



Transport & Infrastructure Committee	Agenda Item
14 June 2023	14

Title:	DEFRA's Air Quality Bid
Report of:	Yo Higton, Active Travel Lead
Lead Member:	Cllr Anna Smith, Chair of Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Public Report:	Yes – but with exempt appendices
Key Decision:	Yes
Voting Arrangements:	A simple majority of voting Members

Recommendations:	
A	Note the contents of the Defra Air Quality Grant bid
B	Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of Air Quality Grant funding subject to Defra approving the bid
C	Subject to Defra approving the bid, recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director - Transport to enter into a contract with sub-contractors named in the bid, subject to procurement, and in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Strategic Objective(s):	
The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):	
✓	Increased connectivity –By providing bike maintenance and free refurbished bikes to residents it will enable them to travel actively around Cambridge.
✓	Enabling resilient communities – the HomeRun App provides options on how to travel around Cambridge City thus allowing residents to have choices on how they travel.

1. Purpose	
1.1	<p>This paper seeks to provide an overview of the Defra Air Quality Grant (2023/24) bid submitted on 29th September 2023.</p> <p>Although mentioned in the Director's Report in September, it was not possible to seek full approval with Members through the Transport and Infrastructure Committee and Combined Authority Board ahead of the bid submission, due to the limited timeframes imposed by DEFRA.</p> <p>Recommendation b) and c) are included in preparation for a successful outcome of the bid and ensure optimal time to undertake the activities proposed in the bid within the 3 year delivery window stipulated in the bid.</p>

2. Proposal

2.1	This paper provides an overview of the Defra Air Quality Grant (2023/24) and requests the drawdown of Air Quality Grant funding subject to Defra approving the bid.
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3. Background

3.1	<p>On 4th August, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) advertised the Invitation To Apply for their 2023/24 Air Quality Grant Fund.</p> <p>Joint applications could bid for up to £1 million with 10% match funding required. Combined Authorities are automatically classed as a joint application.</p> <p>The grant objectives were to undertake measures to deliver air quality improvements and/or improve knowledge and information about air quality and steps individuals can take to reduce their exposure to air pollution.</p> <p>DEFRA stated that priority will be given to proposals that address increasing awareness to encourage behavioural change, measure that address disparities, improve public health and partnership working.</p> <p>Lot 1 focused on air quality improvements in nitrogen dioxide saturation levels. Lot 2 focused on particulate matter and improvement in knowledge about air pollution. Lot 1 also required applicants to have an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).</p>
3.2	<p>The Combined Authority has 7 AQMA's, six of which are in Cambridgeshire and one in Peterborough. Peterborough's AQMA is relating to sulphur dioxide and therefore did not meet the criteria for the bid.</p> <p>Cambridge City's AQMA is the largest of the AQMAs in Cambridgeshire and will provide the greatest impact on air quality thus strengthening the bid. Therefore, Cambridge City was chosen to be the focus of the bid.</p> <p>Cambridge City's Air Quality Status Report (2021) states that the main source of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in Cambridge is from vehicle emissions. Therefore, to address the main source of air pollution and meet the bid criteria our objectives were set as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining or reducing nitrogen oxide levels in the AQMA• Raise awareness of what causes air pollution and how to avoid it• Promote active travel
3.3	<p>The project has been named the Air Care Project. It will focus on deprived neighborhoods in Cambridge City's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The aim of the project is to reduce school run single-family occupancy car journeys within Cambridge City by 10% over three years and thus reducing NO₂ emissions. A further aim is to raise awareness of air quality issues with health practitioners and provide residents from deprived backgrounds with options to choose active travel over using a car to access employment, education, and leisure activities.</p> <p>Ten state schools and eight independent schools will be encouraged to use the HomeRun app which provides options for reducing single occupancy journeys. The Air Quality Fund Grant will cover the 10 state schools in deprived areas and the 8 independent schools will self-fund their involvement. The grant will cover the use of the independent school's data and the ability to use the app to communicate with parents. Thus, targeting the top 18 schools in central Cambridge who contribute to air pollution on the school run.</p> <p>The project will also partner with Papworth Trust, a local charity who offer work and training opportunities for people with disabilities. Their project 'Owl Bikes' employs people with disabilities to refurbish bikes. The current Owl Bike project will be expanded using the Defra grant to enable more people to access free bike maintenance and/or receive a refurbished bike. Papworth Trust will employ a project officer to run the Air Care Project. Residents will be referred to the project via community organisations who support low-income families. These organisations will include homeless shelters, Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centers, and food banks. Residents who have been referred can access the Owl Bikes resources from their shop which is located in central Cambridge or by visiting one of the three pop-up stalls that will be located in deprived neighborhoods weekly.</p>

