Report to the Chief Executive

Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham

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30th November 2026

Reason for Decision
To approve Oldham Council's participation in the National Jobs Guarantee Programme as a delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain, including acceptance of external funding, establishment of staffing resources required for delivery, and commencement of programme activity supporting approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028.

Executive Summary
The National Jobs Guarantee Programme is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded employment programme designed to support young people who are unemployed, economically inactive or facing barriers to employment through personalised employment support, employer engagement, job matching, skills development and in-work support.

Following a successful procurement exercise undertaken by GC Employment, Oldham Council has been identified as a proposed delivery partner through Get Oldham Working.

Indicative delivery assumptions developed during the bid process are based upon supporting approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028 through a dedicated delivery model funded through an estimated external funding allocation of approximately £730,000.

The programme would enable Oldham Council to increase support available to young people whilst attracting significant external investment into the borough. The indicative funding allocation would support approximately six fixed-term FTE posts together with participant support costs, employer engagement activity, contract management and programme overheads.

Approval is sought to accept the external funding allocation, establish the staffing resources required to deliver the programme, enter into contractual arrangements and commence programme delivery.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Chief Executive:

1. Approves Oldham Council's participation in the National Jobs Guarantee Programme as a delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain.
2. Approves the acceptance of external funding of approximately £730,000 (subject to final contract value confirmation) for the period November 2026 to May 2028.
3. Approves the establishment and recruitment of approximately six fixed-term Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts required to deliver the programme.
4. Approves entry into the necessary contractual arrangements with GC Employment.
5. Approves mobilisation and commencement of programme delivery through Get Oldham Working from November 2026.
6. Delegates authority to the relevant Executive Director, in consultation with Finance, HR, Legal and Procurement colleagues, to finalise contractual, staffing and operational arrangements.

Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham

1 Background

1.1 The National Jobs Guarantee Programme is a Government-funded employment programme commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and designed to improve employment outcomes for young people who are unemployed, economically inactive or facing barriers to entering the labour market.

1.2 The programme aims to support young people into sustainable employment, apprenticeships, education and training through personalised employment support, work readiness activity, careers guidance, employer engagement, vacancy matching and in-work support.

1.3 During 2026, GC Employment submitted a bid to deliver the programme. Oldham Council participated in pre-award discussions under a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding potential delivery arrangements, staffing requirements, participant volumes and indicative financial allocations.

1.4 Following confirmation of the successful procurement outcome, Oldham Council was identified as a proposed delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain.

1.5 Subject to approval, the Council will accept external programme funding and establish the delivery capacity required to support approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028.

1.6 Indicative planning assumptions developed during the bid process include:

- Approximately 410 young people supported.
- Programme delivery from November 2026 until May 2028.
- External funding of approximately £730,000.
- Approximately six fixed-term FTE posts.
- Funding for participant support, management and operational overheads.

Corporate Priorities

The programme contributes directly towards:

- Youth Employment.
- Inclusive Economy.
- Skills and Progression.
- Reducing Inequalities.
- Financial Inclusion.
- Improving Life Chances for Young People.

2 Current Position

2.1 Get Oldham Working currently delivers a range of employment, skills and employer engagement programmes supporting residents into employment, training, apprenticeships and progression opportunities. The service has an established track record in contract

delivery, performance management, employer engagement and supporting priority cohorts, including young people facing barriers to employment.

2.2 The National Jobs Guarantee Programme aligns strongly with existing Get Oldham Working delivery models and will further enhance the Council's youth employment offer by providing dedicated resources focused on supporting young people into employment, apprenticeships, education and training.

2.3 The indicative delivery model developed with GC Employment is based upon approximately 410 participant starts between November 2026 and May 2028, supported through an estimated funding allocation of approximately £730,000.

The funding is intended to support:

- Approximately six fixed-term FTE posts;
- Youth engagement and outreach activity;
- Employability and work readiness support;
- Employer brokerage and vacancy matching;
- Participant support costs;
- Programme management, compliance and reporting requirements; and
- Operational and corporate overheads.

2.4 Whilst recruitment to fixed-term posts will be required as part of programme mobilisation, the Council is well placed to commence delivery from the proposed November 2026 start date. Get Oldham Working will utilise existing experienced employment and skills staff to support programme mobilisation, including redeployment of capacity from existing and ending contracts where appropriate, ensuring the service is operational from day one whilst recruitment activity is undertaken.

This approach minimises mobilisation risk, protects delivery performance during the early stages of the programme and enables continuity of support for young people from programme commencement.

2.5 The Council has established employer relationships, delivery systems, referral pathways and management arrangements already in place through Get Oldham Working. As a result, the service is able to mobilise quickly and effectively, reducing implementation risk and providing confidence that contractual requirements can be met from programme commencement.

2.6 The Council is therefore required to determine whether it wishes to formally accept the external funding allocation, establish the staffing structure necessary for ongoing delivery, enter into contractual arrangements and commence programme delivery from November 2026.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 – Accept Funding and Commence Delivery (Preferred)

Advantages

- Supports approximately 410 young people.
- Secures approximately £730,000 of external investment.
- Enables the creation of approximately six fixed-term FTE posts.
- Expands the Get Oldham Working Youth Employment offer.
- Increases support available to young people facing barriers to employment.
- Contributes to Council priorities around youth employment and economic inclusion.
- Strengthens partnership working with GC Employment and DWP.

Disadvantages

- Delivery targets and compliance requirements must be achieved.
- Contract performance must be monitored and managed.
- Recruitment and mobilisation are required prior to go-live.

Option 2 – Decline the Opportunity

Advantages

- No contractual commitments.
- No staffing mobilisation requirements.

Disadvantages

- Loss of approximately £730,000 of external investment.
- Reduced support available for young people.
- Missed opportunity to enhance the Youth Employment offer.
- Reduced ability to influence programme delivery in Oldham.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 is recommended.

The proposal will enable Oldham Council to secure approximately £730,000 of external funding to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people across the borough.

Funding acceptance will enable the establishment of a dedicated team of approximately six fixed-term FTE posts and provide the resources required to support approximately 410 young people into employment, apprenticeships, education and training opportunities.

Delivery through Get Oldham Working will build upon existing strengths within the Council's Employment and Skills service while helping to address youth unemployment, economic inactivity and inequality.

The proposal represents a significant investment in Oldham's young people and aligns strongly with the Council's strategic ambitions for inclusive growth and improved life chances.

5 Consultation

5.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- GC Employment.
- Get Oldham Working Management Team.
- Employment and Skills Service.
- Relevant Council officers.

Further consultation will be undertaken with HR, Finance, Legal and Procurement colleagues regarding staffing, contractual and financial arrangements.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This report proposes accepting £730,000 in revenue funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the period November 2026 to May 2028 (30 months), for the delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme. It also proposes the creation of six 30 month fixed term posts to deliver the Programme.

6.2 This funding will be fully spent on the below activities and will be revenue expenditure.

- Six 30 month fixed-term FTE posts.
- Youth engagement and support.
- Participant intervention.
- Employer engagement.
- Programme management and compliance.
- Operational and corporate overheads.

6.3 The cost to create six 30 month fixed term posts as detailed within the below table will be grade dependent and will range from £563,890 to £650,390 including oncosts.

Position	Grade	FTE	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 4 £	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 5 £	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 6 £
Programme Officer	4-6	4	393,560	434,920	480,060
Higher Apprentice	1	2	170,330	170,330	170,330
Total salary cost		**6**	**563,890**	**605,250**	**650,390**
Remaining grant resource			**166,110**	**124,750**	**79,610**
Total spend			**730,000**	**730,000**	**730,000**
Total Funding			**(730,000)**	**(730,000)**	**(730,000)**

6.4 The programme is expected to be fully externally funded and is not expected to create an unfunded pressure on existing Council budgets. Staffing commitments will be fixed-term and linked directly to the duration and funding profile of the contract.

6.5 This scheme will be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the funding conditions and that all expenditure is maintained within the funding allocation. The remaining budget allocation to be spent on non-salary activities is dependent on the grade the Programme Officers are recruited into.

(John Edisbury)

7 **Legal and HR Implications**

7.1 The Council will be required to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements with GC Employment.

Legal advice will also be sought relating to the employment implications associated with establishing fixed-term posts funded through external programme income.

It is also noted that significant changes come into effect in January 2027 in relation to Employment Rights. A shorter qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal will apply to Fixed Term Contracts and a proper process must be followed before any dismissal takes effect. On the face of it, it doesn't appear that new recruits would acquire redundancy rights, however, this could arise if individuals have continuous local government service and the Service should note this. In all respects, the Council must follow its procedures in relation to the service redesign and the recruitment process.

Teresa Harrison 04.11.26

7.2 HR comments

Due to the impact on staffing, the above proposals would amount to a Service Redesign. A Senior HR Advisor would be appointed to support the process, the HR implications would be as follows:

Job descriptions for new roles or roles that are changing (including job title changes) will need to go through JE.

- Consultation document to be produced
- Early engagement with Trade Union Colleagues to take place
- Formal Consultation with staff & Unions
- Implementation process – recruitment/ redeployment/ redundancies (if applicable as a last resort).

The Council policies will need to be adhered to. Julie Lynch – 3/11/26

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 n/a

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

9.1 **Yes**. The programme is specifically designed to improve employment outcomes for young people and is therefore expected to have a positive impact through increased access to employment, training, skills development and progression opportunities.

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-47

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 n/a

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors:

Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders