

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



Subject:	Acceptance of £49,968 grant funding from The National Archives
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Emma Barton
Decision date:	6th August 2026
Report author:	Subnum Hariff-Khan
Ward (s):	All

Reason for decision

To approve the acceptance of £49,968 funding from The National Archives – Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grant to deliver the 'Headliners: Revealing Real Life Through the Oldham Chronicle' project. There is no cash match fund requirement. £30,200 of match-fund-in-kind has been identified from core Oldham Archives resource (including staff time for project admin and event spaces) to support the delivery of this project.

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept the £49,968 National Archives – Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grant with match-fund-in-kind commitment.

Background

Headliners: Revealing Real Life Through the Oldham Chronicle is a cataloguing and community engagement project to improve access to the archive of a family-owned newspaper that was an important part of daily life in Oldham for 163 years. Headliners will bring new audiences to Oldham Archives, reveal hidden stories of diaspora communities and contribute to skills development for volunteers drawn from community groups and stakeholders.

Programme Overview

Headliners will deliver:

- focused cataloguing of key sections of the archive
- digitisation of photographic negatives by volunteers
- an engagement programme of events in community settings and through Oldham Council's culture and creativity programme, including spotlight activity at Festival Oldham, Nostalgic Oldham and Oldham Histories Festival.

Delivery and Governance

The programme will be delivered by the Oldham Archives team, employing a newly qualified freelance Project Archivist (0.5 FTE for 13 months) and a Freelance Community Collections Assistant (0.3FTE for 12 months), and in collaboration with community partners and volunteers:

The project lead and project archivist will develop a cataloguing scheme that reflects the operation of the business and creates a structure for Headliners and future cataloguing work and convert inventory and box list information into an ISAD(G) compliant catalogue, to be published online via Calmview for public access.

Volunteers will transcribe the original negative index books as the foundation for box listing the negatives before digitising a selection of images that fit with the Headliners engagement themes and audiences. Volunteers will also support repackaging of negatives to secure their long-term preservation.

A freelance Community Collections Assistant (CCA) will lead on community engagement, making use of the Chronicle archive in developing and delivering engagement activities.

Community partners Centre of Wellbeing, Training & Culture (CWTC), Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust and Oldham Athletic Supporters' Foundation will support wider project engagement and the recruitment of volunteers.

Outcomes and Measures of Success

Success will be measured through:

- Archival materials added to public catalogue
- Archival material digitised for public access
- Volunteers mobilised, benefiting from heritage engagement and supporting local offers
- Participation in community engagement programme
- Strategic Impact: contributing to inclusive and accessible collections

Alternative option(s) to be considered

1. **Option 1: Accept the £49,968 National Archives – Archives Revealed Funding**
Accept the £49,968 National Archives – Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grant with match-fund-in-kind commitment. This option enables the Council to increase access to the Oldham Chronicle collection held at Oldham Archives and promote local heritage engagement amongst a broader range of residents supporting social cohesion and pride in place.
2. **Option 2: Decline the Funding**
Decline the National Archives funding and not proceed with the Headlines project. This would result in the loss of £49,968 external investment and associated opportunities for residents. It would limit the Council's ability to provide access to its archival collections, reduce heritage sector capacity, and miss the opportunity to embed community voice in heritage programming. It would leave the important Oldham Chronicle collection uncatalogued and difficult to access. In addition, this option carries a reputational risk for the Council, in relation to The National Archives.

Recommended Option

Option 1: Accept the £49,968 National Archives – Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grant with match-fund-in-kind commitment.

This approach delivers the strongest strategic benefit, enabling investment in our collections and communities, and strengthening Oldham’s position within the regional and national heritage landscape.

3. Consultation N/A

Risks

Implications

Financial	This report seeks approval to accept a grant award of £49,968 from The National Archives’ Archives Revealed Programme to deliver the ‘Headliners: Revealing Real Life Through the Oldham Chronicle’ project. The grant does not require any cash match funding from the Council. However, the project will be supported through £30,200 of match funding in-kind, which has been identified from existing Oldham Archives resources. This contribution will include staff time for project management, administration, professional advice, supervision, and support for volunteer and engagement activities. In addition, the Council will provide the use of archive facilities, event and meeting spaces, equipment, and other operational resources necessary for the successful delivery of the project. Finance will ensure the grant is monitored regularly and any monies secured is spent solely on this project. There are no further financial implications as a result of this proposal. (Waheed Rehman – Accountant)
Legal	The proposal is lawful. Localism Act 2021 section 1 gives Local Authorities a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in their area. The Council must be

	satisfied it can meet the objectives and terms and conditions and milestones of the funding imposed by the funding authority including any obligation to provide match funding and to monitor, keep any necessary records and file any necessary returns. Officers must also check the terms do not conflict with other funding conditions for the scheme/s or project/property already in place. Bryan Boese - solicitor
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A
HR	The service is proposing to employ agency/freelance staff to cover these duties. There are no HR implications to consider for recruiting to agency assignment. The service need to be mindful of the cost implications should the agency worker secure a permanent or fixed term role with the council. Julie Lynch – 3/8/26
Procurement	With this report detailing the acceptance of grant funding into the Council, to be used as detailed in the report (primarily as staffing costs) there are no immediate procurement implications. Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement

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

None.

Report author sign-off	Subnum Hariff-Khan
Role	Head of Heritage Libraries and Arts
Date of sign-off	5 th August 2026

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	 Emma Barton
Role	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Date of sign-off	06.08.2026