

GO SEStran

South East of Scotland
Transport Partnership

People and Place Main Grant Fund
2026/27
Application Guidance



People and Place Main Grant Fund 2026/27 – Application Guidance

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Introduction

This guidance is designed to support you in submitting a grant application to deliver projects as part of SEStran's 26/27 People and Place Programme to deliver active and sustainable travel behaviour change.

Please read it carefully prior to submitting an application, as it contains key information on eligibility of projects, timescales, and how to submit.

Please note that funding is contingent on Transport Scotland funding being awarded to SEStran for the 26/27 financial year, and SEStran Board approval of the subsequent 26/27 Partnership budget.

Purpose of the Fund

In line with the [Regional Transport Strategy 2035](#), the SEStran People and Place Grant Fund is a key part of the regional delivery of active and sustainable travel behaviour change in South East Scotland under SEStran's [People and Place Delivery Plan](#). The Plan is designed to deliver behaviour change interventions to support people in the region to choose active and sustainable travel over private vehicles for utility journeys. The plan will:

- Increase the proportion of active and sustainable journeys in the region
- Increase awareness of the benefits of active and sustainable travel to encourage future behaviour change
- Increase the use of active and sustainable travel modes among underrepresented groups in the region who might face additional barriers
- Collaborate with local authorities and third-sector partners to strengthen capacity and capability in active and sustainable travel

Our People and Place work is supported by the Scottish Government through [Transport Scotland](#), who have made funding available to each of the seven regional transport partnerships across Scotland to support their active travel vision: to enable walking, wheeling (including those using a wheelchair or mobility aid) and cycling to become the most popular mode of transport for short, everyday journeys.

Monitoring

It is expected that all projects funded will include appropriate monitoring in line with the agreed outcomes and the national [Active Travel Framework](#). Costs for monitoring should therefore be included within the budget for each project and should be proportionate to the scale and activity being proposed. Detailed monitoring guidance tailored to specific projects will be shared with successful applicants prior to the delivery year commencing.

Key Definitions

Active Travel

Active travel is walking, wheeling or cycling for a journey. Wheeling includes using a wheelchair or mobility aid as an alternative to walking.

Sustainable Travel

Sustainable travel can be defined as including active, public and shared transport modes. However, in the context of the People and Place programme, the focus is on projects that involve solutions that can specifically improve travel planning and encourage more joined-up journeys.

Revenue Funding

Costs incurred in the day-to-day operations of a business. These expenses are necessary for maintaining the operational efficiency and ensuring the smooth functioning of a business' core activities. The key characteristics of revenue expenditure is that spend occurs regularly and is necessary for ongoing operational activities.

Capital Funding

Involves investments in assets that typically yield benefits over a long period of time, and is generally expenditure that is meant to acquire or improve fixed assets.

Application Timeline

Key dates are as follows:

Stage	Date
Pre-Application Support	15 th December 2025 – 12 th January 2026
Grant applications open	12 th January 2026
Grant applications close	6 th February 2026
Decisions in principle issued*	w/c 2 nd March 2026

*Decisions will be issued subject to confirmation of funding for the People and Place Plan from Transport Scotland and SEStran Board approval of the 26/27 Partnership budget

Subsidy Control

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into force on 4 January 2023, replacing previous EU State aid regulation for awarding subsidies. To ensure that all awards we make are legal, SEStran needs to undertake compliance work to minimise any negative effects on competition or investment.

It is SEStran's responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Act, though we may ask applicants or grant recipients to help us during the process. If we believe your award is a Subsidy as defined by the Subsidy Control Act, we will inform you of this. There may be additional conditions as part of your funding agreement to ensure we maintain compliance.

If your award is classed as a subsidy and is for £100,000 or above, we will need to publish its details on the UK Subsidies Transparency Database.

Project Eligibility

As part of SEStran's People and Place Delivery Plan, a list of project scopes has been developed for which grant funding is available for applications that support delivery of these. There will be an assumed **minimum grant per organisation of £50,000** to ensure projects are of a sufficient scale to deliver regional impact.

