

SPECIAL URGENCY DECISION

Deputy Leader of Council:

Name: Councillor Andrew Walmsley
Date agreed: 17th September 2026

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny:

Name: Councillor Danielle Ashworth
Date agreed: 17th September 2026

Decision Taker:

Name: David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development

Details of Decision and Reasoning:

Decision: To accept £222,000 of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Good Food Neighbourhoods funding for Rossendale Borough Council, to be delivered by March 2029 and to authorise officers to complete the necessary mobilisation, payment and grant agreement arrangements, subject to the formal Grant Determination Letter and accompanying guidance.

Rossendale Borough Council received notification from Defra on 9th September 2026 that it has been selected as one of 45 local authorities to receive funding. The programme is intended to improve access to healthy and affordable food for people in greatest need, strengthen local food-system resilience, create local spaces for social interaction, improve health and nutrition outcomes, and reduce dependence on emergency food parcels.

The decision cannot wait until the next Cabinet meeting because Defra requires acceptance and confirmation of the Council's payment details by Friday 18th September 2026 to enable a single payment in October 2026.

Defra is also planning a programme launch in early October and has requested a nomination of a lead contact. Waiting for the next available ordinary decision route would risk delaying acceptance of the grant, and potentially jeopardising the Council's ability to deliver the programme within the required funding period.

Decision to be taken by:

David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development

Documents to be considered by the decision taker:

Defra confidential notification of approval – Good Food Neighbourhoods, dated 9th September 2026

Implications:

Financial – The Council will receive £222,000 Section 31 grant funding, payable in one payment in October 2026 and to be spent by March 2029.

Legal – The funding will be subject to a formal Grant Determination Letter/agreement and associated conditions.

Staffing – Existing officer capacity will be required to manage the programme. Any additional staffing or commissioned support must be contained within the approved funding and follow Council procedures.

Partnership working – Delivery will require collaboration with community organisations, food banks, health partners, schools, VCSFE, local food providers and other stakeholders.

Council priorities – The decision supports the Council's priorities relating to healthier communities, reducing inequality, supporting residents with the cost of living, and partnership-based community resilience.

Status:

For Publication

Date:

18.09.26

NOTES

A Key Decision is defined as one that either:

- a) is, in value worth more than £100,000, or
 - b) has a **significant impact** because (for example) it either:
 - (i) affects individuals or organisations outside the Borough; or
 - (ii) will have a long term (more than 5 years) or permanent effect on the council or the borough.
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1. Status - Is the issue an open and public matter or is it a private and excluded matter as described in Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972. If it is an open matter it is for publication. If it is a private matter it is not for publication and you state the reason why and the appropriate paragraph number of Schedule 12A.
 2. Implications — List any financial staffing and legal implications and remember to consult with legal, human resources and finance. Also consider implications such as LA21 Environment, Human Rights Act 1998. Equal opportunities, Community Safety, IT, Land and Property and Partnership Working.
 3. When the decision has been made and the form signed by the decision taker and the portfolio holder the form should be sent to the Committee Services Manager.