



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

## Notice of KEY Executive Decision (Special Urgency)

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Approval to deliver a range of emergency economic development services in relation to the Coronavirus Pandemic and its impact on the Havering Economy
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Damian White
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Neil Stubbings
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	<b>Howard Swift</b> Tel: 01708 432654 E: <a href="mailto:howard.swift@havering.gov.uk">howard.swift@havering.gov.uk</a>
<b>Policy context:</b>	Havering Corporate Plan 2019/2020. Opportunities: Helping Our Businesses Grow
<b>Financial summary:</b>	No additional financial resource is sought. Services to be delivered within current Economic Development establishment.
<b>Reason decision is Key</b>	Significant effect on two or more Wards
<b>Relevant OSC:</b>	OSC
<b>Is it an urgent decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Is this decision exempt from being called-in?</b>	<b>Yes, due to Special Urgency</b>

### The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering  
Places making Havering  
Opportunities making Havering  
Connections making Havering

## Key Executive Decision

### Part A – Report seeking decision

#### DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

**The Chief Executive is requested to approve and endorse the highlighted measures outlined below:**

1. To aggregate and fact-check news to inform an internal economic briefing
2. To engage with Time FM as a channel for the coordination of reciprocal local business collaboration
3. To increase the frequency of the Business Briefing for release as frequently as daily
4. To establish a protocol for daily website updates to act as a respected and authoritative source of information to local business
5. To establish a telephone hotline for local business enquiries for information – this will supplement rather than replace existing customer contact channels
6. To deliver a programme of webinars to inform local businesses and importantly receive feedback
7. To undertake gap analysis of support given by HM Government to all sections of the local economy especially the recently self-employed and those not operating out of business rated properties.
8. To undertake a business impact survey to measure further required impact mitigation

**The Chief Executive is requested to endorse the proposed key messages to business outlined in the body of the report.**

#### AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Authority is vested by the Constitution under Powers of the Chief Executive under 3.2 (c)

#### STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The unprecedented guidance of HM Government and subsequent more formal restrictions in response to the global COVID19 pandemic are expected to have far-reaching and long-term negative impacts on resident of Havering as well as local businesses. The scale of the potential losses is immense and the Council must expect to have to play a leading role in mitigating the impacts and planning for recovery downstream.

At the present time, there is considerable uncertainty and anxiety. This report serves to brief elected members as to the action being taken by the Economic Development service which seeks to position the Council as the authoritative channel for fact-checked information for local business both during the current crisis phase but also to provide leadership as we emerge in future.

We are already circulating and maintaining a **new internal briefing** with updates as they happen in real time. These briefings are shared with the Communications Team, and they are organising the message to go out to the public. This includes regular Business Briefings (e-newsletter) as well as social media updates. It has been possible during the past two weeks to circulate the internal briefing as soon as 60 minutes after key announcements. **The Chief**

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### **Executive's approval for this activity is sought.**

**Time FM has offered the Council access to its shows**, so that the Council can share guidance, update residents/businesses, and answer queries. This opportunity is being considered by Comms and will be raised as part of the Comms Bronze group. It is especially relevant in relation to the guidance from Government regarding Business Rates and Cash Grants. It is proposed that Councillor Benham, Sarah Moss and a relevant Officer (who can speak about services to residents) dial into a live show with Time FM to provide guidance, update residents/businesses, and answer queries. **The Chief Executive's endorsement is sought.**

The Economic Development team are organising itself to become the point of contact for businesses. Our proactive approach will include:

- **Business Briefing:** utilising the Business Briefing to update businesses – encouraging businesses to register to receive copies
- **Webpage:** setting up webpage with Government support initiatives and other support initiatives to signpost businesses to relevant services (i.e. ACAS for employment law)
- **Telephone Hotline:** setting up new 03XX business hotline; operated by Economic Development to provide advice and refer to appropriate services – out of hours voicemail will direct clients to webpage. **This could be available as early as Tuesday 31 March if approved by the Chief Executive.**
- **Webinar:** develop weekly webinar to provide advice on some key issues, i.e. business continuity, business rates, small business grants, additional support – Econ Dev will oversee this but will work with Council teams to provide suitable support. **The Chief Executive's support is required to allow their business-facing teams to work with us in developing content and being available for webinars (and live streaming)**
- **Business Impact Survey and Gap Analysis:** to assess which parts of our economy have been impacted by the emergency but remain without central government support especially the recently self employed and those not operating out of business rated properties. **The Chief Executive's endorsement is sought.**

The key messages from the Council are thus follows:

- The Council's normal services to business continue as far as we are able. Nothing will be stopped without a transparent announcement.
- These are exceptional times and the Council stands alongside business to understand the bigger picture. Economic Development is the front door to the Council for this purpose.
- For the time being our monthly business briefing will go out daily – businesses can sign up to receive it at [https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20050/council\\_publications/231/business\\_briefing\\_newsletter](https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20050/council_publications/231/business_briefing_newsletter) - this is the way to get the news soonest and will be a fact-checked aggregation of third party materials gathered together.
- All materials announced through the business briefing will be maintained on the Havering Business webpages and archived when they are no longer current. Frequently Asked Questions can be found here even if the answer is 'we don't know' or 'there isn't yet an answer to be known' – this is not failure but just the reality of a fast moving situation.
- We are setting up a hotline to receive requests for assistance and to answer queries. We will add the responses to the frequently asked questions section of the website and direct callers to the website where their query could have been self served. The hotline number will connect to EVERY member of the

### **Key Executive Decision**

ED team and we will call on Regen colleagues if we need further capacity. The Hotline should be ready on Tuesday 31 March

It should also be noted that HM Government has also indicated its intention to provide grants to small businesses, to be administered by the Council:-

- Small Business Grant Fund – a grant of £10k which is available to all businesses who are in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief, and are registered in the business rate system.
- Retail, Hospitality, Leisure Grant Fund – a grant available to all businesses in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount, with a rateable value of less than £51K.
  - Rateable value of less than £15K – receive £10K
  - Rateable value of between £15K and £51K – receive £25K

A separate Executive Decision seeks authority to administer such assistance.

### **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

No other options were considered. The recommendations made are consistent with the divisional business continuity plan

### **PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION**

The proposals have been widely consulted upon internally as follows:

Communications – sign off protocol for messaging has been confirmed

ICT – advice has been accepted to provide hotline support over an 03xx number rather than 0800 in order to expedite provision.

Business Rates in particular have asked that they be given the opportunity to endorse outgoing messages in relation to payments now expected to be made through that channel and discounts to be administered.

The proposal has been discussed and encouraged at the Bronze Public Realm group on multiple occasions.

**Comment [JWJ1]:** What about Member consultation. Has the Leader been briefed

### **NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER**

Name: Howard Swift

Designation: Economic Development Manager

Signature: H J Swift

Date: 31/03/20

**Key Executive Decision**

**Part B - Assessment of implications and risks**

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

All proposals are within the Council's general power of competence.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this decision as the staffing will be met from existing resources.

**HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS  
(AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)**

These actions can be delivered from within current people resources

**EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- i. The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- ii. The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- iii. Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio – economics and health determinants. The proposals relating to this report, if they are implemented, will improve the business environment in the borough and consequently the employment prospects and socio- economic status of residents.

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**HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The COVID 19 pandemic is a global and national emergency with serious impact on lives and socio economic activities. National guidance recommends social distancing measures, working from home and only essential travels to reduce further risk to lives.

This report proposes a range of activities of the Economic Development Service to provide information and support to local businesses and to undertake research to inform further action of mitigation and support for recovery.

It is not proposed at this time that any current services will be discontinued but may be deprioritised to allow an emphasis on the immediate challenges facing the business community and its local customer base.

Given the threat to lives posed by the ongoing pandemic, the overriding consideration is to follow national guidance to protect lives. This decision is consistent with that guidance.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Key Executive Decision**

**Part C – Record of decision**

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

**Decision**

Proposal agreed

*Delete as applicable*

Proposal NOT agreed because

**Details of decision maker**

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

**Lodging this notice**

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

**For use by Committee Administration**

This notice was lodged with me on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_