In addition to the criteria outlined below, we expect all of the projects we fund to be fully inclusive and accessible to all. As such, all projects should conform with the Public Sector Equality Duty and give due regard to the need to:

- put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act 2010, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not

A project specific Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) can be used to demonstrate the above. A [programme wide IIA](#) has been produced and all projects will be expected to implement the recommendations of this where appropriate.

What is eligible for funding

Eligible applications must fit within one or more of the project scopes identified below, but please note the following:

- Budgets are subject to change, and not all projects listed below as eligible may be funded (in full or in part) depending on budget availability.
- Where you have a coherent application that would run across multiple project scopes, please **only submit one application**, and identify within your application how much would be assigned to each project scope. For example, a coherent application could cover schools interventions in a number of LA areas, or cover a community focused project plus access to cycles.

Priority Intervention Location/project	Scope of eligible projects	Expected Outcomes	Budget	Timeframe
Fife - A broad-ranging behavioural change programme in and around Levenmouth	<u>Community Project Support & Delivery</u> Projects that either directly deliver, or provide support for local organisations within the wider Levenmouth area to deliver, and build local capacity to deliver, interventions to encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle, including as part of multi-modal journeys. Whilst initially this will likely include direct delivery of project activities, a key focus of this project should include building local community capacity to delivery such projects to allow them to be run locally in future years. Specific activities to be delivered should be agreed locally to ensure that they address local barriers to active travel. Where cycle training is provided, this should follow the national Bikeability standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of journeys by active and sustainable modes in and around the target community • Reduce number of short trips being made by car • Improve perceptions of accessibility to local goods/services, education and employment by non-car modes • Increase the amount of walking, wheeling and cycling for physical activity • Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so • Local partner organisations have increased willingness, capacity and skills to establish and implement effective behavioural change projects 	Exact value to be determined based on balance of other projects, mixture of revenue and capital	26/27 only
Scottish Borders - A broad-ranging behavioural change programme in and around Hawick	<u>Intensive Schools Delivery</u> A project to provide a programme of intensive support, delivered using 1FTE of dedicated officer resource, in Hawick High School and all of its associated feeder primary schools. It will deliver tailored support packages depending on schools' needs and circumstances and will include provision of bikes and associated equipment to pupils, improved cycle/scooter storage, as well as walking/wheeling/cycling training (depending on needs and across a wide range of age groups), campaigns, challenges and events, and support with travel planning to encourage and enable pupils and other members of the schools' communities to travel actively more often. A key part of this project will be supporting and adding value to Scottish Borders Council's active travel promotion campaign and associated interventions in Hawick to encourage use of the new active travel path network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of journeys made by young people by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Increase the number of journeys made by parents/carers by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Reduce the number of journeys made by car to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Improve perceptions of accessibility to school by non-car modes • Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so 	Expected to be up to £90,000, largely capital supporting infrastructure delivery	26/27 only
Promotion of active and sustainable travel to NHS sites	<u>NHS Sites Delivery & Support</u> Projects in this area can cover a range of areas, as long as they focus on promotion of active and sustainable travel to NHS sites. The primary audience for these projects should be those working or studying on NHS sites, but secondary audiences could include patients or other visitors. Funds in this area can be applied for directly by the NHS, or by organisations who would support these projects – where other organisations are applying, we would expect an existing relationship with the NHS/the wider site to exist. NHS site can include any area of a wider site and all users of that site – as an example, this would include the entire Edinburgh Bioquarter campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by car from or to major trip generators • Increase the number of journeys made by active and sustainable modes from or to major trip generators • Improve perceptions of accessibility from or to major trip generators by non-car modes • Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so 	A total of approximately £300,000 is available in this across all projects, mixture of revenue and capital	26/27 only

