Report to Chief Executive

Young Futures Hubs and Local youth Transformation programme

Portfolio Holder:

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive, Place
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Reason for Decision

The Council has been awarded funding of up to £2.05m over 2 years, through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. The funding provides a significant opportunity to strengthen youth provision, improve outcomes for young people and develop a sustainable, place-based model of youth support across Oldham.

To ensure timely implementation of the programme and compliance with the conditions of grant funding, approval is sought to formally accept the funding and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to undertake all actions necessary to deliver the programme. This includes recruitment of programme staff, commissioning and procurement activity, approval of programme expenditure, entering into partnership and grant agreements, and making operational decisions within the approved funding allocation.

The delegation will ensure the Council can respond efficiently to programme requirements, maximise investment opportunities and deliver the programme in accordance with Government timescales and funding conditions.

Executive Summary

The Council has been successful in securing funding through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme, with a total allocation of up to £2.05m available over the life of the programme.

The programme represents a significant investment in Oldham's young people and supports the Council's ambition to ensure that every young person has access to safe spaces, trusted relationships, positive activities, support services and opportunities to achieve their potential.

The funding will support:

- Development of two Young Futures Hubs in areas of greatest need.
- A boroughwide programme of youth system transformation.
- Improved partnership working and integration between youth, education, health, community safety and voluntary sector services.
- Enhanced youth participation and co-production.
- Workforce development and increased delivery capacity.
- Capital and digital improvements to support accessibility and service delivery.
- Early intervention and prevention activity is designed to improve wellbeing, reduce vulnerability and tackle inequalities.

The programme will require recruitment of a dedicated programme team, commissioning of specialist support, grant administration and investment into local youth provision. To ensure effective implementation, Cabinet is asked to approve acceptance of the funding and delegate authority for all operational, staffing, procurement, financial and delivery decisions required to implement the programme within the approved grant allocation and in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

Recommendations

1. Approve the acceptance of grant funding of up to £2,050,000 from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and associated Government delivery partners for the delivery of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. Grant funding fro the Programme will be issues in Stages.

2. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to enter into, execute and deliver all grant agreements, funding agreements, partnership agreements and associated documentation required for the implementation and delivery of the programme.

3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Finance, to approve and implement all operational and financial arrangements necessary for delivery of the programme.

4. Approve the creation and recruitment of such fixed-term posts as are required to support programme management, delivery, participation, commissioning, monitoring and evaluation functions, provided that all associated costs are fully funded from the external grant allocation.

5. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to approve expenditure, commission services, award grants, undertake procurement exercises and enter into contracts necessary for programme delivery, subject to compliance with the Council's Constitution, Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Regulations.

6. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to approve amendments to programme delivery arrangements and accept non-material variations, extensions or amendments to funding conditions, where these do not increase the Council's financial liability beyond the approved external grant allocation.

7. Note that the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities will lead the operational delivery, governance, programme management and performance monitoring of the funded programmes on behalf of the Council, under the strategic direction of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities.

8. Note that programme governance, performance management, risk management and delivery oversight will be led by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities on behalf of the Council, reporting through appropriate corporate governance arrangements.

9. Note that all programme expenditure will be funded through external grant resources and that any future financial implications requiring additional Council resources will be the subject of a separate approval process.

10. Note the anticipated outcomes, benefits and reporting requirements associated with both funding streams.

Cabinet/Leadership group 02.11.2026

Youth Futures Hubs and Local youth transformation Programme

1 Background

1.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people.

1.2 Nationally, concerns regarding youth wellbeing, inequalities, social isolation, participation and youth violence have led to renewed investment in local youth services through the Government's National Youth Strategy and the establishment of the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Programme.

1.3 The programme seeks to establish locally designed hubs that bring together services and opportunities for young people, while supporting wider transformation of local youth systems. Young Futures Hubs are expected to improve:

- opportunities for young people;
- mental health and wellbeing; and
- crime prevention and community safety outcomes.

1.4 The Local Youth Transformation element supports local authorities to rebuild capability, strengthen strategic leadership, improve planning and ensure sustainable delivery of high-quality youth services that respond to local need.

1.5 Oldham has been allocated funding for the Development of 2 Young Futures Hubs, that should be located in areas of greatest needed and codesigned and developed with young people.

1.6 The Funding available within the programme is as follows:

Funding Stream	Value
Planning and co-creation	£100,000
Youth Future Hub delivery- 2 year funding	Up to £600,000 per annum
Local Youth Transformation programme	Up to £500,000
Capital/digital investment	Up to £250,000

1.5 The programme aligns strongly with the Council's ambition to ensure that all young people can access opportunities, feel safe, be healthy, have a voice in decisions affecting them and achieve their full potential.

2 Current Position

2.1 The borough benefits from a range of youth provision delivered by the Council, schools, voluntary and community organisations and partner agencies.

2.2 However, feedback from young people and partners identifies ongoing challenges including:

- uneven access to youth provision;
- increasing mental health and wellbeing needs;
- barriers to participation and social mobility;
- fragmented service pathways;
- the need for stronger local coordination and partnership working; and
- concerns relating to community safety and youth vulnerability.

2.3 The funding presents an opportunity to address these challenges through system-wide transformation rather than isolated service activity.

2.4 The proposed programme will focus on:

- youth participation and co-production;
- strengthening local youth infrastructure;
- workforce development;
- partnership governance;
- data and insight-led planning;
- improved access to opportunities;
- prevention and early intervention approaches; and
- integrated support around young people and their families.

2.5 Strategic oversight of the programme will be provided by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities, ensuring alignment with the Council Plan, Children and Young People's priorities and wider community outcomes. Operational leadership will be provided by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities, working collaboratively with schools, health partners, Greater Manchester partners, the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector and young people themselves.

2.6 Programme Delivery arrangements. The programme will require the establishment of dedicated programme management and delivery capacity to meet national programme requirements, coordinate partnership activity and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.

Subject to funding approval, fixed-term posts will be established and recruited to support implementation of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. All staffing costs will be met from the approved grant allocation and will cease on completion of the funded programme unless alternative funding is identified and approved.

The programme may also require the commissioning of specialist support, grant funding arrangements with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations, and procurement of goods, services, digital solutions and capital works. Appropriate governance arrangements will be implemented to ensure all expenditure represents value for money and is fully compliant with Council procurement and financial regulations.

3 Options/Alternatives

Option 1: Accept the Funding (Preferred Option)

Benefits:

- Secures significant external investment.
- Establishes 2 Young Futures Hubs within the borough.
- Enables transformation of the local youth system.
- Improves outcomes for young people.
- Strengthens youth voice and participation.
- Increases partnership working and service integration.

- Supports delivery of statutory duties.
- Creates a longer-term sustainable model for youth provision.

Option 2: Decline the Funding

Implications:
- Loss of external investment.
- Missed opportunity to improve local youth services.
- Reduced ability to address identified needs.
- Missed opportunity to influence national programme learning.
- Reduced capacity to strengthen local youth infrastructure.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is acceptance of both funding streams.

4.2 The programme supports a whole-system approach to youth provision based on the principles of collaboration, prevention and youth empowerment. It will enable the Council and its partners to create a more connected and responsive local youth offer.

4.3 Young people will play a central role in co-designing both the Young Futures Hub and the wider transformation programme, ensuring services are shaped by lived experience and local need. This reflects the national expectation that young people are active partners in service design and decision making.

4.4 The proposed approach will contribute to:

- improved wellbeing;
- increased participation;
- stronger community connections;
- enhanced employability and life opportunities;
- reduced risk of harm and exploitation; and
- greater local system sustainability.

4.5 The governance arrangements for the programme will ensure robust accountability, with strategic decisions overseen by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities and programme delivery coordinated by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities. This will provide effective leadership, oversight of programme performance, financial assurance and partnership engagement throughout the lifetime of the funding.

4.6 Acceptance of the funding will position Oldham as an active contributor to national youth reform activity, enabling the Council and its partners to test, develop and embed innovative approaches that improve outcomes for young people while strengthening the long-term sustainability of local youth services.

