

Report to CABINET

GM Music Hub funding agreement.

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Officer Contact: Gerard Jones

Report Author: Gerard Booth, Head of Music Service
Ext. 5664

14th October 2024

Reason for Decision

Approval is required for Oldham Council Music Service to enter into a new agreement with other GM LAs to receive funding to continue to operate as the Local Area Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Oldham Council approves this proposal and enters into the agreement.

The Greater Manchester and Blackburn with Darwen Music Education Hub Partnership

1. Background

- 1.1. The GM Music Hub (GMMH) partnership began in 2012 following the publication of the first **National Plan for Music education (NPME) (DfE, 2011)**. There were existing good relationships between the music services serving the LAs in GM (AGMA template at the time). With the exception of City of Manchester, the other nine Directors of Education (taking advice from Heads of Music Service) voted to move forward with the partnership agreement and for **Bolton Music Service** to be the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) for the alliance. The partnership was in no way enforced. It was the will of the 9 LA's and their Music Services to join forces in this way.
- 1.2. The partnership agreement between the 9 LAs as established in 2012 is a legal document. Each LA legal dept. adds its 'seal' to the document. There have been numerous interim extensions to the agreement since it was proposed in 2011.
- 1.3. The GMMH is the largest Music Hub in the country. It has been a **flagship for Arts Council England (ACE)/DfE** and has proven the benefits of cross LA working. This situation was further enhanced when Bolton Music Service was approached by Blackburn with Darwen Council in 2015 and asked to take over the management of their local music service. Since that time, BwD Music Service has become an additional partner within GMMH and contributes financially in the same way as the other 9 organisations. The existence of the GMMH has played a part in the development to establish **far more multi-LA hubs across England**, a process which commenced in 2023 and which led to organisations bidding to become the new HLOs for geographic locations assigned by ACE, operation of which will commence from Sept 2024.
- 1.4. The relationships between the LAs and the wider partnership (Halle, BBC, RNCM, University of Salford and many more) has grown and remains extremely collegiate. There are very many **economies of scale, enhanced opportunities for children and teachers** because of the Hub. The principle benefits experienced during the initial phase of the NPME have include, much closer working between the Music Services in each of the partner LAs, enhanced educational pathways for students, increased funding, both regionally and locally, economies of scale, increased efficiency in respect of the grant admin process, peer support. These benefits continue to evolve and we are continually adding value through the addition of new industry partners.
- 1.5. It was the **unanimous** recommendation of the 9 Heads of Music Services **that Bolton should continue to be the HLO** for GM and that they would lead the application in the 2023 funding relating to the period from Sept 2024.
- 1.6. A significant advantage of the GMMH structure is that the HLO (Bolton) is empowered to deal with the admin heavy business of ACE liaison and reporting. This allows the other partners to **focus on local provision**. Bolton take a 3% 'top-slice' to fund the work they carry out on behalf of all partners. This is remarkable **value for money**, because to manage the ACE burden locally would require the establishment of further management posts in each of the boroughs.
- 1.7. The value of the grant funding to Oldham in 2023-24 is **£415,210** (after 3% top-slice). A similar figure is expected going forwards.

-
- 1.8. In 2012, the City of Manchester chose not to join the GMMH. However, in 2023, the DfE/Arts Council (ACE) **redefined the geographic boundaries of each Hub region**. The City of Manchester is within the redefined Greater Manchester Hub and therefore, following extensive and protracted discussions, their Music Service ('MyHub'/One Education) elected to join with the existing GM partnership. The founding regard this to be a positive and logical step forward. We have long wished for a stronger, more formal relationship with City of Manchester.
- 1.9. The funding is expected to be extended in line with the NPME2 to 2030. The sum allocated to Oldham for the period Sep '24 to August '25 is £434,367. Bolton Council has agreed to reduce the 'top-slice' for this initial period to 2.5% resulting of an income of **£423,508**.
- 1.10. In addition to the revenue funding, the new Hub programme from ACE includes an additional element of funding for capital expenditure. In Oldham's case this will result in a further allocation of **£142,686** being available for the purchase of musical instruments and equipment for use by Oldham's pupils and teachers, thereby reducing pressure on the Music Service's budget which might otherwise have been allocated to repairs and purchases. This figure will not be subject to the top-slice but the instruments will remain the property of the GM Music Hub for the duration of their projected useful life. It is not yet clear whether they will ultimately pass to Oldham Council at any stage in the future.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The GMMH grant has become an essential part of the Oldham Council Music Service's income stream over the last twelve years and is approximately **23% of annual turnover**. The income is used to facilitate activities, both in schools and at the Music Centre, and has a particular impact upon the **accessibility** of high-quality music education to **young people** in Oldham's schools.
- 2.2 Oldham's Director of Music/Head of Service worked with regional colleagues (including those from Manchester and Blackburn with Darwen) during 2023 and together they developed revised partnership agreements, putting together and submitting in November a detailed and comprehensive bid to ACE to continue as the Music Education Hub for the GM and BwD region.
- 2.3 On 7th May ACE formally announced the HLOs for each of the new regional Music Hubs and the GM partnership group was delighted to be selected to continue to lead the music education work in the next period of development.
- 2.4 Grant negotiations have been taking place between Bolton and ACE in the period since HLOs were advised in April (under embargo) that they had been selected. These have included but are not limited to submission for scrutiny of:
- governance and management processes,
 - partnership agreements,
 - delivery mechanisms,
 - QC and monitoring procedures,
 - Best Value processes,
 - CPD programmes,
 - SEND provision,
 - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) plans
 - work to ensure maximization of inclusion for all young people within the geographic areas.

