

# Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council.

<b>Subject:</b>	Awarding of Grant Funding from the GMCA Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund
<b>Decision maker: Senior Officer</b>	Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy and Performance
<b>Decision maker: Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability
<b>Decision date:</b>	21.02.25
<b>Report author:</b>	Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience
<b>Ward (s):</b>	All
<b>Reason(s) for exemption from publication:</b>	NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council.

## Reason for decision

Following a successful bid, to award £70,000 funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) as Grant Funding via a Grant Funding Agreement to Inclusive Bytes CIC.

## Recommendation(s)

To award £70,000 funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) as a Grant Funding via a Grant Funding Agreement to Inclusive Bytes CIC.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Following informal discussions, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) wrote to Local Authority Digital Inclusion Leads across Greater Manchester (GM) on 14 October 2024 inviting grant proposals to the GMCA Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund (SCDIF).
- 1.2 Each of the ten (GM) authorities were able to bid for up to £70,000 funding effective from January – June 2025 crossing over 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. The funding has been made available through GM Retained Business Rates 2024/25.
- 1.3 The purpose of the fund as set out the GMCA project overview document is to:  
*move towards 100% digital enablement by tackling place-based inequalities, informed by the mapping to seed and enable locality-led hyper local digital skills and inclusion support for Greater Manchester residents, available and accessible to all within 1 km (or 15 minutes) of walking distance. Therefore, this fund is dedicated to building equity of face-to-face community-based provision and access improving the consistency of core support offers.*
- 1.4 Following on from the scheme guidance documentation and request for initial proposals sent on 14 October 2024, councils were required to submit initial proposals by 21 October. This gave authorities a week to plan, draft and submit or to face the risk of not receiving funding. Therefore the options regarding delivering the funding were limited. Funding existing posts was prohibited in the scheme guidance. We were left with the only viable option to grant fund a reputable, local organisation with a track record of delivery in digital inclusion to work with us to deliver within the parameters of the grant funding agreement and to maximise the impact of the opportunity from the funding to increase access to digital inclusion support.
- 1.5 Oldham Council requested an extension to engage with Inclusive Bytes CIC to develop a clear and impactful proposal to secure the full funding available. Our joint initial proposal was submitted to GMCA on 7 November 2024.
- 1.6 Following review by GMCA, we received confirmation on 18 November that the initial proposal was successful and that we could proceed to the Council's and GMCA's legal teams reviewing and agreeing a Grant Funding Agreement between the two organisations. The Grant Funding Agreement was reviewed during December and finalised, signed and sealed on 9 January 2025. A copy is included at **Appendix A**.
- 1.7 Following agreement, the Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC have drafted, reviewed and agreed in principle a Grant Funding Agreement to deliver the GMCA SCDIF on behalf of Oldham Council for the full funding amount. The Grant Funding Agreement can be found

at **Appendix B**. This DDR seeks authorization to proceed to sign the Grant Funding Agreement between the Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC.

- 1.8 Project governance has been established with monthly monitoring meetings between the Council and inclusive Bytes to deliver the scheme objectives and outcomes as listed in the Grant Funding Agreement.

## **2. Alternative option(s) to be considered**

- 2.1 Due to the timescales provided by GMCA, no other viable options were available to obtain the funding within the parameters provided.

## **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member has been involved throughout the planning of the initiative and has met with Inclusive Bytes CIC.

## **4. Risks**

- 4.1 Project governance has been established with monthly monitoring meetings between the Council and inclusive Bytes to deliver the scheme objectives and outcomes as listed in the Grant Funding Agreement.
- 4.2 Risks have been minimised by establishing Grant Funding Agreements.

## **5. Implications**

Financial	<p>Following a successful bid the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Oldham Council have been awarded the maximum grant of £70k from the GMCA Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund (SCDIF)</p> <p>The preferred option as detailed in the recommendation above is to passport £70k of funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to Inclusive Bytes CIC via a Grant Funding Agreement.</p> <p>The Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC have drafted, reviewed and agreed in principle a Grant Funding Agreement to deliver the GMCA Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund on behalf of Oldham Council.</p>
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	<p>GMCA have included a clawback arrangement should their grant conditions not be met.</p> <p>Project governance has been established with monthly monitoring meetings between the Council and inclusive Bytes to deliver the scheme objectives and outcomes as listed in the Grant Funding Agreement, and to ensure all the GMCA grant conditions are met.</p> <p>This will mitigate the risk of any clawback arrangement being exercised by GMCA.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Matthew Kearns, Finance Manager</p>
Legal	<p>The Grant Funding Agreement between Oldham Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC is legally suitable and provides appropriate protections for the Council. It ensures compliance with public sector grant funding regulations and GMCA's conditions, safeguarding against potential claw back risks. The agreement clearly defines the purpose of the funding, preventing misuse and limiting the Council's financial exposure beyond the grant amount.</p> <p>Monitoring provisions require regular progress updates, allowing the Council to oversee delivery and take action if necessary. The agreement includes robust clauses for breach, termination, and fund recovery in case of non-compliance.</p> <p>Data protection and confidentiality requirements align with UK GDPR, ensuring proper handling of sensitive information.</p> <p>Overall, it is legally sound, minimizes risk to the Council, and is suitable for execution.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pamela Nsofor, Commercial and Procurement Solicitor</p>
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A
Other	N/A

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
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Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

none


#### **Appendix 1 – Grant Funding Agreement: GMCA and Oldham Council**

[GMCA and Oldham Council GMCA Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund Grant Funding Agreement \(executed\).pdf](#)


#### **Appendix 2 – Grant Funding Agreement: Oldham Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC**

[GMCA SCDIF Draft Grant Funding Agreement Oldham Council and Inclusive Bytes CIC 080125.docx](#)

Report author sign-off	Fran Lautman
Role	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Date of sign-off	5 February 2025

<b>Approval</b>	
Officer approval sign-off	Steve Hughes 
Role	Assistant Director of Strategy & Performance

Date of sign-off	21.02.25
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Approval	
Member(s) approval sign-off	<p>Cllr Abdul Jabbar</p> 
Role	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability
Date of sign-off	12.02.25