

Report to CABINET

Acceptance of Funding Allocations 2024-2025 for Oldham Lifelong Learning Service

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member Education and Skills

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Reason for Decision

To accept the funding allocation for the academic year 2024 -2025 for the Lifelong Learning Service.

Executive Summary

The report details funding offer received Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in respect of the Adult Education Budget grant for the 2024-2025 academic year and highlights how this funding will be used to meet GMCA's and the Council's key priorities.

Recommendations

To accept the Adult Education funding offer from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the academic year 2024-2025

Acceptance of Funding Allocations 2024-2025 for Oldham Lifelong Learning Service**1 Background**

- 1.1 Following devolution of the Adult Education Budget, the Council's Lifelong Learning Service is now funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (prior to devolution this was directly awarded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency).
- 1.2 The Service is designed to meet the GMCA Strategy, the Council's ambition and key objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and to support the Oldham Partnership Our Future. The Service works with the 5 district partnerships with a focus upon the Council's 'Get Oldham Working' campaign and the Co-operative Agenda. The funding will support the Service to specifically assist the Council to deliver outcomes against the Healthier, Happier Lives corporate mission.
- 1.3 The Service delivers a range of employability programmers in liaison with the Employment and Skills team (GOW), Job Centre Plus, Welfare to Work Providers and the 5 districts. The Service also works closely with the Voluntary, Community, Faith sector (VCFS) via Action Together. Partnerships with Children's Centres, Family Hubs, Schools, Public Health, Adult and Children Social Care and others to enable the Service to deliver targeted work which develops self-reliance, confidence, independence, health and progression to further learning, training and employment.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 For the academic year 2024 – 2025, the Adult Education Budget will continue to be split based on the initial 2019/20 geographical delivery with an allocation of GMCA Devolved Education Budget. The allocation which is payable by GMCA to the Council for the Lifelong Learning Service for the Funding Year from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 is **£2,865,926** (Two Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand, Nine Hundred and twenty six Pounds Sterling). This is the total of all 3 elements of AEB (adult skills, learner support and where applicable, tailored learning.)
- 2.2 All funds are to be used to support Oldham Lifelong Learning Service's Strategic Plan, Self-Assessment Report (SAR), Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the Oldham Community Learning Plan and Lifelong Learning Service's Business Plan and the Council Corporate Plan. The funding will also support the GM Strategy and GM Local Industrial Strategy and in negotiation with GMCA it will maintain the position of prioritising Adult Skills funded provision.
- 2.3 The Adult Education Budget (AEB) block grant aims to engage adults and provide skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or other learning. It enables more flexible tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which may not require a qualification. This will help those furthest from learning or the workplace.
- 2.4 The AEB allocation for 2024-2025 includes Adult Skills, Tailored Learning, (formerly Community Learning) and Discretionary Learner Support. The Adult Skills element is used to fund the accredited programmes offered by the Service. Discretionary Learner Support is used specifically for childcare provision and to provide financial support towards the cost of fees, books, travel costs and equipment for learners who otherwise would be unable to attend classes.

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- 2.5 GMCA will not be implementing the national approach to tailored learning. Tailored Learning (formerly Community Learning) will be used to fund the non-vocational programme offered by the Service which continues to fall under the following seven delivery strands: • Engaging and/or building confidence • Preparation for further learning • Preparation for employment • Improving essential skills (English, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, maths and digital provision) • Equipping parents/carers to support children’s learning • Health and well-being • Developing stronger communities.
- 2.6 GMCA has removed the tolerance for under allocation; to manage flex and growth in year. GMCA is also committed to having a positive conversation with individual and groups of grant providers to manage underspends for the benefit of ‘place’ first, and then opened up to other GM providers. It is expected that the Lifelong Learning service will not underspend and meet all of the given allocation.

3 **Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 To accept the funding and to enter into suitable funding agreements.
- 3.2 To decline the funding.

4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 **To accept the funding and to enter into suitable funding agreements**

5 **Consultation**

- 5.1 The Service undertakes extensive and regular consultation with learners, other users, partners and non-users.

