



## INTRODUCTION

The year-long Clean Air Villages programme was an air quality improvement scheme funded by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). Cross River Partnership (CRP), a sub-regional public-private partnership that has been responsible for regeneration in central London for 25 years, delivered the work with the London Boroughs of Lambeth – which acted as the lead authority – and Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Lewisham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, alongside other local partners. CRP worked with businesses in ten air pollution hotspots within these boroughs to identify and implement local solutions to reduce congestion and pollution, while also saving businesses time and money. Examples of implemented solutions are the creation of an Ultra-Low Emission Supplier Directory, a shared electric vehicle in Brixton and a shared cargo bike in Streatham.

### Brief and objectives

Air pollution stems from a range of different factors and has no respect for boundaries. Local authorities nationally are making strides in improving air quality and working in partnership with others can have a far greater impact. The Clean Air Villages project focussed on the reduction of pollution from deliveries and servicing trips to and from businesses.

### Rationale

All five partner boroughs have Air Quality Management Areas, yet air pollutant levels, particularly of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), are predicted to exceed the UK's legal targets beyond 2020. Delivery of goods and services is a major contributor to air pollution, with freight accounting for 16% of vehicle kilometres in London but contributing 36% of total nitrous oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and 39% of particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) emissions from road transport. The business sector is a significant generator of demand for these deliveries. Therefore, business procurement power can reduce emissions by influencing the amount of polluting delivery trips generated.

### Strategy

The joint Clean Air Villages programme provided a comprehensive approach to enable and support business communities in the ten 'villages' to take co-ordinated action to reduce emissions from business-related deliveries and services. Working with relevant

stakeholders such as the businesses concerned, suppliers, the local Council and business improvement districts provided the teams with a good understanding of the local issues and resulted in buy-in from the local business community and support for the implementation of identified solutions. The 'village' approach enabled partnership working and best practice exchange while allowing local characteristics to drive local solutions. The five participating local authorities chose two focus areas, or 'villages', each if they:

- exceeded legal air pollutant limits
- had a high concentration of at-risk demographics
- lacked well-resourced existing support
- represented a range of business communities that can provide lessons across London and the UK.

Specific, measurable, achievable and relevant (SMART) targets were set early on, meaning that although bottom-up business engagement on issues such as air quality can be a slow and labour-intensive process, targets have been met.

### Implementation

The action plan for this project included the hosting of 20 air quality workshops, where local businesses, the Council and Ward Councillors, plus larger chain businesses were invited to attend to discuss delivery and servicing issues in the local area and to brainstorm solutions. Within 70 business 1-2-1 engagements



also took place, where advice was given about what businesses can do to improve their deliveries and servicing, which could also result in the bonus of time and cost savings, while also improving local air quality. Proposed actions for businesses included: streamlining orders; bulk buying; retiming; promoting consolidated deliveries of online shopping; preferred supplier schemes and low-emission deliveries.

### **Budget and cost-effectiveness**

The Clean Air Villages partners received £232,850 in Defra funding for this 1-year project and contributed an additional £50,000 in match funding. Partnership working allowed costs to be kept to a minimum, seen in the coordination of event planning with local partners to reach a wider audience, engagement with pan-London businesses jointly rather than by borough and the production of local communications used to engage similar businesses elsewhere.

### **Measurement and evaluation**

The Clean Air Villages programme led to the implementation of local solutions that will have an important, growing, and lasting effect on deliveries and servicing trips to and from local businesses, thereby improving local air pollution. Ten local solutions were developed, including:

- Installation of a free, shared electric van for the local business community in Brixton to use by September 2019 – this aimed to promote behavioural changes reducing the need for vehicle ownership and to make trips zero emission).
- Business engagement in Streatham resulted in the Business Improvement District (BID) and a local, independent bike shop successfully applying for funding for a shared e-cargo bike from the Transport for London (TfL) Healthy Streets for Business Fund.
- In five of the villages, a locally tailored Ultra-Low Emission Supplier Directory has been created. This online tool brings together organisations that use greener vehicles or deliver on foot. This will be expanded to cover 13 villages (seven Boroughs) as part of the second year of the programme.

- The introduction of a working group in Earl's Court - where there is a current lack of business community - to discuss strategies to tackle poor local air quality. Such partnership working will also last beyond the project end date.

Additionally, 10 business case studies were created to promote initiatives that have or will result in reduced deliveries, or lower emission deliveries. These will be used to encourage other businesses to make similar adjustments to their deliveries and servicing. Examples include the encouragement of Brixton butchers in consolidating their meat suppliers, the launch of a bespoke bike courier service that saves retailers time and money, and a landscape gardening company that uses an electric milk float to transport items.

CRP used its measureBEST tool to calculate estimates of predicted avoided emissions for each local solution. Using the example of Brixton, if ten local businesses used the electric vehicle, instead of a diesel van, then 11.6kg of NO<sub>x</sub> and 2,851kg of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) would be saved in a year. To ensure that emissions saving calculations for the case studies were understandable to a range of stakeholders, CRP provided a translation e.g. if 728kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are saved, that is enough to power a house for 20 days.

CRP has secured funding from Defra to continue the Clean Air Villages programme into a second year, and will deliver the work with London Borough of Lewisham as the lead authority, in partnership with the London Boroughs of Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lambeth, Wandsworth, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council, Cadogan Estates (landowners), and Euston Town BID. Due to the culture of regular best practice exchange, fostered as part of the project, local solutions implemented in some areas during the first year are now being rolled out to others. The second year of the programme will continue the collaborative efforts of the first year and will work in new areas.