

## **Ward Members Budgets (WMB) - Guidelines for Spend**

**Each member of Council has £1,500 to spend for the benefit of their ward during the financial year. The following guidelines outline the process for authorisation together with any restrictions and conditions.**

### **The Process**

The Ward Member may only authorise spend for the benefit of their ward. However, Ward Members may pool budgets across wards in order to benefit a wider area.

The Ward Member must be satisfied that spend would improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their ward (as stated in section 4.7 of the Council's [Constitution](#)) and is advised to seek advice from the Communities Team ([communities@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:communities@oxford.gov.uk)) prior to submitting the application form to authorise the expenditure.

Ward Members must complete all parts of the application form. This record will be the Council's formal record of Ward Member decisions and may appear on the Council's website and will be available for public inspection for a period of six years. This written record and timescale is a legal requirement.

#### **By Email:**

The completed application form is emailed by the Ward Member to the Area Support Officer (ASO) at: [communities@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:communities@oxford.gov.uk)

A Ward Member may not submit an application to spend if that member would, if the payment were made, have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the authorisation of the expenditure. Advice on this may be obtained from Committee and Member Services ([democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk)).

If the proposed spend is considered contrary to that permitted in the Constitution (Part 4.7), is in contravention of any of the duties of the Authority, or would result in a consequential additional call upon resources (financial or otherwise), then any of the Head of Financial Services or Head of Law and Governance may decline the application, subject always to advising the member of the reasons for that decision.

Members should not make commitments to spend before formal approval through application and call in process.

The minimum claim amount is no less than £20 per request. If a Ward Member wishes to fund a series of venue bookings (where the cost may be below £20 per booking), a single application form can be submitted detailing the bookings required and the payment can be made direct to the organisation. When a request for spend has been made, and all the information provided, the application is checked by the Area Support Officer (ASO) and sent to Law and Governance and Financial Services for approval. The approval should be complete within 3 working days. Any queries will be raised with the Ward Member.

If approved, the ASO will then circulate this to all members of Council for Call-in (typically once a week on a Friday).

A request may be called in within 2 working days of circulation by any 4 members or the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. Any valid call-in is referred to the Scrutiny Committee (see Part 17 of the Constitution). If an application is not called in, payment for the amount applied for will be made.

Payments will be made by BACS or internal transfer and **not through cash or cheque.**

Payments can be made direct to an organisation if details are provided on the application form.

Overall, the process from applying for spend authorisation to a decision being reached should be completed within two weeks. Payments should be credited within two weeks of an application passing call-in, but please allow three to four weeks for payment.

The Communities Team will keep the record of Ward Member spending and may periodically report to Ward Members and to the Head of Financial Services on expenditure and balances. A composite account will be published on the website in October and May.

### **Ward Members expenditure of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Proportion**

**In May 2016 the City Executive Board (now Cabinet) agreed that some of the *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Portion* could be spent by Ward Members in wards not covered by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Development Plan.**

**Each of these wards will have up to, but not exceeding, £5,000 (or £2,500 per Ward Member) available to them per financial year. In the event that in a financial year insufficient CIL Neighbourhood Portion has been received, the amount available to non-parished wards will be proportionally reduced to reflect this.**

CIL may be spent by Ward Members in their ward to fund infrastructure either through purchase, renewal, replacement, or maintenance to support the development of its area (Regulation 59, (1) - The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2019 (Amended)).

In addition Ward Members are able to fund anything else that address the demands development in general places on a ward or group of wards.

This money is made available to Ward Members in addition to their Ward Member's Budget. Ward Members are able to pass the money back into a greater pool of money for larger infrastructure projects.

At the end of each financial year any Neighbourhood Portion of CIL that remains unspent will be available to be carried over, unless Council agrees otherwise.

### **What can the CIL Neighbourhood fund be used for?**

The CIL regulations give guidance on the spending of the money allocated to Members. It can be spent by Ward Members in their ward to support the provision of infrastructure either through purchase, renewal, replacement, or maintenance. In addition Ward Members are able to fund anything else that addresses the demands development in general places on a ward or group of wards.

By way of example, infrastructure could be:

- Roads and other transport facilities
- Flood defences
- Schools and other educational facilities

- Medical facilities
- Sporting and recreational facilities
- Open spaces
- Contributions to affordable housing

Spending to address the demands development places on an area is a much broader principle and in making requests members must have in mind that the principle is to support the development of an area which is broader than hard infrastructure.

By way of example this may include:

- Bins
- Benches
- Environmental improvements
- Community activities
- Works of art

## **The Process**

Ward Members must complete a *CIL Budget application form* which can be found [here](#). Completed CIL forms must be returned to the CIL Team, which will then be sent for review to officers and then sent for call-in.

By Email:

The completed application form is emailed by the Ward Member to the CIL Team at: [cilteam@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:cilteam@oxford.gov.uk)

## **Additional checks for CIL applications**

The CIL Team will conduct initial checks to ensure all relevant sections of the form have been completed, and that the request for the Neighbourhood Portion of CIL complies with the CIL regulations.

## **Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plans**

In areas covered by a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Parish Council the CIL Neighbourhood Portion is spent directly by the Neighbourhood Forum or Parish Council, following liaison with City Council (Regulation 59A, (3) - The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2019 (Amended)).

## **Parish Councils**

There are four Parish Councils in the City of Oxford:

1. Blackbird Leys Parish Council
2. Littlemore Parish Council
3. Old Marston Parish Council
4. Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council

## **Neighbourhood Plan Areas**

The following Wards are covered by a Neighbourhood Development Plan:

1. Headington
2. Quarry and Risinghurst
3. Cutteslowe and Sunnymead
4. Summertown
5. Wolvercote

## **Wards not covered by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan**

The following Wards are not covered by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Barton and Sandhills         | 11. Lye Valley         |
| 2. Carfax & Jericho             | 12. Marston            |
| 3. Churchill                    | 13. Walton Manor       |
| 4. Cowley                       | 14. Rose Hill & Iffley |
| 5. Temple Cowley                | 15. St. Clement's      |
| 6. Headington Hill and Northway | 16. St. Mary's         |
| 7. Hinksey Park                 |                        |
| 8. Holywell                     |                        |
| 9. Donnington                   |                        |
| 10. Osney & St Thomas           |                        |