Belfast City Council

Subject:	Update on progress with the detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) for the city.
Date:	22nd May 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services Department
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Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	Members are advised that at the People and Communities Committee Meeting of 8th October 2019, it was agreed that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of that Committee on how the council might undertake a detailed ambient air quality review and assessment for the city, for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) pollutants.
1.2	The UK Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) had previously advised government that the impact of NO_2 with $PM_{2.5}$ in the UK was estimated to be equivalent to an increase in deaths of 28,000 to 36,000, where air pollution was the sole cause of death in these people.

1.3	A subsequent update report was provided to the People and Communities Committee meeting of 5th November 2019 detailing the anticipated next steps and estimated costs of undertaking a detailed air quality review and assessment for Belfast City for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter.
1.4	The Committee was advised that a detailed air quality review and assessment would require development of an emissions inventory for NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ pollutant sources, to include road vehicles, industrial emissions, biomass and domestic and commercial combustion, so that atmospheric dispersion modelling could be undertaken across the city. The emissions inventory data would be augmented by road traffic assessments and additional ambient monitoring for $PM_{2.5}$ at a number of targeted locations across the city.
1.5	The Committee was also advised that a suitability experienced consultancy or consultants would need to be appointed via a competitive tender process to undertake the proposed detailed review and assessment work and that an initial guide to indicative costs of engaging this piece of work would be in the range £145,000- £215,000, depending on the extent and quality of the monitoring and dispersion modelling deployed. Members were reminded that this project had not been budgeted for in growth estimates for 2020/21.
1.6	The Committee was further advised that the anticipated duration of this project would be in the order of 18-24 months, depending on the extent of the tender process, the final works specification, and on UK's Brexit progress; EU procurement thresholds may apply.
1.7	At the conclusion of the People and Communities Committee meeting, the Committee agreed that in light of the resource implications and cross-cutting issues raised, the matter of the proposed detailed review and assessment would also be brought before the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
1.8	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee subsequently considered and approved the public advertisement of a tender (T2044) for an ambient air quality review and assessment within the Council boundary for $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_2 ambient pollutants at its meeting of 24th January 2020 and further affirmed its commitment to fund this project at its meeting of 21st February 2020.
1.9	This report serves to highlight the method of the proposed detailed review and assessment for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter pollutants to the Strategic Policy and

	Resources Committee and to provide a summary of preparatory works for the project that have been undertaken by officers, including securing an offer of matched funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • Note the contents of this report concerning the likely requirements of completing a detailed ambient air quality review and assessment for NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ for the city. • Note the offer of matched funding in the 2020-2021 financial year by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to support delivery of the project.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1 3.2 3.3	<u>Key Issues</u> The Committee is advised that as a consequence of the anticipated cost of the project, EU procurement thresholds will likely apply. Accordingly, officers, with assistance from the council's Commercial and Procurement Services, have already completed a procurement Pre Information Notice exercise for the detailed review and assessment project and have received responses from 16 interested consultancies. In addition, the council has submitted an application to DAERA under the local air quality management grant scheme for funding to support delivery of the detailed review and assessment project. DAERA have recently advised the council that the Department is in a position to match fund the detailed review and assessment project **up to** a value of £125,000 of **approved costs** for the 2020/21 financial year. Moreover, DAERA have advised that the Department intends to install an ion chromatogram based air quality analyser at the Belfast Centre Lombard Street monitoring site to assist gaining a better understanding the formation of aerosols and particulate matter from their precursor gases. Data from this instrument could be used to help inform and refine development of the emissions inventory for the city and in any particulate matter source apportionment assessments. The ion chromatogram analyser is proposed to be co-located with existing PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ real time ambient analysers at the Lombard Street monitoring site to enable data intercomparison.

3.4 3.5	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> • Estimated costs for completion of the detailed review and assessment for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) for the city have been obtained from an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy. The costs has been estimated to be in the range £145,000-£215,000, depending upon the final scope and complexity of the work undertaken. • DAERA will match fund the detailed review and assessment project **up to** a value of £125,000 of **approved costs** for the 2020/21 financial year. • The duration of this detailed assessment project for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter is anticipated to be in the order of 18-24 months. • In addition to the abovementioned offer of matched funding support, it is anticipated that a significant staff contribution over the full duration of this project will be required from council, DAERA and DfI Roads staff. <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u> None
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None.