Air Quality Monitoring Station – Queensway, Rochdale

Lawful Development Certificate

Supporting Statement

1. Background

1.1 Poor air quality has a real and significant effect on people's health and according to Public Health England is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. In particular, long-term exposure to high levels of air pollution is known to contribute to the development of respiratory illnesses, such as asthma or bronchitis, as well as cardiovascular problems, and reduces life expectancy.

1.2 The most serious air pollutants are oxides of nitrogen (NOx), principally nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) that are not visible to the naked eye but are found at dangerous levels in many urban areas and on busy roads.

1.3 Like many other conurbations in the UK, Greater Manchester contains areas that suffer from poor air quality. There are 152 stretches of road within the conurbation where concentrations of NO_2 are forecast to exceed the legal Limit Value for NO_2 (40 µg/m^3) beyond 2020 and a single Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared for the conurbation which covers sections of each of the ten districts.

1.4 Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 each of the local authorities in Greater Manchester has a statutory duty to review air quality within its area, both at the present time and the likely future air quality.

1.5 Greater Manchester presently has a network of continuous monitoring stations, each of which consists of an enclosure accommodating two to three air quality monitors, which provide essential information on air quality. An independent review of this monitoring network was commissioned by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in 2016. This comprised a full audit of the current configuration of the network, including an assessment of the type, age and number of air quality monitoring stations, and consideration of whether each of the sites in the network remains "fit for purpose".

1.6 The review concluded that the continuous monitoring station coverage in Greater Manchester is insufficient to provide a robust set of real-time data to inform the decision-making of the general public and for supporting UK Government EU obligations. The review set out clear and concise recommendations to provide a network that is capable of providing the range of data required. Specifically, it identified a requirement to upgrade the existing network through the provision of additional monitoring stations to address geographic gaps in coverage and by replacing outdated monitoring equipment at existing stations.

1.7 The review specifically recommended that a monitoring station is provided within Rochdale, noting that despite the fact that an AQMA has been declared in the area there are no continuous monitoring stations in the Rochdale local authority area and without relevant

monitoring being put in place the Council will lack the evidence base required to assess the impact of local actions made to improve air quality.

2. Proposal

2.1 To address the recommendations of the aforementioned review of the Greater Manchester's monitoring network it is proposed to install a new air quality monitoring station on land to the south east of nos. 238 - 242 Queensway. The proposed monitoring station will accommodate instruments to monitor concentrations of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) and ancillary equipment.

2.2 The monitoring equipment will be housed within a roadside enclosure, the dimensions of which are: 1500mm x 650mm x 1500mm. A 1600w air conditioning unit and cover will be mounted to the side of the enclosure – this will project 275mm from the side of the enclosure and will be 975mm in height. A sample pump and inlet(s) will protrude above the enclosure and will be enclosed within a protective mesh cage. This mesh cage will project a maximum of 750mm above the enclosure.

3. General Permitted Development Order

3.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out classes of development for which a grant of planning permission is automatically given, provided that no restrictive condition is attached or that the development is exempt from the permitted development rights.

3.2 Schedule 2, Part 12 of the Order relates to development by local authorities. Class A of this section of the order states that the following is considered to be permitted development:

> *"The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority or by an urban development corporation of—*
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> *(a) any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers;*
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> *(b) lamp standards, information kiosks, passenger shelters, public shelters and seats, telephone boxes, fire alarms, public drinking fountains, horse troughs, refuse bins or baskets, barriers for the control of people waiting to enter public service vehicles, electric vehicle charging points and any associated infrastructure, and similar structures or works required in connection with the operation of any public service administered by them."*

3.3 The interpretation to this section of the order clarifies that the reference to any small ancillary building, works or equipment is a reference to any ancillary building, works or equipment not exceeding 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity.

4. Assessment

4.1 As detailed above, under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 all local authorities have a statutory duty to review air quality within their area, both at the present time and the likely future air quality. At present there are no continuous monitoring stations within the Rochdale Council area despite the fact that parts of the area have been designated as an AQMA.

4.2 The proposed location of the monitoring station at land to the south east of nos. 238 - 242 Queensway is within the designated AQMA. It is also in close proximity to a section of highway where concentrations of NO_2 are forecast to exceed the legal Limit Value for NO_2 (40 µg/m3) beyond 2020. Therefore a monitoring station in this location is required in order to provide the evidence base required to assess the impact of local actions made to improve air quality and to assist the Council with exercising its duties under the Environment Act.

4.3 The monitoring station would be installed on an area of footway that forms part of the adopted highway. As such, it would be located on land that is within the Council's ownership.

4.4 The monitoring station enclosure would have a height of 1500mm with a mesh protective cage projecting an additional 750mm above this. As a result, the total height of the enclosure (2,250mm) is below the maximum height referred to in Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The volume of the proposed monitoring station would also be significantly less than the 200 cubic metres in capacity referred to in this section of the Order.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The proposed monitoring station would constitute a small ancillary building / works / equipment required for a purpose exercised by the Council. The monitoring station would be located on adopted highway and would therefore be on land within the Council's ownership. In addition, it would be less than 4m in height and less than 200 cubic metres in capacity.

5.2 As a result, it is considered that the proposed air quality monitoring station would constitute permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.