



CABINET

17 April 2013

Subject Heading:

Authority to commit to making progress against the GLA's Exemplar Borough qualifying criteria to become a designated Cleaner Air Borough

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Lesley Kelly - Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Protection

Councillor Barry Tebbutt - Cabinet Member for Environment

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

The Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 928),

The Air Quality (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 (SI 3043),

Clearing the air - The Mayor's Air Quality Strategy 2010

Traffic Management Act 2004

Mayor's Transport Strategy 2010

Havering Corporate Plan 2011-2014 including the 'Living Ambitions' Agenda

Havering Local Implementation Plan 2012

Network Management Plan 2006

Havering Local Development Framework

Havering Regeneration Strategy

Havering Air Quality Action Plan (draft)

Financial summary:

The proposed decision will permit the authority to bid for up to £400k of funding for projects to improve air quality in Havering in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16, and uncapped funding for cross-boundary projects in the same time period.

The financial implication to Havering arising from any fine for continued breaches of AQ limits is not currently known.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

When should this matter be reviewed?

Autumn 2013, and then annually in Spring/early Summer

Reviewing OSC:

Environment OSC

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This report considers the steps that Havering must take towards becoming a 'Cleaner Air Borough', which would have environmental benefits and enable Havering to bid for up to £400k of funding from TfL for projects to improve air quality in the borough.

The environmental benefits would have public health advantages and make the borough a more attractive place to live in and for businesses to invest in.

Many of the criteria that the borough would have to work towards to achieve this status are covered by existing projects and programmes in Havering, and consequently achieving this status would simply require the continuation of existing projects that are funded by TfL through the LIP programme; the implementation of new projects funded via the recently announced London Mayor's Air Quality Fund; and minor adjustments to existing programmes.

Examples of these include: the TfL funded Biking Boroughs programme and Smarter Travel work, development of the Ingrebourne Valley Connect 2 route, regeneration capital projects in Romford and Rainham and business engagement activities.

The report seeks Cabinet approval for Havering to sign up to become a 'Cleaner Air Borough'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report recommends that:

- (1) The Council signs up to become a 'Cleaner Air Borough', progressing projects such as those set out in the report, that will allow it to demonstrate that it meets the Exemplar Borough qualifying criteria.
- (2) Cabinet agrees grant funding bids are submitted in line with Havering becoming a 'Cleaner Air Borough'

REPORT DETAIL

Background

Health impacts

London has some of the worst levels of air pollution of any UK or European city, and air quality is a very significant issue for Londoners' health. Following the Great Smog of 1952 and the ensuing clean air measures, obvious smoke and sulphur dioxide pollution was greatly reduced in urban areas, reducing mortality from short-term exposure. However, in the last ten to fifteen years it has become apparent that the long-term impacts of less visible pollutants are much more significant than previously realised.

It is now known that thousands of Londoners per year die early as a result of long-term exposure to air pollution: a recent study commissioned by the Mayor estimated that over 4000 extra deaths each year in London are attributable to one kind of pollutant, microscopic airborne particles. Another study estimates that the man-made majority of these particles are responsible for a proportion of all deaths in London boroughs ranging from around 6% in the least polluted outer suburbs to over 8% in the most polluted boroughs of inner London.

Air pollution contributes to a range of life-shortening lung and heart conditions; it can also impair lung development in children. Links have also been reported to breast cancer, diabetes and premature and low birth weight babies. The health costs of air pollution in the UK have been estimated at up to £20 billion a year – twice as much as obesity.

London, national and EU air quality targets

The European Commission sets a range of limit values for the concentrations of different air pollutants which are included as objectives in the UK National Air Quality Strategy and the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (MAQS). The two most significant pollutants are fine particulate matter (generally PM, specifically PM10 or the finer-still PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

WHO targets and health benefits

The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recommends maximum pollutant concentrations for human health. In the case of PM10, the recommended limit is half that enforced by the EU and so London has much further to go to reach this standard.

Generally, scientists estimate that every reduction in PM concentration results in a proportionate reduction in excess deaths, so there is a health benefit of progress

towards or beyond the limit values, as well as the legal benefit of meeting the enforceable targets.

Progress to date

Progress towards meeting PM10 values has been gradual but positive and now only a small number of roads in central London breach the EU limit values. In June 2011 the European Commission granted the UK government a time extension to meet these limit values. However, in the case of NO₂, progress has not been as successful.

The UK has consistently failed to meet the EU limit values for NO₂, and in London, levels have been exceeded by some distance. As a result of this non-compliance the UK could potentially be at risk of European fines of up to £300 million for breaching air quality standards. The Localism Act allows the UK government to pass EU fines on to regional and local authorities.

While it is unclear how the UK government would respond to such a European fine, it is possible that a fine of up to £50 million could be passed to London as a result of continued air quality breaches. The London Mayor, in turn, could then divide any fine equally between boroughs, or could apply penalties to individual boroughs, giving consideration to their progress against local targets.

Havering's Air Quality

The whole of the London Borough of Havering was designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2006 due to exceedances of the both EU limit values and UK air quality objectives for both PM10 & NO₂. These breaches of limit values were mainly attributable to emissions from road traffic vehicles.

Since 2006 an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was put in place by the Environmental Health Service of the Council to reduce pollutant concentrations of both NO₂ & PM10 across the Havering. In addition to London-wide measures such as the introduction of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and improvements to public transport fleet, local projects such as greening of Havering's vehicle fleet, travel planning activities, development plans, traffic and parking management initiatives, improvements to cycling and walking routes, climate change measures, regulation of industrial processes and construction/demolition sites have resulted in a gradual trend of improvement.

Whilst the Borough currently has only a small network of air quality monitoring locations, the evidence available shows a decreasing trend across Havering for both NO₂ & PM10. In 2012 the automated air quality monitoring station at in Waterloo Road in Romford recorded both NO₂ and PM10 as meeting the UK air quality objectives. However, at other locations across the Borough, such as Mercury Gardens, the air quality objective has been exceeded continuously for the past five years, indicating that there is still much to be done to achieve statutory targets for air quality.

The Mayor's Air Quality Fund

The London Mayor is committed to further action to tackle poor air quality in London and Transport for London has recently announced a £20 million fund to support local air quality projects over the next 10 years.

The objectives of the Mayor's Air Quality Fund are:

- To reduce air pollutant concentrations across London, particularly PM and NO₂, prioritising Air Quality Focus Areas
- To communicate the issue of poor air quality and facilitate the engagement of the wider London population with measures to improve air quality
- To ensure boroughs have an up-to-date AQAP and support projects that deliver specified air quality targets
- To maximise investment by complementing and enhancing existing air quality programmes
- To provide a clear understanding of the impact of different measures through robust monitoring
- To evaluate innovative measures through trials and investigations, share lessons learnt amongst other boroughs and more widely at a regional and national level

Cleaner Air Borough fund

Within the umbrella of the Mayor's Air Quality Fund, TfL has established a 'Cleaner Air Borough' fund that will provide a total of £6m over three years to London boroughs that are determined to make a difference and implement innovative transport related air quality measures.

For bids to be viewed favourably, Boroughs will need to demonstrate that they are signed up to achieving exemplar borough qualifying criteria.

Each borough is invited to submit one individual bid but can also be a member of more than one partnership bid with other London boroughs and third party organisations. The maximum amount available for an individual borough bid is £400,000 over three years, with a higher amount possible for strong partnership bids. It is possible that the East and South East London (ESEL) transport partnership may co-ordinate a sub-regional bid covering work in Havering.

Boroughs are expected to secure match-funding for their bids through LIPs, BIDs, S106, parking revenues, EU funding, Defra funding, GLA Cleaner Air Fund 2 and other sources; and to focus bids on projects that are complementary to existing plans.

