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Leeds CITY COUNCIL

Report of Director (Communities and Environment)

Report to Executive Board

Date: 25 November 2019

Subject: Tackling Poverty and Inequality through Digital Inclusion

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Has consultation been carried out?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary

1. Main issues

- In December 2018 Executive Board received a report on Tackling Poverty and Inequality presented by the Director of Communities and Environment. The report asked Executive Board to endorse an approach to tackling poverty which placed inclusive growth and the health and wellbeing of citizens at its centre.

- Further to this, and in response to the 2nd Poverty Truth Commission's delegation to Full Council in February 2018 on its Humanifesto, Executive Board agreed that Council services would consider how the voice of those with 'lived experience' of poverty can be heard and engaged in determining and developing appropriate mitigation programmes and activity.

- To facilitate this, Executive Board agreed a series of issue-based reports to be brought forward for consideration which set out the following:
  - The current position across the city on that issue;
  - The success to-date of the council's work in that area on mitigating the impact of poverty and inequality;
  - To establish processes which ensure people and communities with 'lived experience' of poverty are involved in co-producing future plans and actions;
  - To set-out those co-produced actions to further mitigate the impact.

- This is the second of those reports and focuses on how the city can mitigate the impact of poverty and inequality through increasing digital inclusion. Work by the Council and its partners in this work has accelerated in the past few years to tackle the barriers to digital inclusion which were highlighted through the 2015 Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board inquiry.

- Given this, the report considers the impact of the work delivered to-date on tackling poverty and inequality through digital inclusion and outlines the plans to work more closely with Leeds Poverty Truth Commission (LPTC) on this issue to ensure that the voice of those with 'lived experience' contributes to co-producing our activities and actions. It also sets out the range of further work to be undertaken over the next 12 months.

2. **Best Council Plan Implications** (click here for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council Plan and the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the need to address the impact of the climate emergency on those living in poverty and facing inequality.

3. **Resource Implications**

- Funding is in place for both the remainder of this year and for 2020/21 and the Library service will continue to identify and apply for grant funding to support the programme going forward. However should that funding cease at the end of 2020/21 and there is still the requirement for the programme in the same guise as currently designed, a funding pressure will be identified and considered as part of the 2021/22 budget process.

4. **Recommendations**

a) Note the ongoing work, and progress achieved to-date, of the 100% Digital Leeds programme in mitigating the impact of poverty and inequality in the city through a focus on greater digital inclusion.

b) Comment and agree the suggested areas for further work as outlined in Section 5 of the report; and

c) Acknowledge the positive approach being adopted to co-produce the future programme with citizens and communities with 'lived experience' of poverty and inequality.

1.   Purpose of this report

1.1   This report provides an update to Executive Board on the council's strategic approach to tackling digital inclusion in Leeds through the 100% Digital Leeds programme, and sets out the following information:

- The current position regarding digital inclusion in Leeds,
- The success to-date of the council's work in mitigating the impact of poverty and inequality through addressing digital inclusion;
- The actions and activity that are planned to further mitigate the impact; and
- The work being progressed to ensure people and communities with 'lived experience' of poverty are involved in co-producing the future plans and actions around digital inclusion.

2.   Background information

2.1   Tens of thousands of adults in Leeds are offline and/or lack the essential digital skills they need to gain the full benefits of digital inclusion. People who are digitally excluded are also more likely to be on a low income and struggling with poverty, be unemployed or under-employed, be disabled or have long-term health conditions, have low literacy and numeracy levels or have English as a second language. In many cases they will face more than one of those barriers to inclusion. Digital inclusion can help to tackle poverty, reduce the inequalities that still exist and support the council's vision of a Compassionate City with a Strong Economy.

2.2   15% of non-users of the internet cite cost as the main reason they are not online[1]. Amongst those aged 16-64, 19% identify the cost of the equipment or devices as the key barrier and 12% state connectivity stops them getting online[2]. We also know that digital exclusion compounds the 'poverty premium' – the extra money that those experiencing poverty pay for goods and services[3].

2.3   In 2015 the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board, resolved to undertake an inquiry looking at Digital Inclusion given what the research showed and to reflect on local concerns that national policy in many areas, including welfare services and access to employment opportunities, were evolving to 'digital by default'.

2.4   The Board acknowledged that those who are digitally engaged have greater opportunity to reduce poverty through increased opportunities for work, knowledge and financial benefit. Therefore the Board understood the need for citizens to have the opportunity, skills and resilience to improve their lives through digital in a self-sustaining manner.

2.5   To tackle the issues highlighted by Scrutiny Board, the library service has developed and extended its digital inclusion programme to play a leading role in supporting the campaign, specifically through the 100% Digital Leeds programme. 100% Digital Leeds is part of our wider Smart Leeds commitments which sees us taking a 'joined up' approach to people benefiting from technology across the council and the wider city. Our Smart Leeds ambitions also include the 100% Digital Connectivity programme which aims to expand the deployment of high speed broadband.

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[1] Ofcom's 2018 Adult's Media Use and Attitudes Report
[2] Ofcom's 2018 Adult's Media Use and Attitudes Report
[3] University of Bristol 2016: Paying to be Poor

2.6 This programme, which is focused on increasing the digital capacity, capability and connectivity of third sector organisations across the city, takes a cross-cutting approach to addressing digital inclusion through delivering better co-ordinated and joined up activity and connecting work across council departments and the third sector. To this end, it is working to achieve the Board's desired outcomes to:
- Create a citywide movement for digital inclusion
- Increase capacity in communities
- Support local groups and organisations in the delivery of digital skills training to residents in their communities
- Evidence impact and return on investment

2.7 Leeds Libraries has taken a lead role in the city's 100% Digital Leeds campaign, through the delivery of an effective and comprehensive programme of digital inclusion activity. However, we acknowledge that the council cannot achieve this ambition alone and the Library Service has been active in engaging other partners, including the third sector to help build the digital inclusion movement across the city.

2.8 To build this digital inclusion movement we are working with organisations that have deep roots in local communities, many of whom are dedicated to offering specialist support to people with specific needs. This includes people with physical or learning difficulties and disabilities, refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants, people who have English as a second language, older people, people with long term health conditions and carers. The staff and volunteers at these organisations know the challenges faced by the people they serve. In many cases, they also know that digital inclusion could offer solutions to some of these challenges. Our support for these organisations includes lending equipment, installing free Wi-Fi into community buildings, grant funding and Digital Champions training for their staff and volunteers.

3. Main Issues – Progress to-date

3.1 Like all library services, Leeds Libraries has a strong digital offer as part of its core offer. This includes
- A network of 34 libraries across the city with free access to over 500 public access pcs
- Free Wi-Fi and access to software programmes
- A digitally skilled staff team
- Free 'Get on Line' and Digital Drop in sessions

3.2 In 2018, public access computers in libraries and hubs were used over 200,000 times. This figure does not include computers in Jobshops which only recently started to use the libraries' online reservation system. It also does not include people using their own devices to access the free council Wi-Fi available in these buildings.

3.3 To complement this, the 100% Digital programme targets its activity on key wards in the city. A number of datasets were used to map the extent of digital exclusion in Leeds and so inform the priority areas. For each dataset, wards were listed that were above or below the average for that indicator and illustrated the likelihood of digital exclusion.

3.4 This was used as the measure to give an aggregated view of digital inclusion/exclusion across the city and as a result of this analysis, the following wards were identified as a priority:
- Armley
- Beeston and Holbeck
- Bramley and Stanningley
- Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

- Chapel Allerton
- Farnley and Wortley
- Gipton and Harehills
- Hunslet and Riverside
- Killingbeck and Seacroft
- Kirkstall
- Little London and Woodhouse
- Middleton Park

3.5 These wards include three of the council's priority neighbourhood areas:
- Lincoln Green in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward
- Boggart Hill in the Killingbeck and Seacroft ward
- Holdsforth's and Clyde Approach in the Armley Ward

3.6 We know that a significant number of our citizens in these priority wards find it difficult to access the full range of services in their communities due to physical disability or health conditions, mental health difficulties, learning difficulties and disabilities, language barriers and other accessibility challenges. Through the 100% Digital Leeds programme we are working with community organisations who already have a trusted relationship with these groups, too many of whom are often incorrectly labelled as being 'hard to reach'.

3.7 To ensure the programme is able to deliver projects into these wards, there has been an investment of almost £1m made into the Library Service to enable it to grow and extend its digital inclusion programme. This funding has come from a number of different sources including Housing Leeds, Digital and Information Service, Smart Leeds, Local Business Rates Fund, Local Integrated Better Care Fund and NHS Digital.

3.8 The initial focus of this work, through an injection of funds from the Housing Revenue Account, was for the 121,000 people living in our 56,000 Council houses in line with the Council's policy of improving the lives of the poorest the fastest.

3.9 The funding has enabled the Library Service to:
- **Appoint a Digital Inclusion team** to co-ordinate activity and build a network of Digital Champions both in the library service and wider community. The team includes a Digital Inclusion Coordinator funded by the Better Care Fund with a specific remit to develop a Health and Social Care focused digital inclusion offer for people living with long term conditions.
- **Launch a tablet lending scheme** such that Leeds Libraries now has the largest tablet lending service in the country with 300 iPads available to borrow by third sector organisations to trial new ways of working with their service users, to help combat loneliness, improve health and wellbeing and promote financial resilience. This is supported with a programme of Digital Champion Training to help to ensure that the skills are embedded within the organisation. (See Appendix 1 for more information on the organisations who have benefitted to-date from this scheme.)
- **Award £100k in grants** to 15 community organisations (60 bid in total) to reduce the barriers to digital inclusion (See Appendix 2 for full list of organisations). Around half of this funding was awarded to organisations who are supporting people with disabilities or learning difficulties, older people, carers or refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants. The grants, which ranged from £1,000 to £10,000, were used to help organisations embed digital inclusion activity into their delivery models by buying equipment, hiring tutors, coordinate volunteer programmes or pay for connectivity. Leeds Libraries will, in the year ahead, be

supporting these organisations to ensure that their plans are successful and sustainable and have a positive impact on people's lives.

- *Expand free council Wi-Fi* into 20 community buildings.
- *Work with Good Things Foundation* to build our digital inclusion network, embed sustainability and evidence return on investment.
- *Deliver a pathfinder programme to widen digital participation* focussed on improving outcomes for people with dementia and their families/carers.

3.10 Housing Leeds is also funding a number of projects to promote the advantages of using the internet, including the potential for savings on household budgets. The Housing Officer teams advise and support customers who are struggling with fuel bills or need help with benefits or Universal Credit. As well as offering support with online transactions, tenants are also signposted to specialist debt advisors and referred to the Green Doctors.

3.11 All Tenant Engagement events highlight the advantages of being online. A snap shot of some of the activity includes:

- Housing Advisory Panels funding iPads for Retirement Life so Support Officers, most of whom are Digital Champions, can run digital inclusion sessions with tenants.
- Drop-in digital inclusion sessions for Syrian refugees.
- Digital Champions training for Housing Officers and their teams to support tenants who express concerns about using online forms for everything from switching utility providers to benefit claims.
- Using iPads in estate walkabouts to raise the profile of digital inclusion.
- Promoting digital inclusion through Housing Leeds networks and signposting tenants to council, third sector and partner organisations in local areas

3.12 As part of our Smart Leeds programme we are currently developing proposals with partners across the City for how digital technologies can be used to better manage our council properties, identifying repairs that need to be done sooner, providing telecare services that enable people with health conditions to live at home for longer and be connected to others. We are also investigating ways in which tenants can play a more active role in how our properties are managed, as well as paying their rent and booking repairs online.

4. Main issues – Measuring Impact to-date.

4.1 The December 2018 report to Executive Board on Tackling Poverty and Inequality noted that: *"When significantly reducing the number of people living in poverty is realistically not possible as a result of the weight of influence that national policy interventions are having, the council should seek to mitigate the impacts of living in poverty to ensure the best outcomes possible in the circumstances for individuals, families and communities."*

4.2 Poverty is a recurring theme in the areas of the city in which the work of the Library Service through the 100% Digital Leeds campaign is focused. Through this work the service has supported those organisations who work with:
- people using foodbanks,
- people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness,
- refugees who are starting a new life in the city,
- people at risk of social isolation,
- people with a learning difficulty or disability and

- vulnerable young adults overcoming issues such as substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health issues.

4.3 One example of this work is the programme of activity undertaken (with the support of Leeds Libraries), by the third sector organisation Toast Loves Coffee (TLC). TLC is a pay-as-you-feel community café based in the heart of Harehills who have introduced a very successful programme built around the use of iPads to build greater digital capacity with their users. Please see Appendix 3 for more information on this programme.

4.4 In the first year of activity Leeds Libraries has worked with over 100 community organisations:
- 66 organisations borrowed 549 iPads as part of our tablet lending scheme
- We recruited 29 organisations to the Online Centres network, offering new venues for people to get online and learn digital skills
- We trained 797 Digital Champions to help us promote the benefits of being online to digitally excluded people in their communities
- 2,461 people registered with the Learn My Way online-learning platform and completed 13,864 courses

4.5 Within these overall statistics are specific examples of how the 100% Digital Leeds programme is contributing to the council's priorities for equality, accessibility and Health and Wellbeing. For example, 128 Digital Champions focus on health and wellbeing and promote the use of digital solutions to manage long-term conditions. Many of the organisations who have borrowed tablets are using them to improve outcomes for people with disabilities or learning difficulties. Case studies on some of these organisations are online at: www.digitalinclusionleeds.com/impact

4.6 We also know that the library service is helping to mitigate the impacts of living in poverty and is leading to improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities. One example of this was our recent #techmums programme, delivered in three of our priority areas in early 2019. Please see Appendix 4 for more details on this programme.

4.7 Another measure of the impact of the work being done in Leeds is the national recognition that has been received, which includes:
- Speaking at a parliamentary reception for the launch of Good Things Foundation's report: 'Blueprint for a 100% Digitally Included Nation'.
- Sharing information and hosting visits from a number of local authorities and public bodies, including Barnsley, Belfast, Calderdale, Cambridge, City of London, Hackney, Kirklees, Northumberland, Norwich, Sandwell, Scottish Library and Information Council, Sheffield, Somerset, Wakefield and York.
- Invitations to speak at conferences hosted by Westminster Insight, King's Fund, Leeds Digital Festival, O2, Lloyd's Bank, Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals, Libraries Innovation Network, Digital Communities Network, Connected Britain, Smart Cities UK and many others.
- Our tablet lending scheme was highlighted as an example of innovation and best practice by O2, Asavie and IBM.
- Our digital inclusion programme has been recognised with the following awards:
  - ➢ Winner: Digital Council of the Year 2019
  - ➢ Winner: O2 Blue Door Award for supporting organisations to tackle digital inclusion with our tablet lending scheme
  - ➢ Shortlisted: Women in IT Excellence Awards 2019
  - ➢ Shortlisted: Leeds Digital Festival 2019

- Featured on [ITV's Tonight programme](#) which included an interview with Ms Roebuck, a tenant in Clyde Grange. As the mum of two young children, becoming digitally included had a positive impact on her whole family. She has used the internet to support and motivate her son with his homework, which has led to improved grades at school. She has found parent and baby groups close by and now feels more connected to the local community. She is using Parent Pay to pay for school dinners and is bidding for properties and reporting repairs online.
- Featured on Radio 4 documentary, '[Digital Future: The new underclass](#)'

5. Main Issues – Future Plans and Next Steps

5.1 In the year ahead the Library Service will continue to progress activity to improve digital inclusion and access in the city so as to mitigate the impact of poverty and inequality on the citizens and communities of Leeds.

5.2 It will do this by building on the solid foundations laid so far and will concentrate on the following activity:

- Develop the concept of the local Community Hub and Library as a Digital Hub, ensuring that all Community Hub and Library staff are digital champions and aligning those third sector organisations that we have worked with to-date to their local Community Hub and library to ensure sustainable and on-going support. Initial discussions have taken place and a strategy is being written to set-out the practical application of the Digital Hub concept in Leeds.
- To work with other partners to develop the 100% Digital Leeds as a true cross sector campaign, encouraging and supporting other services and sectors to embrace and engage with the campaign and build our network of Community Champions in the city.
- To work with the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission (in the first instance) to ensure the voice of those with 'lived experience' of poverty and inequality is harnessed and engaged in co-producing our activity moving forward and the proposed, new evaluation framework (see below).
- Work with 150 community organisations and 500 Digital Champions to help 10,000 people improve their digital skills.
- Organise network events and workshops for community groups, bringing organisations together to raise awareness and expand the digital inclusion network across Leeds.
- Continue to work with Good Things Foundation to encourage organisations to join the Online Centres Network and access the Foundation's funding, training and support.
- Continue to manage the UK's largest and most successful tablet lending scheme, and support the 15 community organisations identified in Appendix 2 to deliver digital inclusion at a hyper-local level.
- Support improved health and wellbeing outcomes through digital interventions:
  - Increasing skills and engagement with digital self-management solutions through digital champion training and support for Health and Social Care Professionals, people living with Long-Term Conditions and users of social care services.
  - Piloting the launch of a Digital Health Hub within a Leeds Neighbourhood Network to provide digital engagement for service users, enabling them to access health services online with the recruitment of digital health champions.

> ➢ Using our Dementia Pathfinder to test how digital tools and increased digital inclusion can help people with dementia and their families/carers to manage their conditions and improve their quality of life.
> ➢ Delivering digital champion training to Health Champion volunteers at GP Practices to enable patients to access digital support to self-manage their conditions from within their practice.

6.   Main Issues – Evaluation Framework

6.1   Building on the good work done so far, the service is focused on building evidence case studies and interviews with organisations and their service users. It is acknowledged that this evidence base needs to be more robust and work is ongoing to develop an evaluation framework to achieve this in the next 12 months. However in the main the evidence we will use to evaluation the impact will be captured through:

- Ongoing user surveys
- Monthly surveys of organisations and digital champions
- Quarterly interviews with staff, volunteers and service users

6.2   Further to this, Adults and Health have commissioned an external organisation (Social Marketing Gateway) to evaluate the impact of our work for people with long-term health conditions. Three key questions for this evaluation will be: As a result of our work, do people with Long Term Conditions have increased digital literacy skills, have those increased digital skills impacted on people's ability to self-manage their condition and do Health Care Professionals have increased digital skills to support people to self-manage their Long Term Condition.

6.3   At all stages of the evaluation process, including its development, we will be gathering the views of people with lived experience of poverty and exclusion through closer working with the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission. Through this work we will ensure that their voice is heard and included in the design, development and evaluation of our activity in this area. Discussions have started on how this relationship will be developed and sustained and we will report back as part of the next update to Executive Board in 12 months' time.

7.   Corporate considerations

7.1   Consultation and engagement

7.1.1   As outlined earlier in this report, consultation and engagement with third sector organisations and their service users is a constant activity of this work. We also plan to consult, engage and involve more closely, the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission on a regular basis as set out in paragraph 6.3 above.

7.2   Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

7.2.1   The report focuses on actions that are being undertaken principally by the Leeds Library service, through the 100% Digital Leeds programme, to reduce and mitigate the impacts of poverty and inequality. This work will in-turn, through engagement with communities, strengthen cohesion and integration in Leeds.

7.3   Council policies and the Best Council Plan

7.3.1   All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan and the Inclusive

Growth Strategy. Specifically, the work supports a number of key council priorities, including:

- **Inclusive Growth** – especially 'Supporting businesses and residents to improve skills, helping people into work and into better jobs and targeting interventions to tackle poverty in priority neighbourhoods'
- **Health and Wellbeing** – especially 'Reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the poorest the fastest and supporting self-care, with more people managing their own health conditions in the community'
- **Safe, Strong Communities** – especially 'Helping people out of financial hardship and being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities'
- **Age Friendly Leeds** – especially 'Promoting opportunities for older people to be healthy, active, included and respected'

Climate Emergency

7.3.2 It is important to recognise the complex relationship between the council's ambitions to both tackle poverty and reduce inequalities while also respond to the climate emergency. Globally it is the poorest people and communities who are most affected by the negative impacts of climate change, and who have the fewest options available to them in order to respond. In Leeds, the situation is very similar.

7.3.3 Whether it be about the food we eat, the way we travel or the products we buy, those struggling against poverty inevitably have fewer choices and often the ability to take a decision based on what might be the most environmentally ethical path is not based in the day-to-day reality of people's lives. Therefore a key aspect of considering how the council seeks to tackle poverty should be to examine in greater detail the relationship it has with climate and environmental issues, and how we can support and enable those from low income households to be fully included in wider efforts to make more environmentally friendly decisions in the future.

7.3.4 As noted earlier, this report forms part of a wider programme of work considering the lived experiences of those struggling against poverty. Through this activity, the council and its partners will seek to explore the issue of climate emergency in more depth.

7.3.5 With regard to the work around digital inclusion specifically covered in this report, improving levels of digital skill and access in some of the city's less well-off communities has the potential to make a major contribution towards overall efforts to tackle climate change. Significant focus across government and the public sector in particular, has been given to transforming the way citizens interact with services - moving information and applications online while delivering services in fewer physical locations. For those with poor digital skills this has created difficult practical challenges and they are also excluded from securing the environmental benefits of these changes. For example, if someone is not able to complete a form online they may have to travel to a physical location, with the nearest one now being a greater distance away than it was previously and requiring a longer, more polluting, journey.

7.3.6 At its core, work to provide people with more digital skills and access equips them with greater choice and flexibility about how they live their lives. As well as having the ability to present more opportunities in social and economic terms, it can also inform and enable people to make more environmentally positive choices in a realistic and practical way.

7.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

7.4.1 Funding is in place for both the remainder of this year and for 2020/21 and the Library service will continue to identify and apply for grant funding to support the programme going forward. However should that funding cease at the end of 2020/21 and there is still the requirement for the programme in the same guise as currently designed, a funding pressure will be identified and considered as part of the 2021/22 budget process.

7.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

7.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

7.6 Risk management

7.6.1 While there are no specific risks directly associated with any proposals in this report, it is important to note the ongoing risk of failure to achieve our ambition of 100% Digital Leeds. This would have a significant impact on our ability to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities. The impact of this failure would be felt by a significant number of people and families in Leeds.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Digital inclusion is a means to an end, it is not an end in itself. Digital inclusion is not about digital: it is about inclusion. People struggling against poverty can use the internet to tackle many of the challenges and inequalities they face on a daily basis. Being online means having access to cheaper goods, services and utilities, more employment opportunities, self-management tools for long-term health conditions and easier ways to deal with council and government departments.

8.2 Beyond those practical applications, being online also means that people struggling against poverty have more opportunities for leisure and pleasure, listening to music or watching videos, learning new skills with their children or keeping in touch with friends and family. In short, being online means that people struggling against poverty have the same choices and opportunities as other people.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Executive Board are requested to:
   i) Note the ongoing work, and progress achieved to-date, of the 100% Digital Leeds programme in mitigating the impact of poverty and inequality in the city through a focus on greater digital inclusion.
   ii) Comment and agree the suggested areas for further work as outlined in Section 5 of the report; and
   iii) Acknowledge the positive approach being adopted to co-produce the future programme with citizens and communities with 'lived experience' of poverty and inequality.

10. Background documents4

10.1 None.

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[4] 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.

Appendix 1 Tablet Lending Scheme – Third Sector organisations that have benefited.

MAECare

Tablets are lent to older individuals in the community who find it difficult to leave their homes. They get one-to-one support from staff and volunteers on how to download relevant apps, how to search for information, and how to complete online forms for relevant benefits, price comparison sites and online shopping. This reduces the burden on staff from a variety of organisations who are responsible for supporting that individual. They are also sometimes used in MAECare's weekly 'Tech Wednesdays' session, where pupils from Leeds Grammar School volunteer to teach digital skills to people at the centre.

Leeds Irish Health & Homes

Tablets are taken to the homes of individuals in the community who are over 50 and socially isolated without an effective support network. This reduces the demands on staff and helps individuals to be more independent, using the internet to maintain claims for various benefits or booking medical appointments. Tablets have also been used in Care Homes and Retirement Life schemes to help reduce social isolation among residents and teach them basic digital skills.

The tablets have enabled the staff to help more people more efficiently:

"We've used the iPads with people who might have had to go somewhere else to get their benefits or housing or other issues to do with their independent living sorted out, and it's been really useful for those people, especially the ones that are less able to get out and about. A lot of things they need to do can only be done online now. It's a lot less frustrating for them, and we can reassure them by supporting them through a form or system. It's really helpful for people who we help that are already quite disadvantaged – some have chronic illnesses, anxiety or are lacking in confidence – to know that they can get issues sorted easily."

Café Leep

Using tablets to help people with learning disabilities who volunteer in the café to complete their NVQs for food safety and hygiene and food preparation. This increases their digital confidence, skills for life and work, and employment opportunities. This improves volunteers' chances of securing placements at cafes and restaurants and has led to some being employed by these businesses.

Specialist Autism Services
Embedding digital inclusion across their service by using the iPads on a daily basis, in all of their workshops and in lots of different ways. Highlights of this immersive approach include:
- Using a volume-measuring app to make members more aware of their volume, with a view to better controlling the noise in workshops and making them more comfortable for members with sensitive hearing
- Using different apps to support the integration of, as well as communication with, non-verbal members
- Use of sensory apps and various game apps to help members reduce stress and anxiety in workshops and over lunchtimes
- Use of budgeting apps to develop members' money-management skills
- Supporting decision making and communication by supporting one low-verbal member using a tablet for the first time to respond to questions, typing answers he is uncomfortable speaking.

The staff team have also grown in confidence and in their familiarity with technology. For some, it has been the first time that they've used a tablet. Staff are learning about new apps, how to use them to do new things and to add value to the service by discovering how to do "old" things in new and better ways. Staff continue to share their knowledge of apps with each other and support each other to make the best use of the technology. Staff have also become Digital Champions.

Damasq

Damasq support refugees to start their life in Leeds, helping them to develop their skills and confidence and settle independently in the city. Many refugees struggle to use the internet because of the additional barrier of low English language skills on top of low levels of digital literacy. Borrowing the tablets has allowed Damasq to add a digital element to their ESOL classes, financial literacy sessions, Job Club and Universal Credit support sessions. The tablets help learners to look up new words, follow step-by-step instructions to complete online applications, search for the best prices to save their family money, translate things into their own language rather than having an interpreter, and support women in searching for jobs that suits their skills.

Appendix 2 - The full list of organisations that received funding from the £100k Grant

BARCA: £3,700 to support socially isolated service users to develop their basic digital skills, helping them connect with people, find employment, and improve their health and wellbeing.

Bramley Community Centre: £9,900 to create a dedicated space where local residents can access equipment and develop their basic digital skills, helping them to access services and find work.

Carers Leeds: £9,500 to support unpaid carers to develop their basic digital skills, helping them to connect with each other, access online services from home, and get the support they need.

Caring Together in Little London and Woodhouse: £3,600 to support older people to develop their basic digital skills in groups and in their own homes, helping those with mobility issues to access online services from home and stay independent.

Connect In The North: £2,400 to support people with learning disabilities to develop their basic digital skills, helping them to improve the accessibility of their equipment, discover apps designed for people with learning disabilities, and stay safe online.

Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours: £3,200 to provide connectivity and one-to-one digital skills training for older people and the housebound in the Cross Gates area, supporting them to access digital services, stay connected with family and friends, and continue living independently.

DAMASQ: £10,000 to provide internet access and basic digital skills support to refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants, helping them to access local services, live independently, and integrate within the wider Leeds community.

Get Technology Together: £7,600 to extend the reach of their current accessible technology training sessions to meet community need, improving basic digital, life, and work skills across Leeds.

People Matters (West Yorkshire): £7,300 to support people with disabilities to develop their basic digital skills and improve their employability, including increasing the number of Job Clubs across the city and introducing a tablet loan scheme for the benefit of their members who do not have access to their own equipment.

Pyramid of Arts: £8,700 to inspire people with disabilities to embrace tech by embedding digital into arts practice, supporting them to digitally upskill and develop their online arts presence.

Specialist Autism Services: £8,700 to support people with Autism to develop their digital knowledge, skills and confidence, allowing them to live more independently, stay healthy, and stay safe online.

St Vincent's Support Centre: £2,800 to provide connectivity and develop weekly volunteer-led digital skills sessions for migrant service users, as well as the wider local community.

Toast Love Coffee: £10,000 to develop a volunteer and community led digital inclusion scheme to improve the digital skills and confidence of the people of Harehills, with a focus on digital creativity.

Trans Mission: £3,000 to support the Leeds trans and non-binary community to develop their digital skills to better access online service and connect with each other, thereby reducing social isolation.

Turning Lives Around: £10,000 to provide connectivity to homeless clients and to tackle digital and social exclusion by providing people with the skills and confidence they need to access digital technology.

Appendix 3 Case Study - Toast Loves Coffee

Background

TLC is a pay-as-you-feel community café based in the heart of Harehills, an area where residents often face challenges affecting their finances, health and wellbeing, social interactions and employment opportunities. The café opened in December 2018 and it provides an inclusive community facility. Food and drink can be purchased for whatever customers are able to pay and various groups use the space for meetings supporting people to feel part of their community. It is a place where

The project

The Library Service first began working with TLC in October 2018 following a meeting with the TLC Volunteer Coordinator, Natalie. As well as providing a café, TLC works with volunteers to support those using the space to address some of the many challenges that they face, including digital exclusion.

We know that being online can help people to save money and time, be better informed, learn something new, reduce isolation and much more and so TLC were keen become involved in the library service's tablet lending scheme

The iPads were initially used to start up weekly 'Keeping in Touch' sessions, a drop in on a Wednesday afternoon offering bespoke 1:1 help from volunteers to do something online. The iPads are also used in more informal ways, for example:
- They are available to use in the café when someone has a problem logging into Universal Credit and doesn't have a smartphone, tablet or computer, or is confused by the website and needs some guidance.
- They have been used in the kitchen to teach volunteers how to cook healthy recipes.
- They have been used on walks to Gledhow Valley Woods to take pictures by those who have never had the opportunity to use digital technology or try their hand at digital photography. Resulting photographs have been exhibited in the café

Outcomes

TLC successfully applied to the 100% Digital Leeds Digital Inclusion Fund to buy their own equipment and resources to make their work sustainable.

The TLC video showcased at the celebration event where grants were awarded was produced by Jade, one of the volunteers and someone who has faced some of the many barriers caused by poverty.

Through the work of TLC and the partnership with Leeds Libraries and the tablet Lending scheme Jade has found renewed confidence in her abilities:

I came to TLC with real problems and no confidence to sort them out, but I've been given skills to help me cope, sort them out and open new doors. I didn't really know how to use a computer to do things. I've taken a tablet home and learned how to do the basics, and then made and edited this video with some help. I loved learning how to do it, and now I'm going to start teaching others what they can do online. I feel much more positive about my future. (Jade)

Appendix 4: Case Study - Techmums

Background

[#techmums](#) was founded by Tech Evangelist Dr Sue Black OBE, whose story illustrates the transformative impact that education in tech can have in helping women back into the workplace. #techmums is aimed at mothers who, due to family commitments, have taken time out of the workforce or education, and consequently may be lacking in skills and confidence. The ten-week course covering key areas of tech, such as digital safety, coding, and cloud computing, allows women to gain the skills and confidence needed to return to employment, enter a new career path, or set up their own business.

The project

Leeds Libraries partnered with Leeds Adult Learning who provided the funding to bring the ten week #techmums course to Leeds in early 2019. Staff in Leeds received training from #techmums and clubs were then co-delivered by library staff and staff from both Adult Learning and Employment and Skills. #techmums Clubs were delivered at Strawberry Lane Community Centre in Armley, Seacroft Library, and Dewsbury Road Library. Targeted activity in these areas ensured that the course was accessible to those women most in need of support.

Learners were provided with a course booklet and access to the #techmums online learning portal. Spaces were offered free of charge, and the Library Service was able to lend iPads to all learners for the duration of the course. This was a key feature of the programme – participants really appreciated having access to the iPads as it provided the opportunity to continue their learning in their own time, at home and with their families.

The course culminated with a graduation celebration event at Leeds Central Library.

Outcomes

- 100% of the learners said they were interested in the course to gain new skills and knowledge.

- 47 learners were enrolled and 41 learners graduated #techmums after 10 weeks.

- 77% of mums said the topics met their expectations.

All learners surveyed reported an increase in confidence. Twelve mums have progressed onto at least one other Adult Learning course and six have attended a course with Northern College. Three mums have also secured a place on the prestigious TechUP programme, a programme developed by universities in conjunction with tech industry partners aimed at supporting people from underrepresented communities to retrain and build a new career in tech.

I finally landed that job I'd been eyeing for a long time. #techmums helped me get that confidence boost. I just wanted to say Thank You.