

Report of: Assistant Solution Architect

Report to: Director of Resources & Housing

Date: 16/11/2020

Subject: GovTech Catalyst funding awards

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 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
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

- A Key Decision has been taken to allow the Council to distribute funding for the government's GovTech catalyst programme which enabled public sector organisations to set challenges that could be addressed by through using new and emerging technology.
- Leeds City Council's Challenge is 'How can we use technology to better manage our housing stock that can lead to improved health outcomes of our tenants'.
- Phase 1, outlined in a previous DDN report dated 26/07/2019, successfully completed in November 2019. Approval to proceed to Phase 2 was granted by Government Digital Service in January 2020 however the Covid-19 pandemic placed a significant pause on commencement of the project to the next stage.
- This decision awards funding to the two successful companies to progress to Phase 2 of the scheme:
 - Aware Technologies Limited
 - Homelync Limited

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

- Leeds is an innovative and forward thinking city which is keen to look at how technology and innovation can assist with delivering council services. The

recommendations in this report support the Best Council plan with a focus in particular on Housing, Health & wellbeing and Age Friendly Leeds.

- The project all supports the council's Inclusive Growth strategy with a focus on promoting Leeds as a Digital City through working with companies to co-design and co-produce innovative solutions to city challenges.

3. Resource Implications

- This decision will authorise two companies to be awarded £500,000 to carry out some Phase 1 follow-up research and development and the co-creation and production of a solution that could potentially be procurement by the council or other councils across the country. Phase 2 of the project will span a 12 month period from December 2020 to December 2021.

Recommendations

- The Chief Digital & Information Officer is requested to authorise an award of £500,000 each to:
 - a. Aware Technologies Limited
 - b. Homelync Limited

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To award £500,000 funding to two companies to undertake further R&D and production of a solution that improves the Council's service delivery.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In January 2018 the UK Government launched a £20m GovTech Catalyst programme which encouraged public sector organisations to submit challenges which could potentially be addressed through a technological solution.
- 2.2 The programme was split into 3 rounds with five successful applicants in each round. Leeds City Council submitted a challenge in round three and was informed that it was successful in January 2019. The programme is overseen by Government Digital Service (GDS) which is part of Cabinet Office, whilst the applications process is managed by Innovate UK.
- 2.3 Following the successful completion of Phase 1 in November 2019 which focused on researching the Challenge, GDS approved progression to Phase 2. This involved a further ring-fenced competition with the five suppliers from Phase 1 resulting in two successful applicants.
- 2.4 The Council and GDS worked in partnership on the Phase 2 application and interview process and are in agreement with the outcome and who further funding should be awarded to.
- 2.5 Contracts will be drawn up between Leeds City Council and each of the successful applicants and GDS will transfer £1,000,000 to the council to enable it to pay them £500,000 each.
- 2.6 Following the completion of Phase 2 in December 2021, a review will be conducted by the Council to ascertain if the project has produced a sound business case that might lead to the procurement of a solution that addresses the original Challenge. Any procurement will be in line with standard procurement rules and may not necessarily be awarded to either of the suppliers involved in Phase 2 of this project.
- 2.7 Funding will be paid to the suppliers in five tranches throughout the 12 month project. It should be noted that the contract with either of the suppliers may be terminated at any point with 30 days' notice if it is deemed that insufficient progress is being made.
- 2.8 There is no direct cost to the council other than in staff time to administer.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 It is recognised that opportunities may exist with the development of new technologies to enable us to more effectively monitor the environmental conditions within our housing stock and better help those citizens that need the most assistance. Housing Services and Adult Social Care often take reactive measures rather than proactive ones to manage their respective services which can lead to disruption for the customer and costly repairs and care services for the council.
- 3.2 Improved collection, reuse and analysis of data can help us change and improve the day-to-day work of those who work in our communities. For example, deploying tradespeople to fix a repair or social workers to assist an elderly resident. Furthermore, improved intelligence would help inform the impact of poor housing and how this plays out in terms of admissions to hospital and associated costs involved with this care.

3.3 The Key Decision has been taken to authorise the above proposals (full details can be seen here <https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=49878>)

3.4 This decision seeks permission to award £500,000 each to Aware Technologies Limited and Homelync Limited in respect of the GDS GovTech Catalyst project which is being managed by Leeds City Council.

3.5 For Phase 2 of the project, the suppliers outlined in their applications the work they will undertake:

3.5.1 **Aware Technologies Limited:**

- 1) Reach a wider cohort of people including those who are digitally excluded and those with complex impairment and economic needs;
- 2) Reach a wider set of service delivery areas including direct council services and those from the third sector community support groups;
- 3) Iterate on the privacy-by-design technical solution we developed in phase 1 to include new journeys we discover in phase 2;
- 4) Iterate on the prediction models and machine learning we developed in phase 1 to deliver increased accuracy and trust in the solution.

3.5.2 **Homelync Limited:**

- 1) A resident facing solution with insights, based on the Homelync Platform that provides alerts and recommendations for safer and healthier living within their home.
- 2) Deploy 200 homes with a core set of environmental sensors (with the option of more), and within these create a focused representative test-bed of 50 homes with a selection of environmental sensors, fire alarm, and energy monitoring to refine the systems algorithms and feedback mechanisms for residents and council officers.
- 3) Understand and measure which insights, alerts and recommendations impact most on behaviour change.
- 4) Map relevant Council processes, explore where alerts and insight will go, how they will be used, and optimise systems integration (for which we have already been in contact with Civica).

3.6 **Consultation and engagement**

3.6.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults and the Director of Resources and Housing were briefed on the project in January 2019 and are kept regularly updated.

3.7 **Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

3.7.1 The decision to proceed with the award of the does not have any equality and diversity impacts.

3.8 **Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

3.8.1 Leeds is an innovative and forward thinking city which is keen to look at how technology and innovation can assist with delivering council services. The recommendations in this report support the Best Council plan with a focus in particular on Housing, Health & wellbeing and Age Friendly Leeds.

3.8.2 The project all supports the council's Inclusive Growth strategy with a focus on promoting Leeds as a Digital City through working with companies to co-design and co-produce innovative solutions to city challenges.

Climate Emergency

3.8.3 This work will consider how Council resources can be deployed more effectively, helping to cut down on emissions and reducing traffic across the city.

3.9 Resources, procurement and value for money

3.9.1 This decision will allow the Council to transfer a total of £1,000,000 of funding to the successful companies identified above.

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

3.10.1 This is a Significant Operational Decision and is not eligible for call in.

3.11 Risk management

3.11.1 There are no financial risks associated with this project as it is externally financed. Payment will be made to successful companies in tranches and will be based on results.

3.11.2 GDS are keen to promote a fail-fast approach and state that it's acceptable if the council wishes to terminate the contract with either of the suppliers at any point in phase 2.

3.11.3 The council is keen to look at how technology can assist with managing its housing stock as there are already considerable costs associated with repair and legal claims. The project is at limited cost to the council aims to address these issues.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The council is keen to promote itself as a 'Digital City' and look at how new technology can help it deliver new and improved services and/or reduce costs of running those services.

4.2 This project enables the council to do some initial exploratory work with a number of technology companies at minimal cost.

4.3 The challenge set by Leeds in particular is being championed by GDS and promoted at their UK roadshows. Success here, could be replicated by local authorities, housing associations and private landlords across the country.

4.4 Commencement of the project is subject to approval to pay the successful companies

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Chief Digital & Information Officer is requested to authorise an award of £500,000 each to:

- Aware Technologies Limited
- Homelync Limited

6. Background documents¹

6.1 None.

¹ 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.