Access to Cycles and Cycle Storage	<p><u>Access to Cycles and Cycle Storage Direct Delivery*</u></p> <p>Projects that provide access to cycles and cycle storage at scale can apply on an individual basis for cycle refurbishment or purchase – such projects could include bike libraries, other loan models, or gifting that are targeted at groups or individuals who would otherwise not be able to access a cycle. Grant funds should be used to support purchase/refurbishment of cycles and additional items required to use the cycle (such as light, helmet etc), and could also cover cycle training (or referrals to local cycle training). Funding is also available to support delivery of cycle parking, either as a standalone measure or as part of a wider access to cycles project.</p> <p>Projects funded directly by SEStran will have to be already established and have a proven record of delivery. Projects which will operate at a smaller scale or are newer/require further support will be referred to other funding sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of short everyday journeys by cycling • Attitudes towards/propensity cycling • Proportion of journeys to school by cycling • Frequency of cycling for pleasure/ exercise • Proportion of people identifying barriers to cycling 	Exact value to be determined based on balance of other projects, capital only	26/27 only
Regional Projects	<p><u>Schools Incentivisation</u></p> <p>Projects to incentivise primarily walking and wheeling (but also cycling and wider sustainable transport where this is felt relevant) in schools across the SEStran region. Projects in this area can be either region wide or focus on specific areas, but in either case a specific focus should be on supporting schools where they align with the regional priority interventions listed in the Delivery Plan, and to align with other projects funded through People and Place (it is not expected that specific focus areas based on this will be identified in an application, but a process for working with SEStran and Local Authorities to identify the focus areas would support an application).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of journeys made by young people by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Increase the number of journeys made by parents/carers by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Reduce the number of journeys made by car to school and for other commonly-made journeys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve perceptions of accessibility to school by non-car modes ▪ Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so 	Exact value to be determined based on balance of other projects, mixture of revenue and capital	26/27 only
Regional Projects	<p><u>Major trip generators incentivisation, delivery and/or support*</u></p> <p>Projects in this area can cover a range of areas, as long as they focus on promotion of active and sustainable travel to major trip generators, such as workplaces or other key destinations. The primary audience for these projects should be those who visit these sites frequently, such as employees or service users, but secondary audiences could include more occasional visitors. Funds in this area can be applied for directly by the trip generator, or by organisations who would support these projects – where other organisations are applying, we would expect an existing relationship with the workplace to exist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by car from or to major trip generators • Increase the number of journeys made by active and sustainable modes from or to major trip generators • Improve perceptions of accessibility from or to major trip generators by non-car modes • Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so 	Exact value to be determined based on balance of other projects, mixture of revenue and capital	26/27 only

* Where projects support installation of cycle storage and/or workplace initiatives outside the public sector, it is expected that match funding of 50% is provided by the benefitting organisation(s). Exceptions to this can be made by SEStran on a case-by-case basis for smaller organisations and/or third sector organisations if sufficient justification can be provided

What is not eligible for funding

- Any project that does not fit within the eligible project scopes listed above
- Any project that provides for the construction of active or sustainable travel infrastructure
- Any project that does not focus on increasing participation in active or sustainable travel

Eligible expenditure

This is a project-based grant fund that will operate on the basis of full cost recovery, so all costs related to the delivery of the projects funded will be eligible to be claimed. This will include relevant staff costs as well as proportional overheads, premise costs etc. Costs that do not relate to the specific project being funded (for example, whole organisation overheads or entire premises costs) cannot be funded.

Organisation Eligibility

The fund will be open to any properly constituted organisation (note that local authorities are not eligible for this fund).

All applicants must be able to demonstrate a certain level of capability to deliver behaviour change projects, and have a baseline level of understanding, organisation and team set-up, finances, and insurance. We may ask for evidence of this when you submit your application.

If part of your application involves passing on funding to other groups, they will also need to comply with all of the eligibility criteria within this section.

Community Organisations

To be eligible, community organisations must:

- Have a signed constitution.
- Have the required number of board members, including a minimum of three unrelated board members.
- Have an up-to-date Public Liability Insurance certificate.
- Be financially solvent, and be able to provide evidence of such, such as recent accounts.
- Have a project team of at least two people committed to lead and manage the project for its duration, including finance and administration.

Fair Work First

All grants awarded with Scottish Government funds from 1 July 2023 (which includes this fund) must comply with the [Fair Work First](#) conditionality requiring grant recipients to pay at least the real Living Wage, and provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition.

