

Report to CABINET

**UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) NEET
(Not in Education, Employment or Training)
Funding Extension**

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Officer Contact: Matthew Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years

Report Author: Amanda Youlden, Post 16 and Skills Lead

May 2025

Reason for Decision

Request for an extension to the funding provided by GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) as part of the UKSPF skills funding allocation for NEET support be accepted and any variations to the original contract agreement be agreed.

Recommendations

We accept the additional funding to deliver the extension to scheme, known locally as “Empower Oldham” provided for our NEET young people. This option provides additional support to our young people in Oldham that would not normally be available.

UKSPF NEET Funding Extension

1 Background

- 1.1 In August 2023, a Cabinet report (attached at Appendix 1) was taken and agreed to accept funding from the UKSPF Skills funding via GMCA to support NEET young people to re-engage and return to the EET (Education, Employment and Training) pathway. This funding was a total of £720,000.
- 1.2 The report outlined the intention for the funding to be attached to the existing TIAG (Targeted Independent Information, Advice and Guidance) contract as this would provide the most effective use of the additional resource. This became the “Empower Oldham” project currently being delivered by Positive Steps. This grant agreement, contract and funding was made available until 31 March 2025.
- 1.3 In December 2023, Oldham applied to receive some additional funding from the UKSPF fund. This request originated from GMCA and was known as “Growth Fund”. Oldham was awarded an additional £19K (which increased our monitoring outputs by 10 young people reached). The agreed use of this additional funding was to support the rental costs for the new provision Oldham College are developing at Positive Steps.
- 1.4 In July 2024, Oldham was notified of GMCA’s intention to extend UKSPF funding and outcomes to September 2025. The extension will provide an additional £240K to cover the costs of the programme. A Cabinet report (attached at Appendix 2) was taken and agreed to accept the extension.
- 1.5 GMCA have recently confirmed their intention to continue to provide NEET support funding and have confirmed funding up to 31 March 2026.
- 1.6 The total amount of the additional funding requested to be accepted is £240,000.00.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 All relevant departments, including Positive Steps who are our delivery partner, are informed of the extension to the funding and the continuation can proceed seamlessly. The outputs and outcomes attached to the funding are agreed and monitoring procedures are in place.
- 2.2 Whilst the majority of the funding is to be directly passported to Positive Steps for delivery, it has been agreed for £5k of the funding to be allocated as support for a GM wide fixed term post, led by Salford City Council. The aim of the post is to increase capacity and quality in local training providers, therefore increasing sufficiency of education places in independent training providers for young people who wish to be educated outside of a mainstream college.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1: We accept the extension to the funding up to 31 March 2026 and continue to deliver Empower Oldham for our NEET young people. This option secures additional support for our young people in Oldham that would not normally be available.

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- 3.2 Option 2: We decline the extension to funding up to 31 March 2026. This option effectively removes provision, resource and support for young people who are an identified vulnerable group.

4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Option 1 is Officer's preferred option. This option secures additional funding and therefore support for our young people that would not normally be available.

5 **Consultation**

- 5.1 No consultation is required or has been undertaken. There are no declared interests.

6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 This report is seeking approval to receive additional funding from GMCA as part of the UKSPF Skills Funding allocation for NEET for a further 6 months, from the current expiry on 30 September 2025 until March 2026.
- 6.2 As per the table below, the additional funding will total £240K and will be passported to providers and as such the financial implications are net nil for the Council.

Funding to be passported to:	Amount
Positive Steps (extend existing contract for further 6 months)	£235,000
Salford City Council (contribution to GM wide fixed term post)	£5,000
	£240,000

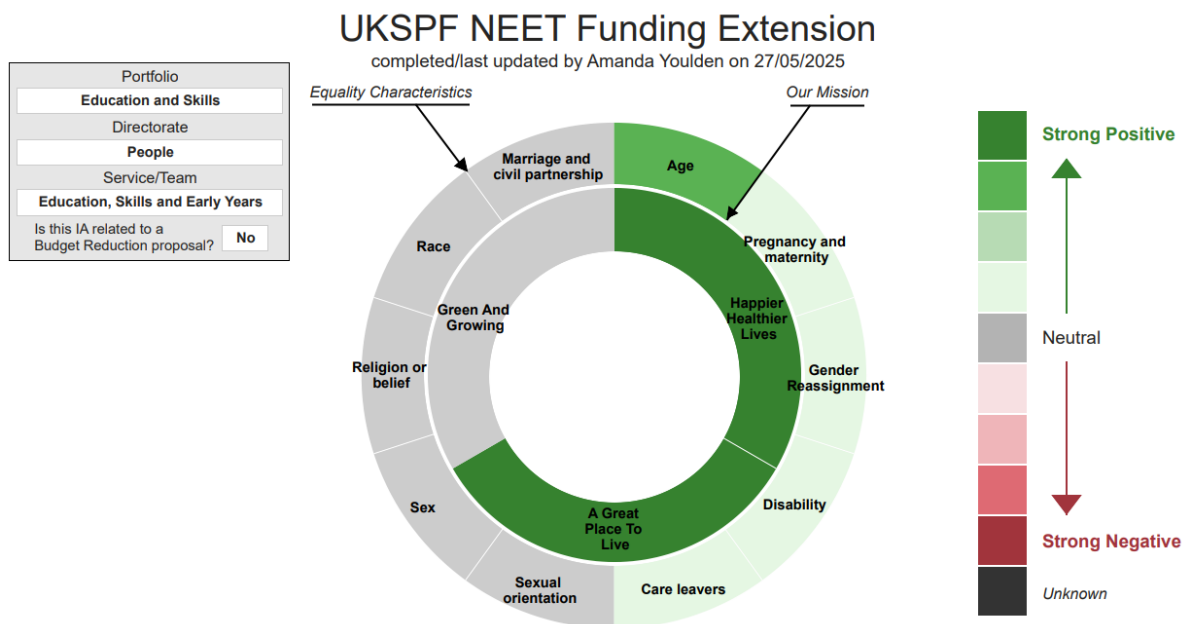
(Catherine Dunkerley – Accountant)

7 **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The preferred option will maintain that the supported group, young vulnerable individuals will have provision in place until March 2026. This of course helps the Council satisfy one of its key objectives in providing the best service possible to those most in need in the Borough. There is already a provider in place and the same arrangements can continue.
- 7.2 It is important that the Council continue to effectively monitor the performance of the current provider and should any grant funding documentation be required to be signed that the service liaise with legal services.

(Alex Bougatef – Interim Borough Solicitor)

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



9 Key Decision

9.1 Yes

10 Key Decision Reference

11.1 EDS-04-25

12 Background Papers

12.1 N/A

13 Appendices

13.1 Cabinet Report accepting original UKSPF NEET funding.



CommitteeReport
UKSPF NEET August

13.2 Cabinet Report accepting extension of NEET funding.



Additional UKSPF
Skills Funding Alloc.