



29th September 2021

COVID-19publicinquirysetupteam@gov.scot

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Dear Sir/Madam

COVID-19 Public Inquiry – invitation to provide input

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the *Aims and Principles* of the public inquiry to investigate the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland.

Despite the challenges the pandemic presented to Scottish Water, the implementation of our emergency and business continuity plans at the start of lockdown in March 2020 enabled us to maintain a strong performance throughout the year.

Although our significant (£600m per year) infrastructure investment programme was largely suspended in the early stage of the pandemic, it was safely brought back on-stream when restrictions allowed through close working with our contractors, suppliers and partners.

We believe our success during this challenging time has been largely the result of collaborative work, the quick deployment of digital tools to enable continuity of working and the dedication our people. One theme worth considering is how we could enable this rapid digital transformation in 'normal' times.

We would suggest that another theme worth considering as part of the enquiry is the very short time frame that businesses had to adapt between announcements of planned changes in Covid-related restrictions and their implementation, how this affected different sectors and how this could be better handled in the future.

We are currently carrying out an internal audit exercise on business continuity and lessons learned during the pandemic. We would be happy to share the output of this work in due course as part of the enquiry if helpful. We believe that understanding how all frontline sectors ensured continuity of service delivery through this challenging time and what elements can be taken forward as a new way of working would be of benefit to Scotland to be better prepared for the eventuality of similar situation presenting itself in the future.

Yours faithfully

Douglas Millican
Chief Executive

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General

