



Performance Through People

29 May 2015 **Your Success is our Business**

Mr P Mellon
Interim SEP Delivery Director
Black Country Consortium
The Deckhouse
Waterfront West
Dudley Road
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Dear Paul,

With reference to our recent communication, please find detailed below the justification for our request to increase our FAB Kit grant from £75k to £98k.

Our initial tender was completed in conjunction with our interim Engineering Manager at the time, who was not a qualified Engineer, supported by her Engineering staff and the employers that we work with. We have since recruited a new Manager, who is a degree qualified Engineer with many years' experience within industry, who has recently spent a considerable amount of time discussing future training requirements with employers within the Black Country. As part of the procurement exercise he has also been visiting the organisations we are looking to purchase our equipment from in order to view the equipment first hand, with his initial findings being that the vast majority of equipment is fit for purpose and suitable for training, however, our manual fabrication plans are not acceptable and do not fit in with our HVM strategy.

Fabrication is a major industrial process within some of the sectors identified within the Black Country LEP "Opportunities for Growth" report, and the Skills Factory have identified the need to train people in both welding and CNC press brake forming skills. Discussions with Amada (one of the largest producers of CNC press brake and fabrication equipment) also reinforced the need within the Black Country for the training of press brake operators. The three core industries identified for growth are not the only ones to use these skills, with telecommunications and transport industries also heavily involved in fabrication, which we see as another opportunity.

Although it was always our intention to purchase a conventional mechanical press brake, the information we have since received has highlighted the need for a much more sophisticated CNC press brake that reduces down time with faster tooling changes and smaller batch runs that will enable more cost efficient production. The purchase of a CNC press brake will enable our apprentices to receive training and choose the fabrication units within the apprenticeship framework; it will also mean that short courses can be delivered to help companies meet their demand for press brake operators and re-train unemployed clients.

Please reply to:

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Companies currently looking for CNC press brake training include:

- Metal forming Engineering - Aldridge
- Black Country Manufacturing - Tipton
- R&S Laser - Birmingham
- Wrekin Sheet Metal - Shropshire
- Caparo - Wolverhampton

If we had the resources, our first choice would be to purchase an Amada Machine (with around 80% of Black Country employers utilising this brand). However, a second hand refurbished Amada machine can cost as much as £30,000, although we have sourced a new Chester CNC Press Brake machine which can be purchased for £23,000.

We have invited Colin Parker from the Skill Factory to visit our Centre to discuss the equipment we intend to purchase, potentially including a CNC Press Brake rather than a manual. Colin has been very supportive of the project and is in total agreement that we would be making the correct choice by replacing a manual Press Brake for a CNC.

If we can increase our grant from £75,000 to £98,788 this would enable us to purchase the Chester CNC Press Brake. We anticipate our financial contribution (in pure spend) will be around £180,000, which is still in line with our LGF intervention match funding.

I hope you can view this request positively and I await your response so that we can process the order for our authorised spend as soon as possible to ensure we are on track to open the Centre on the 1st August 2015.

Yours sincerely,
For and on behalf of
PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE



Rob Colbourne
Managing Director