

CABINET

Thursday, 7 July 2022

DEFRA 21-22 AIR QUALITY GRANT SCHEME AWARD

Report of the Senior Pollution Control Officer (Environment)

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the use of the DEFRA Air Quality Grant fund of £132,932

Summary

Eastleigh Borough Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to monitor air quality and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the four declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the Borough. The Council's AQAP 2020-2025 was adopted in February 2020.

This grant funded project will help deliver the AQAPs aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough to poor air quality

Statutory Powers

Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83

EU Directive 2008/50/EC, transposed into The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 in the UK

Strategic Implications

1. Delivery of the DEFRA air quality grant funded project will have positive implications for many of the Council's Corporate objectives across Health and Wellbeing and the Environment including 'Excellent environment for all' and 'Enabling healthier lifestyles'

Introduction

2. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) must be declared where pollutant concentrations are found to be at risk of exceeding national objective levels set by the Government. Once declared, AQMAs must have an associated Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which contains measures aiming to bring levels of air pollution under the objective values.

3. There are currently four AQMAs within Eastleigh Borough which, following Cabinet approval in February 2020, were incorporated into a single, consolidated Borough wide AQAP.
4. The AQAP is aimed at improving air quality in the time period 2020 – 2025 and outlines how the Council plans to tackle air quality issues within its control. To achieve this, the document contains a range of actions which include a mixture of funded projects, longer term aspirations and schemes that require commitment and joint working with other public and private sector organisations.

DEFRA Air Quality Grant Project

5. In March 2022 the Council was awarded £132,932 from DEFRA towards a project aimed at improving knowledge and information on air quality issues to influence behaviour changes that will result in a reduced exposure to air pollution.
6. This grant funded project will help deliver the AQAP aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough to poor air quality.
7. Specifically, the project will aim to increase the number of people making everyday choices which reduce their personal exposure to air pollution and ultimately reduce the number of private vehicles on the road by encouraging and facilitating active travel options. This will result in:
 - Improved public health and reduced health burdens from NO₂ exposure;
 - Reduced emissions from private car use; and
 - Contribution towards reducing NO₂ concentrations to levels below the national objective.
8. The project will be delivered in conjunction with an external partner and will combine direct engagement with six local schools and two wider communications campaigns in three phases:
 - (a) A communications campaign at project launch aiming to provide information on how people can reduce their personal exposure. This will deliver key messages in a 'myth-busting' format using social media content and targeted advertising.
 - (b) Air quality projects run in six schools for ten months over the 2022-23 academic year, to include focussed lessons linked to the national curriculum; pupil-led campaigns and events; use of monitoring and mapping clean air routes and promotion of active travel.
 - (c) A follow-up campaign towards the scheme end will build on the original launch and the subsequent school projects. Based around active travel, it will use the materials and messages developed throughout the

school's engagement programme and include a targeted leaflet mailout, advertising in public spaces and a novel communication technique such as 'reverse graffiti' to attract attention.

Financial Implications

9. The project will be delivered with the support of the grant fund award of £132,932 from DEFRA and further match funding of £15,540 which will be contributed by the Council through existing officer time and provision of required match funding from existing budgets.
10. A breakdown of the project budget is provided in Appendix 1.

Risk Assessment

11. The grant funded project will help achieve the AQAPs aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough to poor air quality. Whilst this is a long-term aspiration, should this funding not be approved, such action would not be able to be undertaken within current resources at this time.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report as it relates to addressing an issue that, although it has an impact on all residents, can disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in society such as children, people with health issues or those living in closer proximity to pollution sources.
13. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for the approval of the AQMP in February 2020 remains relevant for this decision as the funded project will help to deliver the AQAPs aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough to poor air quality. The Equality Impact Assessment is provided in Appendix 2.
14. In summary the aim of the AQAP, and this funded project, is to improve air quality across the Borough. This will benefit everyone but particularly those groups which air pollution has the biggest impact on, for example children, which this funded project will accelerate work with.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

15. The AQAP, and this funded project, in most instances supports the work in the Climate and Environmental Emergency Strategy and Action Plan and many actions are relevant to both areas of work. Poor air quality also has significant impact on the local environment and public health and in many cases air quality improvements are positive for climate change.

16. The AQAP and this funded project aim to improve air quality across the Borough.

Conclusion

17. The grant funded project aligns with the Councils AQAP aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough, specifically children, to poor air quality.
18. Approval of the funding will allow for project to proceed which will further the Council's aspirations in relation to improving air quality.

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Appendices Attached: Appendix One – Project Budget Breakdown
Appendix Two – Equality Impact Assessment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

- Background Papers - Air Quality Action Plan, Report to Cabinet, 18 February 2020.