4.7 Delegating authority for programme implementation will facilitate timely delivery of the programme and ensure that staffing, procurement, commissioning and operational decisions can be taken efficiently within the approved funding envelope. This approach reflects established practice for externally funded programmes and provides the flexibility necessary to respond to programme requirements, emerging opportunities and changes to national guidance while maintaining appropriate accountability and governance arrangements.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Expression of Interest submitted included consultation that had been undertaken with young people as part of the boroughwide youth offer needs assessment,.

Further consultation is a key driving principle of the programme and it will be developed through extensive engagement with:

- young people;
- youth providers;
- schools and colleges;
- health partners;
- community safety partners;
- voluntary, community and faith sector organisations;
- employers; and
- local communities

A Youth Advisory Group will be established to support co-design, governance and evaluation of the programme.

The Council will continue to engage with national delivery partners including the National Youth Agency and other sector stakeholders throughout implementation.

6 Financial Implications

Revenue

6.1 The Council has been allocated up to £2.050m of external grant funding over the two-year programme period for delivery of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. Of this, £0.100m has currently been confirmed for Planning and Co-creation activities, with the remaining funding subject to the Council's plans being submitted and approved.

6.2 All expenditure associated with the programme, including staffing, commissioning, grants and other delivery costs, must be managed within the external funding available and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant. Appropriate financial monitoring arrangements will be established throughout the programme to ensure expenditure remains within the approved funding allocation.

6.3 The report proposes the creation of fixed-term posts to support programme delivery. These posts will be fully funded from the external grant and should be aligned to the period for which funding is available. Any extension beyond the funded period would be subject to the identification of an appropriate funding source and separate approval.

6.4 The programme also includes commissioning, grant awards, procurement and capital/digital expenditure. Expenditure will need to be appropriately accounted for against the relevant funding streams and comply with the Council's financial and procurement requirements and any conditions attached to the external funding.

6.5 The Council has currently received confirmation of £0.100m non-ringfenced grant funding for Planning and Co-Creation activities (stage 1). Further funding, up to the overall programme allocation of £2.050m, is subject to the Council's plans being submitted and subsequently approved. The final allocation for the programme will therefore be confirmed at the end of the current financial year, and expenditure should only be committed in line with confirmed funding available.

6.6 A new revenue cost centre will be established for the programme to enable Finance and the service to effectively monitor income and expenditure against the external grant funding. All programme-related expenditure will be charged to the appropriate cost centre and monitored regularly against the approved funding allocations to ensure expenditure remains within the available grant funding and to support accurate grant reporting and reconciliation.

6.7 There is no additional financial implication for existing revenue Council budgets, provided that all expenditure is contained within the external grant funding available. Any costs that are not eligible for grant funding or exceed the approved funding allocation would need to be subject to a separate approval.

(John Hoskins – Finance Manager)

Capital

6.8 There are no capital implications currently. However, subject to the formal submission later in the year, there may be the possibility of securing capital funding, this will be subject to a future report.
(Jit Kara – Senior Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2021 give 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 DCMS 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 and ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and obtain any necessary Environmental Assessments.

Any works, services and goods procured by or on behalf of the Council must be procured in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all other relevant regulations including, where applicable, the Financial Procedure Rules and Land and Property Protocol. Officers must work with legal colleagues to approve and formalise the terms of any grant agreement or MOU in conjunction with Finance and Audit colleagues.

The terms of any proposed MOU/Grant Agreement must be reviewed and agreed by the SRO along with legal and finance colleagues. Provisions of note and/or provisions with associated risk should be highlighted to officers for consideration.

Bryan Boese - solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no immediate procurement implications with regards accepting the funding into the Council. However, The Procurement Team will provide guidance and support with regards the allocation of these funds and will ensure that expenditure with third parties is in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and relevant Procurement Legislation.

Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement

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 KDD-26-14

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 **none**

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1: Grant Determination Letter for Programme from DCMS (stage 2)

Appendix 2 – Memorandum of Understanding for programme (stage 2)

Appendix 3: Young Futures Hubs Guidance for Local Authorities

Appendix 4: Local Youth Transformation Programme – Guidance for Local Authorities

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment