

Case Study 4 Technology funding and deployment

Summary

This case study focuses on the deployment of low emission technologies on the ground and looks at the experiences of two of the Peer Group authorities, Greenwich and Sheffield.

Greenwich are using S.106 funding to secure various LES technologies. The S.106 for the major redevelopment of Woolwich Town Centre includes provision of a car club, provision of residential and retail electric vehicle charging points and Euro 5 (or better) vehicle fleet standards. The importance of ensuring S.106 agreements can be revised to keep pace with improving standards and technological developments is recognised as is the need to make a strong case for the need for LES requirements in the face of later renegotiations from developers.

In Sheffield, a long standing low emission pedigree and imaginative use of a variety of funding sources has led to a number of low emission technology initiatives. These include a delivery plan for low emission vehicles and refuelling infrastructure across South Yorkshire, gas powered vehicles in the Council fleet, the Eco Stars voluntary rating scheme and involvement with the DfT 'Plugged in Places' scheme.

Important learning points include: being imaginative about bringing funding in from different sources; having the right team in place (beyond air quality officers) to respond to opportunities; and exploiting political support and positive publicity for this agenda.

1. Background

Both Greenwich and Sheffield have been active in the air quality and low emission scene for a number of years prior to becoming Peer Group Projects as part of the 2009 LES Programme and both already had Beacon Council status for the air quality work.

In Greenwich, the model LES S.106 approach is applied to all significant development sites (10 dwellings or more), but not all aspects are applied to each development. This approach is based on its Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD)¹ which requires contributions towards environmental health and waste management. A standard contribution is sought of £100 per dwelling for residential development and £10 per m² for town centre and commercial development.

Sheffield were the lead authority in establishing and chairing the national low emission forum to disseminate best practise across the country in 2005. Their planning policies and guidance, including the 'Transport Assessments and Travel Plans SPD' (2004) have been instrumental in setting the context for their low emission work.

¹ Planning Obligations SPD Feb 2008

2. LES actions and outcomes

A major Greenwich LES scheme is Woolwich Town Centre where the S.106 with Tesco involves reduced car parking, a funded Car Club, provision of electrical charging points (residential and shopping), fleet controls to Euro 5 or better and uptake of cleaner fuels and technology. The push for Euro 5 or 6 is intended to encourage a move to biomethane as a fuel. Box 1 below provides more details of the S.106 obligations. The Greenwich scheme for Woolwich Town Centre has yet to commence. This may be due to the recession, but the developer is also seeking to renegotiate some of the S.106 aspects, including the LES requirements.

Box 1. London Borough of Greenwich planning obligations achieved through S.106 agreement for Woolwich Town Centre:

- Provision of a car club
- 500 residential spaces annual charge £0 - £300 depending on VED rating of car
- Controls on parking permits and transfers
- Ten electric vehicle charging points within the residential car park
- 50% of delivery vehicles and 50% Home delivery vehicles to meet Euro 5 rating by store opening. 100% within 5 years.
- To report on the implementation of the Low Emission Zone measures and targets on store opening and at five and ten years afterwards
- £16,000 per annum for ten years towards Council's Environmental Monitoring (total £160,000)
- 10% renewable energy commitment
- BREEAM excellent rating
- CHP plant including community heating

In many ways Greenwich was a pioneer authority for low emissions work and their S.106 approach was in place and well advanced before 2009. Therefore, much of this work would have happened without the LESP. Being part of LESP has meant that approaches to developers have met with a good reception, plus the Council has benefitted from other peer group project ideas.

In Sheffield, funding for low emission technology deployment has been secured from a number of sources, rather than through S.106 agreements. This has included: infrastructure grants, Council area based grants, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and air quality grants. The following projects are being taken forward:

- Commissioned a development/delivery plan for low emission vehicles and refuelling infrastructure across South Yorkshire. The expectation is that the LTP will then help fund the delivery of this work;
- Funding bid submitted for round 2 of 'Plugged in Places' DfT initiative;
- Just about to launch ten gas powered vehicles within Council's own fleet via a partnership with Mercedes, VW, Sheffield City Council and Chesterfield Biogas. This

will include a refuelling station at the Council's depot, using biomethane sourced from a southern landfill. Looking at how to build on this on a South Yorkshire basis.

- EcoStars scheme, a voluntary recognition scheme for fleet operators who are awarded stars based on their environmental performance (this is a South Yorkshire initiative involving Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham). Looking into using this as a basis for future work such as low emission zones or procurement decisions.

Like Greenwich, Sheffield was far advanced with this work prior to the 2009 LESP and much of this work would have happened without the LESP. However, there is a recognition that being involved has 'created a momentum' for the LES approach which is positive and beneficial.

3. Lessons learned

Success factors

- Consider a way of reviewing existing S.106 agreements to prevent them becoming out of date with regard to standards and technologies;
- Be clear and firm about the need for LES measures if and when S.106 renegotiation occurs;
- Funding is clearly important, but be imaginative about bringing funding in from different sources;
- Need the right people involved, which is not necessarily air quality officers, but the team should include procurement and media colleagues. This is important especially in terms of...;
- ...being able to respond to opportunities quickly, and having the capacity to respond, including submission of quick bids ('not waiting 6 months to submit a bid');
- Developing a partnership approach is important, including public-private sector partnership, and engage with the right organisations;
- Capitalise on the political support for this agenda and exploit positive publicity to the full, for example ensure appropriate Council publicity on carbon neutral/low emission vehicles and involve community organisations in use of these vehicles.

Barriers/ challenges

Developers can be happy to agree the package of LES measures to receive consent for development, only to seek to renegotiate various aspects at a later date. In Greenwich, the Council's view is to stand firm and argue that the need remains.

However, S.106 agreements can be in danger of becoming 'trapped in time' and outdated as standards rise and technology improves. Greenwich are considering an 'auditing and updating' mechanism which would allow S.106 agreements to be revised to be in keeping with current (or future) standards and technologies. For example, the Greenwich Peninsula development took 18 years to come to fruition.

Fleet managers can be 'risk averse' and resistant to low emission vehicles. Important that the policies are in place to demonstrate that the Council supports this work, including the Local Development Framework process and signing up to appropriate National Indicators (NI 185, 186 and 189). But also important to show that the funding is available.

For more information see:

http://www.care4air.org/eco_stars_scheme.html

<http://sheffieldsmyplanet.co.uk/initiatives/electric-cars-for-sheffield/plugged-in-places>

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