



Amenity and Accessibility Fund

Helping people enjoy and improve their local environment

Funding Criteria and Guidance Notes for Applicants 2025-2026

Contents

- 1 Overview & Background
 - 2 The Fund and its Management
 - 3 Geographical Area for the Amenity and Accessibility Fund (AAF)
-

- 4 Amenity and Accessibility Fund Objectives
 - 5 Essential Criteria and AAFG Priorities
 - 6 Desirable Criteria
-

- 7 Who can apply
 - 8 Grant Conditions & Budget
 - 9 Grant Management
 - 10 Payment of Grant
-

- 11 Monitoring
- 12 Promotion and Publicity
- 13 Application Forms
- 14 Links

1 Overview & Background

Important dates

- Closing date for applications to be received: 3rd March 2025
- Project delivery and completion: April 2025 to 12th March 2026

Before you complete the Application Form, it is essential to check that your project benefits the fund area. If your project does not benefit the fund area it will not be eligible to receive a grant (Section 3 Geographic eligibility) .

Complete all sections of the Application Form or there may be insufficient information for the Panel to make a fully informed decision on your proposal.

The National Landscape will acknowledge receipt of the application, inform you of when the Panel will meet and contact you after the Panel Meeting to inform you of the outcome.

To offset the impact caused by the delay of the release of that part of the Sizewell B site which will accommodate the consented Dry Fuel Store, EDF Energy, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council (now East Suffolk Council) agreed, in 2012, to establish an Amenity and Accessibility Fund.

The objectives of the Fund are to improve the amenity and accessibility of the Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now branded, and referred to from hereon, as the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape) and Suffolk Heritage Coast within the locality of the Sizewell B site and its wider environs.

EDF Energy has a strong track record of behaving respectfully towards the environment. Locally, Sizewell B has won a biodiversity benchmark for the positive way the company has managed the National Landscape in partnership with Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Nationally, EDF Energy launched Team Green Britain in 2009 to help deliver their mission of bringing sustainable, low-carbon solutions home to everyone.

Background: During 2009 a consultation was held with local people about how to manage spent fuel at Sizewell B. At the time, spent fuel from Sizewell B's reactor was stored in a fuel storage pond, which was expected to provide capacity until 2015. A new solution was required for after this date or until a national repository is made available. The Government's Committee for Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is looking at how this might be achieved but has indicated this repository will not be ready for many years. As Sizewell B is due to operate until 2035, with the possibility of life extension beyond that, EDF needed a suitable plan for managing spent fuel from 2015 onwards.

Following thorough consultation and rigorous technical investigations, the construction of a Dry Fuel Store (DFS) was selected as the best solution. A Dry Fuel Store is a mature technology, tried and tested all over the world. It has been constructed on Sizewell B land and was ready for operation in 2016.

2 The Fund and its Management

The Fund is managed by the Amenity and Accessibility Funding Group (AAFG) made up of a representative from EDF, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council, and an Advisor from Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape.

The AAFG will be responsible for the identification of projects to improve the amenity and accessibility of the National Landscape and Heritage Coast within the locality of the DFS and its wider environs. Funds will be held by Suffolk County Council, and administered by Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape.

The Fund benefited from an initial one off payment of £120,000 made by EDF Energy when the DFS construction started, and then receives further annual payments by EDF of £20,000 for a period of 60 years or until the date of the commencement of decommissioning of the DFS. The Fund rolls over and any unallocated funds are included in the following year. In 2024-2025 the total Amenity & Accessibility Fund available will be at least £20,000.

What the Amenity and Accessibility Fund funds:

The Fund supports a wide range of costs, essentially, everything that is needed to complete (or develop) a project, that falls within the criteria of the grant, may be funded. The following list is not all encompassing but gives examples of what costs the AAF may support: capital works, practical work, events, activities, training, equipment, materials, technology, interpretation, planting, publicity, contract work, professional services or staff time.

What makes a strong project?

Please see the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape website for summaries of past funded projects and to read case studies. Successful applications clearly demonstrate benefits to the National Landscape and strongly meet the Criteria of the Fund. Recommended reading about the vision of National Landscapes may be found in Links Section 14

The Government commissioned Landscapes Review of National Landscapes and National Parks (2019) identified the need to engage with a broader range of society in delivering National Landscape purpose. The National Landscapes are committed to equality of opportunities to access the AAF and seek to attract applications from the widest range of society possible.

Projects funded by the AAF will share the vision for a sustainable future, as summarised in the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Management Plan and pledged in The Colchester Declaration (2019 The National Association for National Landscapes).

