

News story: Air Quality Grant programme

Projects across the country will benefit from almost £3.7 million as part of an annual funding scheme to help combat air quality locally, it was announced today.

The Air Quality Grant programme has awarded more than £52 million to a variety of projects since it started in 1997 and helps local authorities tackle air quality in their areas to reduce the impact on people's health and create cleaner and healthier environments.

This year's Air Quality Grant programme for 2016/17 will focus on supporting schemes set up to tackle nitrogen dioxide levels, and include:

- £163,100 for electric vehicle charging and infrastructure improvements and an electric vehicle car club in East Herts
- £498,600 for a Clean Air Zone study by Bristol and South Gloucestershire councils
- £400,000 to support Nottingham trial fuel cell technology and encourage ultra-low emission vehicles in the local NHS

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

"Tackling poor air quality is a priority for the government and we are working closely with Local Authorities so they can play a crucial role in this.

"I was delighted at the broad range of ideas submitted, from using the latest technology to promoting cleaner taxis and increasing the uptake of electric vehicles, and these projects will help to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in our towns and cities, both now and in the future."

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

"We are determined to cut emissions and improve air quality for communities across the country; as a father of two, I would want no less for any family than I'd want for my own. These grants will help councils take significant practical steps to clean up the air and to improve communal wellbeing in their area.

"This good work will sit alongside the government's draft air quality plan which will be published in the spring."

The government is firmly committed to improving the UK's air quality and cutting harmful emissions and its air quality plan will go out to consultation later this year.

More than £2 billion has already been committed since 2011 to increase the

uptake of ultra-low emissions vehicles and support greener transport schemes and set out how it will improve air quality through a new programme of Clean Air Zones. In last year's Autumn Statement, a further £290m was allocated to support electric vehicles, low emission buses and taxis, and alternative fuels.

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
Birmingham City Council	Parking reform to reduce traffic in city centre combined with awareness raising	350,000
Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council	Clean Air Zone feasibility study	498,600
Cornwall County Council	Fitting council vehicles with oxy-hydrogen electrolyzers	236,650
Derby City Council	Retro-fitting of Council's HGV fleet with emissions reduction technology	250,000
Derby City Council	Cleaner taxis research and engagement programme	29,750
Doncaster Council (with Barnsley MBC, Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council)	Demonstration of electric vehicles with a local communication and engagement campaign to increase uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles	100,000
East Herts Council	EV charging and infrastructure improvements and EV car club	163,100
Gateshead Council	Traffic management measures, fleet upgrade and improved cycling infrastructure	395,957
Leeds City Council	Research real-world emissions from road transport refrigeration equipment and possible mitigations	150,000
Leicester City Council	Work-based active travelling local campaign	67,300
London Borough of Islington	Local school focussed awareness and engagement campaign	50,000
Nottingham City Council	Trial of innovative fuel cell technology within the Council's property portfolio	200,000
Nottingham City Council	Improve the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in NHS fleet	200,000
Sheffield City Council	Air Aware communications campaign (engaging local GPs, community groups and schools)	50,000
Southampton City Council (with Eastleigh Borough Council)	Supporting the uptake of low emission taxis	253,880
Southampton City Council	Eco-safe driver training and installation of telematics on council fleet	99,000

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
Southampton City Council (with Birmingham City Council, Derby City Council, Leeds City Council, Manchester City Council and Nottingham City Council)	Air quality awareness and engagement campaign	539,120
Westminster City Council (with London Borough of Camden)	Provide advice and toolkits for SMEs to reduce transport emissions from deliveries associated with their operations	54,077
TOTAL		3,687,434

Press release: 8 anglers face combined fines of over £5,600 for fishing illegally in Staffordshire

On 20 February 2017, North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court issued a total of £5,680 in fines to 8 anglers caught fishing illegally last summer.

All 8 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on regular patrols, and with an annual rod licence costing £27, these anglers have really been left out of pocket.

Matthew Bamford of Werrington Road in Stoke on Trent, Ricky Fisher of Millfield Road in Walsall, Mark Francis of Sefton Park Road in Liverpool, Robbie Johnson of High Street in Laurencekirk, Carl Johnson of Cowlshaw Way in Rugeley, Anthony Leese of Dawlish Drive in Stoke on Trent, Blain Pickering of Community Drive in Stoke on Trent, and Richie Wilkes of Nash Peake Street in Stoke on Trent, were all found guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that on 3 separate days last June and July, Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Stoke on Trent, Rugeley, Eccleshall and Penkridge.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With an annual licence costing £27 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Rod licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence if you are aged 12 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

Policy paper: River Thames Scheme: Berkshire and Surrey discussion group workshops (December 2016)

Updated: Summary reports added,

Discussions from the River Thames Scheme resident groups.

Policy paper: River Thames Scheme: discussion group workshop, Walton Bridge to Richmond (November 2016)

Discussions from the River Thames Scheme group workshops.

News story: Marine Management Organisation (MMO) issue authorisations to catch bass

Updated: Date changed from 14 to 21 March 2017

In order to protect bass stocks and the sustainability of the wider marine environment from 22 February 2017 the MMO will be issuing letters to fishermen who, based on their track records, have authorisation to catch bass. The MMO will also send letters to those who do not have such authorisation.

The letters include details of a representation process through which fishermen can, on limited grounds, provide evidence to the MMO should they wish to challenge the authorisation decisions which have been made. The deadline for such representations is 21 March 2017.

The MMO action is a response to Article 9(2) of Council Regulation (EU) 2017/127 which fixed the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters in 2017.

[Read the bass fishing guidance.](#)

Phil Haslam (MMO Director of Operations) said:

“The bass authorisations help implement EC measures designed to manage effort in order to help protect and improve Bass stocks.

I would urge fishermen to read the letters they receive and familiarise themselves with the bass regulations and the representation process. Those that feel they meet the representation criteria and can provide the relevant evidence should do so at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the 21 March 2017 deadline”.

Full details of the [bass regulations and the representation process](#) have been published on the [MMO website](#).

Assistance is also available via [MMO coastal offices](#).