Principal Decision Report

Decision between £100k-£250k or the Executive Director/Director considers it to be of such significance that a record of the decision would ensure transparency and accountability.

Subject:	Acceptance of GMCA Housing Enforcement Grants
Decision maker:	Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive
Decision date:	30 November 2026
Report author:	Jenni Seex, Assistant Director Public Protection
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

To accept an additional £185,000 in grant funding from the GMCA in relation to enhancing enforcement of housing standards and to utilise £35,000 of Selective Licensing reserves for match funding.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Council accepts £150,000 of grant funding for the purposes of increasing enforcement activity against private landlords with a focus on utilising Rent Repayment Orders
2. That the Council accepts £35,000 of grant funding and match funds this from Selective Licensing ringfenced reserves to support enforcement activity and increase training for housing standards and tenancy relations officers.

Background

The GMCA through its Housing Strategy Team have made a range of funding available to local authorities with the intention of enhancing and increasing capacity to improve standards in the private rented sector. In October 2025, the GMCA invited the Public Protection service to submit a proposal for £150,000 of grant funding focused on increasing the use of Rent Repayment Orders over a 2 year period (£75,000 per year).

An outline proposal was submitted to the GMCA in October based on recruiting an additional officer to investigate unlicensed properties with a view to targeting enforcement, developing clear procedural guidance and securing Rent Repayment Orders.

This grant would allow the Environmental Health Team to create two new roles on a fixed term basis with a focus on developing enforcement procedures and taking targeted enforcement in relation to properties covered by mandatory HMO Licensing and Selective Licensing Schemes. This work would provide a strong foundation for increased enforcement activity aligned to new powers and duties in the Renters Rights Act.
In the summer, the GMCA confirmed further grant funding available to all GM authorities aligned to the PRS Pathfinder Programme. The funding is intended to support the continuation of the PRS Pathfinder programme, helping local authorities strengthen private rented sector enforcement through officer development, increased enforcement capacity, and improved recovery of civil penalty debts. The allocation for Oldham is £ 35,227 and requires match funding. This can be achieved through utilising income from Selective Licensing which is ringfenced.

The current resourcing levels within Environmental Health teams mean that there is insufficient capacity to undertake pre-programmed or targeted work. Acceptance of the funding will enable the Council to build much needed enforcement capacity to undertake targeted investigative work and deliver a range of enforcement outcomes. It will also support building capability through the developing processes and procedures and testing approaches which can then be utilised by the wider team.

It is proposed that the funding be used to create two new dedicated roles on an 18-month fixed term basis as well as procure additional enforcement training for all officers leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

The two proposed roles are:

- Housing Enforcement Lead (Grade 8/9) to lead on development of procedures, monitoring systems and complex cases including prosecutions, Rent Repayment Orders and Civil Penalties
- Enforcement Support Officer (Grade 4/5) to proactively identify unlicensed properties utilising a range of data sources, undertake basic investigations, develop and implement monitoring systems, ensure effective debt recovery processes are in place

In addition, in the region of £10,000 will be dedicated to the production of publicity materials and toolkits to encourage tenants to report issues with their Landlord and to support tenants to pursue action independently of the Council where appropriate. This work will support existing teams in delivering new duties and powers under the Renters Rights Act.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1 (Preferred Option) – approve the acceptance of the £185,000 grant funding from the GMCA and delegate authority to the Director of Environment to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement. Under this option, the Council will receive funding to increase enforcement activity in the private rented sector.

Option 2 – do not accept the additional grant funding. Under this option the Council will not receive any additional resources from the GMCA. All enforcement activity will need to be undertaken within the existing resource capacity and will be limited.

Consultation *consulted)*

N/A

Risks

N/A

Implications

Financial	There is no direct cost to the Council in claiming the £150,000 grant funding from GMCA. However, as the funding is ringfenced for Housing Strategy purposes, the Council may be required to set out its intended use of the grant as part of the funding application process. The proposal is to use the grant to fund two fixed-term posts for an 18-month period: a Housing Enforcement Lead (Grade 9) at an estimated cost of £97,818 including on-costs, and an Enforcement Support Officer (Grade 5) at an estimated cost of £64,955 including on-costs. The total staffing cost is estimated at £162,773. In addition, provision has been made for £40,000 of training and IT costs, together with £17,681 for communications activity, bringing the total estimated cost to £220,454, fully utilising the available funding allocation. Furthermore, the Council is seeking to secure a further £35,227 of funding, which requires a corresponding level of match funding from the Council. It is proposed that the match funding be met from the Selective Licensing

	Reserve, which has an available balance of £96,920 after allowing for existing 2026/27 commitments. See costings table below; *Assuming January 2027 Start Date (18 Months)* **Posts** / **Grade** / **2026/27** / **2027/28** / **2028/29** / **Total** Housing Enforcement Lead / 9 / 15,713 / 64,950 / 17,155 / 97,818 Enforcement Support Officer / 5 / 10,443 / 43,170 / 11,343 / 64,955 **Total Staffing Cost** **162,773** Training & IT Costs **40,000** Communications **17,681** **Total** **220,454** ***Grant Funding*** Housing Strategy 150,000 Pathfinder funding 35,227 Council Match Funding 35,227 **220,454** (Mohammed Hussain)
Procurement	N/A
HR	N/A
Legal	It will be necessary to ensure that the ringfenced income from Selective Licensing can be used as match funding. Alan Evans
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	A detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in relation to the work following acceptance of the grant.
Other	

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

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. N/A

Report author sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

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 paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution that in the event of there being no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, executive functions shall in the interim be carried out by the Chief Executive, subject to the Access to Information Rules.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:

Summary of feedback from the political group leaders