

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2620

Title: Air Quality Forecast and Alert System

Executive Summary:

Since 2016 the Mayor has delivered a system of air quality alerts to reduce exposure from pollution. These alerts warn Londoners during moderate, high and very high periods of air pollution. The alerts provide messages and information through emails, social media and online, and on TfL assets including London Underground and the Road Network.

The Mayor's air quality forecast and alert system is operated by an external duty forecaster who monitors the air-pollution information across London, including during out-of-office hours, and ensures the Mayor is issuing the correct information to Londoners.

The duty forecaster provides a daily pollution update to the GLA, and issues alerts on predicted moderate, high and very high pollution days. The duty forecaster service is provided by Imperial College London Project Limited, who were appointed through a competitive procurement. The contract was let last year and permits extensions for up to five years; this will be the second year.

This decision seeks approval for expenditure to deliver the air quality alert system for financial year 23-24.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Transport, Infrastructure, Connectivity and Air Quality approves:

Expenditure of £40,070 to deliver the Mayor's Air Quality Forecast and Alert system 2023-24.
This will be funded from the Air Quality budget 23-24.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

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: Elliot Treharne

Position: Assistant Director –
Transport, Infrastructure, Connectivity
and Air Quality

Signature:



Date:

30/01/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Since 2016 the Mayor has delivered a system of air quality alerts to reduce exposure from air pollution. These alerts warn Londoners during moderate, high and very high periods of air pollution. The alerts provide messages and information through emails, social media and online, and on TfL assets including London Underground and the Road Network.
- 1.2. On 16 December 2020 the Assistant Coroner for Inner South London (the Coroner) concluded that exposure to excessive air pollution contributed to the death of nine-year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah in 2013. The medical cause of her death was given as acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure. The Coroner published a Prevention of Future Deaths Report on 20 April 2021 setting out areas of concern to be considered by central Government, the Mayor, the London Borough of Lewisham and other organisations. The Mayor has formally replied, setting out his commitment to implementing the recommendations related to the GLA and Transport for London (TfL); and supporting the implementation of other recommendations. A key recommendation raised in the inquest was improved provision of public information about the dangers of air pollution. Delivery of the Mayors Air Quality Alerts addresses this theme.
- 1.3. The Mayor's air quality forecast and alert system is operated by an external duty forecaster who monitors the air-pollution information across London, including during out-of-office hours, and ensures the Mayor is issuing the correct information to Londoners. The duty forecaster provides a daily pollution update to the GLA, and issues alerts on predicted moderate, high and very high pollution days.
- 1.4. The duty forecaster service is provided by Imperial College London Projects Ltd, which was appointed through a competitive procurement. Imperial College London Projects Ltd were awarded a one year Call-Off contract in January 2022, with the option to be extended up to a total of five years. The contract was initially awarded under MD2813.
- 1.5. The GLA is currently completing a review of the Mayor's Air Quality Alert System to improve the effectiveness of the system, including increasing its reach across London. This work is covered under MD2985.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of this decision is to continue delivery of the Mayor's Air Quality Alert System. By enabling this work, the GLA is able to alert Londoners when pollution levels are elevated and provide advice to Londoners on how to reduce their exposure. This outcome will enable Air Quality Alerts to be delivered, as outlined in the London Environment Strategy.
- 2.2. This ADD seeks approval for expenditure to deliver the Mayor's Air Quality alert system review. The work will be delivered under an existing Call-Off contract, approved in MD2813. The contract will be extended for one year.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The GLA must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to the need 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, gender, 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 the characteristic. 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 of the circumstances.
- 3.3. In October 2021 the GLA published analysis on exposure to air pollution which shows that not only are there huge health impacts of pollution but that these fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable, more deprived people and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. This means that improving air quality is fundamentally about tackling social injustice and health inequalities.
- 3.4. The report considered pollution exposure in London and how exposure varies by age, indicators of relative deprivation and ethnic group. It also looks at total exposure (broken down by borough) and exposure at schools. Through this research, the GLA sought to understand inequalities in access to clean air in London and consider how this will be improved by planned air pollution controls.
- 3.5. The research showed on average that the most deprived 10th of the population are exposed to concentrations of NO₂ which are 25 per cent higher than the least deprived 10th of the population. It is important to note that hidden within this are pockets of extreme wealth with very high levels of exposure, e.g. those living in parts of Westminster or the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- 3.6. In terms of ethnicity, research has found there are on average higher concentrations of NO₂ in areas that have higher percentages of non-white ethnic groups, with a particularly skewed distribution for the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British population. A greater proportion of mixed, black and other ethnic groups are exposed to levels of pollution that exceed the NO₂ limit value than their proportion of the total population.
- 3.7. The work set out in this ADD enables the continuation of the delivery of the Mayor’s Air Quality Forecasting and Alert system. This will benefit all Londoners, but due to the unequal impacts of pollution on the most vulnerable Londoners there is likely to be a positive effect in tackling social and health inequality of this programme of activity.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk description	Likelihood of the risk occurring	Impact if the risk occurs	Mitigating action
Costs exceed those outlined	Low	Low	Call-Off Contract has already been awarded.
Stakeholders disagree with the air quality forecast and alert messaging	Medium	Medium	Air Quality Team is working closely with the GLA health team, NHS, UKHSA and Defra.

- 4.1. Delays in extending the Call-Off Contract for the Mayors’ air quality Alert system are likely to lead to an interruption in service provision that may have a negative reputational impact.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. The air quality alert programme will contribute to the ongoing delivery of the London Environment Strategy, delivering commitment 4.1:

*4.1.1a The Mayor will provide better information about air quality, especially during high and very high pollution episodes, and use emergency measures where appropriate.
Timely air pollution information gives disadvantaged people a chance to act to protect themselves, for example by reducing their exposure, or simply by carrying their medication.*

Consultations and impact assessments

- 4.3. A comprehensive Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken to support the London Environment Strategy (LES) which covered air quality. The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) found that the GLA had considered aspects for improving London's air quality based on four policy options. This was recognised in the LES IIA as the most effective approach for addressing human health impacts. The LES includes targets for some of the pollutants identified in the IIA recommendations.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.4. There are no known conflicts of interest to note for any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The proposed expenditure of £40,070 for the delivery of the Mayor's Air Quality Forecast and Alert System will cover financial year 2023-24.
- 5.2. An indicative budget allocation of £430,000 has been earmarked to fund Air Quality projects within the draft GLA budget for 2023-24. However, this allocation has not yet been formally approved and therefore this spend will constitute a pre-existing commitment on this budget allocation. This expenditure will have first call on the final agreed amount for this GLA programme budget, to be approved as part of the GLA's 2023-24 budget setting process, currently underway.
- 5.3. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The proposed activities and associated expenditure to support the air quality programme set out in this Form are authorised by section 30 of the GLA Act 1999 on the basis that they further the promotion of the improvement of London's environment and/ or are in support of them and so authorised under section 34. They also support the provisions of the Mayor's London Environment Strategy and in particular those policies, proposals and other provisions dealing with air quality and his duties under section 362 of the Act. The awarding of grants and/ or expenditure in the procurement of services and supplies in implementing the air quality programme should be carried out in accordance with the GLA processes and appropriate legal advice and subject should be sought at the appropriate time to confirm they are within legal powers and grant or procurement obligations.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Extension of Call-Off contract	January 2023
Delivery Start Date	January 2023

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:

Sarah Morris has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 23 January 2023.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:



Date:

25/01/2023