

PPP DEFRA Grant Funded Air Quality Project

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	31st March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Hilary Cole Councillor Parry Batth Councillor John Harrison
Report Author:	Anna Smy
Forward Plan Ref:	N/a

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The report sets out the details of the Air Quality Project proposed by the Public Protection Partnership for which West Berkshire Council (on behalf of the Partnership) have been awarded £259,406 from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The project focuses on behavioural change for the 448,000 residents who drive in the three boroughs by launching an anti-idling campaign. To support this we will be working closely with schools and significantly expanding our air quality monitoring programme.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee **NOTE** the information provided about the project and how PPP plan to deliver it.
- 2.2 The committee **NOTE** that a project update report will be provided at the Joint Public Protection Committee in June 2022.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The application committed the partnership to an expenditure of 10% of the application (c£25K). Some of this is already covered by the existing Environmental Quality budget within the PPP. A budget was submitted within the application. The key expenditure is the £125k towards the monitoring programme over the 2 year period. In accordance with the West Berkshire Procurement Strategy this level of expenditure will be going through the Procurement Board before going out to tender. It is proposed that a separate cost centre is set up to manage the project as a whole (total project value is £259,030).

Human Resource:	The awarded grant allows for the appointment of a project officer to help deliver the agreed outcomes over 2 years. Part of this role will be to liaise with the successful provider to deliver the monitoring programme. Appendix B sets out the anticipated use of the existing officers, this works sits within their current roles.			
Legal:	The Inter Authority Agreement sets out the legal relationship and responsibilities within the service and requirements on each partner. We will be bound by the terms of the Grant and will need to notify DEFRA of any changes or deviation from the agreed project scope.			
Risk Management:	<p>The funding is provided for all 3 areas over a two year project. The position with Wokingham Borough Council leaving the partnership needs to be considered and reflected in the risk register and form part of the exit plan.</p> <p>There is limited financial risk to the authority as their contribution is in line with current air quality expenditure.</p> <p>There is a vulnerability of using one provider to supply our additional monitoring programme and will need to be mitigated, there are some alternative monitoring programmes where the outcomes could still be monitored, however we would need to return any finance associated.</p> <p>There is also a risk that the monitoring data measures incorrectly and decisions and actions are made on the basis of that information. This could cause reputational risk issues.</p>			
Property:	Some of the locations for the equipment may be on School property or nearby lampposts/street furniture.			
Policy:	This work is undertaken to support national air quality policies as well as more local strategies			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			✓	If monitoring is found to identify significant levels of pollutants there may issues of stigma, concern by home owners

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B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	✓			The aim is to work with schools, identify if air quality is an issue and then engender behavioural change to make improvements
Environmental Impact:	✓			The purpose of the grant is to understand better and make improvements to the local environment
Health Impact:		✓		This is a neutral area as for some by identifying poor air quality we may be able to take positive action and improve the air they breathe, for other areas. In identifying air pollution from PM _{2.5} this could have a negative impact on health with concerns from residents and those supporting children attending or living near the school locations.
ICT Impact:				There are no known impacts
Digital Services Impact:		✓		There may be scope for the results of any monitoring to be provided on the website however during the project itself there will be limited need.
Council Strategy Priorities:	✓			<p>Delivery of the project meets:</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Council Strategic Theme – Protecting and enhancing our environment</p> <p>West Berkshire Priorities for Improvement – Maintain a green district</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council Strategic Priority – A Clean and Green Borough</p> <p>It will also have links with a number of the health and wellbeing, and community linked priorities</p> <p>This work also sits within the Climate Change Action Plan of each authority.</p>
Core Business:		✓		Some of this work expands on our current business as usual work delivering the Air

