



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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| Name and date of Committee | <b>WESTHIVE PLEDGE REVIEW GROUP<br/>MONDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2024 AT 11:30AM</b>   |
| Subject                    | <b>WESTHIVE CROWDFUND ROUND 2 SPRING 2024 PLEDGE DETERMINATIONS INCORPORATING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND)</b>  |
| Wards affected             | All  |
| Accountable member         | Grants: Cllr Rizvana Poole, Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities.<br>Email: <a href="mailto:rizvana.poole@westoxon.gov.uk">rizvana.poole@westoxon.gov.uk</a><br><br>Community Infrastructure Fund: Cllr Duncan Enright – Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development.<br>Email: <a href="mailto:duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk">duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk</a> |
| Accountable officer        | Westhive: Andy Barge, Assistant Director – Communities.<br>Email: <a href="mailto:andy.barge@publicagroup.uk">andy.barge@publicagroup.uk</a><br><br>Community Infrastructure Fund: Claire Locke – Assistant Director, Property and Regeneration.<br>Email: <a href="mailto:claire.locke@publicagroup.uk">claire.locke@publicagroup.uk</a>  |
| Report author              | Janine Sparrowhawk – Community Funding Officer<br>Email: <a href="mailto:janine.sparrowhawk@publicagroup.uk">janine.sparrowhawk@publicagroup.uk</a>  |
| Summary/Purpose            | To consider submissions to the second round of Westhive Crowdfund, and to determine which projects the Council may pledge towards.   |
| Annexes                    | Annex A – Westhive Fund Criteria   |
| Recommendation(s)          | That the Westhive Pledge Review group resolves to:<br><br>I. Recommend to the Chief Executive that pledges be made as set out in 2.8.  |
| Corporate priorities       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Putting Residents First</li><li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li><li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li><li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li><li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li></ul>   |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Key Decision                | No  |
| Exempt                      | No  |
| Consultees/<br>Consultation | <p>Westhive:<br/>Decision to be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Members for Stronger Healthy Communities, Planning and Sustainable Development, Environment, and Climate Change.</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Fund (UK Shared Prosperity Fund):<br/>Decision to be made in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development.</p> <p>Relevant Executive Members were consulted on the report.</p> <p>In addition, a number of Executive Members were involved in a review of the project funding bids and potential pledges with officers ahead of the report being prepared.</p> |

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In March 2023, the Executive Committee agreed to commission Spacehive Ltd to create a Westhive 'movement' on its civic crowdfunding platform. This movement enables local people to promote ideas for civic projects, to raise money from local supporters, including the Council. Round 1 pledges were agreed at a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The Round 2 creators pitch deadline was 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024. Projects have completed verification by Spacehive and are currently campaigning for pledges from the public.
- 1.2 Please visit <https://www.spacehive.com/movement/westhive/> to view the live campaigns.
- 1.3 The Council is promoting two funding sources on the platform. The Council's main Westhive fund has a total available budget of £120,000. The UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) has a remaining total budget of £202,608 which concludes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Projects can 'pitch' for support to either fund or both. The Council's main Westhive fund can contribute up to 40% of the total project cost or up to £10,000, whichever is less. The UKSPF can now contribute towards capital costs of up to 90% of the total project cost or up to £30,000, whichever is less.
- 1.4 When arriving at the recommendations officers have sought to prioritise projects based on the following factors:
  - Relevance to Council aims.
  - Benefit of the project.
  - Number of pledges.
  - Relation to other projects.
  - Value for money/potential impact.
- 1.5 The officers recommendations are summarised in 2.8.

## 2. PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The following projects have pitched for support on Westhive. Each pitch on the website starts with a slightly longer summary of the project, before then addressing appraisal questions. The up-to-date number of supporters, and funding raised was shared at the meeting to inform the Council's pledge decision if this changed.
- 2.2 **Eynsham Biodiversity Boosting Mower**
  - 2.2.1 Eynsham Parish Council has launched a £26,754 campaign to fund a project to purchase a cut and collect mower and the creation of composting bays for the grass collected by the machine. The mower will be used to further enhance biodiversity through maintenance of the wildflower meadows in the village and provide the capacity to manage more wildflower areas. The mower will enable the Parish Council to expand their grounds maintenance team and to support the local Nature Recovery Network.
  - 2.2.2 There are currently 3 community backed pledges totalling £380 and no in kind contributions.
  - 2.2.3 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E3 – Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces) and the Westhive Fund. A condition of a pledge may also be considered to include that the Parish

Council pledges a specific sum towards the project and that this sum is agreed at the pledge review meeting.

**2.2.4** Recommendation: The Community Funding Officer to follow up with the project creator to establish further detailed information on the project proposal. The pledge decision to be deferred and to be brought to a future meeting for consideration.

### **2.3 Get Set Gagingwell – The MAP Garden**

**2.3.1** FarmAbility has launched a £43,059 campaign to fund a project to enable the development of a brand new space at a farm in Gagingwell. The project will create a meeting place, a growing space for produce and an accessible garden. The charity will be supporting people with disabilities, using the site to support people to access experiences and places they may otherwise face barriers to reaching. This will be the MAP Garden, helping create pathways and routes into more opportunities. The project will be creating useable and productive space including a polytunnel, raised beds, classroom and wet weather space and an accessible compost toilet. FarmAbility will be working with their hosts to grow plants to order for other businesses on site, creating more opportunities for their co-farmers (adults with learning disabilities).

**2.3.2** There are currently 27 community backed pledges totalling £19,107 and no in kind contributions.

**2.3.3** The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E9 – Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places) and the Westhive Fund.

**2.3.1** Recommendation: Westhive Fund – No award due to crowd funding already received / Community Infrastructure Fund – Support, up to £23,952 dependent on crowd funding target as of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024. The recommendation is to not over fund the project cost. As of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £23,952. Therefore, the recommended amount is to support, £23,952. The project creator will ensure that capital resources purchased for this project are to remain for the use of West Oxfordshire residents.

### **2.4 Food Surplus Redistribution in Witney**

**2.4.1** Witney Food Revolution (WFR) has launched a £9,535 campaign to fund a project to buy assets including new fridges and freezers, tables for food display and storage, office equipment to include an ipad, software licence to support project management and the running of WFR and a filing cabinet. The cost of training WFR volunteers to include Health and Safety, Food Hygiene and First Aid is also part of the project. Core costs relating to consumables e.g., cleaning materials, paper bags and stationery are included. WFR provides an effective way to tackle food waste and are a volunteer-powered community action group. WFR are open 4 days per week to distribute food to the local community. Their visitors are made up of from a wide demographic including the vulnerable. WFR work closely with local agencies e.g. baby bank, food bank and Citizens Advice. WFR have grown exponentially since opening in 2019. In February 2024 14.5 tonnes of food that would have gone to landfill (double 2023) was shared with 2,148 visitors.

- 2.4.2 There are currently 12 community backed pledges totalling £4,745 and no in kind contributions.
- 2.4.3 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E9 – Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places) and the Westhive Fund.
- 2.4.4 Recommendation: Westhive Fund - No award due to crowd funding already received / Community Infrastructure Fund – Support, up to £4,825 dependent on crowd funding target as of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024. As of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £4,790. The recommended amount is to support, £4,825 to slightly overfund the project.

## 2.5 Role of Culture and Faith within Domestic Violence

- 2.5.1 The Jewins women2women, has launched a £50,127 campaign to deliver training around West Oxfordshire to faith groups, Social Services, Police and Local Authorities on the role of culture as this would affect the response of the ethnic minorities who are victims of domestic violence. The funding would provide expenses associated with the trainer, training manual, documentary, and partial office costs. The training provided by the group will be recharged to support fundraising towards the group's domestic violence project.
- 2.5.2 There is currently 1 community backed pledge totalling £8,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation and £16,000 in kind contributions.
- 2.5.3 The project has pitched to the Westhive Fund.
- 2.5.4 Recommendation: Westhive Fund - Support, £5,000

## 2.6 Enriching our community through theatre

- 2.6.1 Branching out Drama Society (BODS) has launched a £7,002 campaign to fund a project that will purchase theatrical equipment using better stage equipment, sets, costumes and technical resources. This will enrich their community theatre offering, for the benefits of the community they serve and those that participate in their productions and workshops. BODS take their performances into the community. Their society is entirely volunteer run.
- 2.6.2 The project pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (REPF intervention E6) and successfully received a pledge from the Community Infrastructure Fund of £1,759 during the 1<sup>st</sup> Round in January 2024. The project has now pitched to the main Westhive Fund.
- 2.6.3 There are currently 19 community backed pledges totalling £2,824 including a £250 grant from Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council.
- 2.6.4 Recommendation: Westhive Fund - Support, £1,388.40

## 2.7 Access for all – Witney Music Festival 2024

- 2.7.1 Witney Music Festival has launched a £8,625 campaign to fund a raised platform with wheelchair access and specially adapted toilet facilities for those attending the event. The facilities will be hired from specialist contractors for the event. The viewing area will be supervised to ensure a safe environment. The event organisers believe that music is for everyone, and they want to make sure that physical ability is not a barrier to this enjoyment. The two-day open-air music festival for all the family, takes place at the Leys Recreation Ground, Witney. The project costs also include the Public Liability Insurance for the event. The music festival is a not-for-profit event and both local and national performers take part.

Entry is by ticket. Friday adults tickets are £7.50 and Saturday adult tickets are £15.00. Under 14's have free entry with a paying adult ticket holder over the age of 18 yrs. old. The timeline for this project is very tight and the event is scheduled to take place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**2.7.2** The project launched within the last week and there is currently no community backed pledges and no in kind contributions.

**2.7.3** The project has pitched to the Westhive Fund.

**2.7.4** Recommendation: Westhive Fund – The very short time frame for obtaining community backing is acknowledged by the Pledge Review Group and on this project, the pledge has been unsuccessful. Officers will liaise with the project creator to discuss possible future projects that will have a more favourable timescale.

## 2.8 Summary of recommendations:

|   | Council Main Westhive fund | UKSPF          | Number of pledges | Value of pledges to date         |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Eynsham Biodiversity Boosting Mower</b>                | deferred                   | deferred       | 3                 | £0 (in kind)<br>£380             |
| <b>Get Set Gagingwell – The MAP Garden</b>                | £0                         | £23,952        | 27                | £0 (in kind)<br>£19,107(cash)    |
| <b>Food Surplus Redistribution in Witney</b>              | £0                         | £4,825         | 12                | £0 (in kind)<br>£4,745(cash)     |
| <b>Role of Culture and Faith within Domestic Violence</b> | £5,000                     | N/A            | 2                 | £16,000(in kind)<br>£8,000(cash) |
| <b>Enriching our community through theatre</b>            | £1,388.40                  | N/A            | 19                | £0 (in kind)<br>£2,824(cash)     |
| <b>Access for all – Witney Music Festival 2024</b>        | Unsuccessful               | N/A            | 0                 | £0 (in kind)<br>£0 (cash)        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>£6,388.40</b>           | <b>£28,777</b> |                   |                                  |

## 3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

**3.1** The Chief Executive could decide not to fund at the levels recommended above and instead refer the matter for further consultation with the Executive. This would necessitate a further review group meeting and delay determinations.

## **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 At the time that the Council determines a pledge any project is actively fundraising. The project may still need to raise further funds to reach its campaign target after the Council has made a pledge.
- 4.2 The applications above are within the agreed budget parameters for both the Council's main Westhive fund budget 2024/25 of £120,000 and the Community Infrastructure Fund (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) budget 2024/25 of £202,608.
- 4.3 Where a project has pitched to both funds and will probably reach the crowdfunding target from a Council pledge, officers have allocated funding firstly from the UKSPF budget, as the funding concludes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- 4.4 The financial recommendations on a project can detail that the amount pledged by the Council at that given time, will enable the project creator to meet their crowdfunding target and not overfund the project cost where possible.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All applications have been verified by Spacehive, to ensure that they are appropriate to launch on a civic crowdfunding platform. Officers and the Members panel have reviewed the projects and supporting material, and this is reflected in the recommendations above.

## **6 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 This verification process ensures that pitches will only be made by eligible applicants. While this process prevents pledges being given to support ineligible activities, it cannot mitigate wholly against dissatisfaction where projects are unsuccessful in reaching their targets.
- 6.2 While the Council's grant fund is within the Council's control, projects will also need to attract sufficient funding to reach their campaign targets from other supporters by their campaign deadlines. While this is a feature of crowdfunding, it may impact on take-up - projects the Council determines to support today may not meet their targets and thus will not draw down grants.
- 6.3 Where pledges are drawn down, but change of circumstances prevent activity taking place, Spacehive have procedures in place to seek the return of pledges. The Council maintains its discretion not to recover the grant where alternative or more limited activity could still take place.

## **7 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1 The scheme has been designed to be open to geographical communities and communities of interest. The range of projects that have come forward to this second round is to a degree testament to this, as projects cover a range of very different activities, from different communities of geography and interest across the district.

## **8 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All projects have been asked to consider climate change, and any activity they could undertake to help mitigate its impacts. Positive actions to address climate change will be encouraged.

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None