Bid Proposals

Bidding for funding from the Cleaner Air Boroughs funding pot will enable the Council to increase the financial resources available for a number of existing projects and programmes, with no additional burdens placed on the authority.

The areas identified by the GLA as being Air Quality Focus Areas are located in Romford and Rainham, adjacent to main roads into these hubs. Possible projects to tackle air quality also have the potential to deliver benefits across a broad range of policy areas, such as reducing congestion, delivering environmental improvements (immediate infrastructure delivery and longer term outcomes), helping local businesses to reduce their operating costs and improving health outcomes for the local population.

The geographical focus identified will allow projects to be developed that are complementary to the aims of the Romford and Rainham Compass regeneration programmes and fully integrated into the delivery of these programmes' objectives. A specific example of a type of project that could be delivered with assistance from the fund is green walls, with locations around Romford and Rainham that are in need of a face-lift currently being investigated. Advertising revenue has the potential to cover on-going maintenance costs. Appendix 2 provides an illustration of the type of dramatic transformation that can be achieved from this type of treatment.

Cleaner Air Boroughs Criteria

To access funding from the new Mayor's Air Quality Fund, boroughs are asked to commit to make progress against a number of criteria:

1. Political leadership
2. Taking action
3. Leading by example
4. Using the planning system
5. Integrating air quality into the public health system
6. Informing the public

With the exception of Criterion 1, which would be demonstrated through the approval of this report, and Criterion 5, which would require a small amount of additional work to integrate air quality and transport into the Borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Borough is already well placed to demonstrate achievement of the Cleaner Air Boroughs criteria, through continuation of existing (externally funded) projects and programmes.

Full details of the Exemplar Borough Qualifying Criteria and existing work which contributes to the achievement of these criteria is provided in Appendix1.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

Expressing the level of political support required to submit a successful bid for Cleaner Air Borough funding will publicly demonstrate Havering's commitment both to tackling the health issues caused by poor air quality in the borough and to the delivery of London Mayoral priorities.

Development of a successful funding bid will provide financial assistance to the council in implementing existing projects and programmes that deliver across a wide range of council objectives in addition to improved air quality. In particular, these include projects to reduce congestion and support business activity within the borough.

Increasing the level of investment in initiatives to tackle areas of poor air quality in Havering will help the council to both meet the statutory targets for air quality and to reduce the exposure of Havering's population to health-damaging pollutants.

It is hoped that visible commitment to the delivery of air quality improvement projects and improved performance in relation to air quality limits would have a mitigatory effect on the apportionment of any EU Air Quality fines to the borough.

Other options considered:

The option of not demonstrating political support or submitting a bid for Cleaner Air Borough funding was discarded, due to statutory and ethical obligations to meet air quality limits and the opportunity to increase net income to the authority.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Approval of this report will increase the borough's chances of successfully bidding for both the Cleaner Air Borough fund and other Mayoral funding streams that may become available in the future.

TfL expect to allocate a total of £6m of 'Cleaner Air Borough' funding to London Boroughs over the next three years.

Cabinet, 17 April 2013

The maximum amount available for an individual borough bid is £400k over three years, with a higher amount possible for partnership bids. Bids must be match funded by the borough and this will be achieved through use of LIP and other external funding (the exact funding sources are to be confirmed).

Careful consideration will be given to the on-going maintenance costs of any projects identified for potential bid content. Any revenue implications will need a defined funding source.

If the bid is approved, 2013/14 funding will be agreed in early June, with indicative funding allocations for 2014/15 and 2015/16. Funding can be deployed on either revenue or capital expenditure, in line with approved proposals.

Whilst the Air Quality Fund is separate to the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding provided by TfL, the governance and payments processes will be similar. Funding will be allocated and managed through the Borough Portal, with payments made in arrears once evidence is provided to show the work has been completed. There is the risk that if work is not completed on a timely basis funding could be lost, meaning expenditure committed would need to be borne by the Council; this will need to be managed through robust project management.

Funding for project implementation will be released once monitoring has been completed and the project evaluated.

Although there is no specific audit requirement, TfL can at their discretion audit the deployment of funds.

The UK has consistently failed to meet EU air quality standards and in London levels have been exceeded by some distance. There is the possibility that EU fines could be incurred nationally then apportioned to local authorities. The UK could potentially be at risk of fines of up to £300 million (source London Councils). Both London Councils and the Greater London Authority (GLA) are working to ensure there is a transparent framework for passing on these types of fines if they are imposed. Proposals are that weighting be relative to the degree to which each authority has power to tackle the problem.

Air quality initiatives would impact on a number of Council services, such as schools, transport and Public Health. Projects should therefore look to be cross cutting and explore efficiencies across departments.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no legal implications arising from this report

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising from this report. Should bids be successful the workload associated with delivering the projects will be managed within existing staff resources.

Equalities implications and risks:

Any projects delivered as a result of this decision are expected to have beneficial impacts on protected equality groups within Havering. Young and old residents are disproportionately impacted by poor air quality, as are certain disabilities groups and action to improve air quality in the borough will be of particular benefit to these groups.

Any project awarded funding in Havering will be subject to separate equalities analysis prior to implementation where appropriate, to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Mayor's Air Quality Fund Bidding Guidance:

http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors_air_quality_fund_bidding_guidance.pdf

Appendix 1 – assessment of current performance against Cleaner Air Borough qualifying criteria

Appendix 2 – illustrations of green wall infrastructure projects

Cleaner Air Boroughs Criteria

To access funding from the new Mayor's Air Quality Fund, boroughs are asked to commit to make progress against each of the criteria set out below. Those that demonstrate significant improvement towards or achievement of the criteria will then be designated a "Cleaner Air Borough". The first Cleaner Air Boroughs will be announced in January 2014.

1. Political leadership

- To become a Cleaner Air for London Borough the authority will have to pledge (at cabinet level) to take significant action to improve local air quality and sign up to specific delivery targets.
- This includes having an up-to-date air quality action plan, fully incorporated into LIP funding and core strategies.

The council's existing work to improve air quality is already fully embedded within its LIP programme and policies, with many existing projects, such as the school travel planning programme, making a significant contribution towards achieving air quality objectives.

The LIP programme currently contains a modest (£25k) allocation for the delivery of specific air quality projects, including the development of an air quality strategy and action plan. Cabinet level commitment to continue these programmes and projects (through future LIP annual spending submissions, at no additional cost to the council) would be demonstrated through approval of this report.

2. Taking action

Examples include:

- Taking decisive action to address air pollution, especially where human exposure and vulnerability (e.g. schools, older people, hospitals etc) is highest.
- Developing plans for business engagement (including optimising deliveries and supply chain), retrofitting public buildings using the RE:FIT framework, integrating no engine idling awareness raising into the work of civil enforcement officers, etc.
- Integrate transport and air quality, including by improving traffic flows on borough roads to reduce stop/start conditions
- Making additional resources available to improve local air quality, including by pooling its collective resources (s106 funding, LIPs, parking revenue, etc).

The council is currently taking steps that would permit it to demonstrate achievement of this criterion without the need to develop new projects and programmes.

Air quality is already well integrated into the council's transport programmes, with a number of "standing" projects contributing to improving air quality and reducing

human exposure to poor air quality. Examples include projects in the TfL funded LIP programme to smooth traffic flows and reduce congestion, such as junction improvements along Main Road and North Street, loading facilities for local businesses, working with TfL to adjust traffic signals to minimise vehicle 'standing' time; the council's TfL funded smarter travel and school travel planning work, which seeks to reduce car use for journeys where a reasonable alternative exists (this particularly applies to short journeys, where emissions are higher, due to engine not warming up); the Biking Borough's programme which seeks to increase cycling levels in the borough; and the greenways programme and other regeneration/culture projects which aim to increase access to and use of pleasant green spaces around the borough.

Work is currently underway to roll out the Cleaner Air 4 Schools programme at a number of schools close to air quality hotspots in Havering to help these local schools identify measures to target air quality issues relevant to them. The Smarter Travel behavioural campaign "Target your Trip", scheduled for launch as a Council campaign in 2014, will enable delivery of air quality specific items, such as anti-idling work and eco-driving skills training with local businesses and residents.

3. Leading by example

Examples include:

- Investing sufficient resources to complement and drive action from others
- Maintaining an appropriate air quality monitoring network so that air quality impacts within the borough can be properly understood
- Reducing emissions from council operations, including from buildings, vehicles and all activities.
- Adopting a procurement code which reduces emissions from its own and its suppliers activities, including from buildings and vehicles operated by and on their behalf (e.g. rubbish trucks).

The council is currently taking steps that would permit it to demonstrate achievement of this criterion without the need to develop new projects and programmes.

The inclusion of funding for air quality activities within the LIP programme has enabled the Council to begin to establish an appropriate monitoring network which will allow an evidence driven approach to be taken to prioritising air quality interventions within the borough.

In 2009 the Council adopted a Climate Change Action Plan, which has enabled the Council to reduce its carbon and other emissions from council buildings, vehicles and its activities. This Action Plan encompasses all areas of Council activity which have an impact on emissions, and is delivered using internal and external funding for carbon reduction projects. Requirements for contractors and suppliers to reduce their emissions are included in terms and conditions of contracts, and where there is significant impact are used as part of the tender evaluation.

4. Using the planning system

Examples include:

- Fully implementing the Mayor's policies relating to air quality neutral, combined heat and power and biomass.
- Collecting s106 from new developments to ensure air quality neutral development
- Additional enforcement of construction and demolition guidance, with regular checks on medium and high risk building sites.

The council is currently taking steps that would permit it to demonstrate achievement of this criterion without the need to develop new projects and programmes.

As part of planning development control processes, the council actively applies policies in the London Plan to promote air quality neutral and low energy development. The recent approval of the Climate Energy housing scheme at Rainham, in which a 51-unit development is being built to Passivhaus standard, provides a good example of the Council's progress in this area.

S106 agreements and conditions have been, and are, used to fund initiatives such as travel plans, green infrastructure, cycle routes, bus facilities, electric charging points, etc that will deliver and support air quality improvements in the short to medium term. They are also used to secure investment in the Council's air quality monitoring network.

The council is currently progressing the revision of its LDF and its replacement with a new Local Plan. This will provide a timely opportunity to explore the opportunity to integrate air quality policies for new development into the local planning system.

5. Integrating air quality into the public health system

Examples include:

- Including air quality in the borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including measures to promote adaptation amongst vulnerable groups.

The links between transport, air quality and health are not currently covered in the Health and Wellbeing strategy. It would be possible to include references to air quality in future revisions of the strategy, provided that this topic is incorporated into the JSNA. This work could be undertaken within existing resources.

The NHS has a statutory duty to report Public Health Indicators to the UK Government, Air Quality has its own health indicator which has to be reported upon.

6. Informing the public

Examples include:

- Ensuring consistency of branding by using the “Cleaner Air for London” marque.
- Raising awareness about air quality through the active promotion of airTEXT.
- Building a network of air quality champions in schools, businesses, public sector and social housing linked to the Mayor's programme.

The council is developing and delivering projects that would permit it to demonstrate achievement of this criterion.

The GLA is currently funding a six month pilot project to build a network of Air Quality Champions in Havering, Redbridge and Hackney, which is being delivered by Sustrans. It is envisaged that this project will be rolled out across London, following the initial six month trial, with continued implementation in the pilot boroughs (funded by GLA/Defra/TfL).

It is proposed to incorporate public information messages about air quality into the smarter travel “Target your Trip” campaign and the Cleaner Air 4 Schools project will help to raise awareness within the schools community.



Mock up of a green wall treatment (source - Enterprise Plants, google maps)



Use of a green wall for advertising (source - inhabit.com)