



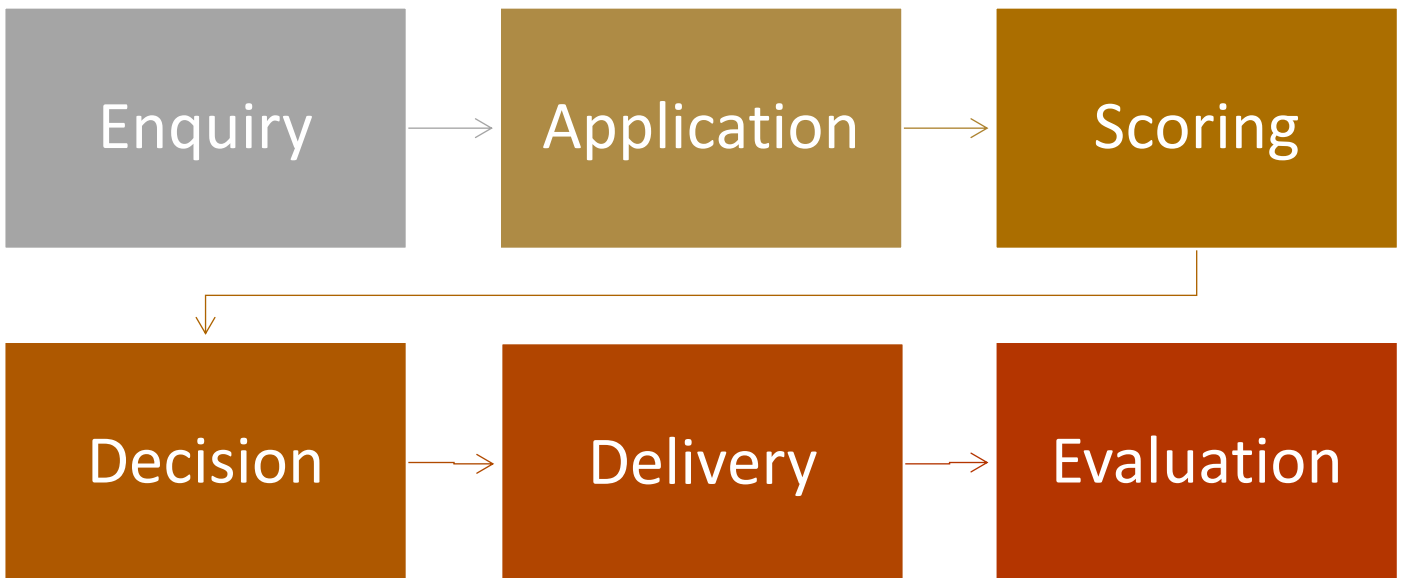
**North Wessex  
Downs  
National  
Landscape**

North Wessex Downs National Landscape  
Units 3 and 4  
Denford Manor  
Lower Denford  
Hungerford  
Berks RG17 0UN

## North Wessex Downs Access for All Fund 2025 Guidance to Applicants

### Enquiry

Thank you for expressing interest in applying for the North Wessex Downs Access for All Fund. We have registered your enquiry along with the information you kindly provided. We are keen for you to develop this project and apply to the fund. The chart below presents the steps in the application process, which we will detail further in this document. Submitting an enquiry and having the application form shared with you does not guarantee funding. You mustn't commence the project unless funding has been approved and you have received a written offer.



## **The Access for All Fund**

Access for All funding is for physical and digital infrastructure improvements to make protected landscapes more accessible for people of all ages and abilities and from all socio-economic backgrounds, to make them what the Glover Review called “places for everyone.”

Spend must improve public access to and within the protected landscape and should serve the broader interests of the Grant Recipient and their communities.

Funds could be spent, for example on private land, or on paths outside but leading into the protected landscape.

The funding is for capital spend only.

Staff time that is directly attributable to creation of an asset can be capitalised.

There is no match funding requirement.

## **Application**

The North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NWDNL) Access for All Fund application form has been shared with you. Please complete this application, including explaining how the project will achieve its stated outcomes.

## **Overall Aim**

Please tell us how your project will meet the following (all projects must meet the first of these; please also provide details of how your project will also meet the Management Plan strategic objectives and policies where applicable):

### **1. The Access for All Fund’s overall aim:**

*Physical and digital infrastructure improvements to make our protected landscapes more accessible for people of all ages and abilities and from all socio-economic backgrounds, to make them what the Glover Review called “places for everyone.”*

### **2. Relevant North Wessex Downs National Landscape Strategic Objectives:**

**S.22** Assist the development of connectivity, based on principles of planning and integrating multi-functional Green Infrastructure assets, from neighbouring urban areas, facilitating active and sustainable access to the AONB to make it easier for these communities to experience and benefit from the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs.

**S.23** Facilitate opportunities for more people of all abilities to access and enjoy the North Wessex Downs that respect and promote the special qualities of the area and its setting.

### **3. Relevant North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan Policies:**

**TLA 05** Promote greater accessibility to the North Wessex Downs for users of all abilities for quiet enjoyment and improved health and wellbeing.

**TLA 06** Encourage the provision of easily accessible information regarding access to and around the North Wessex Downs by public transport.

**TLA 07** With relevant partners, identify and promote signs – or other ways of indicating to visitors that they are in the North Wessex Downs – that do not conflict with AONB purposes.

**TLA 11** Work with local authorities, Local Access Forums and others to manage and improve the network of public rights of way, ensuring that relevant plans for development and delivery of access to the area take full account of the local distinctiveness, character and quality of the North Wessex Downs and its setting.

**TLA 12** Support efforts by user groups to promote and encourage responsible use of rights of way, including byways, consistent with AONB purposes.

**TLA 13** Encourage the creation and maintenance of new permissive and definitive routes that link existing routes and enable recreational walkers, cyclists, riders and carriage-drivers to avoid busy roads.

**TLA 14** Identify spinal and circular routes to be promoted in AONB publicity that are supported by the recreation and tourism infrastructure e.g. bicycle hire, farmhouse B&B/bunk barns and recreational bus links.

**TLA 15** Support increased provision and management of accessible greenspace and the promotion of new and existing recreational opportunities in line with AONB purposes.

### **DEFRA Outcomes Reporting**

DEFRA has identified a list of outcomes for protected landscapes to report against under the Fund. These are:

- Metres of accessible path
- Number of disabled toilets and rest stops
- Number of accessible gates and gaps
- Number of visits facilitated by new equipment
- Number of volunteer days facilitated by new equipment

- Number of accessible or easy access routes for which wayfinding (physical or digital) has been created or improved.

The application form asks you to estimate how your project will contribute towards these outcomes. If your application is successful, following completion of your project we will be asking you to provide information on any of these outcomes that are applicable. **Please therefore include in your application the costs of any required equipment that will reasonably be required to gather this information.** For example, if your project provides more accessible access on existing or new routes, you may need to install a counter to measure the number of users following completion. These costs are eligible under the Fund on the condition that applicants agree to share the data gathered with the NWDNL Partnership and DEFRA.

## Consents and Permissions

Before you apply for your project, you must make sure that you have obtained all the consents and permissions required. You are responsible for arranging all relevant consents, permissions, exemptions and written advice needed for your application. You will not be offered an agreement without all the necessary consents and permissions being in place.

## Assessment Process

In order to assess whether an application will deliver sufficient benefit to be supported, it will be judged against the assessment criteria below.

