

CABINET

Air Quality Grant Bid Cabinet 3rd September 2013

Report of Chief Officer (Health and Housing)

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To approve submission of the air quality grant bid to DEFRA			
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		5 August 2013	
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR HAMILTON-COX

- (1) That retrospective approval be given to the submission of the Air Quality grant bid outlined in this report and attached as an appendix.
- (2) That Cabinet notes the commitment required to deliver this initiative over a two year period expected to commence around January 2014.
- (3) That the Council agrees to accept the grant offer and become the Accountable Body for the funding should the bid be successful.
- (4) That the Chief Officer (Resources) be given delegated authority to update the General Fund Revenue Budget should the bid be successful, subject to there being a nil impact on the Council's resources.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Every year the Government department DEFRA invites applications for grants to support eligible capital expenditure by local authorities on their air quality management duties under the Environment Act 1995, Part 4 'Local Air Quality Management'. The council is an eligible local authority because, like some other councils in Lancashire, we have formally declared Air Quality Management Areas. Bids may be submitted individually or in partnership with other eligible authorities.
- 1.2 Defra wrote to councils on 23 May this year announcing the invitation of bids and providing a set of criteria for potentially successful bids. Reflecting the transfer into local government of Public Health services, the selection criteria this year include projects to improve air quality through influencing behaviour and/or raising awareness to support public health objectives. Applicants are expected to develop such projects in partnership with local Directors of Public Health.
- 1.3 The deadline for receipt of completed bids was 28 June and for this reason it

was necessary to submit our bid pending formal approval.

2 Proposal Details

2.1 The DEFRA grant screening criteria are positively reflected in our existing proposals for improving local air quality. The criteria also provided a good opportunity to develop working relationships with new colleagues in the Public Health service at Lancashire County Council. Our Air Quality Officer's initial discussions with county council colleagues found strong support and good scope for a joint grant bid focussed on improving air quality through the public health 'Large Scale Change' method. A Lancashire-wide approach and greater resources in addition to work already planned at a district level can do much to promote awareness, encouragement and momentum for people to adopt less polluting travel behaviours in the Lancaster district and beyond.

Lancaster City Council is leading this bid because of it's:

- unique (for Lancashire) advantage of a draft Local Air Quality Strategy
- biggest air quality management area and most challenging percentage reductions in measured air pollution concentrations required in Lancaster city centre, making the bid in our interests in particular, and
- highly experienced and capable Air Quality Officer exploring better ways of meeting community needs and fulfilling our statutory duties on Local Air Quality Management

Without this council's lead the bid would not have been developed in time.

2.2 If our grant bid is successful the coordination and delivery of project work proposed in this bid will fall to Lancashire County Council's Public Health service. Implications for Lancaster City Council are not expected to be overly onerous therefore and will involve (1) passporting successful grant funding to the county council, and (2) carrying out the same quantity of air quality improvement activities already planned using our existing staffing resources under existing statutory duty. Any additional responsibilities falling upon the City Council associated with its role as Accountable Body can be absorbed within existing resources.

2.3 A grant bid was prepared collaboratively with positive support from councils across Lancashire. The project aims to reduce air pollution emissions and help achieve national air quality objectives in ways that:

- better understand the benefits and conflicts arising from policies, plans and actions and present them in a format to influence and assist decision makers
- provide a lasting structure for ongoing participation, consensus building and overseeing of air quality matters
- ensure clarity is provided as to what is intended from plans and policies (new or existing) and for roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders to be understood and accepted
- engage communities, businesses, local authorities and employers to understand the issues regarding air pollution and work collaboratively to reduce air pollution for the benefit of the Lancashire community.

If the bid is successful there will be a modest task inside every district to support the 'large scale change' public health methodology. This council is already planning to implement the Local Air Quality Strategy and has an established staffing commitment which serves as match funding without any

new revenue implications. With this staffing capacity we can strongly influence project design and planning on behalf of district councils.

- 2.4 The total amount of the bid against Defra's £1million grant fund for 2013-14 is £146,000 to be spent over a two year period, expected to commence around January 2014, subject to when DEFRA makes its announcement of successful funding bids. This would be matched by existing staffing resources from the participating local councils and in our own case this contribution is already part of the Air Quality Officer's duties.

3 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 During preparation of the grant bid there was extensive collaboration with Public Health specialists at Lancashire County Council. Through them, the proposed bid was raised at a Lancashire Local Authority Health Leads meeting where it received strong support. Our Air Quality Officer has consulted with all the district, borough and unitary councils in Lancashire and received strong support.

4 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Approve submission of the Air Quality grant bid	Option 2: <u>Do not</u> approve submission of the Air Quality grant bid
Advantages	The project subject to the bid has significant scope to assist us with the most difficult area of air quality improvement actions, i.e. public attitudes and behavioural change.	The council would have no commitment to the work proposed in the bid.
Disadvantages	No disadvantages have been identified as our staffing resources are already focussed on work of this nature.	As the lead authority for the joint bid, the bid would have to be withdrawn and this would impact on other Lancashire councils. There would be no prospect of achieving the scale of benefits derived from this Defra funding in other ways.
Risks	No significant risks have been identified because although the city council has taken the lead in making this grant bid, the county council will undertake all further work if the bid proves successful	Reputational risk with regard to the other councils in Lancashire formally supporting this bid and also with DEFRA regarding future bidding rounds.

5 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 The officer preferred option is Option 1 to approve the submission of the Air Quality grant bid.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Approving the submission of this bid as presented to DEFRA on 28 June 2013 (that was the closing date for applications after an extremely tight application window) will positively position the council in relation to joint working and local air quality improvement without any new demands on

resources, benefitting substantially from a pan-Lancashire focus.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Local air quality management is a statutory duty and the project work proposed in the grant bid is fully in line with the council's proposals under the Local Air Quality Strategy.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

No adverse implications have been identified.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The £146K bid to DEFRA is expected to require some form of match funding and can include existing staff time input by each Local Authority involved in managing the project and/or undertaking any of the project work involved. It has been proposed as part of the submission therefore, that:

- Lancaster City Council will contribute 15% (or £21.9K in monetary terms) of resources through existing staff time, mainly via the Air Quality Officer;
- Lancashire County Council will contribute 20% (or £29.2K in monetary terms), and
- The other 13 Local Authorities involved will contribute 5% each (or (£94.9K in total in monetary terms).

If the funding bid is successful, then the City Council's General Fund Revenue Budget will need to be updated to include the £146K DEFRA grant. At least 50% of the grant will fund the appointment of a two year fixed term post by County Council and so the budgets will span three financial years subject to start date for the post, i.e. split across 2013/14 to 2015/16, subject to there being a nil impact on the Council's resources. Should the grant offer be less than that originally bid for, then the project including post appointment will be adjusted accordingly to fit within actual funding amounts available.

Although the City Council is the lead grant bid applicant and will be the Accountable Body if successful, the entire grant funding will be 'passported' to the County Council as the main delivery agent for the project. Formal project management is proposed with a joint City and County Council project executive. This will oversee the planning, financial management progress and completion of grant funded works. It will be for the City Council (i.e. Health & Housing Officers in conjunction with Resources) to determine appropriate timescales and conditions for 'passporting' grant onto Lancashire County Council, however and this will be undertaken using a risk based approach in line with the formal project management being proposed.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

No implications have been identified.

Information Services:

No implications have been identified.

Property:

No implications have been identified.

Open Spaces:

No implications have been identified.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

none

Contact Officer: Nick Howard

Telephone: 01524 582734

E-mail: nhoward@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: C114