3 Geographical Area for the Amenity and Accessibility Fund (AAF)

The geographical area for the AAF is defined primarily by the National Landscape boundary, and then by a boundary of the north bank of the River Deben in the south and the south bank of the River Blyth in the north. Please see the AAF map for further details. <https://coastandheaths-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/brizy/imgs/AAF-map-scaled-1110x1572x0x0x1110x1572x1716308125.jpg>

Applicants may come from within or outside the Fund area. Projects need not necessarily come from, or be based in, the Fund area. However, projects must meet the Criteria of the Fund to further the conservation and enhancement of the Fund area. An award may be made to a project located outside of the Fund area where benefit is seen to be achieved for/within the Fund area, for example (but not limited to) projects that benefits transient wildlife or enhances landscape views from the Fund area.

4 Amenity and Accessibility Fund Objectives

The AAF objectives are primarily those of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape, with additional objectives specifically about amenity and accessibility.

Projects must demonstrate that they will deliver specific actions or objectives identified within the current, and subsequent, National Landscape Management Plan for the area (available from www.coastandheaths-nl.org.uk or on request), and by fulfilling amenity and accessibility objectives.

The statutory purpose of National Landscapes is:

- To conserve and enhance natural beauty

In addition, the 1991 Policy Statement on National Landscapes identifies three related purposes:

- Recreation ('the demand for recreation should be met insofar as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty')
- Socio-economic ('account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries, and the economic and social needs of local communities')
- Sustainable development ('particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment')

Amenity and Accessibility Fund objectives:

Amenity projects shall seek to offset the impact caused by the delay of the release of part of the site, and include:

- Projects that improve the environment, natural character and/or sense of place of the area
- Projects that improve the visual appearance of the area and thereby increase the enjoyment and experience of the National Landscape for residents and visitors.
- Projects that conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty (the principal statutory purpose of the National Landscape).

Accessibility projects shall seek to offset the impact caused by the delay of the release of part of the site, and include:

- Projects that improve sustainable access to the area, within the locality of the DFS developments and its wider environs.
- They may also include projects that improve peoples' intellectual access to the area, for example through the production of interpretation materials.

5 Essential Criteria and AAFG Priorities

The AAFG is particularly keen to encourage projects that are pertinent to its key priorities. Preference will therefore be given to projects that cover one or all of the following:

- Conservation of landscape character and enhance the distinctive nature of the National Landscape
- Conservation of biodiversity and lessen fragmentation of habitats
- Conservation of the historic resources of the area including landscapes and the built environment
- Conservation of the geodiversity of the area
- Provision and enhance of access and recreation provision
- Provision of interpretation that improves understanding, guides behaviour and helps people enjoy the National Landscape

It will also be useful for applicants to consider how their project meets sustainable development objectives within the National Landscape:

Does your proposed project help conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape and the AAF area?	
Economic sustainability:	
Does it	Help the local economy in some way? Generate its own income? Attract other contributions? Generate new or safeguard existing employment?
Social sustainability:	
Does it	Develop community infrastructure? Provide training or build community capacity to tackle things? Provide new or improved local services? Allow/ improve access for a wide spectrum of society? Have support or involvement of local communities?
Environmental sustainability:	
Does it	Help biodiversity and/or sustain distinctive landscapes? Protect natural resources? Involve reducing, recycling, or reusing materials? Minimise adverse transport aspects?

Whilst the project does not have to bring equal benefit to all strands, there should be an element of help for each aspect, or certainly no adverse impact. Sustainable development is about the wise use of resources and avoids the exploitation of one strand to the detriment of the others.

6 Desirable Criteria

A key aim of the scheme is to mitigate the impact of the DFS and thereby to support communities in ways that enhance understanding of amenity and accessibility of the area, while promoting co-operation and social inclusion. Preference will therefore be given to projects that cover some or all of the following:

Demonstration of innovation or best practice
Promotion of or help implement social inclusion
Actively involve members of the community
Provide benefit to the public
Involvement or encouragement of partnership working
Complementary to key local and national strategies
Involvement of young people
Has little or no access to alternative funding sources
Lever in contributions from other sources
Provide potential PR for project and the National Landscape

This is not a comprehensive list and other activities could qualify for a grant.

7 Who can apply

- The Fund is open to organisations or groups from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors from within or outside the National Landscape, where projects benefit the Fund area.
- Whilst applications from individuals are not precluded, there needs to be wider public benefit and it is expected that in most cases applications will be submitted on behalf of organisations or groups of people.
- Applicants need not necessarily come from, or be based in, the National Landscape. However, projects must further the amenity and accessibility of the National Landscape.

- Applicants need to have a bank account for full grant payment to be invoiced from and paid into. If this is not possible, the applicant may request (on the Application Form) to nominate a partner organisation to provide a bank account for project purposes.

