

Scottish Water – Quality & Standards III Investment Programme Update

When Scottish Water was created in April 2002, the priorities of our first investment programme were about improving public health to meet new European standards. This meant a record amount of money was invested in improving water quality and better waste water treatment.

While specific funding was not available for growth, there were more than 80,000 connections made across Scotland in the last four years – with over 20,000 last year alone.

In the next capital investment programme, water quality and environmental improvements will continue to be funded. There will also be significant specific investment between 2006-2014, to increase capacity at strategic assets (water and waste water treatment works) both as part of quality improvement projects and for “growth only” schemes where strategic capacity is needed to meet development needs.

New rules have been set out by the Scottish Executive under which Scottish Water will fund upgrades to water and waste water treatment works to increase capacity if needed for new developments. Developers are also required to help pay for infrastructure which may be needed to service new buildings. Scottish Water will make a reasonable cost contribution of up to a maximum of £2,800 per household connections (water & waste water) to the developer.

Already, significant gains have been achieved by working closely with planners and developers to identify the true level of requirement for new connections across Scotland.

Scottish Water is taking a planned and pro-active approach to enabling growth to accommodate as many customers as possible on the system.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed with SEPA to ensure that the available capacity of waste water assets can be maximised and the impact of development on the public system can be understood.

Working with local authorities, developers and other organisations is key, as Scottish Water’s investment for growth will be led by the planning system – with increases in strategic capacity being largely driven by where planners and developers indicate that growth is most needed.

Scottish Water is the first organisation in the UK to have produced a Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan (SACDP). Annually updated, this shows Scottish Water’s plans for increasing strategic capacity. The plan identifies all settlements in Scotland where development is NOT constrained and can be progressed now. This allows planners and developers to make better informed judgements on where growth can begin.

As well as bringing additional resources into our existing planning and development services department, we have also established a Development Response Team –

dedicated to helping target resources at where growth is most needed in communities.

Development liaison managers are working closely with account teams and processes have been streamlined in order to give local authorities and developers direct links and single points of contact into Scottish Water.

We have met with every local authority in Scotland in the last month to identify where the real need for development is in accordance with their Local Plan priorities. This is helping to inform our growth programme going forward.

Significant progress has already been made with Argyll & Bute Council Planning Department over the last month to understand development need and construction phasing. Work to establish where future Scottish Water investment is required at our water and waste water treatment continues. Some detail of this work has been submitted to the Committee via a separate paper prepared by the Council for your information.

To speed up the process still further, a new connections page has been added to the website, www.scottishwater.co.uk, which now provides a comprehensive guide through every step of the application process and a new email address - connections@scottishwater.co.uk - gives developers direct access to Scottish Water's Planning and Development department.

Ends