All principal grant recipients (in the case of People and Place, this is SEStran) are required to meet the real Living Wage and effective voice conditions. Where the grant recipient issues

funding to third-party organisations to support the delivery of the funded activity, the conditionality applies as follows:

- The real Living Wage condition applies to workers directly engaged in the delivery of the funded activity who are aged 16 and over, including apprentices and based anywhere in the UK.
- The effective voice condition does not apply.

Real Living Wage

- In general, a grant recipient must demonstrate it is paying the Real Living Wage (rLW) before it can access a grant.
- For the purposes of this grant fund, this condition only applies to workers directly engaged in the delivery of the funded activity who are aged 16 and over, including apprentices and based anywhere in the UK.

Evidence required will depend on the size of the grant as per [Scottish Government guidance](#).

Work with vulnerable people

It is important we have assurances relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. If your programme involves working with vulnerable groups, we will ask you to confirm that you have:

- Robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place to protect vulnerable adults and children (these may include things such as a specific safeguarding policy, training, support and supervision of staff, a Code of Conduct)
- Whistleblowing and monitoring and complaints processes.
- A clear procedure which must be followed if you become aware of any specific safeguarding incident

How to apply

Applications can be completed on SEStran's online application portal which will be available from Monday 12th January 2026 and will close for applications on Friday 6th February 2026. Please note that available support will be limited on the closing date (and will not be available after 4pm), so we would encourage registration on the portal and application submission as early as possible so any issues can be resolved promptly. Further details on the online application process will be available prior to opening.

For any questions on the application, please email PeopleAndPlace@sestran.gov.uk.

As set out above, where you have a coherent application that would run across multiple project scopes, please only submit one application and identify within your application how much funding would be required for each project scope.

We welcome joint applications from more than one organisation. In such circumstances, please nominate one organisation to be the lead partner, who will submit the application and sign the funding terms if successful.

Please note that, subject to SEStran's discretion, there is a minimum grant per organisation of £50,000.

Assessment Process

Once submitted, in line with SEStran's Grant Standing Orders and to ensure best value, applications will be scored by 3 members of SEStran staff in line with the scoring criteria below. The average score under each criterion will then be taken and compiled into an overall score for each project.

A recommendation will then be made on a project-by-project basis based on the score, but also taking due account of ensuring a geographical spread of projects and transport modes across the region, and how the projects fit within the overall programme budget. This recommendation will then be reviewed by a funding panel, who will make a final recommendation on which projects are successful in line with the set criteria. The Panel will be made up of a minimum of 3 members of staff from SEStran (not including those who have marked the applications). Decisions of the Panel are final and are not subject to appeal. Where projects are proposed to run beyond 26/27, the assessment will focus only on proposals submitted for 26/27 delivery.

Organisation Financial Assessment

Alongside the assessment, a financial sustainability assessment will be undertaken on organisations in line with City of Edinburgh Council's processes. If an organisation fails this assessment, they may be ineligible to receive grant funding, and their application may be rejected.

Eligibility Assessment

Prior to the scoring being carried out, an eligibility assessment will be undertaken to ensure the applicant organisation and the project being applied for meet the eligibility criteria above. Where an application is found to be ineligible, it will not be scored and will be deemed to be unsuccessful.

Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria that has been developed has been designed to assess projects on their overall quality, fit within the [Delivery Plan](#), experience of the organisation delivering them, and value for money. A total score will be given out to 100 in line with the following criteria.

Project outcomes

This section will be assessed based on how the project will deliver against the relevant outcomes of the specific project scope(s) you have applied for. The following scores will be assigned:

0	Project is unclear or unrelated to any of the project scopes. No reference to how the project will deliver against relevant outcomes.
6	Project has some relevance to a project scope(s) but lacks detail and/or specificity. Project has some reference to relevant outcomes but does not demonstrate how it will deliver against these.
12	Project partly demonstrates how it will deliver on some or all outcomes and has some alignment with the delivery of a project scope(s).
18	Project demonstrates how it will deliver on some relevant outcomes and is specific to relevant project scope(s).
24	Project demonstrates how it will deliver on some or all relevant outcomes and aligns with delivery of the relevant project scope(s).
30	Project clearly and comprehensively demonstrates how it will deliver on the outcomes of the relevant project scope. Project is specific and tailored to the relevant priority scope(s).