	<p>To enable us to reach the most clinically vulnerable residents, we also intend to work with Primary Care Networks. Practitioners will be invited to half-yearly seminars to educate them on how they can advise patients on the best ways to avoid air pollution. They will also be provided with details on how to refer patients to Owl Bikes. A poster campaign will also be run in doctor surgeries and other promotional materials provided.</p> <p>The Air Care Project aligns with Cambridge City's Air Quality Action Plan by addressing the three key points of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing local traffic emissions as quickly as possible to meet national objectives. • Maintaining levels of pollutants below national objectives, including by using planning policies to improve access to sustainable modes of transport. • Improving public health, including by educating people about the health impacts of poor air quality and encouraging 'greener' lifestyles
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4. Appendices

4.1	<p>There are a number of documents that make up this bid. The main documents have been included as exempt appendices as follows:</p> <p>EXEMPT Appendix 1: Bid Document 4 - Deliverability EXEMPT Appendix 2: Bid Document 5 - Strategic Alignment EXEMPT Appendix 3: Bid document 6 - Delivering Air Quality Benefits and Social Value EXEMPT Appendix 4: Bid Document 7 - Value for Money EXEMPT Appendix 5: Bid document 8 - Monitoring</p>
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5. Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	<p>£351,122 was requested for the three-year project and £164,482 was put forward as match funding. The match funding was made up of Officer's time from the Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council's Active Travel Team and Public Health Team and Cambridge City's Air Quality Team.</p> <p>Subject to Defra approval of the bid the Air Quality Grant is expected to be spent by March 2027.</p>
Legal Implications	
6.1	<p>Submission of an external bid will require the responsible budget holder to consult with the Chief Finance Officer to ensure that all aspects of funding have been carefully considered before submission for approval. The bid was approved for submission using the Chief Finance Officer's delegation on the 27 September 2023.</p> <p>Subject to confirmation of a successful bid the Combined Authority will appoint HomeRun and Papworth Trust in accordance with CPCA's Procurement Guidance Document and our Contract Procedure Rules. Both partners provide a unique offer in the Cambridge area and are believed to be good value for money based on their proven outputs in changing travel behaviour.</p> <p>A Subsidy Control Assessment will also to be undertaken to ensure compliance with the new Subsidy Control Act.</p>
Public Health Implications	
7.1	<p>The Air Care Project supports Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health and Wellbeing and Integrated Care Strategy by raising awareness of what causes air pollution, increasing understanding of how to avoid air pollution and promoting active travel.</p>
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	<p>The aim of the Air Care Project is to reduce single-family occupancy car journeys in the 18 schools by 10%, thus having a positive impact on NO₂ emissions and congestion.</p>

Other Significant Implications

9.1	There is a significant implication on levelling up and social value in the Owl Bikes programme. Owl Bikes programme will maintain and refurbish bikes for residents on low income. During a pilot study the OWL Bikes team found that of the 143 individuals who accessed the project, 75% were totally reliant on their bicycle as their only mode of transport. Individuals explained that although their bicycles had seen better days, they could not physically afford for them to not be in working order. They could not afford public transport and it was their only way of accessing their local communities, getting to work and the shops. They felt that their bicycles were their lifeline, and it was of upmost importance that it is safe and working.
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Background Papers

10.1	Invitation to apply Air Quality Grant Scheme
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