

Consultation and Agreement

- The Chair and the Vice Chairs of the NECA have been consulted on this matter and have agreed that it is appropriate for the **Head of Paid Service** to use the delegated powers given to her by the Leadership Board of the NECA and to make an urgent decision.

The Chair and Vice Chairs agreed that this decision is urgent because of the need to progress activity in relation to the extension of the **Cobalt ICT Infrastructure Project**. This matter cannot be left until the next meeting of the Leadership Board on **16 April 2019**.

Agreement received from Chair of the NECA – **Yes**

Agreement received from Vice Chair of the NECA – **Yes**

- The Chair of the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted and has agreed that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances, that it should be treated as a matter of urgency, and that it should be exempt from call-in.

Agreement received from the Chair of NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee – **Yes**

Record of the Decision

1. Subject of Decision

Extension of Cobalt ICT Infrastructure Project.

Thematic Lead Area

Economic Development and Digital

2. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to attain approval for additional investment into the Cobalt ICT Infrastructure Project to the value of £777k through a revision of the terms of an existing North East Investment Fund Loan. The additional investment will connect the existing ICT broadband infrastructure loop and Stellium Data Centre at Cobalt Business Park North Tyneside to Seaton Sluice, Northumberland where a high speed broadband cable will make landfall linking the North East to Esbjerg, Denmark and mainland Europe. This additional infrastructure is a critical piece of a transatlantic super-high speed broadband cabling infrastructure linking the Eastern Seaboard of the United States to the North East of England and on to Mainland Continental Europe. This type of physical infrastructure investment has the ability to change the way in which high tech/ high data using businesses operate in and are attracted to the North East in the future.

NORTH EAST COMBINED AUTHORITY

Record of Urgent Decision by Head of Paid Service



3. Why the Decision is Urgent

The Applicant (CUOS Ltd) approached the North East LEP with regard additional financing for infrastructure to accelerate completion of the transatlantic ICT broadband cable network. CUOS Ltd approached the Partnership at a late stage following imminent requirements of a global data-user. To meet the delivery deadline set by the data-user of May 2019, infrastructure investment needs to be undertaken with immediate effect, given build out can be up to 17 weeks, and needs to be in place by 14 May 2019. As a result actions are now being taken to seek an urgent decision from NECA/NELEP.

4. Decision

4(a)

The recommendations were agreed as outlined in the Urgent Decision Report.

4(b). If Exempt or Confidential, please provide a reason:

Confidential – Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

5. Alternative options considered

Alternative options were considered as outlined in the Urgent Decision Report.

6. Reason for Decision

As outlined in the Urgent Decision Report.

7. Date of Consultation with the Monitoring Officer and their Relevant Comments

Date: 22 February 2019

Comments: None

8. Date of Consultation with Chief Finance Officer and their Relevant Comments

Date: 20 February 2019

Comments: None

9. Contact Officer

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Service



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Date of the Decision 5 March 2019