Business Case
- Business Case Progression – milestones achieved along the way
- Business Case Resources Recommendation
- Next steps



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# Background to Business Case



# LA Natural Waters PMO 21/7

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## Objective:

To provide Local Authorities with the resources to:

- Deliver agreed Programme of Measures to protect and restore water quality within the catchment science and management framework.
- Improve, report and measure LA performance in meeting the objectives of the WFD, which includes basic measures reporting.
- Improve governance and accountability.
- Have an effective delivery structure including enforcement regime.
- **Protect and restore the water quality in waterbodies within their functional areas.**



## Timelines

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- November 2021: Project Initiation Document (PID) Submitted to Public Service Reform Oversight Group (PSROG)
- January 2022: Project Team formed & Business Case project commenced
- Extensive consultation with LG sector, survey interviews, stakeholder meetings etc.

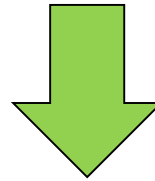
Two reports published:

- A report on the survey of existing local authority resources in the natural water function area across all 31 LAs.
- A report on the findings of an in-person interview with management and staff in all 31 LA's.
- Reports on the survey and the interviews were circulated to CCMA and all Local Authorities.



## Business Case Committee Structure

### Project Board



Sub-committee 1	Sub-committee 2	Sub-committee 3
Water Framework Directive	Bathing Waters	Private Water Supplies
Agriculture	Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Urban Areas
Blue Dot Catchments	Shellfish Waters	Abstractions
Drainage Districts		Drinking Water Safety Plans

- Sub-committees examined each Natural water functional area
- Chaired by Directors of Service
- Comprised LA staff, EPA, HSE, NFGWS, LAWPRO
- Put forward recommendations for consideration by Project Board



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# Business Case Progression

Milestones achieved along the way



## Interim Proposal

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### **Interim business case on the LA Agriculture functional area submitted to DHLGH in November 2022**

- in response to reduction in Nitrates derogation from 250 to 220kg/N/ha/y
- 57no. LA staff sought in Interim Proposal
- May 2023, DHLGH approve funding for 21no. LA Posts
- Jan 2024, approval received for 36no. LA posts.
- EPA establish National Agriculture Inspection Programme (NAIP)





## LA Staff Training

- Training was identified by the Business Case as a keystone requirement for improvement.
- The LA sector has a well-established training resource in the form of the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG).
- The LASNTG tasked by the DHLGH to prepare a proposal on the training needs of the Sector to deliver the objectives of the RBMP, in consultation with the EPA and LAWPRO.
- A proposal to engage a consultant to carry out a scoping study of existing training in the water area was made by LASNTG to DHLGH in March 2024.
- The proposal to develop and deliver training is being progressed on behalf of the LA Sector by LASNTG and the resources required are not included in this Business Base.



## National Data Management & ICT System for LAs

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- The Business Case identified an absolute necessity for a national data system to support existing LA staff & new resources arising.
- Originally intended to include the development of a National ICT and Data Management System in this Business Case.
- Subsequently proposed that the Data Management System be progressed by the LGMA & DHLGH as part of the National Environmental Management and Information System (NEMIS).
- A NEMIS project board specifically to address the water aspects of ICT and data management & the funding required is being progressed separately through the LGMA.
- This keystone area is being progressed as a matter of priority to ensure the use and impact of the new LA resource is measurable (track, monitor and report).



## Governance Revision

### **The Business Case identified the need to establish A CCMA Water Quality Technical Sub-Committee**

- DHLGH and EPA working groups have LA representation, but most of this representation is with a technical focus rather than through the eyes of management and LA policy.
- The establishment of the Water Quality Technical Sub-committee will provide a clearing house for LA participation in these working groups many of which arrive at recommendations and conclusions with implications for LA management and sectoral policy.
- Will ensure that the CCMA & management in LAs have visibility of what the “ask” will be on LAs & assess the resource implications earlier.
- Obligations in the natural water areas are significant. To be effective and to operate like other CCMA Committees the new sub-committee will be supported by a new Coordination Office in the LGMA.



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# Business Case Resources Recommendation



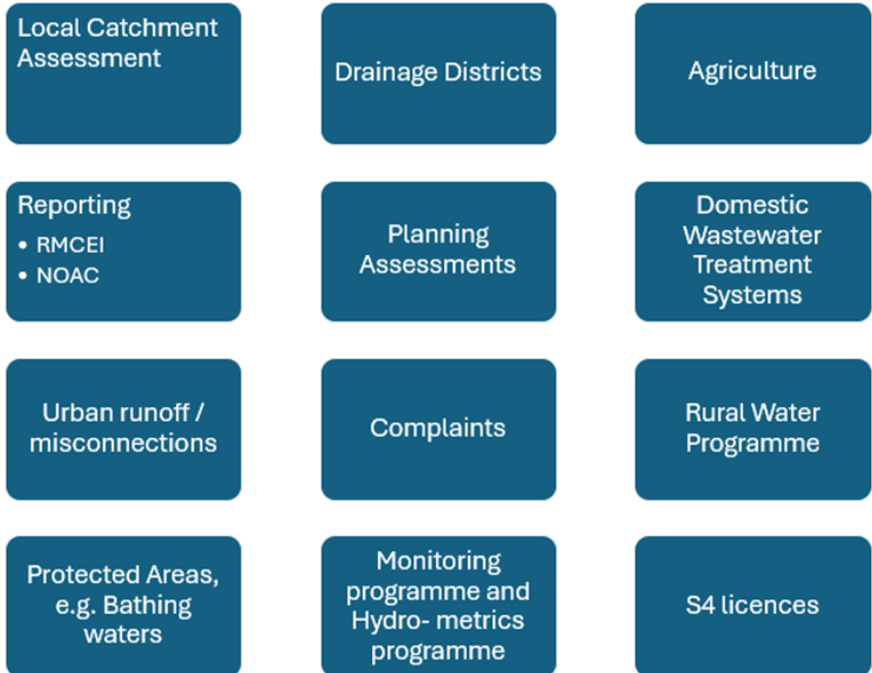
# Main focus of resources

- ❑ April 2024 - Project Board Meeting
  - Business Case focus on protect function and characterisation
  - Significant number of areas not considered
  - Feedback from DHLGH and EPA – Resulted in a Natural Waters Integrated Team to focus resources on:
    - ❑ Coordination,
    - ❑ Planning and Assessment
    - ❑ Enforcement
- ❑ Project Team, LAWPRO with external support – reviewed & revised the business case accordingly.
- ❑ A Separate LAWPRO business case was requested to be prepared at this point.



## July/August 2024:

- ❑ Review of Survey findings, Sub-Working Groups reports and previous Business Case
- ❑ Refocused resource on
  - Coordination, Planning & Assessment
  - Enforcement
- ❑ Natural Waters Integrated Team





# Areas outside scope

- ❑ Number of areas outside of the scope
- ❑ **CCMA Water Technical Sub-Committee to keep under review and progress separately.**
- ❑ **LGMA Co-ordination office as secretariat.**

## ICT and Data Management System

- LGMA progressing in conjunction with CCMA – NEMIS system

## Local Authority Waters Programme (LA Shared Service)

- Separate Business Case being prepared for PSROG.

## Training and Development

- Local Authority Services National Training Group progressing separate proposal with the DHLGH for review, revision and delivery of training for the natural waters area.

## Agriculture

- Successful Business case submitted in 2023 – 57 posts sanctioned in 2023/24

## Marine Strategy Framework Directive

- The resources to specifically deal with the the MSFD requirements for transition waters and coastal waters are not specifically covered within this business case.
- However, resources allocated to planning and assessment with follow up enforcement in the river and lake catchments, will have an indirect benefit for transition and coastal waters though nutrient load reduction to these waters.
- To be kept under review by Technical Sub-Committee

## Drainage districts and hydromorphology

- Clarification required for future role
- To be kept under review by Technical Sub-Committee



# Areas outside scope cont.

## Rural Water Programme

- Separate Business Case to be revisited by Technical Sub-committee
- Awaiting clarification on responsibilities arising on Abstraction licensing
- New responsibilities in new Drinking Water Directive and regulations

## Urban runoff and misconnections

- Estimates developed of proposed resources using data from Dublin Urban Rivers LIFE project.
- To be kept under review by Technical Sub-Committee

## Monitoring and Maintenance

- National Laboratory Strategy being developed
- Hydrometric station maintenance
- To be kept under review by Technical Sub-Committee

## WFD Planning Guidelines

- LA resource requirement arising from the proposed WFD Planning guidelines is unknown but will be kept under review by the Technical Sub-Committee





# Delivery Options Presented

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Five Options were considered as follows:

1. Status Quo - continue as is.
2. An outsourced service.
3. **Enhanced staff resource employed directly by LAs.**
4. A new LA provided shared service.
5. A combination of an outsourced and LA provided service.



# Recommendation: Option 3

## **Option 3: An enhanced staff resource employed directly by LAs.**

It provides for the development of a career structure and includes for added resources:

- Senior scientists,
- Senior executive scientists,
- Executive scientists
- Assistant scientists
- Senior Scientist (LGMA ) Coordinator role
- Grade 7 (LGMA) administrative role



## Additional LA Resources

- LGMA Coordination Team
  - Support the CCMA structures
  - Assist in the coordination of LA natural water functions
  - Progressing ICT system development
- Assessment and Planning
  - Set out the actions to be taken for the different waterbodies in the LA depending on their risk category, pressures and characterisation data
  - Bathing Water profile reports, Shellfish protections plans, and Source Protection reports to inform the planning of enforcement activity
  - Complaints tracking



## Additional LA Resources

### Existing LA statutory functions

- Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Section 4 discharges
- Unlicensed Discharges
- Planning control assessment
- Enhanced enforcement resource for protected areas –
  - Bathing waters,
  - Shellfish waters,
  - Blue Dot and HSOA areas
- Complaints management

**Agricultural Inspections – 57 additional staff assigned to LA in 2023/24 (67 Total)**



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# Next Steps



# Next Steps

- ❑ 3<sup>rd</sup> September – Business Case approved by the Project Board.
- ❑ WFD Regional Management Committees – updated.
- ❑ 11<sup>th</sup> September - CCMA WEEP committee approval.
- ❑ 19<sup>th</sup> September CCMA Plenary – update provided
- ❑ 1<sup>st</sup> October PSROG Meeting: business case presented & approved.
- ❑ PSROG peer review phase is initiated
- ❑ December 2024 – final decision from PSROG expected



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Thank You for listening.