

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:-	21 st April 2011
3.	Title:-	DEFRA Air Quality Grant
4.	Directorate:-	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

Since 2007 Rotherham MBC has successfully bid for an allocation of DEFRA's annual Air Quality Grant monies. Currently there is a budget in the region of £30,611 in this ring-fenced Capital fund for Air Quality.

At the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on the 10th March 2011 the Housing Investment Programme 2010/11 was reviewed and within the "Non HIP Capital Programme for Neighbourhoods " section it was reported that the Air Quality Grant was projecting an under spend of £22,861. This was planned to be rolled forward into 2011/12 (Minute Number 70 of the 10th March 2011 refers).

As a consequence of major IT problems and the availability of alternative funding streams in certain areas, the full budget of this grant has not been spent. However it is part of the Grant agreement that the funds can be rolled over from one year to the next.

It is proposed that the monies are spent during the 2011/12 financial year on Air Quality Modeling and Air Quality Action Plan projects.

The grant is ring-fenced to work in relation to Air Quality, and can be rolled over if not spent.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel notes the detail of the report.

7. Proposals and Details

DEFRA has offered grant monies to local authorities to enhance their work in relation to Air Quality. Rotherham has successfully bid into this pot in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. Currently there is a budget of £30,611 of which £22,861 remains unspent.

The grant monies were proposed to be spent on:

- Air Quality Dispersion Modelling
- Action plan projects to improve local air quality including the South Yorkshire ECO Stars project

An amount of Air Quality Modelling has been undertaken in relation to the Waverley site with a spend of £4,750 in the financial year 2010/11. The main spend for the Modelling, which was proposed to be spent on acquiring traffic modelling data was delayed following the IT difficulties experienced following the liquidation of the service provider for the real time Air Quality monitoring in July 2010. This affected all real time Air Quality Monitoring across South Yorkshire. A new service provider was sourced and the Air Quality Monitoring server went back on line in March 2011. Consequently the expected spend in this area is rolled over into the current financial year.

There was a small spend on Air Quality Action Plan projects of £3,000 which was spent in relation to the South Yorkshire wide Care4Air campaign. However the major spend of £12,000 was expected to be on the Eco-Stars project, this spend proved unnecessary during 2010/11 as alternative funding streams were identified for the financial year.

It is proposed that the spend during the 2011/12 financial year from the Air Quality Grant will be:

- £10,000 on Air Quality Modelling to enable future prediction of effects of traffic pollution and the impact of pollutants on health in Rotherham.
- £12,000 will be spent on the Eco-Stars project during 2011/12.

8. Finance

The Air Quality Grant is an annual Capital grant available for Local Authorities to bid for. It is highly unlikely that the Air Quality Grant fund will continue due to the spending constraints of DEFRA.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is little short term risk in relation to the underspend in this area, however long term failure to invest in Air Quality might lead to a negative perception from local stakeholders and central government.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Council's work in relation to Air Quality clearly fits within existing strategic priorities and in particular directly impacts on:

- **Helping to Create Safe and Healthy Communities and;**
- **Improving the Environment.**

The Council's work in relation to Air Quality clearly links directly to the Government's public health strategy *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England* and the associated White Paper.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None

Contact Name:- Lewis Coates, Community Protection Manager, 01709 823117
lewis.coates@rotherham.gov.uk