

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



Subject:	Acceptance of Arts Council England Extension Funding 2027–28 for Oldham Cultural Programme and New Theatre Development
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive
Decision date:	20 th July 2026
Report author:	Subnum Hariff-Khan
Ward (s):	All

Reason for decision

To approve the acceptance of a further extension grant from Arts Council England (ACE) for the financial year 2027–28 in support of the continued development and delivery of Oldham's cultural programme, community engagement activities, and the development of the new theatre operating model.

This delegated decision is made under the authority granted by Cabinet on 23 March 2026 within the report 'Arts Council Investment into Oldham's Cultural Programming and Venue Development Extension Grant', which delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to accept a further one-year extension for 2027–28, should this be offered by Arts Council England.

Recommendation(s)

To accept the 2027–28 extension grant from Arts Council England in the sum of **£656,147** to support the continued delivery of Oldham's cultural programme and development of the new theatre model.

Background

In February 2023, Oldham Council accepted a three-year investment of £1.845 million from Arts Council England, comprising £615,000 per annum between 2023–24 and 2025–26. The funding was secured to:

- Engage communities and stakeholders in the development and delivery of a new theatre for Oldham.
- Develop appropriate leadership and governance arrangements for the new theatre.

- Deliver a programme of cultural engagement, performance, creative learning and audience development.
- Support the delivery of Arts Council England's *Let's Create* strategy.

Following delays to the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) investment programme arising from the Hodge Review, Arts Council England agreed to provide a one-year extension for 2026–27, including a 5% uplift in funding. Cabinet approved acceptance of this extension on 23 March 2026 and delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to accept a further extension for 2027–28 should one be offered.

Arts Council England has subsequently confirmed continuation funding for 2027–28.

Current Position

The extension funding will enable Oldham Council and its cultural partners, including Oldham Coliseum Theatre, to continue:

- Delivery of cultural programming across the borough.
- Community and neighbourhood engagement activities.
- Creative learning programmes with children and young people.
- Artist and talent development initiatives.
- Audience development work.
- Development and testing of the operating model for the new theatre.
- Partnership working with key cultural organisations and community groups.

The continuation of the funding will maintain momentum built since 2023 and ensure Oldham remains well positioned for future Arts Council England investment opportunities.

As with previous years, the Council will continue to provide the agreed match funding contribution towards support for Oldham Coliseum and development of the new theatre model.

Alternative option(s) to be considered

Option 1 – Accept the Funding (Recommended)

Acceptance of the funding enables the continuation of cultural programming, community engagement, audience development, talent development and progress towards delivery of the new theatre project.

Option 2 – Decline the Funding

Declining the funding would significantly reduce the Council's ability to deliver cultural activities, impact support for the Coliseum and the new theatre development programme, and potentially affect future eligibility for Arts Council England investment.

Recommended Option

Option 1: That the Deputy Chief Executive exercises the delegated authority granted by Cabinet on 23 March 2026 and approves the acceptance of the 2027–28 Arts Council England extension grant of **£656,147** in support of Oldham's cultural programming and new theatre development programme.

Consultation. n/a

Risks

Implications

Financial	This request seeks approval to accept a further £656,147 from Arts Council England for the financial year 2027-28. Acceptance of this funding will enable the Council to continue delivering its cultural programme, support community engagement activities, and progress the development of the new theatre operating model. The funding will help sustain the progress made since 2023 and support the Council's wider cultural and regeneration objectives. The continuation of the funding will maintain momentum built since 2023 and ensure Oldham remains well positioned for future Arts Council England investment opportunities. Appropriate financial management and monitoring arrangements will be put in place to ensure compliance with all grant conditions and reporting requirements. There are no further financial implications as a result of this proposal. (Waheed Rehman – Accountant)
Legal	Acceptance of the grant is consistent with the delegated authority granted by Cabinet on 23 March 2026 to the Deputy Chief Executive to accept a further one-year extension of Arts Council England funding for 2027–28.

	The Council will be required to comply with the terms and conditions of the Arts Council England Funding Agreement and any associated documentation governing the extension funding. Appropriate grant funding arrangements should be maintained or put in place with delivery partners to ensure appropriate governance, monitoring, audit and clawback provisions where necessary. The receipt of the funding constitutes a grant arrangement and does not, of itself, give rise to procurement obligations under the Procurement Act 2023. Any onward funding arrangements should be considered separately and structured in compliance with the SCA 2022 where applicable. Pamela Nsofor (Solicitor)
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	The funding supports a programme of cultural activity designed to increase participation in arts and culture across Oldham, including targeted engagement with children and young people, underrepresented communities and diverse audiences. The continuation of the programme is expected to have a positive impact on equality, inclusion and community participation. Subnum Hariff-Khan, Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts
Other	

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	
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



Cabinet Report -
ACE Extension Grant

1. Cabinet Report March 2026.
- 2.

Appendix

- 1.
- 2.

Report author sign-off	Subnum Hariff-Khan
Role	Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts
Date of sign-off	20 th July 2026.

Approval	
	
Officer approval sign-off	Emma Barton
Role	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Date of sign-off	20.07.26