

Ms Bernie Orr
Government Reform Unit
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
7-9 Merrion Row
Dublin 2

Friday, 30 September 2016

RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FIRST REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE REGULATION OF LOBBYING ACT 2015

Dear Ms Orr

The County and City Management Association (CCMA) is glad to make this submission in relation to the Review of the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (the Act). There is a broad consensus in the local government sector that the objectives of the Act are welcome and to date are operating well. The experience of the sector is that the occurrences of lobbying, as intended in the Act, are rare. This response sets out some of the key views of the sector in relation to the implementation of the Act using the headings set out in the consultation document.

Positive Features of the Act

It is important that lobbying activities are documented, recorded and made available to the public. This should ensure an environment of transparent interactions between persons and organisations engaged in lobbying activities and the designated public officials. The website and publications are comprehensive and clear.

Does the Act Fulfil the Objectives?

The Act fulfils the objectives, but there are a number of amendments that would enhance the reach of the Act as set out below.

Have any Unintended Consequences Occurred

While at relatively early stages of implementation, we are not aware of any unintended consequences.

Can the Act be Improved?

We propose the following improvements:

- The designated public officials in Local Government are the Chief Executives and Directors of Services. However, planning and development duties are delegated officers below these grades. The requirements of the Lobbying Act do not cover these grades, although they are covered under the ethical framework for Local Government. The expansion of the Lobbying Act to include these officials should be considered.



Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association

- It is recommended that more extensive awareness campaigns be undertaken, particularly with elected representatives and sectoral advocacy groups or sectoral representatives on local authority committees. This should help improve awareness of the obligations and responsibilities of all parties in relation to the Act.

I hope this is helpful, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact myself or Fearghal Reidy.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Martin

Chair CCMA Land Use, Transportation Committee