

May 2022

**Proposal to grant a variation of  
appointment to Icosa Water Services  
Limited – Middleton Road, Heysham,  
Lancashire**

Proposal to grant a variation of appointment to Icosa Water Services Limited – Middleton Road, Heysham, Lancashire

	<b>Details</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	Icosa Water Services Limited (“ <b>Icosa Water</b> ”)
<b>Site Details</b>	Middleton Road, Heysham, Lancashire (“ <b>the Site</b> ”)
<b>Services</b>	Water Only
<b>Current water appointee</b>	Water Appointee: United Utilities Water Limited (“ <b>United Utilities</b> ”)
<b>Proposed supply arrangements</b>	Bulk supply agreement with United Utilities
<b>Criterion</b>	Unserved
<b>Household Customer</b>	75
<b>Business Customers</b>	0
<b>Developer</b>	P Casey & Co Limited
<b>Estimated Site completion date</b>	05/2023
<b>Summary of consultation</b>	A statutory consultation made under section 8(3) of the Water Industry Act 1991 (“ <b>WIA91</b> ”) to grant Icosa Water a variation to its appointment as a water company. To also vary the appointment of United Utilities as a water company. Consequently, Icosa Water will become the water company for the Site.
<b>Deadline for submissions</b>	<p>Representations or objections to this consultation should be sent by email to <a href="mailto:Licensing@ofwat.gov.uk">Licensing@ofwat.gov.uk</a> or in writing and sent to the NAV licensing team, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA.</p> <p>Reponses must be received by Ofwat no later than <b>17.00</b> hours on 20 June 2022.</p>
<p>Further information about how to make representations or objections, including information on the treatment of confidential information, can be obtained from Ofwat at the above address or at <a href="http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/foi/">http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/foi/</a>.</p> <p>Ofwat will only use the information you have provided for the purpose of this consultation. We will retain your information in accordance with Ofwat’s retention schedule and will not share with third parties unless we have a legal obligation to do so. For further information please see Ofwat’s Privacy Policy in our <a href="#">Publication Scheme</a>.</p>	

# 1. Our assessment of this application

## Our approach

The new appointment and variation mechanism set out in primary legislation<sup>1</sup>, provides an opportunity for entry and expansion into the water and sewerage sectors by allowing one company to replace the existing appointee as the provider of water and / or sewerage services for a specific area. This mechanism can be used by new companies to enter the market and by existing appointees to expand their businesses.

You can find further details of our approach to assessing applications for New Appointments and Variations ("NAVs") [here](#).

## Unserved status of the Site

To qualify under the unserved criterion, an applicant must show that at the time the appointment is made, none of the premises in the proposed area of appointment is served by the existing appointee.

United Utilities has provided a letter, dated 26 February 2022, confirming that, in its view, the Site is unserved. Satellite images of the Site show no existing buildings or infrastructure.

Given the information provided by the applicant and the incumbent company, we are satisfied that the Site may be considered unserved.

## Price

Icosa Water proposes to match the charges to customers on the Site to those of United Utilities.

## Levels of service

Every appointee is required under its licence conditions to publish and make available the Core Customer Information for its household customers. We have assessed Independent Water Network's proposed Customer Code of Practice, and our view is that it is of an appropriate standard. Our view is that customers on the Site would be no worse off in relation

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<sup>1</sup> The legal framework for new appointments is set out in the WIA91. Section 7 of the WIA91 sets out the criteria by which an appointment or variation may be made. Section 8 sets out the procedure for making that appointment or variation.

to the scope of Icosa Water's proposed Customer Code of Practice than they would be if United Utilities were to be the customers' water company.

## Stakeholder engagement

We take the view of the Environment Agency into account before progressing to formal consultation on an application for a new appointment. The Environment Agency informed us that it is content for us to consult on this application<sup>2</sup>. We previously had pre consultation contact with the Drinking Water Inspectorate and Consumer Council for Water, but both organisations now choose to respond during the consultation process.

## Impact on existing customers

In considering whether customers will be no worse off, we also considered the potential effects of this variation on the prices that United Utilities existing customer base may face. The calculation necessarily depends on a range of assumptions, and there are clearly difficulties involved in quantifying the effect. It is therefore necessary to use a simplified set of figures. We have expressed the effect in 'per bill' terms to try to quantify the possible effect in an easily understandable way.

We have assessed the potential magnitude of this impact by comparing how much United Utilities might have expected to receive in revenue from serving the Site directly, were it to serve the Site, with the revenues it might expect from the proposed arrangement with Icosa Water.

We estimate there will be no annual increase on the water bills of existing United Utilities customers if we grant this variation to Icosa Water. This is once the Site is fully built out.

This estimate does not take into account the potential spill-over benefits to customers arising from dynamic efficiencies achieved as a result of the competitive process to win sites.

Therefore, we consider that granting this variation to Icosa Water would have no financial impact on customers' bills and could have potential benefits for customers.

## Ability to finance and properly carry out its functions

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<sup>2</sup> The Environment Agency as well as the Drinking Water Inspectorate will also be formally consulted on the proposals, as they are on the list of organisations which must be formally consulted as set out in section 8(4)(b) of WIA91.

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We have a statutory duty to ensure that efficient appointees can finance the proper carrying out of their functions. When a company applies for a new appointment or variation, it must satisfy us that it is able to carry out all of the duties and obligations associated with being an appointed water or sewerage company.

We have considered the revenues and costs of the Site relating to the provision of water services should the relevant variation be granted.

- Following our review, we are satisfied that the Site demonstrates sufficient financial viability under our standard assessment.
- We are satisfied that the financial security Icosa Water has in place meets our minimum requirements.

On this basis, our view is that the risk of this Site not being financially viable is small and as a result we are currently satisfied that Icosa Water would be able to finance its functions if the variation is granted.

## 2. Conclusion and next steps

In assessing Icosa Water application, we have considered the general benefits of new appointments and variations. Our view is that our two key policy principles would be met in this case, as customers would be no worse off, and Icosa Water would be able to finance, and carry out, its functions. We have also considered the effects of granting the proposed variation on the existing customers of United Utilities

We are currently minded to grant the variation under the Unserved criterion. Subject to considering any representations submitted during the consultation period in response to this consultation notice, Ofwat will decide whether or not to grant the variation of appointment set out above.



**Ofwat (The Water Services Regulation Authority)  
is a non-ministerial government department.  
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