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**Report of the Director of City Development and the Chief Information Officer**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (City Development)**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

**Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry into Digital Inclusion – Session 3**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Summary of main issues**

To provide Scrutiny Board (City Development) with the information required to undertake the third session of the inquiry into digital inclusion.

The report continues to explore the gap between those who are digitally engaged and those who are not, the reasons why this may be the case, and the impact this has and then discusses opportunities for digital inclusion.

**Recommendations**

Scrutiny Board is requested:

- a) to note the contents of this report
- b) make recommendations as deemed appropriate

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide Scrutiny Board (City Development) with the information required to undertake the third session of the inquiry into digital inclusion.
- 1.2 The report continues to explore the city's digital infrastructure, the gap between those who are digitally engaged and those who are not, the reasons why this may be the case, and the impact this has and then discusses opportunities for digital inclusion.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed the terms of reference of the 9th of September and has conducted inquiry sessions on the 14th of October and 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2015.
- 2.2 At the first session the Scrutiny Board was provided with an overview of the two main elements to digital inclusion, firstly the people who use digital services – having the skills, motivation and confidence to engage digitally, and secondly the infrastructure – is there an appropriate network/broadband service for them to connect to.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Board focused on the Smart Cities Digital Literacy Project in the second session and also received known information about the infrastructure across Leeds including access to digital and online services in council buildings.
- 2.4 The key areas of focus for the session are as follows:
  - The value of digital literacy skills, outreach and support
  - Targeting hard to reach groups, individuals who struggle to embrace technology and those with physical or cognitive impairments
  - Ongoing support to promote confidence and trust in digital technology.
  - Reflect on the evidence received regarding:
    - the strategic approach to improve
    - opportunities to develop new networks and potential to use Council assets to enhance infrastructure
    - partnership, funding and governance arrangements the for delivery of schemes/support/programmes
    - monitoring outcomes and building on what works

## **3 Main issues**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 In session one we discussed the impact of the digital divide as well as a range of initiatives and opportunities to help improve digital literacy and bridge that divide. These included the support provided to library services by the Society of Chief Librarians, including the then impending launch of the Universal 'Learning' Offer; the potential for work between libraries and the Department of Work and Pensions developing digital skills to enable more e-Government services such as Universal Credit; funding bids to the Tinder Foundation for an outreach project to trial use of tablets by library users who are unable to access traditional services; a scheme to develop digital skills within health and social care; the role of digital champions,

volunteers and neighbourhood networks; and the need for the Council to be at the forefront of developing wider learning opportunities which enable citizens to embrace new technologies which both anticipate and prepare communities for the future.

- 3.1.2 A number of these areas are progressing in communities, some of these are local initiatives whereas others are nationally led but with a local emphasis on delivery and outcomes. This report provides a position statement on a range of these initiatives. In addition, further information is provided about the role and work of The Tinder Foundation and mHabitat in widening access to digital opportunities by those most at risk of exclusion. The report also outlines how one community is working within the neighbourhood network framework to tackle digital exclusion locally.

## **3.2 Tinder Foundation**

- 3.2.1 Tinder Foundation's ambition is a world where everyone benefits from digital.
- 3.2.2 They are known as the UK's leading digital inclusion delivery organisation, and support people to improve their basic digital skills through an extensive network of over 5,000 hyper-local partners, as well as with expert digital tools in order to scale their impact.
- 3.2.3 Alongside supporting people to improve their digital skills, they also enable them to gain other essential skills, and to overcome social challenges, all using digital technology. They aim to always put the needs of socially excluded people first, and build programmes and solutions based on their needs.
- 3.2.4 Together with their network Tinder Foundation has helped over 1.6 million people to use the internet and improve their digital skills.
- 3.2.5 Tinder Foundation earns income and receives funding from a broad range of organisations across the public, private and third sectors, including the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, NHS England, Big Lottery, Innovate UK, Comic Relief, and corporate partners such as Lloyds Banking Group and Vodafone, as well as generating income through commercial products.
- 3.2.6 They are particularly interested in digitally excluded individuals, small businesses - particularly micro-businesses and sole traders - and third sector organisations, which they expect will take an increasingly important role in community economies. This is because these groups tend to fall outside formal education and training environments.
- 3.2.7 Helen Milner the Chief Executive of Tinder Foundation is attending the Scrutiny Board meeting to discuss the work of the Tinder Foundation, the digital divide and what could be done to narrow the gap in Leeds. Further information about Helen Milner is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2.8 Appendix B is an updated version of the Tinder Foundation's diagram outlining the extent and impact of the digital divide, and Appendix C contains 'Doing Digital Inclusion: Libraries Handbook', a recent publication by the Tinder Foundation which usefully summarises much of the discussion of the first scrutiny inquiry session regarding the challenges that people wanting to acquire digital skills may

face and offers tips and resources for libraries to recruit learners and tackle digital exclusion.

### **3.3 Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours' Scheme**

- 3.3.1 Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours' Scheme works with and for older people to reduce loneliness and isolation, support independence, promote healthy lifestyles and try new things.
- 3.3.2 Their service users contribute ideas, skills, time, goods and money, as well as encouragement and feedback. The Scheme is supported by a volunteer team, which includes the trustees, who provide their time to support activities.
- 3.3.3 In December 2014 the Scheme asked for volunteers interested in taking part in an IT project with Leeds City Council and Yecco. Participants were given new iPads with the Yecco software application installed. The app allowed the volunteers to digitally track their own health care needs as well as allowing for social interaction with a variety of messaging, picture sharing and skype type software. Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours' Scheme were monitoring the project until the end of July 2015, the information then being evaluated by the University of Leeds to see if using apps improves not only the quality of the participants' lives but also helps reduce visits to their GP or hospital.
- 3.3.4 Yecco is health software company which specialises in delivering solutions and providing consultancy for remote monitoring, self-management of chronic conditions, and assisting older and more vulnerable people to live independently. Yecco also connects medical and health professionals, patients and carers. It has integrated the use of medical devices and home sensors to remotely monitor and provide patients with a mechanism to self-manage with or without the support of experts.
- 3.3.5 A representative from Crossgates Good Neighbours' Scheme, along with a volunteer from the project, are attending the meeting to discuss the value, outcomes and the impact of the project.

### **3.4 mHabitat / NHS / Victoria Betton**

- 3.4.1 mHabitat is an NHS programme, part of Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust working with NHS and local authority providers, commissioners, third sector organisations, universities and industry.
- 3.4.2 The small team of four has clinical and social care expertise, digital technologies and project management, event management, academic expertise and administration. Their aim is to help people and public services keep up to date with digital innovation supporting inclusion and involvement. Victoria Betton from mHabitat is attending the meeting to provide further information about the outcomes of their work.
- 3.4.3 An overview of mHabitat is attached as Appendix D.
- 3.4.4 One of the initiatives led by mHabitat has been the funding bids to Integrated Care Pioneer and Better Care Funding to develop a digital practitioner programme for health and care staff which will be launched in April 2016. The purpose of the programme is to develop the digital confidence of practitioners so they can

support digital inclusion for people they support. The bid has been successful and a project team, involving mHabitat, Adult Social Care, Library and Information Services, and the third sector, has been set up to co-ordinate the work, the first meeting will be 15th December.

### **3.5 Supporting People**

#### **3.5.5 Connect-Ability: Leeds Libraries' new scheme to help disabled people get online**

3.5.6 The Library and Information Service has launched a new scheme called Connect-Ability. Using money from the Tinder Foundation's digital inclusion fund, the library service will help more disabled people enjoy the benefits of being online.

3.5.7 Through the Connect-Ability scheme, Leeds Libraries will lend iPads to some of the people who use the Library At Home service. Librarians will train the volunteers who already visit the At Home service users so that the volunteers can support disabled people who will be getting online for the first time.

3.5.8 Organisations that work with disabled people will also be able to take part in the Connect-Ability scheme. Librarians will deliver iPad training sessions to staff, volunteers and disabled people from those organisations. Sessions will take place in libraries, day centres and other venues that are accessible for people with disabilities.

3.5.9 The iPads have now been bought and are currently being configured. The scheme will be launched with the Library At Home Service volunteers on 15 December encouraging their participation in the project.

#### **3.5.10 Volunteering and digital champions**

3.5.11 Following a successful pilot partnership between Halifax Community Bank and Calderdale Libraries, which demonstrated how Halifax Community Bank's workforce could use their volunteer hours to support residents with their digital skills' needs in libraries, the Halifax would now like to scale up the model and offer Digital Skills support deploying volunteer hours across their entire network. Leeds' Library Service is discussing the opportunity with managers from the Halifax Community Bank to see how this could complement other existing support within libraries and community hubs to help more people to get online and discover the benefits of being able to use the Internet.

#### **3.5.12 Universal Learning Offer – Code Green**

3.5.13 In order to support economic growth and the wellbeing of communities, the UK needs to address the skills deficit in our workforce. The Confederation of British Industry estimates that nearly 40% of firms looking for staff with STEM skills (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) have had difficulties recruiting and a recent House of Lords report warns that the UK could be left behind in terms of our digital skills capabilities. The loss to the UK economy because of this lack of skills has been estimated at £2 billion. In Leeds it is estimated that there are currently 680 vacancies that fall within this bracket where employers are often struggling to attract suitably experienced applicants.

3.5.14 The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) launched the new 'Learning' universal offer on 5th November; named 'Code Green', see booklet at Appendix E, this Universal

Offer will be available in all library services across England and brings together hundreds of unique self-directed learning opportunities for library users, and broadens the range of learning opportunities on offer in local libraries. The Learning Offer will provide libraries with “Code Green”: a detailed Digital Making Kit, a how-to guide to give customers hands-on experience in computer programming (coding), designing and making 3D objects, building robots, creating apps and many other creative activities for all ages. The Learning Offer resources will build on SCL’s Digital Skills Training programme that reached 14,000 library staff.

- 3.5.15 The Universal Learning Offer in public libraries has been developed so that children, young people and families will be able to build their confidence and skill with their creativity, coding and digital skills. This offer will give families more opportunities to learn together, on a variety of subjects, and help to move through from literacy to fluency. People will grow new skills, find more job opportunities and stimulating experiences in their local area, in a friendly and welcoming environment.
- 3.5.16 Ciara Eastell, SCL President said: “Learning has always been at the heart of what libraries deliver and libraries are increasingly being used by a wide range of people to develop life-essential skills. With the growth in self-directed learning, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the phenomenal success of Open University and others, it is a logical step for libraries to be more central in the learning sector. We plan to widely publicise our unique and free learning resources and we look forward to working with partners to deliver this offer.”
- 3.5.17 Culture Minister, Ed Vaizey said: “Libraries are the cornerstones of the communities they serve and this offer will bring a variety of unique learning opportunities into one place. It will create spaces for communities to share ideas and learn together. With the support of the Learning Offer, libraries can build further on great initiatives such as setting up coding clubs, digital training and more.”
- 3.5.18 Support for SMEs (example)
- 3.5.19 Leeds Central Library hosted an event for SMEs in partnership with Google. “Give your business a digital tune-up” at Leeds Central Library on 3 December with room for 100 delegates.
- 3.5.20 Government’s Digital Training and Support
- 3.5.21 Leeds Libraries’ Head of Service and the Society of Chief Librarians nationally are working on an application to be a supplier for the government’s Digital Training and Support framework. If successful, this would see public libraries becoming a provider of digital inclusion training services and assisted digital support.
- 3.5.22 Developing the hooks
- 3.5.23 It has been noted that as local authority we should be encouraging digital engagement rather than forcing it, and enticing those who are not engaged through the provision of services of interest rather than those of necessity.
- 3.5.24 A new service being introduced by the Library Service hopes to be a hook to attract a new audience. In January the service will launch its e-magazine offer,

providing free access to many popular magazines covering topics including crafts, food, cycling, cars, culture, music, and even a weekly TV guide.

### 3.5.25 Awareness

3.5.26 Opportunities for improving the awareness of available training and ICT access, including a refresh and re-publication of 'Get online in Leeds', fall within the scope of the Smart Cities - Digital Literacy for Citizens and Business Staff project and will be completed through partnership between Library and Information Services and Citizens and Communities during 2015/16.

3.5.27 Other options to raise awareness being investigated include the potential to access information about ICT/digital training opportunities by search by skill and/or postcode. To stay current this would most likely be an online resource however support to customers not yet online would be delivered through staff at sites, such as libraries and community hubs, accessing this information and referring the customer to a suitable training pathway.

3.5.28 Libraries will be working with officers from across the Community Hub network to deliver a successful engagement and awareness programme across Leeds.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Consultation has been undertaken between officers across City Development, including Libraries and Economic Development, Citizens and Communities, and Strategy and Resources. Further research has been carried out including a review of Office of National Statistics and Tinder Foundation data relating to digital take up. Further consultation will involve other stakeholders and partners as the Smart Cities' project Digital Literacy for Citizens and Business Staff develops.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 An equality and impact assessment has not been completed at this stage, however, national evidence suggests that older people, those on low incomes, those with low educational attainment and people with disabilities are most likely to be excluded from digital activity

4.2.2 An equality and impact assessment will be completed as part of the Smart Cities project Digital Literacy for Citizens and Business Staff to ensure that these national and any locally determined issues and appropriate actions are identified.

4.2.3 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

4.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 Support for digital inclusion across the city contributes to the Strategic Objectives of :

- supporting communities and tackling poverty
- promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- delivering the better lives programme
- becoming a more efficient and enterprising council

4.3.2 and link strongly to the Best City Outcomes of:

- Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible
- Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
- Earn enough to support themselves and their families
- Enjoy greater access to green space, leisure and the arts

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 Improvements to digital infrastructure, communications systems and transactions, as well as ensuring that the city's citizens have the skills to utilise them, will help ensure greater efficiencies.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 None.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 None.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Digital literacy is, or if not will soon be, as important as reading and writing. Not being able to interact with devices, transact, communicate, work and inform yourself through digital means will result in significant disadvantage and possible exclusion. For Leeds to be the Best City all need to be digitally literate starting with the people most in need.

5.2 Work is already being undertaken within Leeds to deliver improved digital literacy but it is recognised that the offer requires greater cohesion, collaboration and promotion to reduce the literacy gap and for Leeds to become the Best City for Digital. As discussed in the second inquiry session, this work links with the aims of the Digital Literacy for Citizens and Business Staff project within the wider Smart Cities programme through which a business case will be drawn up to secure funding to enable the city to achieve its aspirations for digital literacy.

5.3 It is also recognised following the second inquiry session that further collaborative effort is required with Internet Service Providers to ensure that everyone wishing to digitally engage has access to an infrastructure that offers choice and value.



## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Scrutiny Board is requested to:

- a) note the contents of this report.
- b) make recommendations as deemed appropriate

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

Appendices:

- A Tinder – Helen Milner, CEO Biog
- B Tinder – Digital Nation, 2015 Digital Divide infographic
- C Tinder – Doing Digital Inclusion – Libraries Handbook
- D mHabitat - Introduction
- E SCL – Universal Learning Offer ‘Code Green’ booklet

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council’s website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.