

Citizens@Leeds – Priorities for 2015/16

Ambition and Approach:

The Citizens@Leeds programme supports the council's ambition for Leeds to be the best city and for Leeds City Council to be the best council in the UK. Through our Citizens@Leeds approach we will ensure that: essential services are provided in an integrated and accessible way to the most in need of services, support and advice; those requiring financial assistance have quick and easy access to financial advice and cost effective credit facilities; those seeking employment and/or training have easy access to advice, support and awareness of training and employment opportunities and; that we are better connected with the citizens of Leeds.

Our Core Outcome:

To improve the quality of life for all our residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or experiencing poverty.

Objectives and priorities for 2015/16:

<p>Helping People out of Financial Hardship: Tackling the financial challenges of poverty, deprivation and inequality with a focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivering financial support schemes which support the most vulnerable. 2. Delivering integrated pathways of support within welfare and benefits services, community hubs and the corporate contact centre. 3. Providing more accessible advice services to meet demand. 4. Developing proposals for greater devolution of welfare responsibilities to core cities. 5. Tackling high cost lenders. 6. Working with Leeds City Credit Union to provide affordable credit services. 7. Maximising the impact of the Social Inclusion Fund at a local level. 	<p>Helping People into Work: Helping people into work by providing easy access to advice, support and awareness of training and employment opportunities with a focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconfiguring the employment and skills role within Community Hubs. 2. Delivering the new Council Tax Support scheme which has a clear focus on helping people into work. 3. Working with Community Committees to ensure a localised focus on helping people into work. 4. Creating an effective partnership with the Department of Works and Pensions that delivers an accessible and effective Universal Credit service. 5. Strengthening our partnership approach with Jobcentre plus and exploring integration/co-location with Community Hubs. 6. Ensuring that our approach to volunteering provides opportunities to develop the skills required for work. 7. Focussing our work on priority groups (e.g. mental health) to help those furthest away from the labour market.
<p>Strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities: Supporting and enabling local people and communities to engage and interact with the council on issues that are important to them with a focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working effectively with community committees, local members and the third sector to prioritise and tackle local issues. 2. Create a culture of effective partnership working to support the delivery of stronger and more cohesive communities. 3. Working with the Young Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and third sector partners to identify new opportunities to provide services and tackle inequality. 4. Establishing high standards for cross-council safeguarding. 5. Reviewing the taxi and private hire fleet to ensure there is a wide range of vehicles which meet customer access requirements. 6. Reviewing the statement of licensing policy to reflect local needs. 7. Delivering the joint general parliamentary, local and parish/town council elections in May 2015. 	<p>Providing accessible and integrated services: Creating integrated access to council and partner services that places the customer at the centre of what we do and meets their needs with a focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rolling out a network of community hubs delivering integrated housing, welfare, health, library and advice services. 2. Creating spaces that support social inclusion and offer the opportunity to discover, relax and learn as well as supporting literacy through a love of reading. 3. Delivering the centres of excellence model within the corporate contact centre, including the delivery of a fully integrated council tax service. 4. Delivering integrated pathways under a think family approach to address vulnerability issues including safeguarding and domestic violence as well as a range of health issues including drugs and alcohol. 5. Developing a digital inclusion strategy which supports and helps citizens and communities in Leeds to get on-line. 6. Driving customer self-service through digital channels by delivering the Council's new Customer Contact Platform and a benefits e-claim solution. 7. Developing a coherent branding and marketing approach for all our Citizens@Leeds activities to support improved community engagement.