



**Report of the Head of Equality**

**Report to the Chief Officer Communities**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Subject: Community Champions ‘Outbreak Plan Plus Project’**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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**

- In January 2021 Leeds City Council received notification from the Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government that they had been successful in their bid to the Community Champions fund; which aims to support people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (Covid19) including those from an ethnic minority background, disabled people and others to follow safer behaviours and reduce the impact of the virus on themselves and those around them. This is fixed term non-recurring funding.
- The council will receive grant funding of £141,369.74 to deliver a programme of activities in 2020/21. The intention is that this project will leave a legacy beyond March 2021.

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

- The project outlined in this report contribute to the following targets and priorities set out in the Best Council Plan:
  - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
  - Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
  - Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

### **3. Resource Implications**

- The resources to fund the Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project will be via grant funding from the Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government.

### **Recommendations**

- a) That the Chief Officer Communities accept the grant funding from the Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government to deliver the Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project in Leeds which includes allocating grant funding to third sector organisations and a grant funding pot to community organisations to support this work.

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

- 1.1 This report sets out the background information and proposal for Leeds City Council to accept grant funding from the Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government.
- 1.2 The funding will be used to develop and deliver a programme of activities to deliver the Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project.

#### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The Leeds COVID-19 Outbreak and Control Plan ambition is to serve the needs of all our diverse communities, and those people who are at greater risk. The councils outreach, engagement and communication with residents regarding COVID-19 commenced rapidly in March 2020 due to the existing engagement that already exist in the City.
- 2.2 A targeted and citywide approach to communication and engagement has been developed to respond to the crisis working with voluntary and community organisations, businesses and statutory partners. Task groups have been established to aid more effective communication with communities and priority groups which can be championed by local leaders and communities. The Communities of Interest network was established to ensure information and support connects with the most marginalised and vulnerable communities in Leeds.
- 2.3 The Leeds Outbreak Plan has identified specific work and resources for the Third Sector through the Communities of Interest Network. This builds on existing capacity and capability of the Third Sector to take a proactive, preventative and asset based approach to prevent and manage outbreaks in local communities and communities of interest. As well as, promoting community trust and engagement in the COVID-19 plan. By utilising expertise and networks we have been able to tailor our approach to prevention, outbreak management, testing, tracing, communication and support, further enhancing local two-way dialogue.
- 2.4 An example of specific work includes giving micro grants to maximise the skills, expertise and reach of our smaller organisations and groups to promote key messages, promote health and wellbeing, and identify needs and meaningful solutions through an ongoing collaborative effort.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 This work is an important part of the vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist.
- 3.2 The funding will be used to develop a programme of work which will be delivered between January and March 2021 with the intention the project will leave a legacy beyond March 2021. Grant funding will be allocated to third sector organisations and a grant funding pot to community organisations to support this work.
- 3.3 Our proposal is to develop additional capacity and activities to build on existing work in Leeds to determine community champion capacity to support a range of messaging and activities including vaccinations.
- 3.4 Current work focuses on opportunities to engage communities in system design and access to clear, accessible and consistent information. There are four components of our approach -
  - We have identified that there are communities that are not covered by existing plans. The immediate focus will be to undertake a mapping/gapping exercise to ensure that there is a focus on these communities during the three month delivery period of this project. For example, we know that there continue to be BAME communities in the City who are below the radar and may not engage with existing communication routes due to fear/mistrust of public organisations. There are also disabled people who are unable to participate due to digital exclusion.
  - Existing 'community champion' activity has identified that communities may lack the knowledge/confidence in taking forward key messages and need continual support to remain up to date and to overcome challenges. For example, myths, getting online, safeguarding. We will provide additional support and training through Community Champions.
  - This project will also have a focus on understanding the COVID-19 impact on the wider determinants of health and will provide additional resourcing to trusted organisations working with diverse communities to ensure system communications continue to reach communities which are fully understood and supported.
  - In addition it is proposed that a small grant funding programme is developed with the aim of maximising the skills, expertise and reach of smaller organisations and groups in the City. This will be to promote key messages, promote health and wellbeing, and identify needs and meaningful solutions through an ongoing collaborative effort.
- 3.5 The programme of work is targeted to support people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (Covid19) including those from an ethnic minority background and disabled people.
- 3.6 The proposed work will build on existing internal and external partnerships.
- 3.7 The council recognises that it has a twofold role in supporting and developing community champions to discuss issues that affect them and their communities to consider what they see as potential solutions to those issues.
- 3.8 The Government is keen to work with local authorities and their partners, who know their areas best, to support the communities at risk in those places and learn what

works (and what doesn't work), and apply these lessons to future central and local government efforts to tackle the virus elsewhere.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 Leeds already has strong outbreak management arrangements in place, with robust governance under the leadership of the DPH underpinned by the Leeds Outbreak plan developed and approved by the Leeds Health Protection Board. The Leeds COVID-19 outbreak control plan will build on these strong foundations, working with stakeholders to scale up and enhance existing arrangements and services and increase capacity, recognising the key role of effective communication and engagement, to develop an integrated system to meet the needs of local communities.

4.1.2 The outcome of this work has highlighted some of the issues and challenges diverse communities in Leeds experience effectively engaging with COVID19 messages and guidance.

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

4.2.1 Covid-19 has had a disproportionate and differential impact on inequality in the city, targeted work has been taking place and supporting underserved groups is a priority. The MHCLG funding will further ensure the needs of these communities are further met and addressed.

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

4.3.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:

- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**
  - Strong, engaged and well-connected communities
- **Inclusive Growth**
  - Best city for health and wellbeing
  - Supporting places and communities to respond to economic change
  - Leeds as a digital city
- **Best Council Plan**
  - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
  - Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
  - Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible
- **Stronger Communities**
  - That the Citizens of Leeds:*
    - Feel they belong to their local neighbourhood and are connected to the wider City of Leeds
    - Participate in civic life and regular voluntary activities

#### Climate Emergency

4.3.2 Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project will work within the context of government COVID-19 guidance and restrictions. Current restrictions limit travel

across the city therefore will aim to increase digital inclusion by improving community champions and communities digital skills/confidence and in some cases access.

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

4.4.1 The resources to fund this project will be via grant funding from Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government.

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

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications with this report. This a Significant Operational Decision and is not subject to call-in.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 Any risks associated with the community champions programme will be managed as part of project delivery.

### **5. Conclusions**

5.1 The Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project enables Leeds:

- To build on existing work in Leeds to determine community champion capacity to support a range of messaging and activities including vaccinations.
- To form part of Government learning of what works and what doesn't work to and apply these lessons to future central and local government efforts to tackle the virus elsewhere.

### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 The Chief Officer Communities accept the grant funding from Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government to deliver the Community Champions Outbreak Plan Plus Project in Leeds which includes allocating grant funding to third sector organisations and a grant funding pot to community organisations to support this work.

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

7.1 None

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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.