

2020.05.12

7 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for the Environment regarding Island-wide air quality monitoring (OQ.123/2020)

Will the Minister provide an update on the progress towards Island-wide air-quality monitoring and, given the correlation found in studies in other regions between air pollution and COVID-19 mortality rates, will he pursue such monitoring as a matter of urgency?

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade (The Minister for the Environment):

Island-wide monitoring of our air quality continues and is compared to international standards. My team at Environmental Health commission an annual report to independently assess against these standards and make recommendations for the future air quality monitoring scheme. The 2019 report is in its final stages of production and will be made available on gov.je once it is complete. Initial reviews suggest our Island air quality is generally excellent but there are higher concentrations in urban areas and high-traffic areas. We continue to work with leading experts to create a real-time air quality system for the Island, for the whole Island. The initiative, which I have answered questions on before, progresses and we are currently in the quality-check stage before moving to the next phase.

4.7.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I ask the Minister, given that we will go to a recovery phase, this will not just be economic, but that we have an opportunity for an environmental recovery, the areas he talked about of high pollution, should they not be prioritised in dealing with that pollution given the effects on health, in particular the effects on the health of young children?

Deputy J.H. Young:

There is no question that dealing with those hot spots of pollution, of air quality, should be a priority. I have given a fuller answer in another one of my written questions about that but of course the Deputy knows that we have a project about air-quality monitoring in place and I am afraid the validation work on that has had to be temporarily suspended because the Environmental Health and Digital Jersey teams have had to be deployed to COVID work. But as soon as it is possible to get that back again we will do.