

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2739

### Title: Air quality programme grant to TfL

#### Executive Summary:

The Mayor has identified improving air quality as one of his key priorities, given its impact on public health and inequality. In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced new recommended guidelines for air pollutants and the Mayor has set out his ambition of meeting the third WHO interim target for PM<sub>2.5</sub> by 2030 and the WHO Air Quality guidelines as soon as possible.

These guidelines, alongside recognition by the courts that exposure to air pollution can be a contributory factor in the death of vulnerable groups, strengthen the case for further action by the Mayor to protect public health.

This decision requests the approval of a revenue grant of up to £160,000 from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to Transport for London (TfL) pursuant to section 121(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the GLA Act). The said grant will be paid from the GLA's 2024-25 air quality programme.

By operation of section 121(3) of the GLA Act, the GLA may not impose any limitations upon TfL's use of the said grant. However, TfL has indicated that it intends to apply the grant to expenditure relating to the Mayor's Air Quality Fund (MAQF). The MAQF is a joint TfL and GLA fund, to which boroughs may apply for funds to deliver projects to tackle poor air quality.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves an up to £160,000 revenue grant to Transport for London pursuant to section 121(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. The said revenue grant will come from the GLA's 2024-25 Air Quality Programme.

#### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Philip Graham

**Position:** Executive Director, Good Growth

**Signature:**



**Date:**

17/03/2025



## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. Air quality remains the greatest environmental risk to public health. Analysis from Imperial College London shows that toxic air contributed to the premature deaths of more than 4,000 Londoners in 2019. There is also strong scientific evidence of the acute health effects of short-term exposure to very high levels of pollution, such as those experienced during an air pollution episode. It is essential that coordinated action is taken to reduce exposure, especially of the most vulnerable, and to reduce health inequalities. Further information on air quality, including why it is a public health priority and the Mayor's strategy for addressing it, is provided in the Mayor's London Environment Strategy (LES).
- 1.2. In September 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted new recommended guidelines for both PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>. These targets are based on the best available health evidence. The Mayor has committed to meeting an annual average of 10ug/m<sup>3</sup> for PM<sub>2.5</sub> by 2030 (the third interim guideline for this pollutant) and meeting the final WHO guidelines as soon as possible.
- 1.3. The Air Quality team, within the Connectivity, Air Quality, Transport and Infrastructure (CAQTI) unit, undertakes a range of activities to deliver the Mayor's vision including: supporting the exercise of the Mayor's statutory air quality related functions and supporting the implementation of the Mayor's LES the London Plan and the Mayor's London Transport Strategy (LTS).
- 1.4. One of the key programmes the air quality team delivers is the Mayors Air Quality Fund (MAQF) which offers boroughs and partners the opportunity to apply for funding to deliver projects to tackle the impact of poor air quality in their areas. To date the MAQF has provided boroughs and partners with £27m in funding, matched by £20m in funding and resources from boroughs and partners over four rounds. The MAQF is delivered jointly with TfL who manage the financial governance of the funded projects, and who also contribute towards the overall funding available for each round.
- 1.5. Among other decisions, MD2985 approved a £1,290,000 revenue grant from the GLA to TfL, which, TfL decided to apply to the MAQF along with additional funding from its own budget. The additional monies provided from the GLA's revenue grant and TfL's internal budget enabled TfL to fund 15 projects for the latest (fourth) round of the MAQF, which was announced in March 2024. Further information on the projects funded through the latest round of the MAQF is provided in section 2.
- 1.6. This DD seeks approval of a revenue grant of up to £160,000 from the GLA to TfL under section 121(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the "GLA Act"). The said grant will be paid from the GLA's 2024-25 air quality programme. By operation of section 121(3) of the GLA Act, the GLA may not impose any limitations upon TfL's use of the said grant. However, TfL has indicated that it intends to apply the grant to expenditure relating to the enhancement of existing MAQF projects and/or new projects within the scope of the MAQF. This additional funding could deliver further local improvements to air quality in London including schemes which encourage active and sustainable travel interventions which align with the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the Healthy Streets Approach.
- 1.7. The funding will be spent across 2025-25, 2026-27 and 2027-28. As per the established governance of the MAQF, TfL will manage these finances directly using their own governance processes.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The MAQF supports impactful borough-led projects which have delivered improvements to local air quality. The funding leverages borough's local knowledge and expertise to tackle a wide variety of pollution sources in key areas. Projects are selected through a competitive bidding process where



boroughs are assessed against criteria questions including feasibility, air quality impact and equality, diversity and inclusion.