The scoring process looks at four criteria:

- a) Project outcomes
- b) Value for money
- c) Sustainability / legacy of projects
- d) Ability to deliver

## Scoring

The North Wessex Downs AONB Unit will score all applications according to these criteria. The appropriate score will be attributed for each criterion and the scores combined at the end to provide an aggregate score. Each criterion will be given one of the following scores:

- 2: not satisfactory/not demonstrated
- 4: partially satisfactory/one or more significant gaps in demonstration
- 6: satisfactory/some demonstration
- 8: good/ shows good levels of assurance and demonstration
- 10: excellence/shows high levels of assurance and demonstration

The criteria are as follows along with their weighting:

- a) **Project outcomes** (40%)

Projects will be scored according to how well they:

- i. make clear how the project outcomes will be achieved and how these contribute to the overall Fund aim;
- ii. make a clear link to the relevant North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan Strategic Objectives and policies; and
- iii. outline an effective proposal to monitor success.

**b) Value for Money (20%)**

This includes demonstrating an efficient use of resources and cost-reasonableness. A well-rounded application should demonstrate that the project will deliver value for money. Where projects demonstrate the use of match funding in delivery, they should be scored more highly for Value for Money. Projects which deliver value for money should:

- i. demonstrate efficient use of resources by outlining their costs in detail and providing evidence in support of those costs; and
- ii. show cost-reasonableness via the presentation of comparable quotations or projects.

**c) Sustainability / legacy of projects (20%)**

This includes demonstrating that benefits could be maintained once the programme funding concludes and may include the likelihood of behaviour change and increased capacity, as well as more tangible measures. The longevity of projects should be considered and rewarded where well demonstrated. Projects which show clear links to sustainability should:

- i. demonstrate that benefits will be maintained once the capital expenditure has been completed;
- ii. demonstrate a holistic and/or a collaborative approach; and
- iii. outline commitments or plans to ensure legacy and sustainability.

**d) Ability to deliver (20%)**

This includes demonstrating the capability to deliver in the time required. Well-developed applications should make clear how the project will be delivered, taking into account the resources required and time available for the project to be delivered. Projects should score highly for project outcomes if they:

Projects should score highly for project outcomes if they:

- i. demonstrate clearly the resources available to enable good delivery;
- ii. demonstrate a clear capability to deliver in the time required; and
- iii. show a clear understanding of the roles of those involved in the project.

Projects will not be supported unless they achieve a score of at least 6 against each criterion to achieve the baseline minimum. This will ensure that all projects deliver a meaningful and worthwhile outcome. The assessment uses a pre-weighted formula with the weighting shown above. The scores are aggregated and a final score produced.

### **Decision**

All the applications scoring the necessary points will be compiled and prioritised according to their score and the judgement of the AONB Unit. Funding will be allocated accordingly. Expert input will be requested where necessary. All applicants will be sent a decision letter. Where successful the decision letter will include the conditions of funding. The applicant will need to sign and return this document. Once it has been signed in turn by the Director of the AONB (or his nominee), the project can commence.

### **Delivery**

Once the applicant has received the decision letter signed by themselves and the Director of the NWDNL (or his nominee) in return, the grant will be issued. 50% of funds will be provided in advance of the project commencing (or within a fortnight of the signed issue letter having been received by the NWDNL Unit).

Upon completion of the project, the applicant should notify the AONB Unit by emailing [Jemima.sellwood@northwessexdowns.org.uk](mailto:Jemima.sellwood@northwessexdowns.org.uk) The AONB Unit will issue a claim form for the remaining 50% of the grant.

**All projects must be delivered in full by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.** Failure to do so will result in the NWDNL having to request the return of the grant.

### **Evaluation**

All the applicants, by agreeing to this fund, are committing to be part of the evaluation process. This will be undertaken by officers of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to assess whether the project has been delivered as agreed, to understand deviations from the plan and why they have been made. The team will seek to report the impact of the funds according to the criteria outlined in the application form.

Furthermore, the AONB will seek to publicise the various projects supported by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Access For All Fund on various platforms. We would appreciate your collaboration in promoting the project, the AONB and the impact.