

**Report of Deputy Director Integrated Commissioning**

**Report to Director of Adults and Health**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Subject: Request to award COVID-19 response Grant funding support for the Tier 2 Hub community organisations to the Neighbourhood Networks to support the 33 Wards of Leeds at a total value of £165,000 / £5,000 per Ward**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open 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

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- COVID-19 is an infectious disease resulting largely in respiratory illness. Older people (70 and over) and those with underlying medical conditions such as; cardiovascular disease, diabetes and certain cancers are more likely to develop serious illness as a result. Stringent social distancing and isolation measures have been recommended for these groups.
- To support those at greatest risk of serious illness, Leeds City Council (LCC) Adults and Health and Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) have worked in partnership to develop a 2 tier volunteer system co-ordinated by VAL. Tier 1 volunteer coordination is supported by LCC Adults and Health older people's commissioning team and focusses primarily on statutory services and statutory needs whilst tier 2 is being led by third sector organisations to oversee volunteer distribution in the community in support of the wider population.
- National guidance issued on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 suggests the current social isolation measures will be reviewed in 3 weeks. It is unknown at this stage whether they will be extended but it is anticipated this will most likely be the case.

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

- The approval of this funding will support our objectives to ensure the best quality of life for our citizens whilst keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience during this particularly exceptional time.

### **Resource Implications**

- The total value of this grant award is £165,000, or £5,000 x 33 wards (see appendix 1).
- There will be some resource implications for LCC which will require officer time to support distribution of the award to recipients as a priority.

### **Recommendations**

- a) The Director of Adults and Health is recommended to approve the grant award of £165,000 distributed across all 33 wards in Leeds in support of the tier 2 volunteer response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The grant will be allocated and administered by the relevant Neighbourhood Network Scheme defined within appendix 1.
- b) It is recommended that approval is given for a possible further sum of up to £165k, to enable allocation of up to a further £5k per ward, is made available should this be required over the next few weeks if the stringent social distancing measures related to COVID-19 are having to be maintained.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of grant funding to support third sector partners in co-ordinating a planned volunteer response to COVID-19 across the city.
- 1.2 The funding is a sum of £5,000 to be awarded for each of the 33 wards in Leeds to the recognised local voluntary organisation lead (Appendix 1) to a total value of £165,000.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The COVID-19 outbreak and the Government measures to minimise spread is placing new challenges on communities across the city. In line with guidance all group activities have ceased and citizens across the city remain indoors except for where they must leave under exceptional circumstances. Alongside this is a further group of people who are remaining in-doors to shield themselves further from the virus, which the Government has recommended be done for a period of 12-weeks. People following shielding guidance are those most at risk of the harmful impacts of the virus, including people aged 70 and over and those with specific underlying health conditions.
- 2.2 Alongside this are more complex social issues with difficulties arising accessing specific shopping items and booking onto home delivery services, with many stores being impacted by low stock due to panic buying and limited to no home delivery slots due to increase in demand.
- 2.3 To help mitigate some of the impacts of the current situation LCC and VAL are working in partnership on a volunteer programme under the title #Together Leeds.

This is to establish and utilise the benefit of thousands of volunteers across the city to help minimise the pressures and complexities presented by the current outbreak. Part of this work includes the establishment of tier 2 community hubs with a number of community organisations to lead on the co-ordination of the city's tier 2 volunteer response.

- 2.3.1 National guidance around social isolation will be reviewed in 3 weeks from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Current restrictions may be relaxed but there is a possibility that those at high risk of severe illness will be required to continue self-isolating. As a result continued investment into this programme may be necessary given the uncertainty surrounding the long term management of the COVID-19 outbreak and the volunteer support needed to minimise its impacts on people's lives.
- 2.3.2 The funding request covered in this report is with the view to help support this tier 2 structure to work as most effectively as possible, with the grants to be utilised as needed by organisations towards the goal of responding to COVID-19 related pressures.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 Financial support is required for the organisations (see appendix 1) acting as referral hubs to assist local residents in 33 electoral wards in Leeds. This duty is a separate function to the daily activity that the organisations at appendix 1 would normally undertake.
- 3.2 A planned two tier response is currently underway to assist statutory and non-statutory services to meet the needs of those most at risk during this particular time, with this report focusing on the tier two response.
- 3.3 The additional funding requested is recognised as essential to ensure a volunteer response can be co-ordinated at a community level, led by existing third sector and community-based organisations in Leeds.

### **4. Corporate considerations**

#### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The work to formulate the response has been coordinated with Voluntary Action Leeds and is under the lead of Hannah Bailey, Sector Support Manager at VAL and Martin Dean, Area Leader – Communities and Environment for LCC.
- 4.1.2 A wider conference call with prospective volunteer hub organisations was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 around the nature and role of the hubs. This engagement was held prior to any sign-up to adopt the role of a tier two community hub.

#### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Screening Tool has been completed and is included at Appendix 2.

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

- 4.3.1 The Best Council Plan vision for Leeds is to be the best city for health and wellbeing. The current crisis will provide an opportunity to live up to our policies and practices when supporting those most at risk during this particular unique time.
- 4.3.2 The additional funds requested here will support these aims and support our objectives to ensure the best quality of life for our citizens whilst focusing on keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience.

#### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 In March 2019 Leeds City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency. In response to this emergency the Council is working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. The plan to achieve this goal includes: reducing pollution and noise; improving air quality, and; promoting a less wasteful, low carbon economy. The COVID-19 outbreak is an unprecedented incident and it is difficult to gauge the impact on the City's climate change objectives at this stage.

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

- 4.4.1 The total value of this award is £165,000, £5,000 x 33 wards (see appendix 1). This funding will be drawn down against the emergency funds made available to Local Authorities to manage the response to this virus outbreak. If this specific funding is not available then the sum will be managed within the Directorates overall resources.
- 4.4.2 There will be some resource implications for LCC which will require officer time to distribute the award to recipients.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 The decisions highlighted in this report will be taken by the Director of Adults and Health in line with the officer delegation scheme as detailed in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.
- 4.5.2 As the combined values of all grants is under £500,000 but exceeds £100,000 this report is submitted as a significant operational decision and is not subject to call-in.
- 4.5.3 In light of the COVID-19 outbreak National government is introducing a time limited (2 years) coronavirus act. The act aims to address social care challenges around meeting the needs of those most at risk of a critical reaction to the virus, and the impact on the health and social care workforce which will see the need for volunteer support increase.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 There is a risk that the lack of a co-ordinated response in the community for the most at risk groups during this period would result in a poor quality of life or loss of life.
- 4.6.2 Further risks include the uncertainty surrounding the period of time the current measures will be enforced. Ongoing financial commitments may be required to support a sustained response to the outbreak for non-statutory services in the city.

#### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The approval of the funding proposed in this report is necessary in order to ensure a co-ordinated response in support of the city's most at risk citizens can be delivered immediately during this crisis.
- 5.2 There is also a strong possibility that ongoing financial commitments, as referenced at 6.2 below, may be required to sustain this level of support.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Adults and Health is recommended to approve the grant award of £165,000 across all 33 wards in Leeds in support of the tier 2 volunteer response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The grant will be allocated and administered by the relevant Neighbourhood Network Scheme defined within appendix 1.
- 6.2 It is recommended that approval is given for a possible further sum of up to £165k, to enable allocation of up to a further £5k per ward, is made available should this be required over the next few weeks if the stringent social distancing measures related to COVID-19 are having to be maintained.

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

- 7.1

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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.