

Item No. 8

Report to the Chairperson and Members of the Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Dublin Agglomeration Noise Action Plan December 2013-November 2018

Briefing Note

A revised Action Plan for the Agglomeration of Dublin was published after public consultation in December 2013. The plan is a continuation of the 2008-2013 plan and sets out broad principles and actions to mitigate excessive environmental noise and protect areas of good acoustical quality within the Dublin Agglomeration. The key objective of the Action Plan is to avoid, prevent and reduce, where necessary, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to long term exposure to environmental noise. The aim is to achieve this by taking a strategic approach to managing environmental noise, using a balanced approach within the context of sustainable development.

The 2012 review of the noise maps upon which the Action Plan is based, indicated that traffic was the main source of environmental noise. It also found that the negative impacts of noise were felt by more of the population at night as against daytime. The revised maps also indicated that there was a substantial reduction on 2008 figures in the number of people exposed to undesirable sound levels - both during the day and at night time. It was proposed that one of the reasons for such improvement was the reduction in traffic numbers over the intervening period.

On foot of the results from the revision of the 2012 noise maps, the emphasis in the current Noise Action Plan is placed on measures to prevent noise and reduce, avoid or relocate the various types of noise sources. As per the previous plan, these measures focus mainly on road traffic sound emissions, as the noise maps have shown it to be the major sound source in the Dublin Agglomeration. As such the City continues to promote, support and encourage:

- a) Sustainable travel infrastructure projects and traffic management schemes that promote access by all sustainable travel modes.
- b) The development of sustainable travel modes in conjunction with transport providers and local communities.
- c) The introduction of Local Transport Plans, where appropriate, in line with the draft Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area.
- d) The facilitation of the introduction of Electric Charge Points in conjunction with the relevant government departments and through the Planning Process.
- e) The facilitation of the introduction of car share clubs.

- f) the adoption of best practice / guideline documents and policy in Transportation Planning, e.g. Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013, Cycle Design Manual 2012 etc
- g) The reduction of excessive driving speeds through the provision of appropriate traffic calming measures and changing of speed limits through bye-laws in line with Government guidelines. Noise levels shall be taken into account in the prioritisation / assessment of future Traffic Calming Schemes.
- h) The promotion of the use of low-noise road surfaces where appropriate. For new roads schemes, low noise surfaces will be considered as part of the overall design and in keeping with current design guidelines.

As resources are limited in relation to noise mitigation measures, all major infrastructural projects related to the City are assessed and recommendations made so as to capitalise on any additional potential positive noise mitigation measures accruing from such projects. The objectives of the Action Plan have also been reinforced by the inclusion in the current Draft Development Plan a commitment to: - *'to seek to preserve where good and improve where possible, the ambient acoustic quality in the City in accordance with good practice and relevant legislation'* and *'To take cognisance of the Dublin Agglomeration Environmental Noise Action Plan December 2013- November 2018 during the development and implementation of any policies for the City and before any major planning developments commence within Dublin'*.

Along with the above measures two new ambient sound monitoring sites have been added to the City's real time sound monitoring network, bringing the total site numbers to fourteen. The two new sites are located at Dolphin's Barn and at Mellows Road, Finglas. Real time continuous sound levels can be viewed at the following web link: - <http://dublincitynoise.sonitussystems.com/locations.php>. In 2014 the Dublin City noise website was upgraded to make it more user friendly and to promote it as a public resource in relation to environmental sound. The automatic tweeting of sound levels every hour also commenced using @dublincitynoise, # noise. The annual reports for the ambient sound monitoring network indicate that there has been very little variability in sound levels over the past number of years on a network wide basis.

Preparations are now commencing in relation to the revision of the 2012 noise maps on which the next action plan (2018) will be based. These are required to be revised every 5 years, with the next completion date being June 2017. Preliminary work on the City's annual traffic volumes has been carried out and discussions are due to be held with the Environmental Protection Agency in mid to late November in relation to whether a substantial revision of the City's noise maps is required. If there is no significant increase in traffic volumes over 2012 then it may not be necessary to carry out a detailed review.

Brian McManus
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