



Westhive: Scheme outline

Westhive is a movement on Spacehive, set up to support community projects in West Oxfordshire. Westhive was launched in October 2023. The Civic Crowdfunding platform provides a new and accessible way that West Oxfordshire residents can be at the heart of civic change and provides a springboard for locally led ideas to attract funding more easily.

The online platform presents an opportunity for projects to raise funding from a wide range of support, including local people, local groups, charities and businesses. This aligns directly with the key aims of the Council, which has a drive to be aspirational, innovative and bold; and sits well with the Council priorities of 'Putting residents first' and 'Working together for West Oxfordshire'.

Westhive will support both capital and revenue funded projects, vastly increasing its scope and reach. The Council is committed to pledge and support innovative and impactful projects, allowing residents to influence and shape their communities. To attract projects to the movement, the Council will use it to distribute its Crowdfunding Pledges budget.

The Council is allocating £120,000 annually to its Westhive Fund. Typically, projects can expect a pledge of up to £10,000, max 40% of the target, but the Council will consider applying a premium to projects which are seeking to directly address climate change, the ecological emergency or provide direct support to vulnerable groups, up to a total of 50%. A minimum of £20,000 from the pledge fund will be dedicated towards projects that matter most to West Oxfordshire young residents, enabling them to drive the changes they want to see in their communities.

Eligibility

Eligibility will principally be determined by the aims of the project. The following are able to apply:

- Public bodies, such as Parish Councils – where they are delivering or hosting community projects and if delivery benefits the wider community. Mainstream expenses which could otherwise be covered by the precept such as salaries, running costs or replacement street furniture will not be supported.
- Registered charities and excepted charities**.
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations.
- Community Interest Companies.
- Social Enterprises.

- Unincorporated community groups.
- Faith groups, if the project pitch features non-religious activities and demonstrates the activity is inclusive and does not promote a religious view.
- Under 18's can create projects in conjunction with an eligible group, but the project will need a project delivery manager, who takes responsibility for delivering the project. The project delivery manager must be at least 18 years old.
- Projects must take place within West Oxfordshire.

Exclusions:

We will not fund:

- Commercial organisations and exempt* charities.
- Activity that is more properly the responsibility of other statutory service organisations e.g. social care; bus subsidies
- Groups proposing for-profit projects.
- Groups proposing projects with a political affiliation.
- Schools or religious organisations where the activity proposed does not provide wider public benefit or is of a religious nature.
- Projects pitched by individuals for individual endeavour/benefit. Individuals proposing projects must partner with an eligible group who will manage the project on behalf of the individual.

Outcomes

Through the Westhive Fund the Council would like to see the following outcomes delivered within West Oxfordshire:

- Community led change
- Improved health and food equity
- Well-connected and resilient communities
- Improved mental and physical wellbeing across all age groups and backgrounds
- Improved essential local infrastructure that facilitates rural living
- Improved environmental outcomes, such as carbon reduction, improved biodiversity or green infrastructure

The projects which will be more likely to attract Council support are those which:

- Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our local communities
- Directly address climate change
- Enhance lives through events and activities
- Support young people's ideas and ambitions
- Help to tackle the barriers and challenges many of us experience in life, such as poverty, ill health, distance from services, social isolation/loneliness
- Cultivate food equity, building a fair food system for everyone
- Protect and enhance our natural and built environment
- Invest in and maintain the facilities we rely on for these activities to take place

Phased projects, annual events and repeat applications

Our funding is designed to support projects, not on-going costs however project creators can apply to more than one round so long as the project is broken down into different phases, where each individual phase can be delivered independently of the other (e.g. capital projects). Annually occurring activities, such as annual music festivals, are eligible to return for support on more than one occasion, where each year they can demonstrate the need for funding.

Where a project is broken down into phases, pledges from this fund will not usually exceed £10,000 in a single year. For events, applications for activity in consecutive years will be considered, but project creators should seek to increase their pool of supporters and investigate alternative means of sustaining activity. Projects contributing significantly to the Council's priorities or demonstrating innovation will be looked upon favourably.

Creators are welcome to propose multiple projects, although such projects should be clearly discreet activities and provide additionality (Spacehive do not recommend project creators propose more than one project per funding round, to focus backers towards one funding goal). Where projects, are part of a larger scheme, the Council reserves the right to view such activity in the round, and pledge accordingly.

Assessment

Project creators, where proposing a capital project, must check whether or not their project requires planning permission and/or building regulations approval. The project creator is expected to communicate directly with the appropriate planning department or building control body. Project creators will be expected to have all the necessary permissions in place and provide evidence of approval to enable verification of the project proposal.

Project creators will be required to provide copies of supporting documents for verification as specified, during their project proposal submission. This will be reviewed by Spacehive and must satisfy the necessary criteria for the project e.g. Safeguarding Policy.

Project creators will be required to advise if they have previously been awarded grant funding from the Council and provide the following:

- Details of each individual grant that they have received, the amount awarded and date of award.
- The dates of the project/activity in each award application
- Status of each grant (e.g. complete or ongoing).

The Council will review previous WODC grant conditions to ensure any project proposal is eligible for a partner pledge.

All projects seeking support will be expected to complete a set of questions to determine the eligibility of their projects. Projects will also need to demonstrate that they have local support for the project proposed which typically will be through pledges on the Spacehive website. Projects can upload offline and pre-existing funding offers at the start of the campaign, to evidence the support already offered. Projects will need to pass the verification process and demonstrate local support to be considered for a pledge by the Council.

Decision-making

The Council will review all projects typically 4-6 weeks after the creator pitch deadline. Recommendations will then be reported to the Council's Westhive Pledge Review Group meeting.

Project creators will be informed of the pledge decision shortly after the Council's pledge meeting. Successful projects will have the Council's pledge added during their live campaign. Pledges cannot be made retrospectively to a project. The Council retains its discretion to choose not to pledge against a project, or to pledge a higher or lower sum.

Only projects that are using the 'All or Nothing' funding model and hit their full fundraising target will be eligible for a proposed partner pledge from the Council. If the project does not look likely to hit its target and the project creator opts to choose 'Keep What you Raise', the Council's partner pledge will be removed from the crowdfunding campaign and returned to the Council's pledge pot. The project creator will receive the remaining funds raised from their campaign elsewhere.

In relation to each successfully funded project, the project owner agrees to the obligation requirements of Spacehive.

Impact Report

As part of the project creators pitch for funding, they agree to complete an online impact report once the project is delivered. This is shared with backers to their campaign and the Council. Impact reporting is a mandatory requirement following the completion of the project as evidence that the project outcomes have been met and promises have been delivered.

**Exempt charities – primarily larger education establishments or larger museums.*

***Excepted charities – charities which do not need to be registered – include schools, churches, scout, and guide groups.*