

Environment and Transportation Department,
Block 2, Floor 6,
Civic Offices,
Dublin 8.

23rd November 2016.

To Each Member of the
Environment Strategic Policy Committee

Re: National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme 2017-2022 Consultation Paper - Dublin City Council Response

Dublin City Council welcomes this initiative by the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a new national ambient air quality monitoring programme. The current state of knowledge on the health effects of poor air quality, particularly to vulnerable groups in the population is an imperative in reconsidering and reorganising current air quality monitoring arrangements. The concept of “moving beyond compliance” is an important consideration not just in terms of air quality monitoring but also in terms of contributing to health protection and health gain nationally.

Dublin City Council has been involved in air quality monitoring since 1973. The network that has evolved in Dublin City has been an essential element of the national monitoring network since the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1992. Dublin City Council continues to work very closely with the Agency, and in recent years has taken on the operational management of monitoring stations in the wider Dublin area.

The current national monitoring network has evolved in a piecemeal fashion and is subject to a number of pressures. The existing national air monitoring equipment stock is aging and while working within specification, many analysers are working beyond their expected operational life expectancy. In the medium to long term this is not a sustainable arrangement and would require attention in any event.

The proposals for disseminating air quality information to the public in real time are ambitious and would be a significant improvement on the current situation where a number of different data gathering systems are used.

Establishing central funding at national level for both air quality monitoring programmes and the dissemination of air quality data will be crucial in ensuring the success of this strategy.

In supporting this initiative Dublin City Council is also mindful of the commitment by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment to develop a National Clean Air Strategy during 2017 and looks forward to contributing to the public engagement activities promised by the Department in that process.

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ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE