



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

## Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	To agree to award a contract to the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) for the delivery of a business support programme - Empowering SME Growth.
<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Neil Stubbings – Strategic Director of Place.
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Graham Williamson Cabinet Member for Development & Regeneration.
<b>ELT Lead:</b>	Neil Stubbings – Strategic Director of Place.
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Howard Swift Head of Inclusive Growth <a href="mailto:Howard.swift@havering.gov.uk">Howard.swift@havering.gov.uk</a> 01708 432654
<b>Policy context:</b>	Havering Corporate Plan: <u>A great place to live, work and enjoy.</u> Aim: To attract and deliver investment and regeneration opportunities, whilst protecting the character of the borough.
<b>Financial summary:</b>	This Executive Decision is to approve the commissioning of The Centre of Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) to deliver a business support programme for SME's totalling £0.097m and will be funded via the UKSPF allocation resulting in no financial cost to the Council.

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<b>Relevant Overview &amp; Scrutiny Sub Committee:</b>	Places Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee.
<b>Is this decision exempt from being called-in?</b>	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non Key Decision.

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

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy x

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

### **Part A – Report seeking decision**

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

This Executive Decision report seeks authority to:

To award a contract to the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) for the delivery of a business support programme - Empowering SME Growth, at an estimated cost of £97,000.00.

#### **AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE**

##### **Part 3 of the Council's Constitution**

##### **Scheme 3.3.3 - Powers common to all Strategic Directors**

###### **1. General**

1.1 To take any steps, and take any decisions, necessary for the proper management and administration of their allocated directorate

###### **4. Contracts**

4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

##### Background

A Grant Agreement was signed by the Council in May 2023 to accept the GLA UKSPF allocation to deliver a number of projects and initiatives under the categories: Communities and Places, People and Skills and Supporting Local Businesses, to be delivered by the end of March 2025. These projects and initiatives have assigned outcome and output targets that have to be achieved as part of the Grant Agreement terms and conditions.

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Under the 'Supporting Local Business category', the objective for one of the projects, 'Innovation Supply Chain', was to build on the work of the Future Cube initiative conceived in 2019, which, despite the challenges of the pandemic, delivered valuable advice and guidance to enterprises in Havering, as well as across London and South Essex, helping them grasp the opportunities presented by 3D virtualisation and additive manufacturing technologies. The plan was to continue this work to support and advise the business community and SMEs in Havering, enabling them to access supply chain opportunities and adopt new technologies to improve efficiency.

While the FutureCube project was successful in delivering its contracted outputs, it had been hoped that the model could become self-sustaining. However, the pandemic presented insurmountable challenges in meeting this collateral target and it is thus not a viable option to deliver.

### Project Overview

It is therefore the intention to utilise the £97,000 UKSPF fund allocation to commission CEME to deliver a comprehensive business support programme to empower entrepreneurs and SMEs to drive economic growth, while fostering a more inclusive and sustainable business landscape within Havering. The programme is designed to enhance the market presence of entrepreneurs and SMEs while driving sustainable growth via a series of tailored workshops and one-to-one consultations. These initiatives aim to equip SMEs with the knowledge, tools, and strategies needed to increase market visibility, strengthen their commercial positioning, and accelerate growth. Additionally, the programme will complement and support the delivery of the UKSPF Output targets E23 – GA ref OP11 and OP13 for the "number of enterprises receiving non –financial support". It will also assist entrepreneurs in becoming enterprise-ready, enabling the Council to meet the requirements of the Grant Agreement with the GLA while investing in the business community within Havering.

### Procurement Process

The justification to commission CEME as the chosen supplier is that they are a locally based, not-for-profit enterprise situated in Rainham, Havering. They have previously delivered credible business support initiatives and projects for Havering, including 'Driving Growth in the London Riverside Opportunity Area' and CEME Launchpad, alongside their core mission of providing enterprise incubator space with wrap-around business support. CEME has a comprehensive understanding of the Havering business community and is equipped with the necessary skills, resources and expertise to deliver an effective economic growth programme to support businesses in Havering within a tight timescale.

The Business Support Empowering SME Growth programme proposal was presented in the form of waiver at the Procurement Gateway Review Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, resulting in the approval to proceed with a direct award to CEME for the delivery of this programme. This commission will be at no cost to the Council corporate revenue budgets due to the cost being met by the GLA UKSPF external fund allocation.

## **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

The option of undertaking a competitive tender process was rejected on the basis of the time constraints being dependent on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) external funding allocation 24/25. The Council has an obligation via a signed Grant Agreement to fulfil spend of

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the UKSPF allocation and deliver the agreed outcome and output targets as part of the overall UKSPF programme by the end of March 2025. If the UKSPF programme is not delivered by the end of March 2025, there may be the possibility of the GLA requesting elements of the funds/allocation to be reimbursed. The Council would also miss the opportunity to upskill Havering businesses, foster entrepreneurship, and support SME growth within the borough. Additionally, there could be a negative impact on future funding allocations, potentially reducing the resources available for similar initiatives.

**PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION**

The Cabinet Member for Development & Regeneration was consulted prior to the Executive Decision being signed.

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

Name: Howard Swift

Designation: Head of Inclusive Growth

Signature:



Date: 17/01/25

## Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The Council has the power to award the contract under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do subject to any statutory limitations. The recommendation sought within this report is in accordance with this power.

The estimated contract value is £97,000, which is below the threshold for services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR), The contract is therefore not subject to the full PCR regime and does not need to be advertised on Find a Tender Service (FTS).

Officers recommend directly awarding the contract to CEME, and have obtained a waiver of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules (CPR). In accordance with CPR 14, a waiver can only be granted in specific circumstances and cannot be given if it would contravene applicable law.

Officers have satisfied themselves that the requirements for a waiver have been met in this instance and that this decision will result in the best value for the Council overall.

In accordance with CPR 16.8, details of the contract award must be published on Contracts Finder.

For the reasons set out above, the Council may award the contract.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The total cost of this commission £0.097m will be funded via the GLA UKSPF allocation. The Business support Programme must be delivered by March 2025 in order to adhere to the UKSPF funding allocation grant agreement. Regular monitoring meetings will be carried out with the supplier by officers throughout the delivery stage to ensure the project is completed within the approved grant programme window 24/25.

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

The recommendations made in this report do not appear to give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would impact on either the Council or its workforce.

### **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:

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- (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, sex, race, 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.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out when a proposed or planned activity is likely to affect staff, service users, or other residents.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in every situation.

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

There are no direct implications relating to the environment or climate change.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **APPENDICES**

N/A

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**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

**Details of decision maker**

Signed



Neil Stubbings  
Strategic Director of Place

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Lodging this notice**

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

**For use by Committee Administration**

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_