- 2.2. The third round of the MAQF delivered 19 projects including single borough, multi borough, and pan-London projects. These projects were delivered over three years across all 32 boroughs and the City of London.
- 2.3. Example projects in round three include the Idling Action Project, a behaviour change project involving 31 boroughs which aimed to reduce unnecessary and harmful idling, and the pan-London Non-Road Mobile Machinery enforcement project which helped deliver a 42 per cent reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from NRMM at construction sites.
- 2.4. The MAQF round three also funded four Low Emission Neighbourhoods (LENs). These are large, area-based schemes which deliver a package of measures to tackle emissions of air pollutants. This included the Walworth Low Emission Neighbourhood which achieved a 15 per cent reduction in car journeys in the area.
- 2.5. Other overall outputs from the third round of the MAQF include: 83 school streets, 5.3km of new or improved cycle infrastructure, 43 electric vehicle charging points and 123 grants or loans to small businesses for active travel improvements.
- 2.6. The most recent (fourth) round of the MAQF provided £5.3m of funding across 15 projects including individual and multi-borough projects, as well as two additional Low Emission Neighbourhoods (LENs). This includes the second phase of the Healthy Streets Everyday project - a collaboration between six boroughs, a business improvement district, and a strategic partner to deliver walking routes, school streets, low emission transport infrastructure, and green space improvements.
- 2.7. MAQF round 4 also includes the Kilburn High Road Improvement Scheme which will deliver 20mph speed limits, better pedestrian access, improved street lighting, new street furniture, and new cycle parking for the area.
- 2.8. Other projects in round 4 include a renew of the Idling Action Project, the London Woodburning Project, several projects reducing the impact of pollution on school students, and the Burnt Oak and Hackney Central Super LENs.
- 2.9. The MAQF also strongly encourages applications with high levels of match funding commitment. Round 4 has unlocked £12m of match funding from boroughs and other partners.
- 2.10. The MAQF currently has £59,000 projected in unallocated funding. Combined with the proposed addition of up to £160,000 from the air quality budget 24-25, the MAQF will have increased capacity to strengthen existing funded projects, or fund additional projects further unlocking the benefits of the MAQF for air quality in London.
- 2.11. Round 4 of the MAQF was significantly oversubscribed with a total of £10,564,897 funding requested from 42 applications.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. The GLA and other public authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This involves: having due regard to the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.



- 3.2. The protected characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership status. Compliance with the Equality Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one. The duty must be exercised with an open mind, and at the time a decision is taken in the exercise of the GLA's functions. Conscientious regard must be had that is appropriate in all circumstances.
- 3.3. In June 2023, the GLA published updated analysis on exposure to air pollution showing not only that there are huge health impacts of pollution, but also that these fall disproportionately on: the most vulnerable; more deprived people (including more deprived primary school children); and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. It is also established that those who contribute the least to poor air quality suffer the most from it. This means that improving air quality is fundamentally about tackling social injustice and health inequalities.
- 3.4. MAQF projects have been selected partly due to their potential to help mitigate the impacts of health and socioeconomic inequalities. Many of the projects funded focus funding in areas of higher deprivation and exposure and lower car ownership, for example.

#### 4. Other considerations

##### *Key risks and issues*

- 4.1. The key risks and issues, and their mitigating actions, are outlined in the table below.

<b>Risk description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>
TfL unable to receive payment and reprofile to allocated FY	Low	High	GLA officers have discussed with TfL colleagues who have confirmed payment routes which will be feasible this financial year.
Projects selected to receive funding do not deliver tangible air quality benefit	Low	Medium	Use existing project sponsorship mechanisms to identify where projects are underperforming against expectations. Escalate non-conformity as needed. Reassign funding if needed.

##### *Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

- 4.2. MAQF projects and the air quality outcomes they deliver will contribute towards the Cleaning London's Air mandate and will contribute towards the following LES objectives:
- Objective 4.1 – "Support and empower London and its communities, particularly the most disadvantaged and those in priority locations, to reduce their exposure to poor air quality."
  - Objective 4.2 – "Achieve legal compliance with UK and EU limits as soon as possible, including by mobilising action from London boroughs, Government and other partners."
  - Objective 4.3 – "Establish and achieve new, tighter air quality targets for a cleaner London by transitioning to a zero emissions London by 2050, meeting WHO health-based guidelines for air quality."

##### *Conflicts of interest*

- 4.3. The officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this form do not have an interest to declare in accordance with the GLA's policy on registering interests that might, or might be seen to, conflict with this DD. The MAQF projects which will receive additional funding will be chosen purely based on their potential for delivering further air quality and health outputs and benefits.



## 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is requested to utilise up to £160,000 from the 2024-25 air quality programme budget to enhance existing Mayor's Air Quality Fund (MAQF) projects and/or new projects within the scope of the MAQF. This would involve transferring this amount to Transport for London (TfL) who manage the MAQF grants.
- 5.2. Up to £160,000 is to be moved from the 2024-25 budget and will be spent by TfL across the remainder of 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27.
- 5.3. Once the funds have been transferred to the Mayor's Air Quality Fund it will be allocated to round 4 of this fund. The precise allocation of the expenditure across the three financial years will be dependent on how the TfL decide to allocate to the projects that have been allocated funds.

## 6. Legal comments

- 6.1. In the decision, above, officers have sought approval of a revenue grant of up to £160,000 from the GLA to the TfL pursuant to section 121(1) of the GLA Act. The officers are reminded that, in accordance with section 121(3) of the GLA Act, no conditions may be imposed upon TfL's use of the grant other than that the grant must not be used for capital expenditure. Furthermore, in accordance with section 121(4) of the GLA Act, TfL must apply the grant towards meeting revenue expenditure for the purposes of or in connection with the discharge of its functions.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

The following timetable sets out the estimated dates associated with this decision.

Activity	Timeline
Transfer of GLA revenue to TfL	By March 2025
Grant funding award	December 2025
Project delivery	2025 – 2028
Project end date	2028

## Appendices and supporting papers:

None



### Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

### Part 1 - Deferral

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

### Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO**

### ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

#### Drafting officer:

George O’Ferrall has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

#### Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Elliot Treharne has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

#### Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

#### Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 17 March 2025.

✓

### CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

17/03/2025