

Report to CABINET

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) – Reprioritisation of CRSTS1 funding

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

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Reason for Decision

To formally accept capital grant funding of £7.3m from CRSTS1 towards the delivery of two Oldham projects:

- Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link
- Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Links

Executive Summary

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has agreed to reprioritise £190 million of CRSTS1 capital funding to address underspend and delivery challenges. This strategic adjustment supports the Bee Network, active travel and integrated transport goals across the region.

As part of this process, 35 local authority-led schemes have been identified across GMCA, totaling £89.5 million in reprioritised funding. For Oldham, funding has been awarded for the development of Outline and Full Business Cases (OBC/FBC) for:

- Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link
- Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Link

These schemes align with Oldham's strategic transport objectives and growth, and support wider GMCA ambitions for sustainable mobility and inclusive growth.

The allocation of funding will enable detailed design work and the commissioning of professional services to meet funding conditions and ensure readiness for future delivery stages. Cabinet approval is sought to integrate this additional resource into the transport capital programme and proceed with procurement and scheme development.

Furthermore, they complement our current CRSTS1 schemes, which have already received funding:

- St Mary's Way
- Mumps
- Broadway to Rochdale Canal Link
- Park Road / Kings Road

Recommendations

- 1) That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), for delivery of an outline/full business case (OBC/FBC) for the schemes at Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link and Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Link, be accepted;
- 2) That approval is granted to enter into a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM in relation to the proposed schemes;
- 3) That the intention to bring the additional resource into the transport capital programme in 2025/26 and complete development of the scheme in the appropriate timescales be noted;
- 4) That approval is granted to procure and make tender awards relating to the necessary external support required to develop the outline/full business case (OBC/FBC) and design development, and that this is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place);
- 5) That approval is granted to use part of this resource to support Council teams, as required, to progress design options, stakeholder engagement and production of the full business case to secure further capital funding for Oldham; and
- 6) That approval to the Director of Legal Services or his nominated representatives be granted to execute and complete any contractual documents.

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) – Reprioritisation of CRSTS1 funding

1 Background

- 1.1 In April 2022, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was awarded £1.07 billion through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS1) to support the delivery of its long-term transport ambitions, including the development of the Bee Network – an integrated system for buses, trams, walking, wheeling, and rail.
- 1.2 By 2025, due to national inflationary pressures and delivery challenges, GMCA undertook a re-baselining and reprioritisation of its CRSTS1 programme. This process was approved by Government in March 2024 and aimed to ensure realistic delivery within the funding period ending March 2027.
- 1.3 As part of this strategic adjustment, GMCA identified £190 million in capital funding available for reprioritisation.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 A total of 35 schemes across the GMCA area were selected to receive £89.5 million in redirected funding, supporting infrastructure that aligns with regional goals for net zero, inclusive growth, and transport connectivity.
- 2.2 Oldham Council secured funding through this process to develop Outline and Full Business Cases (OBC/FBC) for two priority schemes:
 - Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link (£4.5m)
 - Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Link (£2.8m)
- 2.3 Funding has been secured to support the preparation of Outline and Full Business Cases (OBC/FBC) for both schemes. These projects are aligned with Greater Manchester’s Bee Network and Integrated Pipeline, aiming to improve connectivity, promote active travel, and support regeneration. These additional schemes complement our existing CRSTS schemes.
- 2.4 Should the funding be accepted and the Grant Funding Agreement be entered into, this additional resource will be included in the transport capital programme in 2025/26 and utilised to fund development design and business case preparation, including appointing external support as necessary for this purpose.
- 2.5 Procurement of such support will be undertaken in accordance with the council’s procurement policies and it is proposed that the approval for any procurement

activity, including the award of contracts for any of these works, will be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place).

Strategic Partnership Agreement (Delivery Model)

- 2.6 For Oldham Council to meet the expectations and delivery timescales required under CRSTS we need to adopt a pro-active approach to procurement of a contractor to deliver works.
- 2.7 The Council has previously entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement – ‘Accessible Oldham’ - with a medium-sized local contractor who are successfully delivering several works packages across the town centre to meet timescales put in place by funders. This agreement is working well and evidence that, once established, in conjunction with legal, procurement and finance colleagues, a Strategic Partnership Agreement can be used to negate the need for lengthy procurement exercises of up to 3-4 months for each package of works.
- 2.8 This successful model for the development and delivery of highway works is to be repeated for schemes coming forward through CRSTS allocations and means that individual projects will be procured via a Call Off procedure under the Strategic Partnership Agreement. The Call-Off procedure would be governed by the overarching agreement and each order for works (Call-Off) would be approved at Director level (in liaison with the Directors of Finance and Legal Services) rather than through individual Cabinet reports for each element of work over £400k.
- 2.9 Having a Strategic Partner in place assists the Delivery Team at key stages of the development of schemes and business cases through Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and fast-track, where applicable, the construction of projects, to meet the expectations demands of the overseeing organisations.

3 **Options/Alternatives**

Option 1

- 3.1 That the grant offer from the CRSTS1 for the two schemes referred to is accepted, that a Grant Funding Agreement be entered into with TfGM for this funding and scheme development and that the additional funding is incorporated into the Transport Capital Programme for 2025/26 onwards and utilised to support council teams and procure external support to deliver the two schemes.

Option 2

- 3.2 That the grant offer from the CRSTS1 for the two schemes referred to is **not** accepted.
- 3.3 If the funding is not accepted and utilised in accordance with the subsequent Grant Funding Agreement and timescales of CRSTS1, the two schemes will not be able to be delivered. Acceptance of the funding now is crucial to allow progress with the design development and business case preparation.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 This report recommends 'Option 1' is taken forward. That is, for Oldham Council to accept the CRSTS1 reprioritised capital funding and proceed with the development of the two identified transport schemes:

- Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link
- Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Link

4.2 This option will enable the Council to:

- Secure funding for Outline and Full Business Case (OBC/FBC) development
- Integrate the funding into the 2025/26 Transport Capital Programme
- Procure necessary technical support to meet delivery milestones
- Align with GMCA's Bee Network and Integrated Pipeline priorities
- Protect future capital investment by ensuring readiness for implementation

4.3 Rejecting or delaying this option risks forfeiting the funding, missing the March 2027 delivery window, and undermining Oldham's strategic transport and regeneration objectives.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Portfolio Holder (Transport and Highways) and Senior Management were briefed in June 2025.

5.2 Engagement with senior stakeholders and ward members will continue as the schemes develops and will be supported with a detailed stakeholder engagement plan.

5.3 The stakeholder engagement plan will also take into account wider stakeholders including Council colleagues, residents, businesses, visitors, bus operators, taxi association and specific groups such as those that represent people with disabilities.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The Council has secured £7.3m capital funding through the GMCA's reprioritization of £190 million of CRSTS1 capital funding to address underspend and delivery challenges.

6.2 £4.5m will be used to deliver the Oldham Edge and Higginshaw Active Travel Link scheme, which will deliver an off-road active travel link between Royton and Oldham Town Centre, supporting the regeneration of the town centre. The scheme will be phased over 3 years.

6.3 £2.8m will be used to deliver the Oldham Town Centre Sustainable Connectivity Link scheme, which is a series of projects aimed at improving accessibility and

connectivity within and around Oldham Town Centre for all modes of transport, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users.

6.4 This represents an increase in the transport capital programme, and new cost centres will be set up for each scheme to monitor spend against the budget.

6.5 The Council will utilise the Strategic Partnership Agreement – ‘Accessible Oldham’ to deliver the schemes. Once the maximum contract value been reached, the Council will move to its successor framework, Strategic Partnership Agreement – ‘Sustainable Oldham’.

(Leonne Wharton-Brown, Senior Accountant)

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 This Grant does not have any subsidy control issues and will be carried out under a standard Grant Agreement. Legal support Option 1 as the preferred option.

(Michael Grocott, Solicitor)

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

8.1 N/A

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

10.1 NEI/07/25

11 **Background Papers**

None

12 **Appendices**

None