

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just
Transition

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Council Leaders of Local Authorities

A copy of this letter goes to all Chief Executives of
Local Authorities

29 November 2023,

Dear Council Leader(s),

Water, Wastewater & Drainage Policy Consultation

I wish to inform you that the Scottish Government has issued a consultation which seeks views on how our water industry needs to adapt to the impacts of the climate emergency.

The policy proposals are designed to protect our water, wastewater and drainage services; better understand the impacts of climate change on these services; and, maximise the benefits that can be delivered for the people of Scotland.

In March 2022, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) set out a series of recommendations in its independent assessment “Is Scotland climate ready? 2022 Report to Scottish Parliament Recommendations (theccc.org.uk)”. In this report the CCC identified key areas where Scotland could make improvements to better adapt to the impacts of climate change. This message has been reinforced by the CCC’s latest adaptation progress assessment (www.theccc.org.uk/publication/adapting-to-climate-change-progress-in-scotland) which was published 21 November.

In this consultation document we have considered how we address the risks highlighted and the recommendations made by the CCC. These are set out as choices that Scotland needs to consider in adapting and evolving to the impacts of climate change. In addition to this consultation, we will be consulting on a new Scottish National Adaptation Plan early next year. This will set out a wider response to the risks set out across the natural, coastal and marine environments, communities, public services and businesses.

We confirmed in Programme for Government 2023 that there would be a review of water and sewerage services and water industry policy. The outcome of this consultation could inform potential changes to legislation. This would reflect the views collected from the public about how water, wastewater and drainage services need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including increased temperatures, drought and more intense rainfall.

We need to make sure that we are able to provide a reliable supply of water during dry periods and act to protect the water supplies quickly during these times. Whilst most of Scotland is served by a public supply of water there are some homes across Scotland that have private

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water supplies, which are especially vulnerable and we need to make sure that they are protected too.

We are also seeing more extreme weather events such as periods of very heavy and/or intense rainfall which can lead to spills from drainage systems to the environment and/or cause flooding to homes and businesses. We need to make greater changes in the way we manage the consequences of extreme weather events as their frequency increases.

There is a greater need to better plan and fund our drainage services to be able to cope with more rainwater through the integrated drainage of roofs and roads. We need to ensure that the drainage of rainwater separately from wastewater is seen as a vital service that is planned for when we consider how land should be used. We need to consider how we can bring blue-green infrastructure into existing communities by making the best of our existing greenspace whether they are small or large to help us manage rainwater. We also need to take all opportunities to bring in new blue-green infrastructure and reduce our hard surfaces, for example, by introducing rain gardens at the street scale and replacing paved areas such as driveways with permeable surfaces.

Any new infrastructure to collect and manage rainwater will need to be delivered efficiently, effectively and designed and built to drain both new developments and existing urban areas. To do this they need to be planned and built in partnership with Local Authorities, Scottish Water, developers, landowners, communities and other partners. Ensuring that they are operated and maintained so they continue to work properly over the long term. We need to work together to deliver better outcomes for Scotland.

We invite you to complete this consultation to help inform our next steps. Please find a link to the consultation below, closing 21 February 2024:

[Water, wastewater and drainage policy consultation - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

We would also like to invite you to an information session which will be run by the Deputy Director for Water Policy, Jon Rathjen. The purpose of this session is to provide you with an overview of this consultation and hear your views on how the water industry in Scotland can best respond to the impacts of climate change. We have provided dates for three information sessions below. These will be run via Microsoft Teams. Please let us know which session you would like to attend by emailing waterindustry@gov.scot and we will issue you with an invite.

Tuesday 16 January, 2pm – 4pm

Wednesday 31 January, 1pm – 3pm

We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,



MÀIRI MCALLAN

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