

These notes refer to the Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 23 March 2016

Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

3. The Department is responsible for setting the policy for the delivery of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland by the sole licensed water and sewerage undertaker, Northern Ireland Water (“NI Water”). The Act extends existing arrangements to allow the Department to pay subsidy to NI Water in view of the Executive’s commitment not to apply household charges to domestic customers during the current Assembly mandate. It also gives the Department the power to make subordinate legislation to extend the period for which subsidy is paid in the future if necessary.
4. The Act also introduces measures to streamline current obligations on NI Water to produce Water Resources Management Plans and Drought Plans.
5. The Act gives the Department power to remove the requirement on NI Water to install meters at domestic properties connecting for the first time to the public water supply.
6. The Act seeks to promote more sustainable means of managing surface water and reduce the volume of surface water being carried and treated by NI Water’s sewerage system.
7. Following recommendations made by the Committee for Regional Development in its Inquiry into Unadopted Roads in 2012, the Act includes powers to require new sewerage, which will be connected to the public sewerage network, to be constructed to standards which NI Water can then adopt (that is, take responsibility for) in order to protect householders.
8. The measures proposed in the Act support the aims of the Executive’s Sustainable Water - A Long Term Water Strategy (2015-40), which seeks to deliver a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland.