

Report title	DEFRA Grant funding for Air Quality	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans City Environment	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	East Park, Ettingshall, Heath Town and St Peter's	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Service Director of City Environment	
Originating service	City Environment	
Accountable employee	John Roseblade Tel Email	Head of City Transport 01902 555755 john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	City Environment Leadership Team	8 January 2018

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the establishment of the budget to allow the identified works as set out in the report to be carried out and the grant to be spent.
2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to accept a grant from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs on behalf of City of Wolverhampton Council and approve the terms of any grant agreement.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note that in addition, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs has issued the West Midlands Combined Authority with a £3 million grant to be spent on cleaning the bus fleet that use the section of road identified. This aspect of the grant will be delivered by Transport for West Midlands.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has been working with City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) to explore the potential for accelerating compliance with air quality limits at certain identified locations within the City.
- 1.2 The government have issued ministerial direction relating to this work compelling the Council to undertake certain key actions that have been demonstrated could have a demonstrable affect on pollution levels. As a result, on the 20 December 2018 Defra awarded funding to assist the Council in delivering these interventions.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish an associated budget and seek delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Environment in consultation with the Director of Finance officer to accept the grant on behalf of CWC.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As part of the National Air Quality Strategy Defra has identified certain busy roads in the City of Wolverhampton as having a continued breach of the National Air Quality Limit for Nitrogen Dioxide. These roads are identified on the plan included in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Earlier in 2018 Defra issued a ministerial direction requiring CWC to undertake a Targeted Feasibility Study, examining any possible interventions that could bring about compliance with the air quality limits. A revenue grant of £50,000 was provided by Defra to fund this.
- 2.3 This study was submitted in July 2018 and identified that for a section of the A4150 (Defra's reference: Census ID 28464) a combination of traffic signal optimisation and retrofit of clean bus technology could bring forward compliance from 2021 to 2020.
- 2.4 Although there were many options considered for all four stretches of road identified in Appendix 1 the interventions mentioned in section 3 below were the only ones where a an objective air quality benefit could be demonstrated and as such were the only ones taken forward.
- 2.5 A further ministerial direction was issued to CWC requiring these measures to be implemented as soon as possible. CWC has subsequently provided further detail in relation to the proposals which has now lead to Defra issuing grant funding of **£228,000** to facilitate the implementation of the signal optimisation work.
- 2.6 In addition to this funding Defra has issued the West Midlands Combined Authority with £3 million to be spent on cleaning the bus fleet that use the section of road identified. This aspect of the grant will be delivered by Transport for West Midlands.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 In order to achieve accelerated air quality compliance Defra has been working on extremely tight timescales. The work as set out below needs to commence immediately.

3.2 The proposed measures Defra is asking us to implement are as follows:

Bilston Street Island:

- a. Review of signal operation utilising modelling software Linsig and implementation and evaluation of changes
- b. Phase 1 – Widening of Ring Road St David's to provide 3 Lanes full (2x3.65m and 1x3.5m @70m) to improve flow at junction and reduce queue lengths by 30% at peak periods.
- c. Phase 2 – Widening of Ring Road St George's to provide 3 Lanes full (2x3.65m and 1x3.5m @70m) to improve flow at junction and reduce queue lengths by 30% at peak periods.

Ring Road / Broad Street

- a. Review of signal operation utilising modelling software Linsig and implementation and evaluation of changes.
- b. Review design layouts (feasibility) consider reintroduction of two lane cut through for A4124 to improve flow at junction.

Horseley Fields / Corn Hill

- a. Review of signal operation utilising modelling software Linsig and implementation and evaluation of changes.

3.3 In addition to the above an element of funding is available as part of the grant for monitoring and evaluation including the ongoing roadside monitoring of pollution levels.

3.4 Defra has indicated that they will be setting up regular review meetings to support and monitor progress.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

4.1 During the initial feasibility study several options were examined but rejected from the Defra study because a tangible air quality improvement could not be demonstrated. These options included speed limit reductions, traffic smoothing and softer measures such as driver training and sustainable transport initiatives.

4.2 The measures identified and now being funded by Defra through this particular grant are only those that can demonstrably contribute to the specific air quality levels on the relevant section of the A4150.

5.0 Reasons for decisions

5.1 Defra has made this money available for CWC to implement measures that have been mandated through ministerial direction. Cabinet is being asked to approve the establishment of a budget and delegate authority to accept this funding. Without this external contribution CWC would have to find funding from other sources.

5.2 The measures identified are likely to be included in Defra's final National Air Quality Action Plan.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 The capital grant of £228,000 is being offered under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is subject to specific grant conditions, including: "Grant paid to a local authority under this determination may be used only for the purposes that a capital receipt may be used for in accordance with regulations made under section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003."

6.2 If an authority fails to comply with the requirements of the grant then it may have to repay some or all of the grant.

6.3 Approval is required to establish a budget of £228,000 and accept the grant in order to deliver the requirements of the ministerial direction.

[MK/11012019/E]

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 The Council may be required to enter into a formal grant agreement in order to received the funds referred to in this report. Legal advice will be required in respect of any such agreement.

[TS/11012-19/R]

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 There are no Equalities implications arising from this report.

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 The specific intention of this grant is to improve air quality levels at key points within the City.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

12.1 Poor Air Quality has a direct affect on health and wellbeing. By implementing these measures it is intended to improve pollution levels with a consequential benefit in health. Reduced congestion on this busy section of road will also contribute towards more efficient and consistent journey times

13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 Targeted Feasibility Study produced OBO Defra, July 2018.

14.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map showing Areas Identified by Defra as having continued exceedances of the air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide