Report to Chief Executive

Approval of the 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant and Proposed Expenditure

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Reason for Decision

To seek Cabinet approval for Oldham Council to accept £418,307 of 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme revenue funding and, once received and approved by Legal Services, to enter into the associated grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Written confirmation of the allocation was received from GMCA on the 4th of September 2026. The grant agreement is awaited. The full allocation must be committed and spent on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027, with no assumption of carry-forward.

Executive Summary

The funding will strengthen Oldham's response to rough sleeping by creating rapid routes off the street, improving throughput from emergency and short-stay accommodation, and developing sustainable pathways into supported housing, the private rented sector, social housing, SMART Housing and Housing First. The programme is designed around the principle that accommodation is the platform for intervention, while the intended outcome is a safe and sustainable route away from rough sleeping with core aim of ending revolving door homelessness

Local learning demonstrates that providing additional bed spaces without effective assessment, support and move-on pathways does not necessarily achieve lasting outcomes. The programme therefore provides an integrated response comprising dedicated Housing Options and Move-On Officers, cross-pathway coordination, accommodation-based interventions at Spring Bank and Napier Street, emergency off-the-street accommodation, targeted personalisation support and the development of new pathways.

The central aim is to improve throughput within existing supported housing by helping people who are ready to move on to access suitable longer-term accommodation, thereby releasing capacity for those who continue to need support. Local data lived experience and ongoing performance monitoring will be used to identify unmet need and gaps in the current supported accommodation market. This will be a test-and-learn approach, aligned with the wider borough-wide demand analysis for supported accommodation, with findings used to inform future commissioning priorities and service requirements.

The programme will address the needs of people experiencing entrenched and repeat rough sleeping, while also responding to the recent increase in people sleeping rough for the first time. Early intervention for this group will help prevent new rough sleeping from becoming recurring or entrenched.

Recommendations

- The funding will strengthen Oldham's response to rough sleeping by creating rapid routes off the street, improving throughput from emergency and short-stay accommodation, and developing sustainable pathways into supported housing, the private rented sector, social housing, SMART Housing and Housing First. The programme is designed around the principle that accommodation is the platform for intervention, while the intended outcome is a safe and sustainable route away from rough sleeping with core aim to end revolving homelessness.

- The programme responds to local learning that additional bed spaces alone do not guarantee sustained move-on. It therefore combines dedicated housing options and move-on capacity, cross-the-pathway coordination, accommodation-enabled interventions at Spring Bank and Napier Street, an emergency off-the-street offer, and targeted Personalisation and pathway-development activity.

1 Background

1.1 Oldham Council works with GMCA and local partners to prevent and relieve homelessness and to support people sleeping rough or at immediate risk of doing so.

1.2 GMCA confirmed in writing on 4th of September 2026 that Oldham's 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme allocation is £418,307. The formal grant agreement has not yet been issued. Officers are preparing for mobilisation so that delivery can begin promptly once the agreement is received and approved.

1.3 The funding is time limited and must be spent by 31 March 2027. The programme will therefore operate through a tightly managed mobilisation, expenditure, performance and risk framework. No carryforward is assumed and no recurring commitment will be made beyond the funding period without an identified and approved funding source.

1.4 Due to the limited mobilisation period and the requirement for the service to be operational by December 2026, there is insufficient time to undertake a full competitive procurement process. Officers will therefore seek advice from Commercial and Procurement Services on the appropriate and lawful route, including whether an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules is justified in relation to the proposed spend. The initial funding period will be used as a time-limited test-and-learn phase to evaluate the model, demand, outcomes and future commissioning requirements.

1.5 A local review of rough sleeping presentations indicates that some people repeatedly present across successive financial years and that women with complex needs are disproportionately represented among those returning to A Bed Every Night (ABEN). The programme will therefore focus on prevention, rapid assessment, purposeful placements, move-on planning from the point of admission and sustainable housing outcomes. Learning from the initial delivery period will inform the future design and commissioning of rough sleeping and supported accommodation services.

2 Strategic Context

National Context

2.1 The current contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service ended on the 30th of June 2026, with no further extension option available. Care Point Housing has continued to honour the original contract and provide the service, ensuring continuity of provision to date. Approval is therefore sought for a 6-month direct award from the 1st of July 2026 to 31 December 2026, to maintain this critical statutory service while the Council completes a full procurement process for longer-term provision from on the 1st of January 2027.

2.2 Oldham's proposed programme gives local effect to this "Everyone In"-type offer. The Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund will support rapid access to safe short-term accommodation where no suitable immediate alternative is available. Dedicated housing options, move-on and cross-pathway staff will ensure that an offer of accommodation is linked from the outset to assessment, health and support needs, an

intended housing pathway, a named lead and a target move date. This reflects the national expectation that the winter response should provide a route off the street rather than emergency bed capacity alone.

Greater Manchester context

2.3 The programme aligns with the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy and its missions that everyone can access and sustain a safe, decent and affordable home; people leave care with somewhere safe to go; quality advice and support are available; people experiencing homelessness can access respite, recovery and reconnection; and homelessness is not entrenched or repeated. It also supports Greater Manchester's person-centered, trauma-informed and Housing First ambitions.

2.4 The proposal also supports GMCA's 2026-29 investment priorities for Housing First, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programmes, ABEN, homelessness inclusion health and rough sleeping infrastructure.

Local context

2.5 The programme supports the priorities of Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-26, including advice and information, early identification, pre-crisis intervention, preventing recurring homelessness and effective partnership working. A new Oldham Homelessness Strategy for 2026 onwards is being developed. The proposed activity provides a practical bridge into the emerging strategy by strengthening prevention, pathways and long-term sustainment.

3. Proposed Programme

3.1 Rough Sleeping Housing Options Officer
Dedicated assessment, personalised housing plans, statutory and discretionary interventions, outreach attendance and assertive follow-up for people sleeping rough or at immediate risk, including people with complex needs.

3.2 Rough Sleeping Move-On Support Officer
Resident-facing support from short-stay accommodation into supported or settled housing. Move-on planning will begin at admission and include supported accommodation, private rented housing, social housing, SMART Housing and Housing First.

3.3 Supported Accommodation and Cross-Pathway Coordinator
Coordination of moves for people with long-term support needs and households in temporary accommodation who are ready for greater independence. A live tracker will identify pathways, barriers, actions, responsible leads and target move dates.

3.4 Accommodation Pathway

Subject to satisfactory due diligence, property compliance, Housing Benefit assessment, value for money considerations, and the receipt of all required approvals, the programme

will support the provision of 13 units within Accommodation Pathway 1 and 4 spaces within Accommodation Pathway 2 as managed accommodation-based interventions. Should any proposed accommodation be deemed unsuitable, unavailable, or otherwise incapable of meeting programme requirements, the Council reserves the right to explore and implement alternative accommodation-based solutions and delivery arrangements to ensure the continued achievement of the programme objectives, subject to the necessary approvals, due diligence, and funding availability. This may include the use of accommodation and support provision through existing delivery arrangements on a test-and-learn basis where this is considered the most appropriate and effective option.

Accommodation Pathway 1 will deliver a combination of medium-stay and rapid move-on accommodation pathways, supported by an appropriate 24-hour on-site staffing presence.

Accommodation Pathway 2 will provide a lower-risk, early-intervention accommodation pathway, subject to individual suitability, risk and safeguarding assessments to ensure the accommodation is appropriate for each resident.

3.5 Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund
Case-by-case access to short-term safe accommodation when no suitable immediate alternative is available, including cold-weather and winter pressures. This will form Oldham's local contribution to the national ambition to offer everyone sleeping rough who needs it a route off the streets by Christmas 2026. Every placement will be purposeful and accompanied by an initial assessment, an active move-on plan, access to relevant health and support services, and financial reconciliation. The offer is not intended to replicate a stand-alone night shelter or create bed capacity without a sustainable pathway.

