

REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER - ENVIRONMENTAL

DATE: 7th April 2010

SUBJECT: **AIR QUALITY UPDATE**

WARDS AFFECTED: All Wards

REPORT OF: Peter Moore
Environmental and Technical Services Director

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EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL: No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To advise Cabinet Member Environmental of:

- a) The Outcome of an Application to the Low Emissions Strategies Partnership Regional Groups Initiative (RGI) for support to develop a Low Emissions Strategy (LES) for the Liverpool City Region
- b) The receipt of extra funding from DEFRA's Air Quality Grant Fund for Sefton's air quality monitoring programme

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

The demonstrate the support of the Cabinet Member Environmental for progressing the development of a Low Emissions Strategy for the Liverpool City Region and for the proposals for spending the air Quality Grant.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Cabinet Member Environmental:

1. Endorses the proposed development of a Liverpool City Region Low Emissions Strategy and the production of a report to the board of the Liverpool City Region
2. Approves the expenditure associated with the Air Quality Grant for improving Sefton's air quality monitoring programme.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: Not appropriate

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Immediately following the expiry date of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of this meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The only alternative would be not to endorse the development of a City Region LES and not approve the proposal for spending the Air Quality Grant. These options were rejected because development of a LES will form a part of Sefton's statutory air quality action plan. Furthermore, participation in the RGI has already attracted funding and consultancy support. The proposals for spending the Air Quality Grant are necessary to develop the statutory Air Quality Action Plan.

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: None.

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure	£40,000			
Funded by:	DEFRA Air Quality Grant			
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: None.

Risk Assessment: None.

Asset Management: None.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

The Planning and Economic Development Department have been consulted in the development of the Low Emissions Strategy

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM TG03)

Low Emission Strategies

1. During the air quality beacon year the Beacon Councils, in conjunction with a number of partner organisations, developed guidance on Low Emissions Strategies (LES). LES are concerned with the implementation of a range of measures that could help reduce atmospheric transport emissions associated with new developments by using the planning system. Their aim is to reduce the emission of carbon and toxic air pollutants, principally by promoting the uptake of low emissions fuels and technologies.
2. The guidance was successful and funding was secured from DEFRA and DCLG to continue the promotion of LES. This led to the formation of The Low Emissions Strategies Partnership (LESP), which included Sefton as a founder member, and the initiation of a peer group project in which participating local authorities sought to develop aspects of LES within their areas. Sefton participated in the peer group project, developing a draft policy guidance note concerning the use of Section 106 agreements and planning conditions to secure emissions reductions from new developments. This work has progressed well, due in part to the enthusiastic support of colleagues from Planning and Economic Development Department, and Sefton is considered to be one of the most advanced of the 15 Peer Group project authorities.
3. The success of the Peer Group project secured further national funding from DCLG and DEFRA and the LESP board used this money to begin the Regional Groups Initiative (RGI). The RGI aims to provide local authorities, who have experience of LES, with financial and consultancy support to promote the development of LES within their region or sub region. The funding was sufficient to support 3 groups of local authorities and therefore local authorities were asked to bid to become Regional Champions under the scheme. A successful bid, led by Sefton, to develop a LES for the Liverpool City Region was made. As a result of this £20,000 and 20 days of consultancy support has been made available to Sefton to promote the development of LES within the City Region

The City Region Low Emissions Strategy

4. There are 6 elements to the proposal to develop a LES for the City Region:
 - (1) Develop a LES planning policy guidance note agreed across the sub-region that can be developed into a formal planning policy document called an SPD (Supplementary Planning Document).
 - (2) Include LES within the next Local Transport Plan (LTP3)
 - (3) Explore whether the use of offset contributions from new developments can be used to support additional funding for the introduction of low emissions buses
 - (4) Examine how LES can be used to minimise and control construction emissions

- (5) Examine how LES can be used through taxi licensing to achieve a reduction in emissions from taxis.
 - (6) Examine how LES can be included in local authority sustainable procurement policies
5. The proposal has received support from the Chief Environmental Health Officers Group, the District Planning Officers Group and the Merseyside Senior Transport Engineers Group.
 6. The development of common planning policy guidance will build on the development work already undertaken in Sefton as part of the peer group project. The planning policy guidance aims to establish the provision of electric vehicle charging points as a standard requirement for new developments and secure other emissions reductions from large and medium sized developments. The emphasis is on securing emissions by giving developers a choice on how this may be achieved. The policy will clearly quantify emissions reductions that can be achieved and will form an important part in participating authorities' Air Quality Action Plans.
 7. Great care is being taken to ensure that all the requirements are reasonable, not overly prescriptive and will not discourage development. One of the advantages of developing city region guidance is that this uniform approach provides developers with a level playing field and prevents one authority being played off against another. A draft copy of the Sefton policy guidance is attached at Annex 1, exact emissions reductions requirements have yet to be calculated.
 8. Up to now LES has largely focused on using the planning system to secure emissions reductions but it has been recognised that transport policies and in particular Local Transport Plans, will also have an important role to play. Working in conjunction with the Merseyside Transport Partnership, it is intended to include LES in LTP3. This is a new area of work and it is intended to use the consultancy support available from the RGI to consider alternative vehicle technologies, their likely future development and whether or not they should be supported. Realistic policies with regard to these technologies will then be proposed for inclusion in LTP3.
 9. The other elements of the strategy all relate to issues that are important to the City Region. For example, research has shown that taxis form a much more important part of the transport infrastructure of the City Region than many other comparable areas of the country. Therefore any emission reduction improvements that can be made to the taxi fleet are likely to have significant beneficial impacts.
 10. Each element of the strategy will be developed by small groups of officers from across the City Region, mostly by the use of e-mail, but with face-to-face meetings where necessary.
 11. A final report on the outcomes of the project will be submitted in March 2011

DEFRA Air Quality Grant

12. In May 2009 an application was made for £56,000, from DEFRA's Air Quality Grant Fund, towards the development of the statutory Air Quality Action Plan. The fund is normally over-subscribed and authorities seldom receive the entire grant requested and in this instance Sefton received £16,000.
13. DEFRA has subsequently written to a number of authorities advising them that extra funding is now available, from this year's grant fund, and offering additional funds to undertake specific actions that were identified in the 2009/10 air quality grant application.
14. DEFRA have made £40,000 of additional Air Quality Grant funding available to Sefton, to be spent as follows:
 - (1) £10,000 contribution to the Low Emissions Strategies Partnership. This is DEFRA's preferred method of funding the partnership.
 - (2) £25,000 to support a proposed road-washing trial at the AQMA near Millers Bridge, Bootle.
 - (3) £5000 to support the development of LES within Sefton.
15. There is some flexibility with regard to the funding allocated for spending within Sefton, but any changes would have to be agreed with DEFRA. The funding will be received shortly and there is no time limit by which it must be spent.