

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



Subject:	Acceptance of £181,640 grant funding from Art Council England
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Emma Barton
Decision date:	20 th July 2026
Report author:	Subnum Hariff-Khan
Ward (s):	All

Reason for decision

To approve the acceptance of £181,640 funding from Arts Council England's Place Partnership Funds to be delivered by the Local Cultural Education Partnership. This funding will deliver the Oldham Young Creative Producers Programme (YCPP), alongside a requirement to secure £30,000 in match funding.

This funding will be raised through sponsorship and fundraising activity. However, should fundraising not achieve the anticipated level, funding has already been secured to ensure that the full match-funding requirement is met, and project delivery can proceed as planned.

A total of £30,000 in match funding has been identified, comprising £15,000 from the Economic Development and Regeneration Flexible Grant (ED&RFG) (formerly the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and £15,000 from activity-based projects within the Youth Service. This provides assurance that any fundraising shortfall can be covered, enabling the project to be delivered in full.

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept the £181,640 Arts Council England's Place Partnership grant funding and a commitment to £30,000 match funding.

Background

Young Creative Producers Programme (YCPP) will place young people at the centre of Oldham's cultural sector through bursary funded work placements, training, and co-creation opportunities. The programme addresses local talent drain, strengthens cultural career pathways, and supports delivery of inclusive, resident-focused cultural activity.

The proposal aligns with Council priorities relating to skills, inclusion, and place-based regeneration, while leveraging external investment to build long-term cultural capacity.

Programme Overview

The Oldham Young Creative Producers Programme (YCPP) is designed to redistribute power within the cultural sector by embedding young people (aged 16–25) in the design and delivery of cultural programmes.

Participants will:

- Receive a £3,000 bursary
- Complete a 200-hour placement with local cultural organisations
- Access training aligned to Gatsby Benchmarks
- Participate in peer learning, mentoring, and pastoral support
- Work towards Arts Award or AQA accreditation

The programme will actively recruit participants from under-represented communities and respond to sector priorities, including equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), environmental sustainability, and digital inclusion.

Delivery and Governance

The programme will be delivered through a partnership model led by the Council's Heritage, Libraries and Arts service, working closely with local cultural organisations and the Local Cultural Education Partnership.

- Global Grooves will provide project management, overseeing delivery, coordination of partners, and ensuring outcomes are met in line with ACE requirements
- New roles of YCPP Coordinator and Junior Coordinator will be established to support delivery, providing day-to-day coordination, participant support, and placement management
- The freelance fixed-term Coordinator posts will be managed by Global Grooves within their existing organisational governance structure, as part of their commission by Heritage, Libraries and Arts.
- Project monitoring and reporting (including budget control) sits with Heritage, Libraries and Arts, ensuring alignment with Council priorities and integration with wider cultural programmes
- Strategic oversight will be supported through existing partnership governance structures and ACE reporting frameworks

Key Partnerships and Activity

Placements and delivery will include:

- Global Grooves (Carnival arts and creative careers)
- Northern Roots (environmental sustainability)
- Peshkar (digital inclusion and festival programming)
- Place Arts (town centre cultural events)
- Oldham Theatre Workshop (career pathways in theatre)
- Stand and Be Counted (supporting young people with lived experience of migration)
- Heritage, Libraries and Arts (Live@Library and inclusive community programmes)
- CWTC (Qawwali and community connector)
- Mahdlo (Youth programming and qualifications administrator)
- New Bridge College (supporting young people with lived experience of SEND)
- Oldham Coliseum (programming and production in theatre)
- Oldham Music Service (career pathways in music)
- Oldham Sixth Form College (career pathways in the arts)

Outcomes and Measures of Success

Success will be measured through:

- Participation: number and diversity of young people engaged
- Skills and accreditation: Arts Award/AQA achievement and skills development
- Progression: employment, apprenticeships, or further education outcomes
- Cultural impact: scale and quality of co-created cultural outputs
- Partnership strength: partner feedback and sustainability
- Strategic impact: contribution to EDI, skills development, and reduction in talent drain

Alternative option(s) to be considered

1. **Option 1: Accept the Arts Council England (ACE) Funding (Recommended)**
Accept £181,640 from Arts Council England and deliver the Oldham Young Creative Producers Programme (YCPP), with a commitment to £30,000 match funding. This option enables the Council to implement a high-impact programme that develops creative skills, supports pathways into employment, and strengthens the borough's

cultural infrastructure. It maximises external investment and delivers against key corporate priorities, including skills development, inclusion, and regeneration.

2. Option 2: Decline the Funding

Decline the ACE funding and not proceed with the YCPP programme. This would result in the loss of £181,640 external investment and associated opportunities for young people. It would limit the Council's ability to address local talent drain, reduce cultural sector capacity, and miss the opportunity to embed youth voice in cultural programming. In addition, this option carries a reputational risk for the Council, particularly in relation to Arts Council England and local stakeholders. It may also negatively impact partnerships within the local Cultural Education Partnership, potentially undermining trust, future collaboration opportunities, and Oldham's position in securing future external funding.

Recommended Option

Option 1: acceptance of the £181,640 Arts Council England grant, with a commitment to £30,000 match funding and proceed with full delivery of the YCPP programme.

This approach delivers the strongest strategic benefit, enabling investment in young people, supporting economic and cultural growth, and strengthening Oldham's position within the regional and national cultural landscape.

3. Consultation. N/A

Risks

Implications

Financial	This report seeks approval to accept funding from the Arts Council England's Place Partnership fund. The YCPP aims to embed young people aged 16–25 in the design and delivery of cultural activity, supporting greater inclusion and developing future creative talent. The Oldham Young Creative Producers Programme (YCPP) is designed to redistribute power within the cultural sector by embedding young people (aged 16–25) in the design and delivery of cultural programmes. The programme will be delivered through a partnership approach led by the Council's Culture Service, working with local cultural organisations and the Local Cultural Education Partnership.
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	The funding will enable the Council to deliver the Programme, subject to securing £30,000 in match funding through sponsorship and fundraising. Should the service not secure the full £30,000 through sponsorship and fundraising activities, the shortfall will be met through £15,000 from the Economic Development and Regeneration Flexible Grant (ED&RFG) (formerly the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and £15,000 from activity-based projects within the Youth Service. As and when the Council receives the funding, finance will ensure it is monitored regularly and consider any conditions of this grant. There are no further financial implications as a result of this proposal. (Waheed Rehman – Accountant)
Legal	Legal has no objection to acceptance of the funding, subject to review and approval of the grant funding agreement.. The report refers to a commitment to secure £30,000 through sponsorship and fundraising. Any sponsorship arrangements should be appropriately documented and consideration should be given to the implications if the full sponsorship target is not achieved, particularly where this may affect compliance with any funding conditions. The report states that Global Grooves will provide project management services and manage the coordinator posts as part of its commission by Heritage, Libraries and Arts. The nature of this arrangement should be clarified, including whether Global Grooves is being engaged as a supplier, delivery partner or grant recipient. If services are commissioned, the appointment must comply with the Council's CPR and applicable procurement legislation, with appropriate contractual arrangements put in place. Pamela Nsofor (solicitor)
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	The proposed Young Creative Producers Programme is expected to have a positive impact on equality by creating accessible pathways into the cultural and creative sectors for young people aged 16 to 25, particularly those from under-represented communities and groups that experience barriers to employment, skills development and cultural participation. The provision of bursaries, mentoring, training and accredited learning opportunities will help reduce financial and social barriers to engagement. Subnum Hariff-Khan, head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts
HR	There are no HR implications as no staff will be recruited to by Oldham Council as commissioned from external provider.

	Young people will be on work placements hosted by partnership organization of which Oldham Council is one Julie Lynch (Senior HR Advisor) 23/6/26
Procurement	Based on the information provided, this arrangement would be considered grant-funded activity with a named delivery partner, rather than a procurement of services initiated by the Council. As the Arts Council grant and the associated Partnership Agreement explicitly requires the use of a specified organisation to deliver the project administration function, Oldham Council is not creating a competitive marketplace, nor is it selecting a supplier itself. Therefore, no additional procurement support is required. Tom Pyne, AD Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
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

- 1.
- 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