				Quality objectives and requirements of the Local Air Quality Management regime.
Data Impact:		✓		This project has no significant impact on the rights of data subjects.
Consultation and Engagement:	There are a number internal officer groups which officers attend have advised of the successful application. These groups include Heads of Service, Highways Managers, My Journey and Transport Policy Teams, Public Health and Climate Change officers. This has been across all 3 areas.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The responsibility for monitoring air quality is that of the Public Protection Service and under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are required to produce an air quality Action Plan describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place. If a Local Authority has an AQMA they are able to apply to DEFRA for funding towards measures which help tackle poor air quality.
- 4.2 The profile of our air quality work has changed significantly over the last year or so with actions embedded in each authorities Climate Change Action Plans, anti-idling projects and more regrettably the links to health seen in the landmark ruling in October that air pollution “made a material contribution” to the death of 9 year old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah. We have also maintained our monitoring regime throughout the pandemic which has enabled us to look at the impact the changes which have taken place in transport related pollution during this time.
- 4.3 The service developed a project which would help each Council by bringing together the air quality related campaigns to ensure they are properly funded and also to provide an additional monitoring programme to understand the true picture of the pollutant PM_{2.5} and to be able to demonstrate the impact of the work being undertaken.
- 4.4 This is an ambitious and exciting project for the PPP to lead on and has the opportunity to demonstrate tangible improvements in the local environment. We know that although there are localised areas of pollution at an undesirable level across all 3 authority areas we benefit from some of the best countryside, forest and parklands in the country. However we know that we do have areas where the levels of particular matter could be at a level above that set by the World Health Organisation and DEFRA. At the moment we do not monitor this pollutant so are reliant on indicative and modelled data.
- 4.5 The purpose of the grant is clearly stated by DEFRA. *“The purpose of the grant is to provide support to LAs in England to develop and/or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits in the near future (one to two years), projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes, and new, innovative ideas if they will successfully and as closely as possible meet the needs and objectives of the Applicant’s local area. Specifically, projects should contribute to*

reductions in air pollutant emissions and/or concentrations in areas in current and projected”

5 Supporting Information

Proposals

5.1 Our project proposals have been fully appraised by DEFRA and the full grant amount awarded. We are in the process of finalising a more detailed project plan. Following Full Council decisions at both Wokingham and Bracknell Councils we have project plans for the introduction of the anti-idling campaigns and work with schools and promotional work such as the banners (which are shown in Appendix C – PPP Air Quality Newsletter) we are now working with the necessary teams to bring this into a wider project plan.

5.2 DEFRA are clear in their requirements for any funding applications and list the following objectives for authorities to demonstrate:

Funding is awarded for approved projects that meet the grant objectives:

- i. To help deliver compliance in areas in current and projected exceedance of UK air pollution targets in the shortest possible time;
- ii. To support LAs (particularly those with a Smoke Control Area) to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions from domestic wood and coal burning;
- iii. To support projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes.
- iv. To support projects that align with the objectives of Defra’s Clean Air strategy
- v. To support projects that reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions
- vi. To support innovative projects that can improve local air quality, especially in relation to delivering effective air pollutant emissions reduction measures, and to share this best practice.

5.3 Appendix B shows the areas the project will cover and proposed outcomes and monitoring standards. In particular these are local benefits and public health improvements.

5.4 Officers will provide regular project updates to the Joint Management Board and will provide an interim project update report to the Joint Public Protection Committee in June 2022 (approx. half way through the project)

6 Other options considered

6.1 For the PPP to purchase their own equipment and carry out all the associated calibration, maintenance and management. This was not deemed cost effective due to the costs of the equipment, short term nature of the project.

6.2 To continue the current arrangements of working in isolation with each authority on ad hoc projects, this is not an effective use of resource and had the funding not been provided we would have been looking at more co-ordinated project work.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The PPP have been awarded the sum of £259k to deliver on a behavioural change project around the pollutant PM_{2.5} which is known to cause health issues particularly in those with underlying health problems associated with their lungs, including asthma (it is also linked to strokes and other neurological issues). There is a significant sum of £125k allocated to providing the monitoring equipment and support costs to enable the authority to act on accurate and detailed data. We therefore need to ensure that the best available equipment is provided at a cost that will allow maximum coverage of the 3 local authorities and in particular in and around schools.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Key Outcomes of the project

Appendix C – PPP Air Quality Newsletter

Background Papers:

Costings detailed in the Grant application

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

Report is to note only



Wards affected: All (West Berkshire Council, Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council)

Officer details:

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Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	There is no decision being made – they are noting the proposed project
Summary of relevant legislation:	
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Anna Smy
Name of Service/Directorate:	Public Protection and Culture
Name of assessor:	Anna Smy
Date of assessment:	17/03/2021
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To see changes in pollutant levels through a combination of monitoring and behavioural changes from residents

Objectives:	To establish actual levels of a particular pollutant (currently only inactive mapping is available).
Outcomes:	Full 2 year monitoring data across the local authority areas Identification of areas of concern for further assessment
Benefits:	Improvements in areas where poor air quality may be identified.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
This is not a decision	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
This is not a decision	

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Anna Smy

Date: 21/03/2021