



NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2017 GUIDELINES

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1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) supports projects that bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The SDF is intended to develop and test new ways of achieving a more sustainable way of life in this area of great beauty and diversity. Funding is provided by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who aim to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

These Guidelines are to help you complete the [Expression of Interest](#) and Application Forms successfully. You are advised to read them before you start and if you are uncertain about any of the questions on the form Contact the SDF Co-ordinator by telephone: 01488 685440 or e-mail: info@northwessexdowns.org.uk.

Please note; the Sustainable Development Fund Panel reserves the right to make changes to criteria or guidance at any time.

2. Criteria for eligibility (Core Criteria);

- ❖ All projects must have a positive impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB, by demonstrating best practice or presenting imaginative ideas for achieving sustainability.
- ❖ Projects must assist in the delivery of one or more objectives from the current North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. You can view and download the Management Plan at www.northwessexdowns.org.uk, or call 01488 685440 to order a copy.
- ❖ All projects should be located in the North Wessex Downs AONB, or demonstrate a clear benefit to the landscape of, or people working or living in the AONB.
- ❖ Projects should show evidence of widespread consultation with local communities and relevant partners where possible.

Suggestions for adding value to your project (Desirable Criteria);

We would hope to see some of the following aims included in your application. A summary of projects we have previously supported through the Sustainable Development Fund can be found at www.northwessexdowns.org.uk.

- Raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the unique qualities and sensitivities of the North Wessex Downs among the general public and specific communities associated with the project. Interpret and celebrate to a wide audience the natural and cultural wealth of the North Wessex Downs, including the role of land management in shaping and conserving the landscape.
- Bring organisations and people together to co-operate to tackle problems or promote new ideas. Demonstrate innovation and/or best practice and add value or new dimensions to existing projects.
- Encourage more people to interact with the natural environment of the North Wessex Downs to improve their well-being.
- Help to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs as expressed in the Management Plan – this includes geology, soils, water, wildlife, heritage and dark skies, as well as qualitative aspects like tranquillity.
- Promote sustainable use of the natural environment. This can include ways in which sustainable energy schemes can be adopted to cut greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the impact of climate change.
- Encourage greater participation by people of all ages, combat social exclusion and promote diversity. Encourage links between urban communities and those living or working in the North Wessex Downs.

3. What the SDF can fund

- Project materials, equipment and implementation
- Events and activities to raise awareness of the landscape
- Establishing new groups to conserve and enhance the landscape
- Publicity and marketing
- Labour and contractors' costs

A Budget and a Project Workplan must be submitted with the Application Form so that it is clear what the SDF grant will be used for and how the project will be carried out.

The SDF grant cannot be used to fund capital schemes such as the purchase of land or buildings, or schemes which deliver a commercial benefit to the organisation running the project.

In all cases an agreement setting out what is required for satisfactory completion of the project will need to be signed prior to receipt of the grant.

4. Who can apply?

- Community and voluntary groups, and groups working in partnership*
- The private sector
- Local authorities and public bodies
- Charities
- Businesses

You don't have to live or work within the North Wessex Downs AONB to apply. Applicants are welcome to submit more than one application. However, the panel will not normally fund the same project more than once.

*this may include partnership projects supported or led by the North Wessex Downs AONB.

5. How much money may be available?

There is a streamlined assessment process for grants below £1,000, while the average grant awarded is currently between £1,000 and £3,000. Larger grants may be considered at the discretion of the Panel in the case of exceptional projects.

The SDF grant will normally be not more than 75% of total project expenditure or 50% for local authority projects.

We expect to see matched contributions from third party sources. These may include non-cash sources such as in-kind contributions and volunteer time **at the discretion of the Panel.**

In such cases, Volunteer time is valued at £50 per day or £6.25 per hour. Specialist, technical or professional volunteers are valued at £100 per day or £12.50 per hour (evidence of specialist expertise should be provided).

6. How to apply for the SDF grant

If you think that your projects meets the required criteria then follow these steps:

- ❖ Fill in the short, on-line [Expression of Interest Form](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk) on the SDF pages at www.northwessexdowns.org.uk . When you have completed it press **Submit**. The information you supply to will be considered by the Director and the SDF Co-ordinator, and you may be contacted by telephone or e-mail if they have any questions.
- ❖ Expression of Interest forms submitted on-line will normally be considered within two weeks. Applicants will be notified by e-mail whether they have passed this first assessment and given a unique application link to access the form on-line.
- ❖ Please include a description of your project, details regarding your organisation and a breakdown of costs. You can attach any relevant documents as detailed in section 10, below.
- ❖ You are recommended complete the form on-line and save a copy as a PDF or Word Document. Remember to save the form until you return to continue editing. Once you are happy with your application, press **Submit**. After this point you will not be able to make further changes to the application.
- ❖ Application forms submitted on-line are usually made available to the Grant Panel within five working days of submission. The Panel's assessment process is rapid, but in some cases

can take up to three weeks. We may need to contact you for more information to help the Grant Panel reach its decision.

- ❖ The Expression of Interest and Application Forms are available in hard copy for applicants who do not have access to the Internet. Please contact the SDF Co-ordinator and a form will be sent to you.

All applications are considered by the Sustainable Development Fund Grant Panel, appointed by the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Grant Panel will award grants from April onwards in each financial year.

Work funded by the SDF grant should be completed in the same financial year and the grant claimed by 31 March at the very latest. We will ask you to complete a brief Monitoring Report and provide evidence of publicity and project outputs upon completion.

7. Expression of Interest Form

To help you complete the [Expression of Interest Form](#), please read these Guidance Notes.

The contact details should be for the person who will be the main contact for the project. The address should be the permanent home or work address for that person. If this is not possible for any reason, please contact the SDF Co-ordinator for advice.

Give us in no more than 250 words the following information:

- The objectives of your project
- Who will benefit from it
- How it will meet the core and desirable grant criteria
- The location of the project

We need to know the likely start and end dates of the project or phase of project that you are seeking funding for.

We need to know the location of your project to ensure that it is within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

8. Full Application Form

To help you complete the Application Form, please read these Guidance Notes.

It is important to be clear who will benefit from your project, in what ways they will derive that benefit, and how long you expect the beneficial effects to last. The long-term aims of the project must be clear in the application. We would also like to know how your project will enable the beneficiaries to have a better understanding of the North Wessex Downs, and the role of sustainable development.

Your project must fulfill the core criteria and also one or more of the desirable criteria. Successful projects will have the demonstrable support or involvement of communities – these can be geographically based, e.g. a village, or communities of interest or work, e.g. a youth network or group of farmers.

Describe how your project will meet any of the suggestions for adding value, as described above.

We would like to know about any particular social groups involved in your project, and how you will engage them.

Project Budget and Workplan

You must submit a Budget and a Project Workplan – only for the project or phase of project for which you are seeking a grant.

Please note that our procurement guidelines require that you supply a minimum of one quote for items under £500, two quotes for items costing between £501 - £5,000 and three quotes for items above £5,001.

The Accountable Body

This is the organisation that will be responsible to the North Wessex Downs AONB for the receipt and use of the grant, and for the implementation of the project. The North Wessex Downs AONB can enter into a funding agreement only with a legal body capable of meeting the debts and other liabilities of the project and the conditions attached to the payment of public money.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Body include:

- Signing the Acceptance Form
- Being able to provide proof of the project's expenditure [e.g. invoices/receipts etc]
- Having in place effective approval, monitoring and financial systems
- Notifying North Wessex Downs AONB SDF Co-ordinator of any changes to the work for which the SDF grant is made
- Providing access to documents and records for inspections and audits
- Submitting press releases and any other publicity and promotional materials to the SDF Grant Co-ordinator by e-mail for approval before distribution. This process should take no more than a one day turn around
- Distributing information about the North Wessex Downs AONB during the project. We can provide you with publications, images and maps as required
- Submitting progress and end of project Monitoring Reports to North Wessex Downs AONB SDF Co-ordinator by agreed dates.

9. Publicity

Project applicants should identify potential publicity opportunities including press releases, launch events or photographs of volunteer activity.

The North Wessex Downs AONB reserves the right to approve, in advance, any publicity material in connection with the SDF grant, to be released to the media or published on the Internet.

Please send your material to the North Wessex Downs AONB SDF Co-ordinator on e-mail: info@northwessexdowns.org.uk. Failure to do so may result in you having to pay back the grant.

10. Checklist for applicants

Before submitting your full application form, please check that you have the following, if relevant.

- A copy of your constitution, or legal status
- Evidence of consultation with local people and/or letters of support from stated partners.
- Project plan detailing timescale and milestones for proposed activity.
- Site photos, plans or designs.
- A budget and minimum of one quote for items under £500, two quotes for items costing between £501 - £5,000 and three quotes for items above £5,001.
- Evidence of match funding and volunteer support

For advice before making an application please contact the SDF Co-ordinator by telephone: 01488 685440 or e-mail: info@northwessexdowns.org.uk