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| Title of Report: | Drinking Water Quality Report 2024 |
| Committee Report Submitted To: | Environmental Services Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 10th March 2026 |
| For Decision or For Information | For Information |
| To be discussed In Committee YES/NO | NO |

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| Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25) | |
| Strategic Theme | Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities |
| Outcome | To provide information on the quality of Drinking Water in 2024 |
| Lead Officer | Head of Health & Built Environment |

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| Estimated Timescale for Completion | |
| Date to be Completed | N/A |

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| Budgetary Considerations | |
| Cost of Proposal | N/A |
| Included in Current Year Estimates | N/A |
| Capital/Revenue | N/A |
| Code | N/A |
| Staffing Costs | N/A |

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| Legal Considerations | |
| Input of Legal Services Required | NO |
| Legal Opinion Obtained | NO |

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| Screening Requirements | Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals. | | |
| Section 75 Screening | Screening Completed: | Yes/No N/A | Date: |
| | EQIA Required and Completed: | Yes/No N/A | Date: |
| Rural Needs Assessment (RNA) | Screening Completed | Yes/No N/A | Date: |
| | RNA Required and Completed: | Yes/No N/A | Date: |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) | Screening Completed: | Yes/No N/A | Date: |
| | DPIA Required and Completed: | Yes/No N/A | Date: |

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the 2024 Drinking Water Quality Report provided by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

2.0 Background

2.1 The Drinking Water Inspectorate's (DWI's) primary role is to protect public health through effective drinking water regulation. DWI have recently published the 2024 Drinking Water Quality Report which can be found at:

[DWI Annual Report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland in 2024.pdf](#)

2.2 This report provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public water supplies provided by Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water) and private supplies for the calendar year 2024. Key points from the report are detailed below.

2.3 Public Water Supplies

- **Compliance Levels:** Public drinking water compliance remained high at 99.88%, slightly lower than 2023 (99.92%). Compliance at consumers' taps was 99.87%.
- **Key Issues:** Iron had the lowest compliance at 99.02%, attributed to the deterioration of cast iron mains. Blue-green algal blooms in Lough Neagh impacted water quality at Castor Bay and Moyola Water Treatment Works (WTWs), leading to two serious events due to taste and odour issues.
- **Consumer Concerns:** NI Water received 5,470 consumer contacts in 2024, with 51.13% related to water appearance and 27.4% to taste and odour, including an increase in "earthy/musty" complaints linked to algal blooms.

2.4 Private Water Supplies

- **Compliance Levels:** Private water supplies achieved 99.12% compliance, a slight improvement from 2023 (99.11%). However, microbiological compliance remains lower than public supplies at 94.17%.
- **Key Issues:** 64 private water supply sites failed to meet regulatory standards, with 44% contravening microbiological standards, 50% chemical standards, and 6% both. Common issues include faecal contamination, elevated metals, and pesticide residues.

- **Actions Taken:** Restrictions were placed on 15 private water supplies due to health risks, with corrective actions implemented at affected sites.

2.5 Enforcement Action:

- DWI issued three Regulation 31(4) Notices requiring NI Water to address non-compliance at specific WTWs, including Ballinrees (MCPA and taste/odour issues) and Drumaroad (aluminium contraventions). Warning letters were issued for serious events at Castor Bay and Moyola WTWs.

2.6 Technical Audits and Risk Management:

- Four technical audits were conducted in 2024 to ensure compliance with best practices. Recommendations were made to improve operational practices and sampling techniques.
- DWI continues to monitor NI Water's Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSPs) and risk assessments to address emerging risks and ensure water quality.

2.7 Future Investment:

- DWI is working with stakeholders to identify capital investment needs for the next Price Control process (PC28). Efforts are focused on innovative, low-carbon water treatment solutions and sustainable catchment management.

2.8 Council Involvement:

- Environmental Health staff from councils play a key role in sampling and risk assessment for private water supplies. In 2024, 30 staff were trained in sampling techniques, and 21 were trained in risk assessment processes.
- DWI are encouraging Councils to continue supporting their efforts to improve private water supply compliance, particularly in rural areas.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.