

23rd January 2012



**Scottish
Water**

Always serving Scotland

Charles Culbertson
Chair
Sleat Community Council
Raffin
Camuscross
Isle of Skye
IV43 8QS

Castle House
6 Castle Drive
Carnegie Campus
Dunfermline
KY11 8GG

T: 01383 848 200
F: 01383 848 286
W: www.scottishwater.co.uk

Dear Mr Culbertson

Public Water Supply, Sleat, Isle of Skye

Thank you for your letters to our Chief Executive and Directors raising concerns about the public drinking water supply in the area. I have been asked to respond on their behalf and will address the main points you have raised.

Tankering

I would like to apologise for the tankers over the New Year period. It was clearly disruptive for the community to have tankers come through the local area. I am afraid they were essential as we needed to ensure customers continued to have an uninterrupted water supply during this period. We had problems with our pre-filtration units, which strain out larger particles and debris which naturally exist in raw water coming from lochs and can become more predominant during certain weather conditions. It is a normal part of the treatment process for one of the pre-filtration units to become "full" and for another unit to take over while the first unit is cleaned. However, the second unit which is currently in place has been unable to deal with some of the extreme raw water conditions and we needed to use tankers to augment supplies.

As you will be aware from previous discussions and information provided to the community, one of the projects we are currently progressing at Teangue water treatment works is to install a second new pre-filtration unit to provide greater operational resilience. In addition, to help understand the poor raw water quality events that affected the filters, we have asked for our Catchment Management Team to take a look at the area and see if there is anything in the catchment possibly affecting the raw water quality. This team will also look at the intake itself and offer advice on possible improvements. As soon as we have finalised details with them, we will be in contact with the tenants and landowners to agree access.

With the additional pre-filtration unit in place and with the support of the Catchment Management Team, we do not anticipate needing tankers as part of the normal operation of the treatment works.

Road Condition

I acknowledge that the current road condition leading up to the treatment works needs to be addressed and we have previously discussed this with the Grazing Committee. We have asked our contractors to provide options for us to repair it and the intention is to do

any initial repairs now and then complete all the permanent repairs once the proposed work at the water treatment works is complete over the coming months.

Using Loch Mhic Charmhiceil to supply Sleat

As you are most likely aware, Teangue water treatment works is the largest on Sleat and has been serving most customers in the area (over 600) for quite some time now. It has full membrane technology, which is known to be the most effective barrier against naturally occurring impurities which exist in water, particularly in rural and agricultural areas, and this ensures the drinking water is treated to a very high standard.

The two smaller, more basic treatment works for the Drumfearn and Tarskavaig areas -- serving roughly 30 and 70 customers respectively have been adequate to date. However, the type of treatment being used needs to be upgraded to provide membrane treatment to meet increased drinking water standards.

The main aim of the changes we are making on Sleat is to ensure the small number of customers in Drumfearn and Tarskavaig receive the same level of treatment and protection as the majority of customers on Sleat. I am afraid it is not practicable for us to build and operate two additional membrane treatment facilities at Tarskavaig and Drumfearn, particularly for such small populations when there is a viable alternative at Teangue water treatment works.

Tarskavaig is now connected to the Teangue supply and the alterations for Drumfearn will be complete within the next few days. We will continue to use some of the existing facilities at Tarskavaig and Drumfearn such as storage and the control and monitoring systems and much of the necessary equipment is already in place.

Capacity at Teangue Water Treatment Works and Loch Mhic Charmhiceil

Whilst I appreciate your concerns, Teangue water treatment works is able to produce enough water to supply Tarskavaig and Drumfearn and is able to accommodate the proposed larger development at Kilbeg. In addition, the existing Controlled Activities Regulation (CAR) license, which sets out how much water we can take from Loch Mhic Charmhiceill, is also sufficient to meet these needs. A new water main will be installed to improve the flow of water in the pipe which runs from Loch Mhic Charmhiceill to the water treatment works.

The water treatment works at Teangue has been sized for future development based on the Highland Council local plan. We are aware you are looking for a hydrology report; however there is no specific report in the format which we think you are looking for. Scottish Water's Water Resource Team were consulted before the decision was made to progress with any work on Sleat to connect the Tarskavaig and Drumfearn areas to Teangue. This is the usual process for projects of this type and the team look at the yield available within the source loch. Yield is calculated to an industry standard method. Based on this information, it was determined that the yield of Loch Mhic Charmhiceil is significantly greater than the required abstraction. As a result, it was determined that no additional studies were required at this time to assess the water availability at Loch Mhic Charmhiceil.

Future Development and Enabling Growth

Scottish Water is committed to enabling development where there is demand and there are mechanisms in place which allow us to work with developers to meet the needs of an area in a way which ensures there is no detrimental impact to existing customers.

Scottish Water is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient water resources and enough capacity at the water treatment works to meet the needs of development and this is something that is continually assessed. We have no concerns at this time about meeting the water resource needs for Sleat under the proposed changes both currently and with projected growth into the foreseeable future.

Specifically in relation to plans at Kilbeg, Scottish Water has requested, through the Planning in Principle Application consultation with the Highland Council, that the developer undertake a Developer Impact Assessment (DIA). As part of this, a technical assessment would be made of the network and further discussions held with the developer regarding their proposals. This is standard practice for developments of this size.

I understand that Joanna Peebles our Regional Community Manager for your area has been in touch with you and has offered to meet with members of the community council to outline our proposals further. I hope this offer will be accepted as I feel it will enable positive dialogue to reassure you that our investment will deliver positive outcomes for the local community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan R Thomson', written over a horizontal line.

Alan R Thomson
Head of Corporate Relations