

Report to CABINET

**Approval of Grant Funding Agreement with Greater Manchester
Combined Authority**

Portfolio Holder: Shelley Kipling – Chief Executive Officer

Officer Contact: Neil Consterdine, Director for Community

Report Author: Seyi Adeyemi, Senior Housing Needs Officer

20th July 2026

Reason for Decision

This report requests an approval to enter into a grant agreement with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Under the proposed arrangement, Oldham will hold its own grant agreement with the Combined Authority to fund two services dedicated to supporting residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Oldham has been allocated grant funding to support these services, ensuring continuity of services. The funding will enable the ongoing delivery of targeted support for residents who are homeless, helping to prevent rough sleeping, improve engagement, and provide timely interventions aligned with local homelessness prevention priorities across Oldham communities.

Executive Summary

The Council are currently delivering two specific services that are intrinsically linked by virtue of the support they provide to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The two respective services are:

- A Bed Every Night (ABEN)
- Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI)

To ensure the continuation of these vital local services and to formalise monitoring and reporting arrangements, the Council is required to enter into a grant agreement with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Securing this agreement is necessary for accessing the funding needed to sustain services delivery.

These services have been operating successfully for several years through a joint procurement arrangement with Oldham Borough Council and Rochdale Borough Council. However, moving forward, Oldham Council will independently procure its own RSI and Navigator services to better meet local needs and priorities.

The services identified for continued GMCA funding between 2026 to 2029 are firmly embedded within Oldham's local support framework. They play a crucial role in delivering the Council's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy and directly contribute to the Government's national Ending Rough Sleeping agenda.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Authorizes Oldham Council to agree and enter into grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Approve the continued delivery of the two services captured in the grant agreement namely, ABEN and RSI

Approval of Grant Funding Agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has been working in partnership with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on various projects that support residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness via two existing services:
- Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI)
 - A Bed Every Night (ABEN)
- 1.2 These projects have been operating in Oldham for several years and are well established within the local homelessness support. They form a key part of the Council's wider homelessness response and have consistently supported some of the borough's most vulnerable residents. Further details are given below on each service.
- 1.3 Rough Sleeping Initiative
- 1.4 The Rough Sleepers Initiative in Oldham operates as the Council's core outreach service for individuals sleeping rough. The service provides practical advice, individual support, and targeted interventions to help rough sleepers access accommodation, health services, and other relevant support pathways.
- 1.5 As part of the wider outreach offer, GMCA funding specifically supports an RSI Navigator role, alongside an attached personalisation budget designed to remove barriers to engagement and accommodation.
- 1.6 In addition to the GMCA-funded Navigator role, the wider RSI Team includes several key posts that strengthen delivery but are not funded through the GMCA grant. These include a Project Officer who coordinates referrals, intelligence sharing, and operational support; and a Move on Support Officer who assists residents in ABEN and related accommodation to access settled housing options. The service is further supported by two Outreach Workers, augmented by volunteers and social work students provided through Sanctuary Trust.
- 1.7 Entering into a grant agreement with GMCA will enable the continued delivery of this vital local service in Oldham.
- 1.8 A Bed Every Night

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- 1.9 The Oldham ABEN has been in operation since October 2018, with the service evolving from a communal night shelter model to a 24-hour self-contained accommodation scheme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, also increasing in bed spaces in response to demand.
- 1.10 ABEN is funded via grant from GMCA which is made up of contributions from a range of sources including Public Health, Probation and the Mayor's Fund. Local authorities are also asked to contribute to the scheme locally; in Oldham the Council funds the accommodation leases and most utility costs at the ABEN buildings, less any rebate recouped through Housing Benefit and service charges.
- 1.11 Oldham's ABEN provision within the GMCA grant agreement consists of 23no (including one emergency bed) main ABEN bedspaces and 6no bedspaces for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). These are based across three buildings held on private sector leases (PSLs) by the Council. The service accommodates between 60-90 people each year, with numbers primarily influenced by the availability of move on accommodation.
- 1.12 The Council took the decision to tender the delivery of ABEN support and day-to-day building management, resulting in a contract being awarded to DePaul for an initial term of 9 months +1 year +1 year until 31st March 2025. The contract award was approved by Cabinet on 17th June 2022.
- 1.13 The ABEN contract between Oldham Council and DePaul supports the delivery of key performance indicators (KPIs) which the Council report back to GMCA. To formalise the ongoing arrangement, it is therefore recommended that Oldham Council enters into the grant agreement with GMCA to enable the continued delivery of ABEN

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The proposed grant agreement consolidates two services that were previously commissioned through separate grant agreements. However, given the related activities Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) took the decision to amalgamate the services into the same funding agreement in 2023. The proposed grant agreement seeks to continue this arrangement.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1 – Do not enter into a grant agreement with GMCA.
Proceeding with this option would result in the Council being unable to deliver the two projects detailed in this report. There would also be significant increase in

numbers of rough sleepers in Oldham during a period of significant homelessness and pressure, which is further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.

3.2 This would significantly reduce local capacity to prevent and respond to rough sleeping and would likely lead to an increase in the number of people sleeping rough in Oldham. This risk is heightened by ongoing pressures within the housing system and the wider impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

3.3 Option 2 – Enter into a grant agreement with GMCA

3.4 This option would allow the Council to continue delivering the two programmes locally. The funding would support ongoing prevention activity, outreach work, and the provision of temporary accommodation placements for people experiencing rough sleeping.

4. Preferred Option

4.1 Option 2 is the preferred option, as it formalises existing arrangements and provides the necessary resources to sustain the delivery of vital homelessness services within the

5. Consultation

5.1 Cabinet Member is fully supportive of continued ABEN and RSI provision within Oldham. No conflict of interest declared.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The grant agreement will ensure that the Council continues to receive the funding required to support the cost of services. There have been no financial pressures arising as a result of the arrangements to date, and this should continue to be the case as long as costs are kept within the levels of grant provided.

(Mike Roberts - Senior Accountant)

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Council is being asked to approve entry into a grant agreement with GMCA to secure funding for the continued provision of homelessness support services (ABEN and RSI).

Confirmation of funding has been received; however, the grant agreement itself has not yet been provided. Legal Services will review the grant agreement once received to ensure the Council is able to comply with all conditions attached to the funding. This will include consideration of requirements relating to eligible expenditure, monitoring and reporting obligations, subsidy control, and delivery requirements. Failure to comply with the grant conditions may expose the Council to a risk of clawback of funding.

Officers have confirmed that this report relates to the acceptance of grant funding only. Current service provision is understood to be operating under interim arrangements pending recommissioning, and a separate Cabinet report has been prepared seeking approval to undertake a competitive tender exercise and to award the resulting contracts. Accordingly, the continued delivery of services beyond any interim arrangements will be subject to the outcome of that procurement process and must comply with the procurement regulations.

Subject to the above, and the grant agreement being in a form acceptable to Legal Services, there are no legal reasons preventing Cabinet from approving the recommendations set out in this report.

Pamela Nsofor (solicitor)

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications

Angela Porter – Senior Category Manager -Commercial & Environmental Services.

9. Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes

10. Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11. Key Decision Reference

11.1 HNS-03-26

12 Background Papers

N/A

13 Appendices

N/A