



South East of Scotland
Transport Partnership

People and Place Community 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 Community Grant Fund is a key part of the regional delivery of active and sustainable travel behaviour change. It aims to fund small (£5,000-£50,000) projects that support people to increase their use of active and/or sustainable transport modes.

As part of SEStran's [People and Place Programme](#), these projects will support its objectives to:

- 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.

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 2nd 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

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. Specific monitoring requirements will be discussed further with successful applicants.

Subsidy Control

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into effect on 4 January 2023, replacing previous EU State Aid regulation for awarding subsidies. To ensure 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

The Community fund will focus on projects between £5,000 and £50,000 aiming at delivering key local interventions to encourage active and sustainable transport in the SEStran region.

What is eligible for funding

Projects can focus solely on active travel or sustainable transport interventions or a combination of both elements. Projects must align with at least one of the three key People and Place themes below, but will not score worse if they align with only one theme:

Schools and Young People

Interventions in Scottish schools that deliver holistic solutions for creating an environment where active and sustainable travel choices are not only an option, but the most effective ways to travel for young people and families.

Workplaces

Interventions that focus on places of work, that make active and sustainable travel choices a realistic solution for commuting for staff and volunteers. These could include investment in workplace cycle storage/parking or maintenance provision, or incentivisation schemes that make walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport more attractive choices to private car use.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Interventions that focus on inclusion of underrepresented groups in Scotland who might face additional barriers to active and sustainable travel, such as cost, social perception, culture, health, ability, and geographical location. Interventions should integrate a good engagement with groups who face such barriers and aim at significantly reducing them to increase opportunities to choose active and sustainable travel.

Location Criteria

Projects should be run within the SEStran area (but organisations can be based outwith that area). Projects that cross [Regional Transport Partnership \(RTP\)](#) boundaries should get in touch with each RTP and a 'lead' RTP will be agreed who will assess the application and manage any successful project.

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.

Examples of eligible projects (non-exhaustive list)

Active travel projects

- Creation or development of a community bike or e-bike share scheme.
- Cycling facilities at key community destinations such as cycle parking and/or cycle storage.
- Provision of a variety of training sessions, such as confidence cycle sessions, bike maintenance sessions, health walks, etc.
- Support on route planning for walking, wheeling, and cycling journeys.
- Delivery of activities such as led cycle rides, led walks, bike maintenance sessions / Dr Bike sessions, etc.

Sustainable travel projects

- Shared-transport projects, including car clubs, car share, etc.
- Engagement initiatives to promote sustainable transport.

Multi Modal Projects

- Support for travel planning.
- Pop-up mobility hubs – integrating shared transport with public transport.
- Promotional campaigns.
- Delivery of activities in the community aiming at raising awareness of active and sustainable travel options.

Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list of projects, and we acknowledge that other project proposals could meet the eligibility criteria of this fund; if you wish to discuss your project further, please get in touch at peopleandplace@sestran.gov.uk

What is not eligible for funding

- Any project that does not focus on increasing rates of walking, wheeling, cycling and/or sustainable travel.
- Any project that provides for the construction of active or sustainable travel infrastructure.

Organisation Eligibility

The fund is open to:

- community groups
- voluntary organisations
- registered charities
- social enterprises
- community benefit societies
- community interest companies (CICs)

Note that this fund is not open to Local Authorities, other public bodies, or businesses.

To be eligible, 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 or equivalent.
- Be financially solvent, and be able to provide evidence of such, such as recent accounts.
- Have a project team of at least one suitable person committed to lead and manage the project for its duration, including finance and administration.
- Comply with the Fair Work First conditionality – *see more details below*.
- Have robust safeguarding policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults and children (if applicable to the project) – *see more details below*.

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.

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.

To apply for funding, applicants must first create an account on our online application portal ([SEStran Online Portal](#)). Please follow these steps:

1. Enter your organisation's email address under where it says 'Log in or register'
2. You will then be prompted to enter a 6 digit code which will be in an email sent to this email address. This can take a few minutes and sometimes goes to spam/junk folders.
3. You will then be asked to provide the required details, including your name and organisation name.
4. You will be asked to create a password and accept the portal's terms and conditions. Please note you must agree to receive notification emails to receive updates on your application.

After activation, you can log in at any time to start, save, and submit your application(s). Further guidance notes/instructions will be available at the top of the home page, with the application forms below.

We welcome joint applications from more than one organisation. In such circumstances, please decide on one organisation to be the lead partner. They will submit the

application and sign the funding terms if successful. Details of this partnership will need to be included in your application.

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

Assessment Process

Once submitted, in line with SEStran's Grant Standing Orders and to ensure best value, applications will be scored by at least 2 members of SEStran staff following the scoring criteria below. The average score under each criterion will then be taken and compiled into an overall score for each project.

An internal 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 across the entire People and Place programme, transport modes across the region, and how the projects fit within the People and Place budget. Decisions are final and are not subject to appeal. They will be made via email notification linked to the online application portal.

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 have been developed have been designed to assess projects on their overall quality, fit within the People and Place programme's objectives, experience of the organisation delivering them, and value for money. A total score will be given out of 100 in line with the following criteria.

Community engagement and barrier identification

This section will be assessed based on the work and engagement that the organisation has undertaken with their community to identify the current needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable travel. The following scores will be assigned:

0	No evidence of community consultation or engagement and no identification of the current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.
6	Insufficient community consultation or engagement and/or limited understanding of the current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.
12	Partial demonstration of community consultation or engagement and/or partial identification of current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.
18	Relevant community engagement work and/or partial identification of current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.
24	Demonstration of a good community engagement work and/or identification of current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.
30	Demonstration of a strong community engagement and clear identification of current community needs and barriers to access active and/or sustainable transport.

Project outcomes

This section will be assessed based on how the project will deliver on the relevant outcomes related to the People and Place programme objectives and the three identified People and Place themes. The following scores will be assigned:

0	Project is unclear or unrelated to any of the programme objectives and/or the three identified People and Place themes. No reference to how the project will deliver against relevant outcomes.
4	Project has some relevance to the programme objectives and/or any of the three identified People and Place themes but lacks detail and/or specificity. Project has some reference to relevant outcomes but does not demonstrate how it will deliver against these.

8	Project partly demonstrates how it will deliver on some or all outcomes and has some alignment with the programme objectives and/or any of the three identified People and Place themes.
12	Project demonstrates how it will deliver on some relevant outcomes and is specific to relevant programme objectives and any of the three identified People and Place themes.
16	Project demonstrates how it will deliver on some or all relevant outcomes, and aligns with delivery of relevant programme objectives and any of the three identified People and Place themes
20	Project clearly and comprehensively demonstrates how it will deliver on relevant outcomes and fully aligns with delivery of relevant programme objectives and any of the three identified People and Place themes. Project is specific and tailored to the programme objectives and respective location(s).

Value for Money

This section will be assessed based on the project budget provided within the application and the stated 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 delivery plan and outcomes and the available budget.
5	Project cost is disproportionately high or low respective to the submitted delivery plan and outcomes but fits within the available budget. Project budget and/or submitted delivery plan and/or outcomes will need adjusted to demonstrate value for money.
10	Project cost is adequately proportionate to the submitted delivery plan and outcomes but does not fit within the available budget. Project budget will need adjusted to fit within the programme.
15	Project cost is reasonably proportionate to the submitted delivery plan and outcomes and generally fits within the available budget
20	Project cost is proportionate to the submitted delivery plan and outcomes and the available 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 plan or planning in relation to the proposed project.
3	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.
6	Delivery plan has been provided but lacks detail or specificity to the project and may be missing some information.
9	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.
12	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.
15	Detailed and comprehensive 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.

Future Planning

This section will score how well an organisation sets out its vision for the project beyond the end of this funding period. The assessment will consider how the organisation plans to utilise funding requested in this application to support independent delivery in future years and ensure long term project and organisational sustainability. The following scoring will be assigned:

0	No detail provided about plans beyond this funding period to continue project delivery and/or ensure ongoing impact on behaviour change.
5	Some detail provided about plans beyond this funding period to continue project delivery and impact, but these rely heavily on uncertain funding sources or underdeveloped plans to resource activities.
10	Good amount of detail provided about plans beyond this funding period. Some of these may have already been tested out, or will be explored during project delivery this funding period.
15	Significant detail provided about plans beyond this funding period to continue project delivery and ensure ongoing impact on behaviour change. Robust development plans are in place to make activities fully sustainable and/or impact will be ensured through allocation of core organisational resources.

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:

- Grants under this fund will be in the range of **£5,000 - £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.
- Unless by prior agreement, grant funds must be claimed in arrears at the end of each quarter. Payment will only be made on production of satisfactory evidence of expenditure and project progress.
- SEStran will require quarterly project progress meetings and reports over the duration of the project.

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.

Eligible sustainable travel projects should include at least one of the following elements:

- Shared transport (such as introduction or expansion of car clubs, bike and e-bike share schemes, as well as car share/lift-share)
- (Digital) Demand Responsive Transport schemes
- Mobility Hubs (full and pop-up)
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) provision
- Support for MaaS project roles

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. Examples of revenue expenditure would be costs associated with activities, events or engagement initiatives, training sessions, promotional / marketing activities, staff costs, etc.

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 asset. Examples of capital expenditure would be purchase of cycles, cycling facilities, bike maintenance tools, etc.

Additional information on eligibility criteria

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 project 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.