3.6 PRS, Bond and Personalisation Support
Controlled support for deposits, rent in advance, essential household items, identification, travel, digital inclusion and other practical barriers linked to an agreed housing or support outcome.

Intervention	**Revised allocation**
Rough Sleeping Housing Options Officer	£55,000
Rough Sleeping Move-On Support Officer	£50,000
Supported Housing Gateway Officer	£50,000
Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund, including cold weather	**£95,000**
Accommodation Pathway mobilisation costs	**£60,000**
PRS, bond and personalisation funds	**£75,000**
Performance, lived experience and contingency	£33,307
Total	**£418,307**

4. Options/Alternatives

Option 1: Do not accept the grant
4.1 This would remove £418,307 of time-limited external funding and substantially reduce local capacity to prevent and respond to rough sleeping. It would limit emergency accommodation, assessment, move-on and pathway-development capacity and increase the risk of repeat or prolonged rough sleeping.

Option 2: Accept the grant and enter into the grant agreement
4.2 This would enable the Council to implement the proposed programme, subject to the final grant conditions, and strengthen both immediate responses and sustainable move-on pathways.

4.3 That authority be delegated to Neil Consterdine, Director for Community,to agree and sign the final grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Subject to the agreement being in an acceptable form and remaining within the approved funding allocation, no further approval from Cabinet will be required.

5. Preferred Option
5.1 Option 2 is preferred because it secures external resources for a targeted, outcome-focused rough sleeping programme and supports national, regional and local strategic priorities.

6. Financial Implications
6.1 The confirmed allocation is £418,307 for 2026/27. The full amount must be spent on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027. Expenditure will be subject to the final grant conditions, monthly monitoring, evidence of additionality and a clear audit trail.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will be consulted on the final programme. Delivery planning will involve GMCA, relevant Council services, accommodation and support providers, health and criminal justice partners, and people with lived experience. Further operational consultation will take place during mobilisation.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The confirmed allocation is £418,307 for 2026/27. The full amount must either be spent or committed on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027. Expenditure will be subject to the final grant conditions, monthly monitoring, evidence of additionality and a clear audit trail. As long as the posts are established as time limited (12 months), there should be no call on Council resources other than the grant receivable.
Mike Roberts (Finance Manager)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council has the power pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to accept the grant funding and enter into the associated funding agreement with GMCA. The

funding agreement has not yet been received and must be reviewed and approved by Legal Services prior to execution to ensure that its terms are acceptable to the Council and that any conditions attached to the funding can be complied with.
Any expenditure of the funding must be undertaken in accordance with the Council's CPR and the Procurement Act 2023, where applicable.
Where funding is passed to, or expended through, third parties, consideration must be given to whether the arrangements constitute a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and where appropriate, a subsidy control assessment completed and recorded. The Service should also ensure that any grant funding, contractual, procurement or other legal implications arising from the proposed arrangements are identified and addressed, and further legal advice obtained at that point as necessary.
Pamela Nsofor (Commercial and Procurement Solicitor)

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications with regards accepting the grant funding into the Council. However, Procurement will support the Service with regards to either allocating funds in line with the Councils/ Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and Procurement Regulations (PA2023) or advising the Service how it could set out a robust case exemption for exemption to the CPRs and Procurement Regulations, based on the critical urgency of the situation and the real-world service risk of not allocating the funds promptly. Procurement will also be required to set out the risk alongside Legal of any non-competed commissioning and in addition, advise on such matters as Transparency Notices.

Tom Pyne –(AD Procurement)

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

9.1 Yes - Equality Impact Assessment Completed and attached at Appendix 1.

10. Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11. Key Decision Reference

KDD-26-25

12. **Background Papers**

N/A

13. Appendices

13 .1 Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment