

Member Budget Scheme Guidance Note – 2025/2026

About the members budget award scheme

What is it?

This Member's Budget Award Scheme was introduced to support small to medium community driven projects and enhance the ability of Members, to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of their local communities. Funding is provided to recipients as a discretionary award and is aimed at addressing priorities for action identified within Members Ward Plans.

What funding is available?

The budget for 2025/26 is £5000 per Member. Except in exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the local ward Member(s), the minimum funding award per funding application is £250, up to a maximum of £5000 per Councillor and any amount in-between.

How do I find out more?

Please speak to your local Councillor about your project or funding proposal and they can advise if they want to support it in line with local ward priorities. You can find contact details of your local Councillor here [Councillors and committees | Cheshire West and Chester Council www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees)

When is it available?

Key dates are outlined below:

01 April 2025	Members Budgets Scheme Opens
31 January 2026	Last day for completed applications to be received by the Council
01 March 2026	Last day for applications to be processed and paid by the Council
31 March 2026	Projects which have received funding in 2025/2026 financial year should be completed.

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How can I apply?

Please speak to your local Councillor in advance of making an application and read the following guidance notes so that you have all the information necessary before applying, for completing your application and after receiving the funding should your application be successful.

All applications should be submitted with specific local Councillor support.

Your application will be considered in a fair and transparent way by your local Councillor(s), who are supported by officers following the guidance set out [here](#).

Is there any other Cheshire West Council funding available?

Groups wishing to receive funding from Members Budget scheme may also want to look at funding via the Council's Spacehive crowdfunding scheme 'Cheshire West Crowd'. The aim of Spacehive is to make it as easy as possible for people with ideas to improve their local area by attracting support and funding from local people, local businesses, and funders. For more information visit [Cheshire West Crowd - Home \(spacehive.com\)](https://spacehive.com).

Is there any external funding support available for my project?

Please visit [Communities in action | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) and review the funding section.

I have some questions about the form – who can I contact?

Please visit [Communities in action | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) and use the map to contact the Communities Team.

Apply Here - Next steps

Step 1

Pre application check, does your project/group meet the following four basic criteria:

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- Have you spoken to your local Councillor(s) and got support for this application?
- Does your group have a constitution?
- Does your group have a bank account?
- Does your project benefit a wider and varied community?

If the answer is yes to all questions, then please move to 1b. If the answer is no to any of these questions your group are not eligible to make an application for funding. Please speak to a member of your Communities team who will be happy to;

- Signpost you to organisations who can help you develop a constitution
- Inform you about other arrangements e.g., where organisations or groups do not hold their own bank account it is also possible for funding to be held by another organisation in their bank account on behalf of the group applying for the funding. You can speak to your Communities Team who can advise how this can be reflected in the Member Budget Application Form.
- Help you to consider how your project benefits the wider community.

Step 1b

- Does your project already receive other funding from Cheshire West and Chester Council?

If yes, then your application could be requesting duplicate funding from the Council, which may not be accepted. The Communities Team can discuss this with you before you complete an application form. If the answer is no move to step 2.

Step 2

Decide on the amount you are applying for and agree the amount you wish to apply for with your local ward Member(s) in the first instance.

Except in exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the local ward Councillor(s), the minimum funding award per funding application is £250, up to a maximum of £5000 per Councillor and any amount in-between.

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If your ward is represented by multiple Ward Members, please ensure you include all the Ward Members that you wish to include in your application. The application is only shared with the Members you select on the application form.

Step 3

Complete the [application form](#) - in full and submit it for your local Member(s) to consider, attaching your constitution, bank statement and any other required documentation to the e-form.

Fully completed applications should ideally be submitted at least eight weeks before the project or event start date to enable all the necessary approval and financial processes to be completed.

You must indicate on the application form which local Ward Members you are requesting funding from, you need to make contact with your local ward member in advance of applying; contact details can be found [here](#).

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees

If you require access to the application form in another format (Word/ PDF) please contact the Communities Team here: [Communities in action | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Step 4

We will acknowledge receipt of your application. Your fully completed applications will go to your local Ward Member(s) for a decision to be made. Members will consider applications against the priorities in their ward plan and the borough plan and in line with the Members Code of Conduct.

Step 5

You will receive notification of a decision within 28 days of receipt of a fully completed application form with all associated documents attached.

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There may be a delay if your application form is incomplete or missing necessary documents.

Step 6

If your application is successful, we will arrange payment via BACS payment, this will be made in line with the Council's Scheme of Financial Delegation. Internal applications will be made by Journal Transfer which the Communities Team will arrange.

Is there any guidance on who and what is eligible for funding?

Who is eligible to apply for Member Budgets?

Examples of eligible award recipients include:

- Voluntary groups
- Community groups
- Charities and not-for-profit organisations
- Faith and belief groups for the benefit of the wider community
- Schools and education units for the benefit of the wider community
- "Friends of..." organisations
- Parish or town councils
- Statutory organisations where it is not duplicate funding.

What we can fund:

The project or service must be located within the Member's own ward or area or be of significant benefit to those living within the member's own ward.

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- Equipment hire or purchase
- Community events or activities – these may take place on an annual basis can include one-off management costs linked directly to the event. *Please view the events guidance regarding consents and permissions required (funding may be with-held if permissions are not in place)*
- Improvements or additions to community facilities
- Materials and equipment for a local project
- Seasonal or project workers (those who work only as and when required), or an element of salary costs incurred as part of a wider scheme
- Start-up costs for groups or activities
- Team clothing or kit
- Environmental improvements to the local area. *Please check if any additional consents are required, for example adding furniture onto CWC land i.e. benches, bins, noticeboards*
- Training or capacity building events
- Revenue (running or day-to-day) costs such as transport costs, venue hire, volunteer expenses
- Costs which can be met by a Schools Pupil Premium Strategy for example a school trip being accessible to all students in a class will be considered on a case by case basis and agreed with Members
- Capital (fixed items) works or expenditure

Funding from multiple ward Members may on occasion be pooled together on a ward or area basis; effectively allowing multiple members to contribute to a project that will benefit their wards together.

What we cannot fund

- Funding must be agreed before the scheme/activity can take place wherever possible. Members may be able to support, in exceptional circumstances, if the project has a short delivery deadline.
- A project taking place on Cheshire West and Chester land, where permissions have not been granted
- An individual

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- A third-party applicant
- Any costs incurred when putting together an application
- Loans or interest payments
- Anything party political, including supporting political organisations
- Anything solely for religious purposes
- Lobbying against council policy
- Anything that will bring the council into disrepute
- Anything contrary to the council's financial regulations or council policies
- Anything illegal
- Anything that does not have a wide community benefit. This includes trips for individuals
- Applications from organisations who have previously failed to adhere to the Members Budget guidance and/or monitoring guidelines
- Profit making companies

Clarity:

- *Members Budget funding can be used to commission a profit-making company to deliver a service to support the delivery of a project of wider community benefit*
- *Members Budget cannot support a private company to enable them to generate a project which does not have a wider community benefit. Example: Providing a local café service to the wider community does not mean “wider community benefit” if the organisation is a private profit-making company*
- *Please note other more suitable grants and funding pots may be available to support such initiatives*

What supporting documents are required?

Applicants must send the following supporting documents with their applications:

- A constitution, standing orders, articles of association or similar
- Bank account details and statements (payments cannot be made to individuals)

Where appropriate additional supporting documentation may be required to be submitted with your application before it is accepted, the Communities Team will let you know if this is the case examples may include:

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- Equal opportunities policy and/or equality and diversity policy
- A safeguarding policy if working with children and / or vulnerable adults