

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

2561

Author:

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Department:

Development

Contact:

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Subject:

Nottingham participation in the D2N2 Digital Business Growth Programme

Total Value:

£138,000 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

To agree:

Participation as a partner in the £7.2m D2N2 Digital Business Programme, the subject of a European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) bid for £3.6m ERDF funding, and for the Strategic Director, Economy to enter into a collaboration agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council as Accountable Body.

To commit £138K match funding over the three years (2016/17 - 2018/19). The Council will cover this cost from the guaranteed income from the City Council Wireless Concession received.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

D2N2 has made available £3.6m of ERDF grant to support digital business growth across its area. An Expression of Interest involving Nottinghamshire County Council as the lead body, Nottingham and Derby City Councils, Derbyshire County Council, the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and the Creative Quarter Company has been recommended for approval by the D2N2 board. Further checks are taking place and all partners are now required to confirm their match funding by the end of May 2016.

The programme builds on previous local initiatives, including the Council's CQ Connect grants fund, and will deliver a bespoke structured business support programme intensively supporting 870 enterprises with real growth aspirations. It is expected that around 1/4 of these businesses (approximately 200) will be based in Nottingham. The programme will be delivered through the East Midlands Chambers specialist e-Business club team, Programme Co-ordinators within each local authority, and an ICT Innovation Manager at the Creative Quarter Company.

The core programme will support growing digital businesses and include ICT seminars; action planning workshops; 1 to 1 ICT digital skills advice and support; and an ICT grant scheme offering a 40% contribution to businesses investing in their ICT development. Intensive support will be targeted at businesses with real growth potential who have developed a plan to grow their business by better exploiting digital opportunities. Web content to manage the programme will be linked to the Growth Hub, and a major Digital Conference and Expo will be delivered in November 2017.

The programme provides the opportunity to build on the council's digital business growth activities and would provide ongoing funding for the Council's Digital Manager role.

When the City Centre Wireless Concession was set up it was agreed in principle by the Portfolio Holder that the resultant income from BT would be reinvested in some form of ICT exploitation. By using it as match funding in this ERDF funded project we are able to double its impact -a further £138K of ERDF making a total of £276K.

Other Options Considered:

The other option available would be to withdraw from the programme and lose the benefits of the scheme for the city. Loss of funding from the scheme would adversely affect the Council's ability to attract resources to support the development of digital businesses.

Background Papers:

Published Works:

Wireless Concession decision - DDM1872

Affected Wards:

Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests:

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

N/A

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: N/A. The project will respond to the needs of local businesses.

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:

Yes

Call In Expiry date:

17/08/2016

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Other: Maria Balchin(maria.balchin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Legal Advice:

This report does not raise significant legal issues. The City Council is agreeing to provide matched funding to the County Council which is acting as the accountable body for this programme. There should be an agreement with the County Council setting out the City's funding and obligations of participation such as monitoring and reporting. The Legal Services team can assist with this agreement as required. Advice provided by Andrew James (Team Leader Contracts and Commercial) on 18/01/2016. Advice provided by Andrew James (Team Leader Contracts and Commercial) on 07/06/2016.

Finance Advice:

This decision seeks approval to participate as a partner in the D2N2 Digital Business Programme and to contribute £0.138m as match funding. This programme will be led by Nottinghamshire County Council which will be the accountable body, and is subject to a bid for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant funding. The ERDF funding will require match funding, and partners are required to confirm their contributions.

The Council's contribution will be resourced as follows:

£137,740 - Exempt delegated decision number 1872 - City Centre Wireless Concession. The up-front payment outlined in this decision has been secured by the Council;

£260 - to be funded from existing Economic Development resources.

The funding has been received in advance of the programme expenditure, therefore to avoid unfunded expenditure, the funding will be held in earmarked reserves and drawn down as required, subject to the approval of Council's financial out-turn as approved by Executive Board.

The Digital Business Programme will maximise the City's potential to create economic growth for the benefit of all communities as outlined in the Council's Plan.

Advice provided by Maria Balchin (Finance Analyst) on 13/01/2016.

Advice provided by Maria Balchin (Finance Analyst) on 10/05/2016.

Other Advice:

Confirmation that Finance advice is incorporated above Advice provided by Noel McMenamin (Governance Officer) on 07/06/2016.

Signatures

Nick McDonald (PH for Business, Growth and Transport)
SIGNED and Dated: 10/08/2016
David Bishop (Deputy CE, CD for Development and Growth)
SIGNED and Dated: 10/08/2016