**Appendix A**

**55up Technology Helpline – Digital Inclusion**

**Specification**

**Background to the Helpline**

Within the Town Council’s five-year strategic plan 2021 – 2024, is the objective:

*No 27. Consider ways to support the increase in leisure opportunities for older people.*

This objective focuses on Parish residents aged 55yrs and up.

A headline ‘needs gap’ identified by Leighton-Linslade Town Council when it carried out a community survey in 2020, was digital inclusion, or more accurately the current digital ‘exclusion’ of this age group.

Covid-19 has shown us that supporting older people to use technology is fundamental to reducing their loneliness and the negative effects of increased isolation. In addition, concern over housebound individuals (who cannot or prefer not to leave their home) points to the increased importance of digital devices to help create or maintain connections with others, vital to their wellbeing.

It is also recognised that many services are increasingly directing clients or customers to online communication and self-service portals.

The Town Council seeks to address the issue by investing funds into the development and delivery of a ‘technology helpline’, as well as through face-to-face support, that assists those aged 55 and up to have the ability, skills set and confidence, to use digital devices.

The development and delivery of this work will be outsourced and run as a pilot scheme for two years. Contract delivery performance, along with project evaluation will be of key interest for this pilot scheme to influence future delivery.

This Technology Helpline is one of several initiatives being carried out under the project banner ‘55up’ to support Parish residents who are over 55 years old.

**Overview of the ‘Technology Helpline’**

A telephone ‘helpline’ to support those 55 years and over’s technology needs.

Details about each request for help will be obtained, and then directed to appropriate individuals in a pool of technology staff or volunteers, who (DBS checked) can then speak to the client directly to give them technology support, information and guidance.

In addition to the helpline, face to face support can be introduced to beneficiaries in line with government safeguarding guidelines. This can be prioritized for clients whose needs haven’t or can’t be met through phone consultations.

Digital buddies can be introduced where appropriate. The Coordinator and/or technology staff or volunteers can help the beneficiary identify a family member or friend who could become their ‘digital buddy’, and thereby support them more long term with their technology needs/ambitions and be on hand during phone consultations.

Group workshops and/or drop-ins on technology can also be introduced in public locations like the Library, so that people can bring their devices to a public space for direct ‘hands on’ support and guidance.

Additional training to be made available to existing community support groups such as Leighton-Linslade Helping Hands. The aim of the training should be to upskill their volunteers to enable them to incorporate technology support into the existing work they do with their over 55 year old client base.

We welcome a variety of innovative ways for the project to be delivered e.g. through a consortium, subcontracting and partnerships as long as contractual responsibilities are clear and all work to one set of overarching policy documents including health and safety assessments.

**Who will run the helpline?**

The Town Council will commission this service to be run by an external organisation.

The Town Council will expect quarterly project review meetings and will commission an independent evaluation on completion of the 2-year pilot.

**Project specifications:**

1. Coordination of the service.
2. Dedicated service telephone line.
3. DBS checks and safeguarding of staff and volunteers working on, and with access to beneficiaries and their personal details.
4. Adherence to data protection guidelines when collecting and storing beneficiaries personal data.
5. Staff and volunteer recruitment and coordination (including items such as training)
6. Staff and volunteer expenses (e.g. transport and telephone costs).
7. Creation and distribution of promotional materials.
8. Creation of helpline support materials including simple ‘how to’ guides for technology support such as for email/video conferencing. The materials should follow accessibility principles.
9. Workshops and beneficiary drop-in sessions.
10. Training sessions to upskill staff and volunteers from other community organisations who support those 55 years old and over.
11. Collate project data about the service for evaluation and continued learning including beneficiary feedback.

\*If a commercial organisation, it is imperative you do not upsell your commercial offerings to the beneficiaries or unnecessarily impede the support given in order to sell them your services.

**Budget available**

**£34,500** is being made available to cover the full cost of this pilot scheme for the first 2 years.

The Town Council will carry out an independent evaluation of the pilot scheme towards the end of the 2 years. Should the project be successful, the Council will look to continue the project with a possible contact extension or new quotation opportunity.

**Timeline for project**

Project to commence – before January 2022

Pilot scheme is for 2 years

Monitoring meetings with the Town Council 3 times per year

Progress reports bi-annually

Project evaluation carried out in the final quarter of the project

**Details in the tender should include**

1. Detailed explanation of how the helpline will be managed and operated including a flow chart depicting the beneficiary journey from first contact to receiving help and after.
2. Detailed allocation of project budget spend.
3. Copy of accounts for the last two years.
4. Project delivery timeline.
5. Project risk assessment.
6. Service risk assessment.
7. Roles, responsibilities and qualifications of your organisational staff who will be involved in delivering this project including a named contact project liaison person.
8. Detailed explanation on whether you will be using volunteers to help deliver the service and how they will be managed including DBS, training, safeguarding and supervision procedures.
9. Detailed explanation on whether you will subcontract any of the work or forming a consortium and how this work will be managed including roles, responsibilities and qualifications of staff and volunteers.
10. Description of how your organisation (and any consortium members) is formed including copies of organisational management documents, (i.e. Not for profit, Charity, Commercial) Please include your Charity or Company Registration number.
11. Examples and description of similar work undertaken.
12. Details of 2 named referees who are/have been in receipt of your organisation’s services.
13. Details of how long you have operated/traded.
14. Copies of relevant policies in place (Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Environmental Management, Data Protection, Volunteer)
15. Evidence of relevant insurances and the level of indemnity held inc. Employees Liability, Public Liability etc. Will your volunteers be covered by this insurance?
16. Explanation of how this project will stand separately from your current service delivery or otherwise.
17. Explanation on how you will ensure, if a commercial organisation, that you will not up sell any of your services or products to the helpline beneficiaries.

We reserve the right to request further detailed information following the receipt of the first quotation prior to awarding a contract.

For further information or to submit a quote contact **Sarah Jewell**, **Cultural & Economic Services Support Officer** at sarahjewell@leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk