

Supporting Communities and tackling poverty

This paper provides a progress report on the Best Council priority of supporting communities and tackling poverty. The first section of the paper sets out the current context of poverty and deprivation in Leeds and then, in section 2, looks at some of the key achievements over the last 18 months following the formation of the Citizens & Communities Directorate.

Section 3 provides a short series of case studies looking in more detail at some of the successful initiatives with a strong theme emerging of cross-directorate working and partnership working. The final section sets out the aims for the next 5 years and next steps for the next 12 months that will help deliver these aims.

Section 1: Poverty and deprivation in Leeds

Leeds is a successful city that has shown a great deal of resilience during the recent recession. The First Direct Arena, the Trinity shopping centre and new Victoria Gate development are all signs of a recovering, growing and vibrant economy. However, despite this resilience and economic recovery, other factors such as the squeeze on public sector finance and changes to welfare and benefits means that there are a large number of people in the city that face challenging circumstances and are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Whilst many of these people will live in some of the most deprived areas of our city, we know that the economic pressures of the last few years have had an impact on a large number of people right across the city.

We know that there have been long-term challenges to address such as access to sustainable, permanent and fairly paid employment, which has been made more difficult by welfare support changes over the last few years. The issue of fair pay, or better known as a living wage, has become a crucial factor in recent years as we have experienced a significant increase in the number of people who are working but living in poverty – so much so that for the first time since records begun, 2014 statistics demonstrated there were more people considered as working and suffering poverty as compared to those not working and in poverty.¹

Analysis of the welfare changes introduced in April 2013 show that many people are struggling as a consequence of the changes introduced. There has been an increase in the number of tenants in rent arrears and more people are falling behind with their Council Tax payments. In addition, changes around the benefit cap have seen more people faced with reductions in financial support and the impact on families and children is significant. Furthermore, the rollout of Universal Credit, with its digital by default nature and the implications of direct payment of rent to tenants, is expected to lead to further increases in rent arrears and may create an environment where more people get into unmanageable debt and turn to high cost and payday lenders for access to quick credit.

¹ Joseph Rowntree's More Jobs Better Jobs initiative

The Council's response to this challenge has been the development of a city-wide anti-poverty approach that prepares the city for further welfare changes; develops new activities and initiatives to tackle high cost lenders; seeks to maximise access to training and employment opportunities for local people; and seeks to develop more accessible and integrated service delivery solutions to provide more localised and targeted support and advice.

The following section provides an analysis of the current levels of poverty in Leeds.

People in Poverty in Leeds

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks areas of Leeds in order of deprivation. The most recent IMD was undertaken in 2010, and measures overall deprivation by scoring areas on a number of themes including Income, Employment, Health, Housing, Education, Environment and Crime. According to the 2010 index over 150,000 people in Leeds live in areas that are ranked amongst the most deprived 10% nationally, and this represents 20% of the city's population. Some of Leeds' most deprived areas are located within the Gipton and Harehills ward. When the Index is analysed just on the Income theme, the most deprived area in Leeds is within the Chapel Allerton ward. This highlights how different aspects of poverty are impacting different parts of the city.

Household income, after housing costs have been deducted is often the base for analysing poverty. Poverty Thresholds are calculated for different household types and the current threshold income levels are set out in the table below.

Poverty Thresholds, 2012/13	£, per week
Couple with no children	224
Single with no children	130
Couple with two children aged 5 and 14	364
Single with two children aged 5 and 14	269
Source: DWP, Households below average income (HBAI), July 2014, next release July 2015	

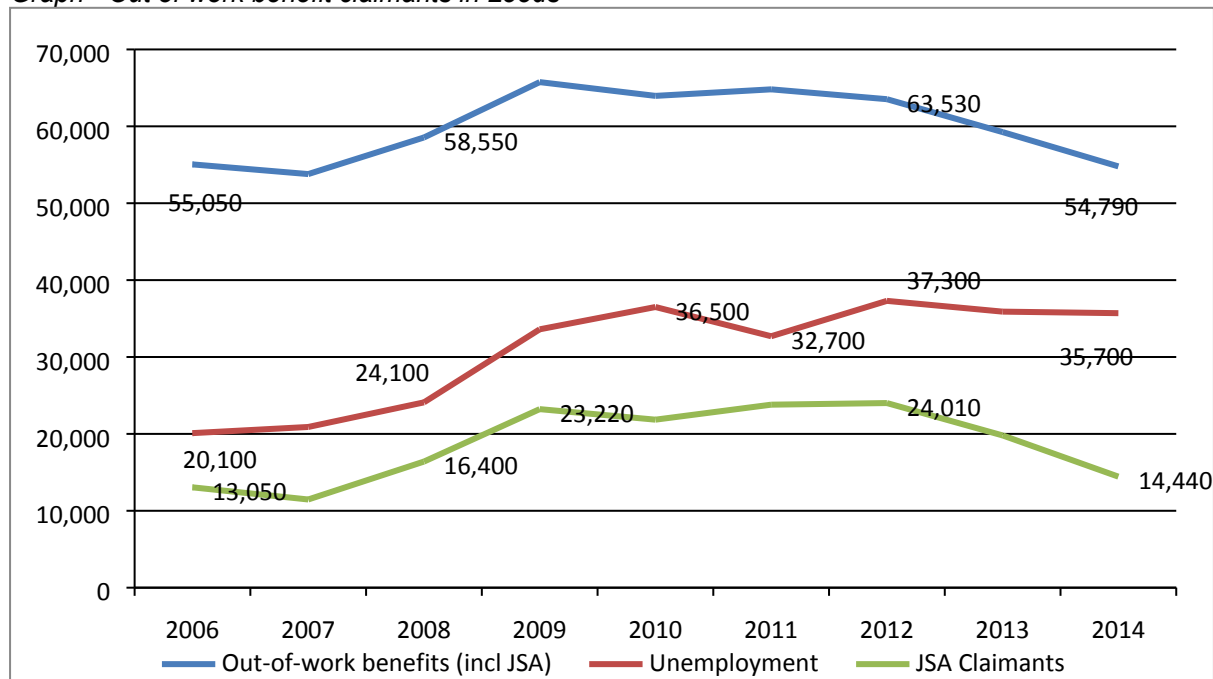
Using thresholds of poverty such as these, it is estimated that there are 13.2 million people in poverty in the UK. This is 21% of the UK population. If a similar proportion of the Leeds population lived in poverty, this would equate to 160,000 people in Leeds (21% of Leeds' total population).

In-work poverty

Total employment in Leeds in 2015 was estimated at 480,000. Between 2005 and 2015, over 15,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment figures have been gradually falling since 2012 but are yet to reach pre-recession levels. The graph below displays both overall unemployment in Leeds (derived from the Annual Population Survey of those aged 16-64 who are unemployed) and unemployment in terms of Key Out-of-Work Benefit claimants (derived from the DWP's Out-of-work claimants, which include Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance Claimants (ESA) and Lone Parents). The graph shows there has been a 40% fall in JSA, a 14% fall in Out-of-work benefit claimants since 2012 and only a 4% fall in overall unemployment since 2012².

Figures for November 2014 also show that 31,880 people were out of work and getting Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefits and a further 6,680 Lone Parents were also out of work and getting benefits.

Graph - Out of work benefit claimants in Leeds



Work should offer a reliable route out of poverty, but national data reveals 2 million people are in work, from households where all adults are earning, yet their combined income still falls below the poverty threshold. In addition to this, 3.1 million adults live in households where at least 1 person is in work and their income is below the poverty threshold. This shows some people are working on very low incomes and supporting other adults. Taken together, 13.5% of all working age adults are affected by in-work poverty. If a similar proportion of the Leeds population was affected in this way, it is estimated that 68,000 (13.5% of Leeds' working age population) of Leeds adults are experiencing in-work poverty.

This level of in-work poverty indicates a problem with the nature of work at the bottom end of the labour market. Jobs that are low paid, low skilled and offer zero-hour contracts are all contributing to in-work poverty.

The UK Living Wage for outside of London is currently £7.85 per hour. In Leeds, the average full-time worker wage is £12.79 per hour; the average part time worker wage is £8.42 per hour. Most people in Leeds earn more than the Living Wage but 10% of residents, in full-time work, are earning less than the Living Wage; this is estimated to affect at least 30,000 residents. Amongst part-time workers the figure is significantly higher with at least 40% (122,000 workers) of Leeds residents who work part-time earning less than the Living Wage.

² From September 2013, school pupils turning 16 must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday and are no longer entitled to claim JSA in England.

As shown by the table below, taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the lower 20% of workers are earning less than the living wage in Leeds.

2014	Lower 10% Earners	Lower 20% Earners	Lower 25% Earners	Lower 30% Earners	Lower 40% Earners	Median Earners	Top 10% Earners
All Leeds Residents	£6.61	£7.58	£8.15	£8.76	£10.10	£11.49	£24.40
Full Time	£7.37	£8.59	£9.24	£10.00	£11.27	£12.79	£24.97
Part-time	£6.32	£6.50	£6.67	£6.94	£7.50	£8.42	n/a
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Nov 2014 (next update Nov 2015)							

Child Poverty

There are 3.7 million children living in poverty in the UK. Of these children, 61% (2.2 million) live in a family where at least one member of the household works.

According to local figures, 29,805 children in Leeds are estimated to be living in poverty. Although the rate of child poverty in Leeds is 21.6%, just slightly higher than the national rate of 19.2%, certain areas of Leeds have rates above 40%. The Child Poverty rate in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill is 42% and in Hyde Park and Woodhouse it is 44%. These figures are based on the number of children under 16 from low income families in receipt of out-of-work benefits or tax credits with a reported income of less than 60% of UK median earnings.

Fuel Poverty

Under the government's new definition, there are an estimated 38,100 Leeds households experiencing fuel poverty. This is 11.6% of all Leeds households that are fuel poor, slightly above the national level of 10.4% (2.3 million households). The new measure introduced the fuel poverty gap which represents the difference between the required fuel costs for each household and the average required fuel costs. The average fuel poverty gap is £443. This means that all fuel poor households would need an average of £443 more a year, in order to heat their homes properly.

Welfare Reform – Impacts on Housing Benefit and Council Tax

In the last five years the Council's welfare benefit caseload has grown, with the number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support each seeing an increase of over 10% since the recession in 2008.

From April 2013, major reform to welfare benefits started to take effect nationally. One of the first changes to be introduced was a change termed the spare room subsidy or under-occupancy, commonly referred to as the 'bedroom tax'. This change affected the amount of Housing Benefit paid to working age tenants who live in council or housing association properties; Housing Benefit was reduced where they have more bedrooms than the family is deemed to need. The Benefit Cap was also introduced, whereby a limit was placed on the total amount of benefit received

by working age people who are not in employment. Council Tax Support scheme replaced the previous scheme of Council Tax Benefit. This has meant that a significant number of households who would previously have had full council tax support, now have to pay 26% of their council tax (see below).

Housing benefit under-occupancy

The number of households claiming housing benefit affected by the under-occupancy changes in Leeds is approximately 7,000. These households are losing a total of over £88,000 a week. This is an average of £13 cut from each household per week. Of the 7,000 claims, over 40% of households (almost 3,000) are in rent arrears.

Benefit cap

Almost 350 households are affected by the Benefit Cap in Leeds. Of this figure around 230 are Private tenants with an average weekly loss of £50; 80 are Housing Leeds tenants with an average weekly loss of £40 and 25 are Housing Association tenants with an average weekly loss of £50. The total weekly reduction for claims affected by the Benefit Cap in Leeds was over £17,000 in September 2014. This means an average of around £50 is being reduced across 350 households in Leeds.

Council Tax Support changes

About 29,000 households, who would previously have had full council tax support, now have to pay 26% of their council tax. Over one year the 29,000 households have together lost almost £5.2m of benefit. This is an average loss of around £180 per year to each household.

Changes to Housing Benefit in the Private Rented Sector were introduced from 2011 and have had an impact on the affordability of private rented properties. Local Housing Allowances were reduced across the board in 2011 and a 1% cap on increases in LHA rates was imposed in April 2013. The latest analysis shows:

- In high rent areas, between 76% (in Burley and Little Woodhouse) and 100% (in Scarcroft, Bardsley and Thorner) of advertised lettings are at rents higher than the LHA rate.
- In mid rent areas, between 45% (in Morley) and 93% (in Guiseley) of advertised lettings are at rents higher than the LHA rate.
- In low rent areas, between 0% (in Halton Moor) and 48% (in Seacroft/Swarcliffe) of advertised lettings are at rents higher than the LHA rate.

Debt

People in poverty, with no savings and low incomes are vulnerable to debt becoming unmanageable and spiralling out of control. Nationally, the average household debt (excluding mortgages) is £6,400. The average borrowing for individuals is £3,300 (this includes credit cards, motor and retail finance deals, overdrafts and unsecured loans). If a household suffers an unexpected shock such as a redundancy, bereavement or a long term medical illness, failing to keep up with credit repayments can lead to poverty.

When debt becomes unmanageable a number of insolvency options become available, however these often leave people with poor credit ratings and limited options for affordable credit. Individual insolvency procedures include bankruptcy, debt relief orders and individual voluntary arrangements. In Leeds there were 1,100 individual insolvencies issued in 2013. These were made up of 300 bankruptcies, 200 Debt Relief Orders and 600 new Individual Voluntary Arrangements. Once a person has undergone one of these procedures, their credit options become limited. Since the 2008 recession, mainstream finance has been squeezed and harder to obtain, creating a gap in the market which high cost lenders have exploited.

For the whole high cost lending market (home credit, pawn brokers, money shops, payday lenders and rent to buy shops) it was estimated that loans to consumers totalled £7.5 billion in 2008 (OFT 2010). On this basis, it is estimated the market was worth £90m in Leeds. More recent data suggests the UK pay day lending market alone was worth £2.0 to £2.2 billion in 2012; this is up from an estimated £900 million in 2008 (OFT 2013). Based on this estimate, the payday loan market alone was likely to be worth £26m in Leeds.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for tackling poor conduct in the High Cost Short Term Credit market to ensure consumer protection. In January 2015, the FCA implemented a cap on credit to specifically tackle online and retail payday lenders; preventing them from charging excessive fees and interest. Although this has been a positive step, the cap was set at a relatively high level (circa 1,300% representative APR) and the cap does not cover other high credit options such as pawn brokers, rent-to-buy shops, home credit loans, logbook loans and guarantor loans.

The provision of Food Aid support in Leeds has grown over the last 2 years. The nature of food aid provision which is often provided by local charities and churches, means that it is difficult to get accurate statistics on the numbers using food aid locally. The Trussell Trust keeps statistics for Yorkshire and Humber and this shows that use of Foodbanks in Y&H has seen a 61% increase in the last year with the number of people using foodbanks increasing from 37,403 in 2013/14 to 60,186 in 14/15.

Domestic Violence

The wards with the highest incidence of domestic violence correlates strongly with the wards with the highest incidence of multiple deprivation. This has implications both for the victims of domestic violence and their options for dealing with incidents of domestic violence and also for the type of support and help that is made available. Working with individuals and families to address financial hardship is an important element of the work needed to tackle domestic violence in the city.

Section 2: Our response

The Council's Best Council Plan identifies as a key priority the need to "Support communities and tackle poverty". In 2013 the Council brought together a number of services under the new Citizens and Communities directorate tasked with taking a lead on addressing the poverty agenda, working with other directorates, services and partners.

In the summer of 2013, Executive Board endorsed an approach to tackling poverty, built around 4 key propositions:

- *Helping people out of financial hardship*: with a focus on reducing dependency on local and national benefits, improving access to affordable credit as well as tackling high costs lending, reducing debt levels and increasing financial resilience of the poorest citizens and communities in the city;
- *Providing integrated and accessible services and pathways*: with a focus on developing integrated pathways of support that are accessible to local communities and create local partnerships between council-led services and other relevant organisations;
- *Helping people into work*: with a focus on working with those adults who are furthest away from employment and developing programmes of support that meet individual needs and promote citizen engagement;
- *Being responsive to the needs of local people*: with a focus on establishing a voice for local communities within the democratic process that leads to community-supported actions to address local issues.

The following pages set out some of the key achievements over the last 18 months and demonstrate the value and power of cross-directorate working and the effectiveness of our relationships with Third Sector Leeds and Voluntary Action Leeds partners.

Helping people out of financial hardship – key achievements

What we've done	How it helped
Delivered a Local Welfare Support scheme	<p>£2.6m on providing direct emergency support covering food, fuel, furniture, cookers, clothing etc.to over 15,000 residents in need.</p> <p>Additional advice activity covering welfare benefit surgeries and debt advice as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • casework services to Families First referrals from the CHEAD cluster and to families with no recourse to public funds that are in receipt of section 17 monies from Children's Services; • 3 Domestic Violence Peer Support Groups hosted by Women's Health Matters, and; • 4 Opportunity Shops offering community volunteering opportunities and access to GIPSIL Advice Service.
Delivered a Discretionary Housing Payments scheme	<p>Since 2103 we've made around 7,000 awards amounting to £4.8m to support tenants affected by welfare reforms since 2013. 65% of the awards have been made to help tenants affected by the under-occupancy changes.</p>
Multi-storey flats initiative	<p>Wrap around, personalised support delivered to around 550 tenants affected by the under-occupancy rules. Details of the pilot are set out as a detailed case study in Section 3.</p>
Social Inclusion Fund	<p>Working with Leeds Community Foundation, the fund has provided small grants to help with financial inclusion initiative. It has also supported::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trialling new more inclusive ways of accessing advice; • Further developing an innovative debt advice solution for roll out across the city, and; • Supporting a scheme that helps residents with significant challenges (including substance dependency issues) to move closer to the labour market.
Tackling debt issues	<p>Helped tackle the scourge of High-cost lenders in the city through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banning their websites, • launching a Take A Stand campaign; and • lobbying for changes to the high cost credit market; <p>Developed and launched the Money Information Centre;</p> <p>Supported Leeds City Credit Union (LCCU) to promote</p>

	<p>its growth through brand awareness publicity, community campaigns and support for a modernisation programme that has seen the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headrow Moneyline (a CDFI initiative), • an on-line payday loan solution; and • the first LCCU Loan shop on Roundhay Road which aims to compete with the high street lenders; <p>Housing Leeds funding supports 3 Money Management and Budgeting LCCU workers across the city, providing an exclusive service to Housing Leeds tenants.</p> <p>Developed a strategic relationship with StepChange Debt Charity that provides direct access to StepChange Debt Charity in One Stop Centres and Community Hubs;</p> <p>Housing Leeds have delivered Financial Inclusion training to front line Housing staff to increase awareness, advice and support for tenants.</p> <p>All Housing Leeds tenants receive an Annual Home Visit and during the visit they are offered budgeting support.</p> <p>Public Health are leading on an initiative to support frontline workers to signpost clients to appropriate support</p>
Tackling food poverty	<p>Supported the introduction and development of a Food Aid Network within the city which brings together national, city-wide and local agencies and voluntary organisations in order to share good practice, resources and expertise and to develop an understanding of the needs of providers and service users;</p> <p>Provided a number of food banks with financial support to help get established, ensuring that families continue to be fed, and;</p> <p>Worked closely with FareShare Yorkshire to establish a base in Leeds that supports distribution of food to Foodbanks and schools that would otherwise have ended up in landfill.</p>

Providing accessible and integrated services – key achievements

What we've done	How it helped
<p>Delivered 3 Community Hub pathfinders in the city which has integrated services from the Council and partners to make it easy for people to get the services they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-locating with local Neighbourhood Police teams has resulted in the increased presence of local policing within the community, reduced tension in the Community Hubs and a faster response to reports from staff and citizens presenting with domestic violence and human trafficking issues; • Improved our working relationship with the voluntary and 3rd sector with new & extended services being available from the Hubs and through 'Pop-up' services, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ICT support, ○ Volunteering, ○ support to vulnerable 16-25 year olds, ○ support to parents; and ○ local food banks. • Some of the organisations worked with include Chapeltown & Harehills Area Learning Project, Caring Dads (a service for Dads who want to rebuild a broken relationship with their children), the Healthy Living Network/Barca, Archway and Leeds West Foodbank; • Delivered a single team approach for customer services, library and the job shop resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ extended opening hours (e.g. St George's Centre Library hrs extended from 25 hrs a week to 69 hrs a week); ○ a new welcoming front-of house roles with floorwalkers to meet and greet customers and establish reason for the visit to the centre; ○ increased case-working with priority need customers (for example, Armley job shop now convert 25% of their customers into jobs (previously 8%); • Integrated working with both Children's Services and Housing Leeds leading to increased provision of key services in local communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 80 additional under 2 years free nursery places in Harehills ○ the ability to access Housing Options and sign up for tenancies in Armley ○ costs savings as a result of integration (for example Children's services saved approx. £80k as a result of the integrated working in Harehills).

Introduced a ' Centre of Excellence ' approach within the Council's Corporate Contact Centre	Provides more focus on supporting citizens' deal with much more complex social and economic issues around Care and Safeguarding, Welfare and Benefits and Environment and Community Infrastructure.
Delivered a reconfigured advice services to increase access for all Leeds residents.	The reconfiguration will see the number of residents able to access advice increase from around 18,000 to over 35,000 over the next 2 years;
Improved use of Digital channels	<p>This has been done through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the introduction of a Web Chat facility which enables customers to engage with the Council in real-time whilst using the Council's website, ○ greater engagements via Social Media, specifically through Facebook and the @LeedsCC-Help twitter account, ○ an increased focus on ensuring that the content on the website is truly customer focussed so that customers can find what they are looking for without recourse to ringing or visiting the Council and; ○ latterly, through the introduction of greater self-serve capability on the Council's website so that citizens can report issues and make service requests around highways and environmental services on-line: <p>The delivery of an on-line application process for Housing Benefits, Council tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments will be introduced over the summer leading to improvements in speed of processing, accuracy and accessibility of benefits.</p>

