

Title: The Core ground and first floor fit-out contract
Portfolio: All portfolios
Responsible Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Operations
Report Author: Lorna Hodson-Fraser, Head of People and Culture

Purpose of the report

This report seeks authority from the Director of Operations for the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA) to enter into a contract with Roberston Construction Group to undertake fit-out works, purchase furniture and prepare the ground and first floors of The Core for short-term occupation by the North East MSA.

Recommendations

The Director of Operations is recommended to:

1. authorise the completion of a contract with Robertson Construction Group to undertake fit-out works, purchase furniture and prepare the ground and first floors of The Core for short-term occupation by the North East MSA with a contract value of up to £248,400; and
2. authorise the Monitoring Officer to sign the contract with Robertson Construction Group and all other required agreements.

Executive Summary

The North East MSA has agreed to occupy part of the ground floor and the first floor of The Core building as a short-term solution to alleviate some of the current capacity pressures while a long-term office accommodation solution is finalised. This report seeks authority for the North East MSA to enter into a contract with Robertson Construction Group to undertake fit-out works, purchase furniture and prepare the ground and first floors of The Core for short-term occupation by the North East MSA.

A. Context

1. Outline

On 2 July 2026, the Chief Executive agreed by delegated decision for the North East MSA to enter into an agreement with Newcastle City Council (the Council) to occupy part of the ground floor and the first floor of The Core for a period of up to 2 years.

The space in The Core will offer a short-term solution to relieve some of the current capacity issues by providing additional desks, meeting rooms and collaboration spaces. The ground and first floors require minor works before they are ready for use by the North East MSA. The main works relate to improving accessibility and resolving security requirements, alongside the provision of furniture, decoration and supporting infrastructure.

- Ground floor - the meeting rooms do not require any additional furniture or equipment to be purchased. Security access controls will be installed on the doors of the ground floor meeting rooms to allow access for North East MSA officers only.
- First floor - the space requires minor fit-out work to be completed, such as partitioning of the existing staircase, data cabling, moving of electrical floor boxes, installation of security access controls, decoration and the provision of furniture.

It is proposed that a contract is awarded to Robertson Construction Group to undertake this work and purchase the required furniture and equipment on behalf of the North East MSA.

2. Procurement

A request for quote exercise has been undertaken and a total of 4 tenders have been submitted by suppliers from the NEPO207 Construction Works framework. A list of the tenders submitted by suppliers can be found in confidential Appendix A.

Robertson Construction Group has been chosen as the preferred supplier on the basis that their quote offers the best value for money, and they are able to carry out the works in accordance with the North East MSA's timetable set out below.

It is proposed that Robertson Construction Group be appointed by direct award from Lot 1 of the NEPO207 Construction Works framework.

3. Timetable

Contractor appointed	19 October 2026
Start on site	13 November 2026
Completion of works	4 December 2026

B. Impact on North East Mayoral Strategic Authority Objectives

Office accommodation is an operational requirement for the North East MSA and will support delivery of its Corporate Plan priorities by providing the physical space needed for colleagues to work, collaborate and meet with partners. The short-term occupation of The Core will help relieve current capacity pressures while the longer-term accommodation solution is finalised. The proposed works will also support the North East MSA's commitment to an inclusive and accessible working environment by ensuring the space can be used safely and effectively by colleagues and visitors.

C. Key risks

Risk	Risk Category	Risk rating	Explanation
Works are not completed within the expected timeframe	Project/Programme risk and People risk	Likelihood: Possible Impact: Moderate	This would delay the first floor space being ready to occupy and would mean continued office capacity pressures. Officers will have access to the ground floor meeting rooms during the works. The North East MSA will work with the appointed supplier to agree and monitor a realistic programme, escalate issues quickly, and communicate any revised timetable to colleagues.

Accessibility requirements are not fully addressed	People risk	Likelihood: Possible Impact: Significant	If accessibility requirements are not properly reflected in the works, the space may not be suitable for all colleagues and visitors. Accessibility requirements have been identified through the Equality Impact Assessment and will be included within the specification of works, including upgrades to doors and any individual workplace requirements identified through engagement with colleagues.
Security arrangements are not in place before occupation	Security Risk & People risk	Likelihood: Possible Impact: Significant	If security access controls are not installed before occupation, there may be unauthorised access to North East MSA workspaces or meeting rooms. The works include installation of security access controls on the ground floor meeting rooms and first floor space, and occupation will be managed in line with agreed security arrangements. Should these security controls not be installed before the space is ready for occupation, use of the space will need to be delayed until the works have been carried out which would add a delay to the capacity pressures.

D. Corporate Implications

D1. Financial and other resources implications

The delegated decision dated 2 July 2026 approved an estimated budget of £400,000 for the fit-out of the ground floor and first floor space at The Core.

The quote provided by Robertson Construction Group requires a budget of up to £248,400.

D2. Legal implications

The comments of a representative of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

D3. Equalities implications

The North East MSA has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment in respect of the proposed use of the ground floor and first floor of The Core. This has identified the need to ensure that accessibility, inclusion and any individual workplace requirements are fully considered as part of the temporary occupation and fit-out of the space. The specification of works will include various upgrades to doors to ensure they are accessible for all North East MSA officers.

D4. Communication and engagement plan

A communication and engagement plan has been developed to keep colleagues informed about the timing of the works, when the space will be available and how it will be used. The North East Mayor has been consulted prior to this decision being made. Trade union colleagues have been informed and are represented through the working group. Colleagues are also being involved in the design of the workspace so that accessibility, operational requirements and user experience are considered before occupation.

E. Appendices

Confidential Appendix A – List of tenders submitted

F. Background papers

[Delegated Decision report dated 2 July 2026](#)

G. Contact officers

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Shaun Nattrass, Lawyer – Shaun.Nattrass@northeast-ca.gov.uk

H. Glossary

North East MSA – North East Mayoral Strategic Authority

The Council – The Council of the City of Newcastle Upon Tyne

The Core – The Core, Bath Lane, Newcastle Helix, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 5TF