Wednesday 6th December 2017
Welsh Water 2050 consultation
5.30 pm (for 6pm start)

Start Time: 17:30
End Time: 19:00
Speakers: Tim Williams (DCWW)
Venue: Prince Phillip Lecture Theatre, Cardiff University, North Building (N/4.07)

Synopsis: Governments and regulators globally are setting water companies a significant challenge to become more resilient in response to global trends such as climate and demographic change. That challenge is made all the more complex by customer and stakeholder pressure on water companies to make their investment and risk management strategies lean and responsive as well as predictive towards the mitigation of familiar shock events, such as drought, rather than less familiar, high impact, low likelihood events. Welsh Water worked with external consultants to develop a resilience framework based on global best practice to assist in creating a business strategy for the next 35 years that mitigates the risks posed by shocks and stresses both old and new. Welsh Water also worked with organisations associated with the Rockefeller Institute 100 Resilient Cities Programme, as well as the OECD and how these principles could be applied to other locations around the world.

Informed by a comprehensive review of best practice, workshops and collaboration with Cardiff University, the framework includes a resilience lens and qualities to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to incorporate resilience into all aspects of Welsh Water’s business for our customers. The process uses a maturity matrix to assess the current resilience of the business and assist the development of an action plan to improve resilience. These actions are short-listed using an assessment of cost benefit and ease of implementation (including cost, collaboration and timescales). The shortlisted actions inform the Welsh Water’s 2050 vision.

The very nature of the water sector requires us to plan for the long term. Looking back for example, we are still benefiting from the dams designed and built by Victorian engineers. Equally, looking forward, there are some clear opportunities and challenges now facing the communities we serve. That is why we are developing our long term vision — Welsh Water 2050. This identifies eight significant trends over the next 30 years, how they will impact on us and our customers and how they will be addressed. The consultation looks at future trends and potential to effect the service customers receive or indeed may demand. At a macro level these include demographic (e.g. an ageing population) or climate change, down to changes in lifestyle and the effect of the digital revolution on the business and also customers.

In order to mitigate the challenges and harness the opportunities of these trends, we have developed 14 strategic responses which will enable us to become a truly world class, resilient and sustainable water service for the benefit of future generations. Our responses are aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and involve new methods of working together with customers, other water companies, land users and other interested parties. Responses to these trends discussed in the consultation document include the management of catchments to safeguard clean drinking water by working with nature to ensuring we are able to attract and train the right people to deliver excellent service to our customers.

This project is providing some of the leading thinking in incorporating resilience into the UK Water Industry. It is one of the first projects to build resilience into a wide range of shocks and stresses in all
aspects of a water business. It provides water companies in the UK and around the world with a model for mitigating their exposure to an ever widening array of shocks and stresses that is also being challenged by OfWat the economic regulator as one of its statutory duties.

The consultation process involved workshops with stakeholders, Glas Cymru Members, focus groups with customers, an online community and a response from over 20,000 customers during the Summer of 2017. The results, once collated will allow us to focus our programme over 2020-25, as well as out to 2050.

There will be opportunity for Q/A after the presentation.