Value for Money

This section will be assessed based on the project budget provided within the [Project Delivery Plan](#), along with the project delivery plan and outcomes. Consideration will also be taken of the overall People and Place budget, the affordability for specific projects within that, and the comparative costs of other proposals (including costs of projects delivered in 2024/25). The following scores will be assigned:

0	Project cost is disproportionately high or low respective to the submitted project delivery plan and outcomes and the overall People and Place budget
10	Project cost is disproportionately high or low respective to the submitted project delivery plan and outcomes, but fits within the overall People and Place budget. Project budget and/or submitted delivery plan and/or outcomes will need adjusted to demonstrate value for money.
20	Project cost is proportionate to the submitted project delivery plan and outcomes, but not the overall People and Place budget. Project budget will need adjusted to fit within the programme.
30	Project cost is proportionate to the submitted project delivery plan and outcomes and the overall People and Place budget

Delivery Programme

This section will be assessed based on the project delivery plan provided in the application form. Consideration will be taken on use of resources, project timescales, project milestones and risk management. The following scores will be assigned:

0	No evidence of delivery programme or planning in relation to the proposed project
4	Partial details are provided relating to a project delivery plan but these are very limited in detail or missing key information, or the delivery approach is unrealistic with insufficient capacity to successfully deliver the project.
8	Project delivery plan has been provided but lacks detail or specificity to the project and may be missing some information.
12	Project delivery plan demonstrates some understanding of how the project will be delivered. The timescales and/or resourcing are in part appropriate to the delivery of the project and a basic risk management plan is in place.
16	Project delivery plan demonstrates a good understanding of how the project will be delivered. Timescales and resourcing are appropriate to the delivery of the project, and a good risk management plan is in place.
20	Detailed and comprehensive project delivery plan that demonstrates a well-planned and appropriately resourced project. Project has a realistic timescale with clear milestones, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of project delivery, along with a thorough risk management plan.

Organisation Experience

This section will score the evidence that has been provided on an organisations previous success at delivering active and/or sustainable travel behaviour change projects. The following scores will be assigned:

0	No experience provided, or experience is not relevant to behaviour change for the chosen transport mode(s)
3	Relevant experience of delivering behaviour change projects for the chosen transport mode(s), but little or no evidence of successful delivery of relevant outcomes in previous projects provided
6	Relevant experience of delivering behaviour change projects for the chosen transport mode(s), with some evidence of successful delivery of relevant outcomes in previous projects provided
10	Relevant experience of delivering behaviour change projects for the chosen transport mode(s), with high quality evidence of successful delivery of relevant outcomes in previous projects provided

Partnership Work

This section will score the evidence that has been provided on an organisation's experience and ability to deliver successful projects in partnership with other organisations and its relevance for the project. The following scores will be assigned:

0	No evidence of partnership working is provided
2	Partnership working is referenced but no evidence is provided
4	Partnership working is referenced, and some partial evidence is provided
6	Some evidence of partnership working is provided and there is some relation to how this will contribute to the delivery of the project.
8	Evidence of partnership working is provided, and a demonstration of how this will contribute to the effective delivery of the project.
10	Relevant and clear evidence of partnership working is provided. Evidence outlines the approach and effectiveness of past experiences of partnership working and how this will contribute to the effective delivery of the project.

Grant Fund Additional Requirements

All successful applications will be expected to sign the grant funding terms prior to any projects commencing. Full copies of these can be provided in due course, but will include the following requirements:

- There is an assumed minimum grant per organisation of £50,000.
- All funding must be spent, and project close documentation submitted, by 31st March 2027. Any funding not spent and claimed by this date will not be claimable from SEStran.
- Projects are funded for the scope and amount given on the full application. Any deviation from this requires prior approval from SEStran.
- Monitoring is a key component of the programme, and it is expected that this is carried out as part of the project, and all results from this are provided to SEStran in a timely manner (and no later than 30th April 2027).
- Grant funds must be claimed in arrears at the end of each quarter, and payment will only be made on production of satisfactory evidence of expenditure and project progress (unless by prior agreement).
- SEStran will require quarterly project progress meetings and reports over the duration of the project.