

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

<b>Reference Number:</b>	2467
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<b>Department:</b>	Development
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<b>Subject:</b>	Direct award for SME Graduate Assessment & Jobs Matching
<b>Total Value:</b>	£65,000 (Type: Revenue)
<b>Decision Being Taken:</b>	<p>1. Approval of £40,000 funding from Nottingham City Council towards the delivery of a front-end assessment and recruitment service to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) for individuals graduating from Nottingham Universities in 2016. The overall scheme for the year will cost £65,000 with £25,000 being funded by partner agencies. 2. Approval to dispense with contract procedure rule 5.1.2 in accordance with financial regs (3.29) to commission GradCore to provide the service.</p>

**Reasons for the Decision(s)**

The retention of graduates in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire from its two universities is a priority for the City and an area which requires improvement. If agreed, this proposal will directly contribute to the Council's priority to increase the number of graduates who choose to stay in Nottingham by 20%. The N2 Skills & Employment Board also identifies developing a higher skilled local workforce to increase productivity and competitiveness as a priority area. Independent research has confirmed that this service will fill a gap in support currently available to SMEs.

In 2014-15 the City Council undertook a small-scale pilot to support SMEs to recruit graduates, which demonstrated value for the concept, but identified the need to build a more sustainable model based on economies of scale generated through commissioning the service from an external provider.

The proposal is for an independent provider to enable the provision of 30 graduate level jobs in SMEs in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County, by supporting with recruitment and retention activity.

The end result will be 30 Nottingham graduates recruited in to SME graduate level positions in the City and County, targeted at SMEs that would not typically hire graduates. All graduates from the two Nottingham Universities that participate will benefit by gaining employability feedback. The programme will run from April to November 2016.

The provider, GradCore, has delivered this in Sheffield since 2013 and the outcomes they have achieved are in line with those desired for this programme.

This proposal will be delivered and funded in partnership between the two Nottingham Universities and Nottinghamshire County Council, who are all supportive of this approach. A summary of the funding split is outlined below:

- Nottingham City Council: £40,000
- Other partners: £25,000

Nottingham City Council's funding allocation is already agreed through Good to Great, Skilled Workforce, Theme Three. See delegated decision 1754 which agreed Good to Great funding for graduate retention. The cost of this proposal can be contained within this budget.

A direct award appointment is recommended so that activity to identify students for the programme can happen while they are still on campus at the two universities. This is a tight window and so the programme needs to go live in April 2016 to ensure it achieves the desired impact.

Sheffield City Council undertook a competitive procurement exercise for a similar programme in 2014 and awarded the contract to GradCore. An independent evaluation of Sheffield's programme evidenced a £5 GVA return for every £1 invested, and so it has been proven to demonstrate value for money.

**Other Options Considered:**

1. To enter in to a competitive procurement process. This is not preferred as it will delay this going live in readiness for 2016 graduates, and so will need to be considered again in 2017. Another local authority entered into a procurement process for this service and awarded to this provider.
2. To do nothing. This is not preferred as graduate retention is a Council priority and this programme will have a positive impact in achieving this. Other partner agencies have also agreed funding to take this forward. It would not have the same level of impact without Nottingham City's financial contribution.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Published Works:** Delegated decision 1754 - Good to Great - Graduate Retention

**Affected Wards:** Citywide

**Colleague / Councillor Interests:** None.

**Any Information Exempt from publication:** Yes

**Dispensation from Financial Regulations:** Yes

**Exempt Information:**

**Description of what is exempt:** The attached appendix is exempt from publication as it contains commercially sensitive information belonging to the Service Provider in relation to unit costs.

An appendix (or appendices) to this decision is exempt from publication under the following paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).** The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because it reveals commercially sensitive information belonging to the Service Provider in relation to unit costs.

**Documents exempt from publication:** Unit Cost Comparison.20160401.docx

**Consultations:** Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

**Crime and Disorder Implications:** There are no Crime and Disorder Implications.

Equality:	Please login to the system to view the EIA document: EIA of SME assessment recruitment DDM.20160401.doc
Decision Type:	Portfolio Holder
Subject to Call In:	Yes
Call In Expiry date:	20/05/2016
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance, Procurement, Equality and Diversity
Legal Advice:	<p>There are no significant legal issues arising from this decision.</p> <p>On the basis of the reasons submitted both the decision and the dispensation from Contract Procedure Rules are supported.</p> <p>In the event that the Scheme is considered again for next year or in any future year, then further advice on procurement considerations must be sought to ensure compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and EU Regulations.</p> <p>Advice provided by Connie Green (Solicitor) on 06/04/2016.</p>
Finance Advice:	<p>This decision seeks approval to commission Gradcore to deliver a service at a total cost of £65k. The cost will be funded £25k from partner agencies and £40k from Good to Great earmarked reserves, and can be contained within the overall approval outlined in delegated decision number 1754. In commissioning Gradcore to deliver this service, dispensation from contract procedure rule 5.1.2 is required under financial regulation 3.29 for operational reasons. The company has a track record in delivering a similar service in Sheffield. Advice provided by Maria Balchin (Finance Analyst) on 30/03/2016.</p>
Procurement Advice:	<p>'Approval to dispense with Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.2 in accordance with Financial Regulation (3.29) is given as this is an urgent requirement and a delay would compromise the success of the programme. The preferred supplier has already implemented a similar programme at Sheffield Council. Advice provided by John Watson (Category Manager) on 04/04/2016.</p>
Equality and Diversity Advice:	<p>The success of this proposal as regards the Public Sector Equality Duty is dependant on the diversity of the SME's and students that are recruited. Whilst the timescale is very short, the process of engagement with appropriate business associations e.g. First Enterprise, student groups (BME and Disabled) and the use of community media e.g. KEMET and other young people platforms (social media) will be important. Additionally, a robust monitoring process that enables an agile approach to recruitment will be key to address any emerging disparities where monitoring stats are not reflective of both cohorts. Advice provided by Adisa Djan (Equalities and Diversity Consultant) on 01/04/2016.</p>
Signatures	<p>Nick McDonald (PH for Business, Growth and Transport)</p> <p>SIGNED and Dated: 12/05/2016</p>

<b>David Bishop (Deputy CE, CD for Development and Growth)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 13/05/2016</b>
<b>Theresa Channell (Head of Corporate and Strategic Finance) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 29/04/2016</b>
<b>Chief Finance Officer's Comments:</b>