Helping people into work – key achievements

What we've done	How it helped
Introduced a network of community champions around Employment, Skills and Worklessness.	<p>The network has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> established partnership action plans to ensure that Council services, Jobcentre Plus, learning institutions, training providers and community and third sector organisations work together to meet local needs and target priority groups and neighbourhoods; promoted and supported the delivery of locality focused apprenticeship fairs and workshops for over 1,000 young people.
Delivered work-related initiatives	<p>The initiatives have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported over 4,000 people into work through a wide range of programmes that provide advice and guidance, skills training, work experience and brokerage with employers. supported over 8,000 adults to take their first steps or re-engage with learning; delivered over 1,000 courses at 200 community venues which are designed to help those with low skills or no qualifications learn new skills and build confidence and acquire formal qualifications; delivered training and recruitment information sessions in communities to link these to the job and training opportunities offered by developers seeking planning consent and businesses contracting with the Council with over 500 local residents securing jobs in construction, retail, hospitality and customer services.
Supported citizens who, as a consequence of difficulties associated with their mental health and wellbeing , are further away from the workplace and in or closer to poverty.	<p>Support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Leeds offer support to people with Mental Health issues looking for employment. Positive Pathways Housing Service and Jobcentre plus help people with Mental Health issues find good quality work. The Employment support service help improve employment rates for people accessing adult social care, Jobcentreplus and housing mental health support services. Job retention support is offered for people in employment, who are at risk of losing their jobs and are accessing IAPT, specific GP and secondary mental health services. Group peer support e.g. Being Well at Work groups,

	<p>stress management workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT service gain ECDL, City & Guilds qualifications and general IT skills for work. • Mindful Employer – co-ordinate and 'lead' for City of Leeds in supporting employers to create mentally healthy workplaces.
Implemented a new Council Tax Support Scheme	The scheme is the first in the country to build conditionality around finding work into the qualification criteria for obtaining Council Tax support. This will provide additional help with finding employment and dealing with money issues to over 1,000 unemployed residents in the first year.
Supported the Volunteering Centre run by Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL)	<p>Numerous studies of employers have shown that volunteering helps candidates improve the quality of their offer to prospective employers and improves their chances of being successful.</p> <p>Studies have also shown that volunteering by their workforce reduces sickness absence and improves staff general wellbeing and we have actively sought to increase the visibility and use of the Council's employee supported volunteering scheme.</p>
Multi-storey flats initiative	Housing Leeds led pilot with Welfare & Benefits for tenants suffering financial hardship due to their Under Occupation charge has helped over 129 tenants into work.

Strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities – key achievements

What we've done	How it helped
Developed and delivered the new Community Committees approach across the city	<p>Community Committees were developed with the expressed aim to be more locally responsive, more accountable to local members and local people and to improve locality outcomes. Since their inception, workshops and meetings have seen a significant increase in attendance, and a far greater involvement in conversations that can influence local service delivery. The workshops have focused on issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social isolation ○ Employment and skills ○ Mental health ○ Domestic violence
Provided funding for local communities through the Wellbeing Budget and Youth Activities Fund .	<p>Administered by Community Committees, this combined budget of £2m is there to support initiatives and activities that will benefit the local area and address local priorities. Since April 2014, 75% of the fund has been spent on supporting communities and tackling poverty in the city and some of the relevant key initiatives supported include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Food Banks • Providing financial advice • Supporting 'Money Buddies' • Increasing access to computers and the internet • Supported vulnerable residents through wellbeing packs, which help on issues of warmth, food and health.
Supported the Poverty Truth Challenge which brings together business and community leaders with those experiencing, first hand, the challenges of poverty in order to develop new approaches to tackle poverty.	<p>The key areas of focus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Achieving potential</i>: focuses on NEETs and the actions, barriers and incentives to encouraging more young people to achieve their potential; • <i>Disability and poverty</i>: looks at issues for people with disabilities and how organisations/society can provide 'breathing spaces' that would enable greater involvement and fulfilment for people with disabilities; • <i>Stigma and perception</i>: focuses on barriers created by negative portrayal of 'poor' people, esp. people on benefits, and 'poor' communities. Intention is to show that a more informed understanding would lead to better outcomes for all, including agencies charged with helping people in poverty.

<p>In March 2015, Executive board agreed to delegate investment into local parks and associated facilities to community committees.</p>	<p>The service has analysed all the parks, green spaces etc. against the Leeds Parks standard providing a bench mark against which members can make decisions. The work of the service, and the tasks to be completed, have also been reviewed so that from 2016 the community committee can make service and investment choices. In the current year Community Committee Champions will work with their committees to prepare for this delegation.</p>
<p>Support for the City of Sanctuary movement</p>	<p>Leeds is proud to be a City of Sanctuary and aims to ensure that all people are welcomed and treated fairly and with dignity. We recognise that there are asylum seekers, within Leeds, who have no recourse to public funds, they have no legal right to work and cannot support themselves. They may have left their home countries under difficult circumstances, with no independent means, and have specific support needs. We are supporting the Migration Partnership work to understand current issues, numbers and impacts and to prevent destitution in Leeds.</p>
<p>Implemented Individual Electoral Registration</p>	<p>The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) presented a significant challenge to maintain community engagement with the democratic process as registration levels dropped across the country. Local data matching, doorstep canvassing and a postal mini canvass has helped Leeds achieve higher registration figures than pre-IER and created a solid foundation for a successful set of elections in 2015 and beyond.</p>

Section 3: Case Studies

Financial Hardship: Multi-storey flats initiative

The multi-storey flats initiative was set up to see whether providing financial support within a wider package of personal support and advice would lead to better outcomes and reduce dependency on financial support. The introduction of the under-occupancy rules in Housing Benefit (sometimes called the 'bedroom tax') means that many single tenants and childless couple living in 2- or 3-bed flats have to pay an additional £12 a week on average to maintain their tenancies. These tenants are not normally considered a priority for Discretionary Housing Payments.

A project was agreed which would see tenants paid Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) for a maximum of 6 months on condition they engaged with the Council to agree a package of support activities that would help reduce debt or increase employability. Housing Leeds provided the face-to-face Key Worker and co-ordinated the delivery of additional support activities; Welfare & Benefits provided the Discretionary Housing Payments service.

1,077 tenants living in the multi-storey flats were affected by the under-occupancy changes and 763 agreed to participate in the initiative. This is a participation rate of 71%. The table below shows the number of tenants wanting to participate in the different activities with most tenants requesting more than 1 activity

Category	Activity	Number
1	Confidence Building	153
2	Job Clubs/CV Writing	250
3	Budgeting/Money Management	142
4	Healthy Living/Cooking on a budget	173
5	Energy Saving/Fuel Switch	144
6	Benefit Advice/Leeds City Credit Union	128
7	Money Buddies	17
8	IT Skills	198
9	Voluntary Work	176
10	Dealing with Sanctions	9
	Total Number of Support Measures Offered	1390

Since the start of the initiative 129 tenants have moved into paid work and a number have carried out voluntary work. A sample of 10 tenants that the project supported into work has been undertaken.

- All were signposted to Employment and Skills
- 8 are no longer dependent on HB.
- Of the 10 sampled the following support activities undertaken were:
 - Confidence Building = 4
 - Job Clubs = 9
 - Budgeting = 5
 - Cooking on a budget = 2
 - Energy Saving = 3

- LCCU = 1
- IT Skills = 3
- Voluntary Action Leeds = 4

173 tenants expressed an interest in making changes to their lifestyle in order to improve their health and wellbeing. This has included attending sessions on alcohol and drug misuse, how to prepare healthy meals on a budget and attendance at local sports centres. This has been delivered in partnership with Leeds Let's Get Active and Public Health.

Tenants were surveyed at the start of the initiative and after they had been involved for 6 months. The results of the initiative are shown here with the highlight being the outcome that 93% of tenants say that engagement on the initiative has made a difference to their life.

Key emerging findings from multi storey flat pilots:

- 89% of tenants are now managing well (up from 61%)
- 89% of tenants feel able to deal with problems (up from 62%)
- 78% of tenants are feeling generally optimistic (up from 57%)
- 93% of tenants say the engagement in the pilot has made a difference or a big difference in their life

Individual stories also demonstrate the value of the initiative:

- 1 tenant living in a top floor flat had no aspirations, was isolated and cut off and hadn't eaten properly for a while. With the help of the Key Worker, the tenant received a food voucher, applied for a grant to help with water debt, joined a local gardening club and a woodwork club and has now become a volunteer driver
- 1 Tenant has lost 1st 5lbs since May through the healthy living swimming and looking at his diet, he has also got onto a Customer Service Training course and obtained a GNVQ in Customer service in the hope of getting an interview out of the training.
- 1 tenant has helped set up a social club for the block in her area and they apply for funding to take the residents on trips.
- 1 tenant had debts of over £5000 from catalogues and online shopping is now in a payment plan with her creditors and will be debt free in 3 years.
- 1 Tenant volunteers for the food bank and is training to become a food/warehouse distribution manager and hopes it might lead to a full time job. He is also going to engage with pinnacle people as he would like a job in care.
- 1 Tenant now voluntarily knits for charity for the baby unit at LGI

Integrated and accessible services:

Working with the Third Sector

A key focus for the Community Hubs is to work closer with the Voluntary and 3rd Sector in Leeds. The 3 Pathfinder sites have enabled a number of initiative and projects to get off the ground around this focus and the following provides a short summary of the work that has been done in the past 12 months.

Extended Use of Community Hub buildings

- At the Compton Centre community hub an additional IT skills courses is being provided four evening a week and on Saturdays. These sessions are being delivered by Chapeltown and Harehills Area Learning Project. A fifth evening session is being delivered by 'Together Women' supporting local women.
- Connexions and BARCA are making use of rooms at Armley Community Hub for drop-in sessions for young people. They had previously been advised that the use of rooms would be chargeable however this can now be provided free of charge. Connexions provide personal, transition and career support for 13 – 19 year olds and BARCA is a multi-purpose charity in Bramley which provides specialist support to people to help them overcome a broad range of issues.
- Police are collocated in 3 hubs so a local police station is in these communities where residents can call in. Previously, in these 3 areas there was no locally based teams and to talk with the Police was either by phone or to travel to an area with a Police Station. The Council provides the front of house for the Police enquiries. So at St George's Centre the front of house team is the Council, the NHS and the Police.

Providing services that meet local need

- In the St Georges Centre and Armley community hubs, Archway is providing a surgery each week. This service is aimed at vulnerable 16 – 25 year olds and offers counselling, welfare rights advice, employment and training support. The surgeries at the centre are focussing on housing support, including teenage parent housing support.
- In the St Georges Centre community hub, Voluntary Action Leeds attends each fortnight and work alongside our staff to recruit volunteers.
- Money Buddies are holding surgeries at the three pathfinder hubs. They are a team of volunteers who deliver a free, confidential, impartial and independent financial advice to the public.
- Collaboration with Angel of Youths saw a consultation process being held in Armley Community Hub centre to engage with young people (16 – 30) and get their views on what they would like to do / get involved with in the area.

- A training event was held with Living Streets, a national charity helping to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets where it's great to walk. Living Streets have lottery funding to deliver training to a group of people who will then become qualified and fully insured walk leaders. The charity will focus on facilitating 1-2 mile walks for residents in the Armley & New Wortley area.
- The Community Hubs have encouraged businesses to use the local Hub building to hold recruitment of their vacancies e.g. Asda used St George's Centre to recruit and train their staff for a new local store. This also included the Council helping people make their job application, get online and prepare for working.

More Integrated working

- Colleagues from Armley Community Hub have been working with BARCA on their "Our Place" development regarding a collaborative approach for integrated and accessible services in Bramley. The initiative will be focussing on communities on the Fairfields and Broadleas estates and Armley Community Hub will be joining other agencies to offer support to residents on money worries and helping people get ready for work. This will be held on the estates and the Hub team will go to them to deliver the service.
- IT learning sessions have been provided in Armley hub for an Eastern European women's group run by "Get IT Together Leeds". This is a project working in partnership with Leeds City Council and BT aimed at tackling digital exclusion in the Leeds City Area. As part of this, the librarian came to the session to help support any additional resources which could be offered in the library e.g. easy readers and ESOL books.
- The Volunteer Centre is based with the City Centre Council site and is delivering services in communities to encourage communities to volunteer.

Helping people into work:

ASDA recruitment exercise

Team: Jobshops and Outreach

Ward: Middleton Park

Following the grant of planning consent and the negotiation of a S106 agreement including employment and skills obligations, Asda constructed a new store in Middleton offering the prospect of up to 300 new jobs.

Employment and Skills were invited to support local recruitment by planning and coordinating a programme of awareness raising and capacity building ahead of the scheduled opening in May 2014. A range of activities commenced in February, including 34 information sessions over 3 days at local venues to:

- provide potential applicants with key information about job roles and the unique Asda online recruitment process
- provide referral and signposting for further support and guidance

The Power of Team Work

The service brought together key partners within the area, to support the marketing effort: leafleting, web advertisements, banners and text messaging. In addition to Employment and Skills, Community Hubs, the Library Service and Housing Leeds from within the Council, the following partners contributed to the success of the marketing campaign and delivery of the information sessions:

Jobcentre Plus

Aspire-igen
BITMO

GMB

Union Learn
Remploy

A great result!

In total, 1,497 people booked onto the sessions. ASDA appointed to 222 posts with 67% of recruits residing within the local area. Comments from successful applicants included:

“Could not have done it without your support”

“The information given at the sessions was absolutely invaluable”

Helping people into work and tackling poverty

The ‘More jobs, better jobs’ partnership

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) aims to find out how economic growth can be promoted in a way that enables people to lift themselves and their communities out of poverty. The Foundation wants to make addressing poverty a more integral part of local growth strategies. The More Jobs, Better Jobs partnership between JRF, Leeds City Council and Leeds City Region, a locally focused 3 year programme, aims to achieve this and sits at the heart of JRF’s Cities, growth and poverty research programme. This builds on the findings of the Commission on the Future of Local Government’s commitment to pursuing “good growth”.

The More Jobs Better Jobs partnership launched in February 2014 aims to understand how we can ensure local people across Leeds and Leeds City Region , and those in greatest need, benefit from jobs and growth. We know that even when a city economy is growing, some people and parts of the city remain cut off from the prosperity and jobs that growth can bring. Through its programme the partnership will support the design and implementation of practical, evidence based policy and practice solutions for promoting more inclusive growth and reducing poverty by:-

- Developing a better understanding of the relationship between poverty and the economy at a city and city region level;
- Identifying what can be done and by whom at a city/city region level to create more and better jobs;
- Making addressing poverty a more integral part of local growth strategies in cities and city regions

The partnership has produced a ‘base line’ study mapping the attitudes, strategies and initiatives around linking the local growth and poverty agendas. It found a good understanding of growth and poverty as separate issues and the issues of in-work poverty and job quality are rising in importance. The issues of wage levels and terms and conditions are widely recognised as important to poverty reduction but the extent to which growth and poverty are linked is less evident and that ‘good growth’ appears to be a high level narrative which is not yet embedded in organisational culture and ethos. The study recommended that actions related to growth, jobs and poverty needed to have a more strategic, collaborative and targeted approach if they are going to make a significant difference.

In autumn 2014, the partnership published the baseline alongside measures that will allow it check and challenge progress towards our goals.

Having identified the key issues, the partnership has developed a programme of work involving institutions that can offer external expertise and challenge to address these:-

Jobs and Skills – Warwick University are working with local stakeholders to co-design and test an innovative package of employment and skills initiatives that can be applied to a number of sectors to support progression for low paid workers to

higher skilled and higher paid jobs across Leeds City Region. Work will complete in the Summer 2015.

Anchor Institutions – Leeds Beckett University is working with 12 Anchor Institutions, the biggest spenders and employers in the region, to explore the impact they have on the local economy and reducing poverty. It examines how they can do this through their procurement, recruitment and employment practices and to share and develop best practice. Work will complete early 2016.

Infrastructure and Planning – University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University are working with the Council and other local authorities to review existing activity and better connect those residents needing more support to access to jobs and training created through their controls over major developments and contracts. Work will complete in the summer 2015.

Overcoming Disconnection and Deprivation – University of Sheffield is working with stakeholders to develop policy proposals that better connect neighbourhoods experiencing persistent poverty to the urban labour market. Work will be completed on late 2015.

The partnership will run until 2017 and will continue to initiate new research and follow up projects throughout the course of the partnership while. It will continue to develop and 'road test' policy initiatives, taking learning from our research and putting it into practice across the city region; embedding learning and solutions from this work in local policy/practice; identifying local champions to take forward the partnership agenda; and sharing good practice/learning from the programme with other cities.

Strengthening local accountability

Tackling social isolation

Many of our Community Committees have taken an in-depth look at what it means to be lonely and isolated in our inner and outer area communities; particularly, its impact on mental health and well-being and its relationship to poverty and deprivation. For example,

- In January 2015, the Outer East Community Committee held a workshop on 'Tackling Social Isolation & Loneliness through Partnership Working'. Swarcliffe Community Centre hosted the workshop with around 60 people attending and all four Neighbourhood Networks in the Outer East being represented. The key determination from the meeting was the need for more outreach work to tackle isolation and loneliness. The Community Committee has agreed to provide up to £20k from its wellbeing funds to deliver improved outcomes with the support of Leeds City Council's Adult Social Care and the Third Sector to deliver a project to improve the level of engagement with isolated and lonely individuals. It is anticipated that the project will be operational in Autumn 2015 and that this work will be eventually rolled out across the whole South East area.
- The Inner East and the Inner North East Community Committees have worked in partnership with the Poverty Truth Commission and North Clinical Commissioning Group to better understand what it feels like to experience social isolation and the impact it can have on mental health and well being. In January 2015, workshop conversations took place in the Gipton and Chapeltown areas of Leeds. At the Inner East Community Committee meeting held in the Henry Barran Centre in Gipton on 22nd Jan, 42 people including local councillors, residents, council officers, 3rd sector representatives and local GPs were in attendance. At the Inner North East Community Committee meeting held in Roscoe Methodist Church on 19th January, 40 people including local councillors, residents, council officers, 3rd sector representatives and local GPs were in attendance. The Community Committees used the voices of Poverty Truth testifiers to open the workshop to reframe the conversation about how communities tackle the challenge. Both sessions identified a range of issues where integrated locality working could improve how we support people who are lonely and isolated. A key determination was to influence commissioning of services from the Clinical Commissioning Groups and deepening partnership working with the local Third Sector for improved community resilience and "neighbourliness".
- Outer West and Outer North West Community Committees held workshops on 'Social Isolation and Older People' in Horsforth and Pudsey during December 14/January 15 with presentations from Adult Social Care and Public Health colleagues focussed on challenges facing services in supporting older people who were living alone and feeling isolated due to poor mobility, being widowed or as a result of relationship breakdown. A wide range of stakeholders engaged in the events as well as statutory services providers

including local neighbourhood networks and voluntary sector organisations.

- Actions being progressed include putting together guidance for frontline services and organisations to be able to recognise signs that point to isolation and to take steps to engage and refer individuals to key services. To encourage development of 'social connectors' building on the Patient Empowerment model that was developed in partnership with the Leeds West Clinical Commissioning Group in 2013/14 which has seen over 300 patients sign up to provide support to issues like social isolation. The model is being developed in different settings, such as the tower blocks in New Wortley.

Section 4: Next Steps

In our ambition to be the Best City for People to Live, we recognise that improving the quality of life for our residents, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in poverty is a key priority. We cannot solve the challenges facing our communities alone, but we have a vital role in providing leadership to orchestrate collaborative action, where we work with individuals, families and communities, rather than simply delivering services in the traditional manner, we need to help them help themselves.

We want to be a city where all people can realise their ambitions and potential. This will reduce demand for some of our services, ensuring quality provision to those in most need. We will work more closely with all relevant service providers (public/private/third sector) and the community to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are at the heart of our response, rather than institutional perspectives – designing integrated services around individuals.

The continual move towards locally responsive, integrated frontline services is the cornerstone of this approach.

Our aims for the next 5 years:

- Every household in the city is aware of and able to access services that provide practical solutions to deal with financial hardship, support work-related ambitions and promote community-led anti-poverty initiatives;
- A network of Community Hubs with well-developed cross-sector partnerships that deliver integrated pathways of support;
- A Centres of Excellence approach that delivers more effective and efficient council services that provide connections with localities and integrated pathways of support;
- A network of cross-sector partnerships that provide relevant and timely support to enable all vulnerable citizens to manage and maintain Universal Credit claims;
- Devolved welfare schemes delivered locally that provide integrated and wrap around support to customers;
- In conjunction with Leeds City Credit Union, deliver a 5-year strategy that delivers significant growth in membership, loans, savings and products through a modern banking platform;
- An effective, affordable and joined-up network of advice for all Leeds residents that embraces new technologies and recognises and builds on the strengths of all partner organisations, and;
- Supported community-led initiatives that address food poverty and support a food strategy for Leeds that increases local resilience.

So what are we going to do in the next 12 months?

Helping People out of Financial Hardship:

- *Delivering financial support schemes which support the most vulnerable:*
The Local Welfare Support and Discretionary Housing Payments schemes are critical in enabling vulnerable tenants to deal with emergencies and maintain tenancies in the face of reductions in Housing Benefit support. Reductions in Government funding for both these schemes, place an even greater emphasis on ensuring that schemes are targeted at the most vulnerable and where they are most effective.
- *Delivering integrated pathways of support within welfare and benefits services, community hubs and the corporate contact centre:*
The successes of the multi-storey flats pilot and the debt pilot highlight the improved outcomes that can be achieved from integrating support packages that cover financial support, personal support and advice. The approach now needs to be rolled-out wider in a cost effective way that targets those most affected by welfare reforms and those most in need.
- *Providing more accessible advice services to meet demand:*
Significant work has been undertaken by Leeds CAB in reconfiguring their service in order to meet increased demand for advice. We need to work closely with Leeds CAB and the Advice Consortium to help embed the changes and deliver the improvements in 15/16.
- *Developing proposals for greater devolution of welfare responsibilities to support the Core Cities' ambitions:*
All the major parties are committed to devolution in some form and there is a growing body of evidence that devolution of welfare-to-work responsibilities to Combined Authorities or City Regions would generate additional growth and job outcomes and reduce the welfare bill. The welfare devolution debate also needs to embrace welfare benefits delivery in its wider role, including operational and administrative aspects, in order to achieve the greatest outcomes.
- *Tackling high cost lenders:*
14/15 was a significant year in the campaign to tackle high cost lending both locally and nationally. Interest caps were introduced nationally and, locally, the effective partnership between the council and the Credit Union saw the development of real alternatives to the high cost lending market with increased provision of advice and guidance on debt and borrowing. The target for 15/16 is development further alternatives to high cost borrowing and work with Community Committees to develop more locality-based campaigns to tackle debt and high cost lending. As an example, Housing Leeds has started a number of Action Days in local areas with high poverty such as Burmantofts where, along with partner agencies, Loan Sharks/High cost borrowing and other key issues will be targeted. This will have high publicity and high staff presence on the estates to raise awareness and be on hand to deliver advice and support face to face.

- *Working with Leeds City Credit Union to provide affordable credit services:*
The Credit Union has gone from strength to strength in recent years and this has enabled it to play a significant role in helping to tackle financial hardship. In 15/16 we will work with the Credit Union to help develop a 5 year strategy that will focus on modernisation, accessibility, growth in membership and loans, support for businesses and social enterprises and the delivery of efficiencies that will support this growth. The Loan Shop and PayDay Loan initiatives will continue as will Housing Leeds funding for 3 Money Management and Budgeting LCCU workers across the city.
- *Maximising the impact of the Social Inclusion Fund at a local level:*
A number of initiatives have been funded in line with the criteria approved by Executive Board. A key task for the next year is to monitor and evaluate the impact of these initiatives with the intention of developing longer term solutions where appropriate.

Helping People into Work:

- *Reconfiguring the employment and skills role within Community Hubs:*
We will implement the Partnership Agreement which underpins effective delivery of the new blend of universal and targeted services within Hubs. This shapes current arrangements and the future development of the city's employment and skills offer in the context of changing policy and delivery arrangements for both demand and supply side interventions.

We will ensure that the Employment and Skills role is fully integrated into Hubs, capable of serving a wide population whilst also providing the dedicated and specialised skills and resources needed to help local people who are furthest from the labour market. Hubs are central to the Employment and Skills Service effectively meeting its current strategic and operational responsibilities and taking advantage of future opportunities through devolved powers and the Leeds City Region Growth and Devolution Deals.

There will be planned and evidence based decision making on the deployment and sufficiency of the specialist employment and skills resource which will support the following 15/16 priorities:

- delivering the new employability strand of the Council Tax support scheme
 - embedding the customer focused case work approach
 - ensuring we have an effective dialogue with Hubs so that they can fully assist work with businesses to recruit, train and retain local people, in particular young people and those affected by long term unemployment
 - working with partner agencies to align and deliver services to maximise impact and minimise duplication in localities
- *Delivering the new Council Tax Support scheme which has a clear focus on helping people into work:*
The Council has adopted an innovative Council Tax Support scheme that wraps entitlement for jobseekers with work-related support. In the first year it is

expected that between 1,000 and 2,000 jobseekers will be eligible for the wrap around support. The delivery model has been developed and agreed with all relevant services and processes have been put in place to monitor the delivery and outcomes from the scheme.

▪ *Working with Community Committees to ensure a localised focus on helping people into work:*

We will:

- improve the dissemination of information on local job opportunities from pipeline to recruitment
- Improve the intelligence on those areas where the out-of-work claimant data indicates priority
- negotiate and plan needs led and evidence based Community Committee themed events
- continue to support and work closely with Community Committee Champions for Employment, Skills and Welfare
- steer partnership activity and disseminate information and outcomes from the locality Employment and Skills Boards
- develop a working protocol with Area Support Teams to better coordinate and target the collective resource within localities

▪ *Creating an effective partnership with the Department of Works and Pensions that delivers an accessible and effective Universal Credit service:*

Universal Credit is being rolled out nationally from February 2015 and will come to Leeds in February 2016. Initially, it will affect only single jobseekers but it is expected to be rolled out to families shortly after with a programme of transition and migration of existing Housing Benefit cases expected to start in May 2016. The main challenges are:

- Supporting customers during the in-built 5 week waiting period until the first payment of Universal Credit is made;
- Supporting customers with getting online, and;
- Supporting customers with personal budgeting support, managing monthly payments and keeping up to date with rent payments.

There are also implications for landlords and an effective partnership between DWP and the council will be necessary to ensure a smooth implementation and to respond to any emerging issues.

▪ *Strengthening our partnership approach with Jobcentre plus and exploring integration/co-location with Community Hubs:*

The Council has a longstanding and positive strategic and operational relationship with Jobcentre Plus. Operationally this will include co-delivery at The Point, White Rose Centre, and an extended secondment arrangement to support delivery of the Council Tax Support Scheme following the success of this arrangement in the Multi Storey Flats initiative. Further to this, high-level conversations are ongoing between the Council and Jobcentre Plus regarding co-location within the Council's Community hubs and/or within existing Job Centres. Progress on this development will be made in 2015/16 subject to agreement from both parties that a workable and cost-effective solution can be found and delivered.

- *Ensuring that our approach to volunteering provides opportunities to develop the skills required for work:*
Volunteering can help to tackle isolation, provide valuable skills and knowledge and help raise aspirations and self-confidence. In the coming year we will continue to support and build on volunteering initiatives which include:
 - Leeds City Ambassadors which, in addition to providing volunteers with key roles within major city events, provides the opportunity to achieve a level three NVQ in customer service.
 - The Independent Visitors Scheme, which was first piloted in Leeds and is now a national scheme, supports volunteers who work with looked after young people.
 - Our Museums and Galleries Service have a range of opportunities which enable volunteers to be involved in cultural events and curation.

- *Focussing our work on priority groups (e.g. mental health) to help those furthest away from the labour market:*
Employment and Skills will maximise the opportunities to better connect health and employability agendas through improved sequencing, resourcing and coordination of services for those with mental health issues. This will be through engaging with partners and exploring opportunities to co-commission. Given the, often intermittent nature of mental ill health, the complexity of the support services available and the range of partners involved this is a challenging piece of work. However, it is already clear is that there is an ambition and scope to bring services and support together to provide a more flexible and coherent offer for the city.

We will continue work to support HR in developing and coordinating a work experience offer, across council directorates for priority groups. We will:

- work with mental health partners to offer flexible, supportive work experience opportunities. This could be for those returning to any kind of workplace or those who need a new environment in which to fully recover and regain resilience
- work with colleagues from Children's Services and HR to better connect Care Leavers to Council work experience and employment opportunities, either through a discrete programme or a flexible response on an individual basis. There will be further development of a Care Leaver focused offer informed by evaluation of the Ready for Work programme pilot
- support offenders through exploring a partnership with the city's Work Programme providers where there is a day 1 eligibility offer for those released from custody

Strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities

- *Working effectively with community committees, local members and the third sector to prioritise and tackle local issues:*

The new arrangements for community committees and community engagement have been a significant step towards a more inclusive, more responsive and smarter approach to decision-making in local areas. Community committees have given local elected members the opportunity to look at key local issues, local needs, aspirations and potential. They have been challenged to genuinely involve the communities they represent in the decisions that affect them. They have made a good start. For example, by engaging with -

- Young people on the local activities offer in their local areas.
- Older residents on the local action needed to tackle social isolation.
- Residents concerned about the impact of domestic violence on the range of responsive multiagency services.
- Business on overcoming barriers to the labour market.

In every case, this approach has attracted new residents, services from the Council and key partners, and local community groups and third sector organisations. The approach has improved partnership working, delivered practical action on the ground that may not have been initiated in other ways, and initiated new projects utilising community committee wellbeing funds as well as drawing in wider funds and in kind contributions. This inclusive local approach has been established in the first 12 months of community committees and we will develop it further to improve resident engagement, prioritise local issues, and deliver improvements.

- *Create a culture of effective partnership working to support the delivery of stronger and more cohesive communities.*

By harnessing the collective capacity of agencies working in local areas and from the business, public, and the Third Sectors, Community Committees are working alongside local residents – sometimes as co-optees on the community committee - to seek an in-depth understanding of the key issues affecting poverty in their area and co-designing local solutions for local issues.

Through Neighbourhood Improvement Boards we are establishing a performance culture that provides for neighbourhood level analysis in our inner city priority neighbourhoods most affected by poverty, to -

- Examine the impact that commissioned services are making
- Explore the strength of community engagement and capacity for change, and
- Develop a new social contract with neighbourhoods and communities.

The Communities Board has sponsored three locality based projects that, over the next twelve months, will explore aspects of community development and empowerment using an action based learning model – real projects tackling issues identified by local communities. The aim is to learn about effective working with communities on the matters that matter to them. This will be complemented by a city wide study of community development practice across Leeds to identify the common principles that may guide future community development and to seek partnership agreement to the adoption of such principles.

- *Working with the Young Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and third sector partners to identify new opportunities to provide services and tackle inequality:*

The initiative is at a relatively early stage of implementation but directly relates to the aspirations of the commission for local government. It aims to build a deeper understanding of the nature of inequality in Leeds and bring together citizens, private, public and third sectors to identify and develop new and innovative ways of addressing this challenge in Leeds. Learning from experience and expertise developed in areas outside of Leeds, it is underpinned by an asset based community development approach that recognises the thriving Third Sector in Leeds and the success of its entrepreneurial business community to build on the concepts of civic responsibility and a new social contract.

- *Establishing high standards for cross-council safeguarding:*

It is recognised that some citizens in Leeds are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and/or violence and this can be associated with conditions that promote poverty and inequality (although not exclusively). The Council's cross organisational work is focussed on raising the awareness of, and understanding by, non-social care staff, and reflects that everyone in the Council has a personal responsibility to take steps to safeguard people. Specific cross council safeguarding work has highlighted female genital mutilation, modern day slavery, child sexual exploitation and preventing terrorism and violent extremism. In relation to the current focus in Rotherham around child sexual abuse the Council has already reviewed its policies with regard to taxi and private hire licensing to ensure they are robust, and there are clear processes in place to ensure only fit and proper persons are granted licenses.

Providing accessible and integrated services

- *Rolling out a network of community hubs across the city and delivering integrated housing, welfare, library and advice services in community hubs:*

Given the success of the 3 pathfinder Community Hub sites, Executive Board agreed in October 2014 to roll-out the model across the city and create a network of Community Hubs that provide integrated and accessible services and are responsive to local need.

In essence, Executive Board agreed the following 3 key actions:

- the adoption of a city-wide community hub model that sees a network based approach, developed in partnership with Community Committee's and local ward councillors, and supported by a city centre community hub.
- The bringing together of all existing community based one stop centres, libraries and housing management offices to be managed as a single set of front-of-house services, to enable the development of a city-wide network of community hubs; and
- The creation of a single 'front of house team' to provide the community hub workforce. The team to be made up from all existing front-of-house staff based in customer services, libraries, housing Leeds and jobs and skills.

From April 2015 all community libraries came under the leadership of the citizens and communities directorate and all community-based library assistants and Jobs and Skills colleagues transferred to the Directorate to become part of the Community Hub team. Work is ongoing on the development of a phased plan for the roll-out of the Community hub model across the city and a business case is being developed to ensure that the work is started in earnest in 2015 to deliver the Community Hub network.

- *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:* Tackling social isolation is one of the four key focusses in 2015/16 for the Integrated and Accessible Services proposition.

The Council is keen to ensure that local community Hubs become trusted local places for people to come and enjoy the space and opportunities that are available within them. Key to this is the integration of local community libraries within the network as these are already trusted places for local residents who have long held their local library as a key asset within their communities. To this end work will be ongoing in 2015/16 to enhance the current service offer from libraries and develop new services within the hubs that tackle social isolation and provide local spaces for people to learn and grow.

- *Delivering the centres of excellence model within the corporate contact centre, including the delivery of a fully integrated council tax service:* Quarter 4 of 2014/15 saw the initial development of the Centres of Excellence at the corporate contact centre. This work brought together relevant services and co-located them on the 3 floors of the centre to create the 3 Centres of Excellence as follows:
 - Care and Safeguarding
 - Welfare and benefits
 - Environment & City Infrastructure

The development of the Centres of Excellence approach is a radical departure from the more traditional customer services approach prevalent within local councils and therefore the approach being taken is very much one concerned with value-added both for the customer and the services delivered from the centres of excellence.

To this end, work is now ongoing to identify issues and projects within each of the Centres of Excellence where greater integration of people and processes will provide this value-added service. The focus in 2014/15 is on the delivery of an integrated Council Tax services as part of the Welfare and Benefits Centre of Excellence and the development of the care and safeguarding centre of excellence.

- *Delivering integrated pathways under a think family approach to address vulnerability issues, including safeguarding, drugs and alcohol and domestic violence:* Tackling vulnerability is one of the four key focusses in 2015/16 for the Integrated and Accessible Services proposition.

The ethos of the Integrated and Accessible Services proposition is to deliver simple and easy customer access to integrated services. Therefore the development of integrated pathways around vulnerability, built around a circle of need approach, is key to achieving the proposition and work will be undertaken in 2015/16 across the principle customer access channels – the care and safeguarding centre of excellence, the Community Hub Network and Digital channels - to deliver a more integrated service approach to these issues.

- *Developing a digital inclusion strategy which supports and helps citizens and communities in Leeds to get on-line:*

A Digital Inclusion Strategy will be developed and agreed in 2015/16.

Principally, the strategy will set out the outcomes, objectives and actions required to improve digital inclusion within the city. Principally the focus therefore is on the following 3 areas:

- How citizens and communities can increase their access to digital capabilities
- How citizens and communities can make the most of digital capabilities; and
- How the Council and its partners can extend the reach of digital capabilities to all citizens and communities

- *Driving customer self-service through digital channels by delivering the Council's new Customer Contact Platform and a benefits e-claim solution:*

The Council will continue its development of its digital channels to ensure that those citizens and communities who want to engage with the Council on-line can do so easily and simply. To this end, work will continue on the delivery of the Council's Customer Contact Platform, specifically focussing on the Waste Services, the Council Tax and Benefits Service and Housing Leeds. Completion of this work will ensure that all high-volume contact has an on-line option available for customers to use.

- *Developing a coherent branding and marketing approach for all our Citizens@Leeds activities to support improved community engagement:*

We are rapidly developing a coherent brand - 'Your Community' - underpinned by strong brand values and a marketing and communication approach that engages citizens in community committee areas through a wide range of media. The approach seeks to -

- Introduce one cohesive brand for communities and community engagement activities that can be embraced by a wide range of services and partners.
- Raise awareness of community committees and how residents can get involved with local democracy and help influence decisions about their local community.
- Promote training and employment opportunities by working with our internal stakeholders
- Provide one place on social media for community engagement activity to take place

- Raise awareness of services available to those who are in need of financial support and advice
- Engage with partners and stakeholders to support the delivery of services at a local level
- Ensure the community hubs are used and understood by the local communities
- Provide links to council wide consultation and engagement activities and the breakthrough projects

Additionally, we will promote 'Your Community' throughout all services, stakeholders and partners that address the four propositions including community committees and community hubs and on all branded materials to ensure this becomes the recognisable iconography relating to communities. We will also develop a digital platform for 'Your Community' making information and services more easily accessible to people.