6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The initial funding allocation for Oldham Lifelong Learning Service is £2,865,926. The funding will be utilised to fund the Service’s delivery programme, which is developed to meet the ESFA, GMCA and the Council’s priorities and targets.
- 6.2 There is an additional element for GM Devolved AEB Local Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) which will be allocated based on outcomes received via the ILR online system and paid monthly. This is to a maximum amount of £50,000. The service achieved £11,491 in Academic Year 2023/2024 and the service is expecting to achieve £12,000 for academic year 2024/2025
- 6.3 The budget is for the 2024/2025 academic year and covers the delivery of the Service’s programme for the same period, income therefore falls into the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 financial years. As the grant funding runs across two financial years, any unspent funding at the end of the financial year 2024/2025 will be carried forward as a receipt in advance to be spent in 2025/2026 financial year.
- 6.4 GMCA continues to honour over delivery payable at the end of year reconciliation up to a maximum of 110%. For academic year 2023/2024 this was factored into the financial year budget. Any overachievement for Academic year 2024/2025 will be factored into the relevant financial year budget. The Service is currently planning an overachievement of 102%; £57,318 planned for the 2024/25 academic year. The £11,491 outlined in section

6.2, for Level 3 funding is for 2023/2024 academic year and the expectation is that Level 3 funding will be similar for 2024/2025:

	2024/25	2025/26	Total
2024/2025 GMCA AEB Allocation	£1,910,617	£955,309	£2,865,926
102% overachievement (planned)	£38,212	£19,106	£57,318
2024/2025 AEB Local Level 3	£8,000	£4,000	£12,000
Total (within financial year)	£1,956,829	£978,415	
Total Academic Year (Aug 24 – Jul 25)	£2,935,244		

6.5 As in previous years, the Service may receive additional one-off grant allocations from the GMCA and other funding bodies and will seek approval to accept these as and when they arise. Again, this funding will be linked to specific delivery programmes and targets from varying sources. They may fall into the academic year or financial year.

6.6 The AEB grant is fully ring-fenced to the Lifelong Learning Service and is subject to a detailed annual grant return and detailed monthly data returns and an annual audit. The monthly data returns, namely the Individual Learner Record (ILR), record the amount of funding drawn down by individual learners and calculate the overall amount of funding earned each month. The Service is paid on a monthly profile. GMCA provide Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rate for each audit and the service is pleased to have maintained a “green” award for each audit with no additional conditions attached.

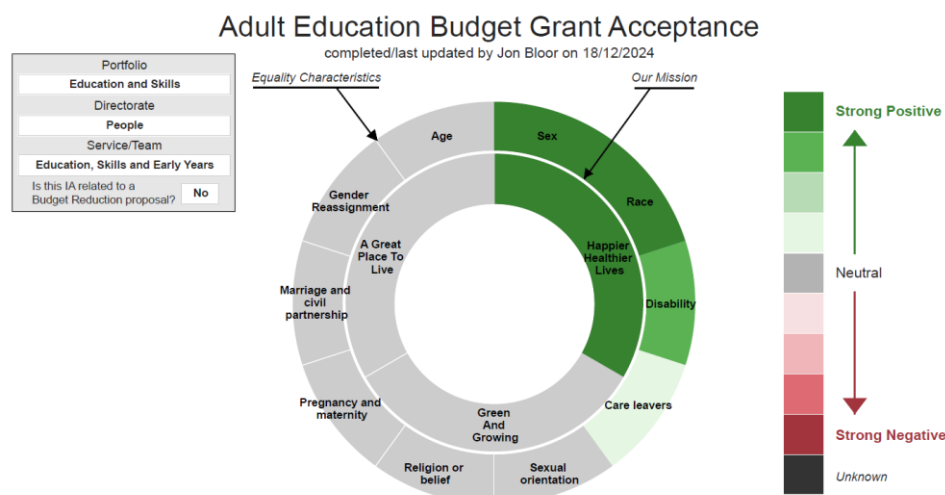
6.7 Should performance issues arise then the Service delivery programme will be revised to reflect the new budget allocation at no additional cost to the Authority.
(Catherine Dunkerley - Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The GMCA grant offered to the Council will, as per the contents of this report, assist the Council to meet its aims, objectives and priorities. The terms and conditions upon which the grant funding is made available are currently unknown, so it is recommended that the form of grant agreement is reviewed by Legal Services prior to the transfer of any funds. Provided the Council is in a position to meet the requirements of the grant funding agreement, there are no known legal implications in respect of the proposed recommendation.
Sarah Orrell – Commercial & Procurement Solicitor

8 Oldham Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

8.1



9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

10.1 EDS-08-24

11 **Background Papers**

11.1 None

12 **Appendices**

12.1



Oldham Council - GMCA ASF Funding
Allocation Letter 24/25 and Performance M

GMCA Funding and Performance Management rules
Allocation Letter for 24/25 funding from GMCA