-
- 2.5 As all of the above have now been accepted and ratified by the partners and ACE we are at the stage where each and all of the local delivery partners will shortly be required to sign new **Partnership Agreements** in order to receive the funding amount for their region and to commence delivery of the music education required by NPME. The Partnership Documents are currently being drawn up by **Bolton Council's Legal Team** and it is anticipated that partners will be required to sign these in early September 2024.

3 **Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 Option 1: To sign the Agreement as presented and to continue as the appointed local Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub in the borough of Oldham. This option has the advantage of ensuring that the delivery of musical opportunities for young people and other groups in Oldham continues its unbroken tradition and will continue to develop and thrive.

Option 2: To reject the Agreement and not to remain as the Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub in Oldham. This would pose an existential threat to the Oldham Council Music Service as the reduction of c. £415k of funding annually would result in mass redundancies, a massive contraction of the offer and the potential failure of extra-curricular delivery. Additionally, the new GM/BwD Music Hub would be compelled to appoint an alternative Local Delivery Partner for the borough and this would, most likely, lead to the establishment of an additional and well-funded, if inexperienced, local competitor, thereby placing additional pressure upon the Council Music Service..

4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred alternative as it would ensure that high-quality music provision remains guaranteed within the borough and that the existing offer can be maintained and developed for the benefit of residents.

5 **Consultation**

- 5.1 Parties consulted with during the process described above include the following current partners within the GM Hub:

- All member LAs/GM Music Services: Bolton, Blackburn with Darwen, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan
- Halle
- BBC Philharmonic
- Bridgewater Hall
- Brighter Sound
- Charanga
- Chetham's School of Music
- University of Manchester
- Manchester Camerata
- MMU
- RNCM
- University of Salford
- Sing for Pleasure
- Spirit Studios
- BIMM Institute

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 This report is seeking approval to accept and sign the new agreement with the other eight Local Authorities to receive funding from the GM Music Hub and continue as the local delivery partner for Oldham.
- 6.2 The total amount of funding expected from the GM Hub Grant is £423,508 from September 2024 to August 2025, an increase of £8,298 from the current academic year due to a decrease of the top slice reduced from 3% to 2.5%.
- 6.3 This arrangement mirrors the agreement which has been in place over the last 12 years, where Bolton continue to be the Hub Lead Organisation in charge of receiving the grant and passporting on to the nine Local Authorities.
- 6.4 The Music Service is reliant on this income as it is approximately 23% of the annual budgeted income.
- 6.5 The funding can only be spent on music education in the Borough of Oldham and would not be available for use elsewhere in GM. If the Council were not to engage then the Hub would be required to find and appoint a new partner to carry out the delivery elements in the Borough and the new partner would receive the investment.
- 6.6 Not accepting the funding will have a big impact on the service as they will lose £423,508 of funding each year so will not be able to continue running the service as it is and will be forced to have a major restructure, make redundancies and not be able to fulfil the requirements of being the Local Delivery Partner for Oldham.

(Catherine Dunkerley – Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1

Paragraph 1.10 of the report highlights uncertainty regarding the ownership of musical instruments purchased with capital funding, as they will remain the property of the GM Music Hub for the duration of their projected useful life. It would be prudent to seek clarification on whether these assets will eventually transfer to Oldham. Even if they do, given that they would transfer only after their projected useful life, Oldham should carefully consider whether taking ownership is desirable, as they may become liabilities rather than assets at that stage.

The grant represents approximately 23% of Oldham Music Service's annual turnover, indicating a strong reliance on this funding for service continuity. Any reduction or loss of funding could severely impact the service, potentially leading to restructuring, redundancies, and a diminished offer for Oldham. The Council should continue to monitor its financial position and establish contingency plans for potential changes in funding.

The partnership also involves various performance and compliance monitoring mechanisms, including governance, management processes, CPD programs, and inclusion frameworks. Oldham should ensure it meets its specific obligations regarding adequate reporting and active participation in these processes, as failure to comply could lead to breaches of the agreement.

Pamela Nsofor (legal)

8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**



8.1 IAReport_GerardBooth_01_Music Hub F

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 EDS-07-24

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 None

13 **Appendices**

13.1 The Power of Music to Change Lives – A National Plan for Music Education (NPME2) (DfE 2022)

13.2 What the National Plan for Music Education means for Children and Young People (GOV.UK)

13.3 Music Hub Areas and Grant Allocations essential document 18.07.23 (ACE)

13.4 Music Hub Investment Programme - Hub Lead Organisations_1 (ACE, 2024)

13.5 Music Hub Timeline July 2024 (ACE)