

PRESS RELEASE

Department for Regional Development

26 March, 2003

MINISTER URGES PUBLIC TO COMMENT ON WATER REFORM

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Angela Smith MP, today encouraged on householders across Northern Ireland to contribute to public consultation on the reform of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

She was speaking as leaflets explaining how householders can put forward their comments and views began to be delivered to every home in Northern Ireland.

The Minister said: **“We have started distribution of the leaflet on water reform this week and every home in Northern Ireland should have a copy within the next four weeks.**

“The invitation for householders to comment on options for Water Reform follows up the commitment to open and inclusive consultation which I gave when launching the consultation document “The Reform of Water and Sewerage Services in Northern Ireland” on 11 March.

“The options for Water Reform set out in the consultation document will affect every person in Northern Ireland and I am keen that householders contribute to the public debate.”

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The leaflet explains how to obtain a copy of the consultation paper and how individuals can provide their views and comments.

A series of public meetings across Northern Ireland on Water Reform will commence with a meeting in Omagh Leisure Centre, at 7:30 PM on Wednesday 16th April 2003.

Notes for Editors

1. The consultation paper, "*The Reform of Water and Sewerage Services in Northern Ireland*" was launched by Angela Smith MP on 11 March 2003. The consultation period ends on 20 June 2003.
2. The paper seeks views on the following:
 - The basis on which domestic water and sewerage charges should be set.
 - Possible business models for a reformed Water Service.
 - How best to protect the consumer interest.
3. A series of public meetings to explain the Water Reform Proposals will take place during April and May 2003: ~~Omagh Leisure Centre (16th April); Tower Hotel, Londonderry (29th April); Ballymena Town Hall (7th May); Grosvenor House, Belfast (13th May); Craigavon Civic Centre (14th May).~~
4. Copies of the consultation paper can be obtained from:

Water Reform Unit

Department for Regional Development

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6. Further information on Water Reform can be obtained from the Water Reform website:

www.waterreformni.gov.uk

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