8 Grant Conditions & Budget

Applications will be assessed by the AAFG. They will look at the above AAFG objectives and criteria to judge how well the proposed project meets those aspirations. The AAFG will favour projects that really grasp the concept of amenity and accessibility, and have demonstrated how they are trying to meet the criteria and priorities of the National Landscape. The AAFG may advise that an offer is made for less than the full amount requested. They may also give guidance to the National Landscape Advisor to discuss certain aspects of the project with the applicant to clarify details before they give their final advice.

Including overheads in your budget: Up to 20% of the project value may be grant support of overhead costs e.g. staff and office costs. Panels usually expect to fund project activity. Panels recognise that projects need resources to deliver them. Panels anticipate seeing overhead costs, such as staff and office costs as part of match funding, so showing up in the income and expenditure elements of the budget. In most cases the Panel will consider supporting staff and office costs at 20% of expenditure levels. (i.e. up to 20% of the overall value of the project). In some circumstances, for example where staff are brought in to deliver a particular project the intervention rate may rise to 100% of overhead costs.

Grants are offered for up to 75% of the total project costs/value, however it is beneficial for the Panel to be aware of the added value of projects for communities when considering the application and we advise that you include match funding* in your budget. Up to 100% grant support of project costs will be available in exceptional circumstances where the project is particularly innovative or struggling to find match funding, although in most cases this will require a very clear demonstration of community support

*Match Funding - A contribution from the applicant towards the project budget. This is known as 'match funding' and may include the estimated value of volunteer/staff time, in-kind contributions or other funding secured to enable the project to be completed.

Voluntary and community organisations may be able to use 'in kind' help (e.g. volunteer time or the loan of equipment, premises or land) to form at least part of their matching contribution towards the overall value of the project. The Applicant should calculate 'in kind' contributions and include in the project budget for the Panel to be fully informed in the decision making process.

Volunteer time 'in kind' values for budget presentation table		
Volunteer contribution	Examples	Value per day based on 7.5hr day
Unskilled	Site clearance, tree planting, event steward	£75
Semi-Skilled	event leader, project management, copy for interpretation boards, seeking formal permissions	£150
Professional	Legal, accounting	£375

VAT

If the application is from non VAT registered organisation/body/individual the AAF can fund up to 100% of the gross cost of the project. (i.e. VAT cost can be met by the fund). If the application is from a VAT registered organisation the AAF cannot meet any VAT costs (i.e. use figures excluding VAT).

Budget presentation

It is vital for the Grant Advisory Panel to see the financial details of your project. Please include in your application a detailed breakdown of the expenditure and income of the project. It is important for the Panel to see how the money is likely to be spent. The Panel appreciates that some elements may be hard to cost but it is important that expenditure is not presented under large general headings or that guesses are made about costs. This is to everyone's benefit as it would be sad to find there is not enough money to complete the project when the Panel would have been willing to offer more grant aid to a well thought out application. If estimates must be made, please indicate this on the form.

Below is an example of a table that is useful for the Panel to consider your application. It is a requirement for your budget presentation to be in a similar format, for consistency of information that is presented to the Panel across all applications.

Example Project Budget Presentation		
Expenditure	£	Note
1 interpretation board	1,500	Materials, design and delivery
Drill bits/saw	150	
Bird box kits	200	40 boxes at £5/kit
Staff time	600	4 days @£150 per day
Volunteer time	600	8 days unskilled volunteer time @£75 per day
Total expenditure	3,050	
Income	£	Note
In kind - staff time	600	4 days @£150 per day
In kind - volunteer time	600	8 days unskilled volunteer time @£75 per day
Grant request	1,850	(61% of total project)
Total income	3,050	

9 Grant Management

Applications will be acknowledged within five working days, and applicants will be informed of the date on which the AAFG will consider their application. Applicants may in some instances be asked to provide further information to allow a decision to be taken.

The National Landscape Advisor will undertake a simple eligibility assessment and will often come back to applicants if there is missing information or they feel the project is not eligible. However it is the responsibility of the applicants, not the National Landscape Advisor, to see that they have supplied all the required information.

Applicants will be informed within five working days of the AAFG funding meeting whether their application has been successful, and if so the amount of grant they have been offered. This will be followed up by written confirmation and a formal offer of grant aid for successful applicants. This will normally include certain conditions regarding what the grant is supporting, accepting the offer of grant within a certain period, the evidence required to prove the project has been completed that will need to accompany the claim for the grant.

10 Payment of Grant

Projects must wait to begin publicity and delivery of the project until the formal offer letter has been received.

Applicants are responsible for management and delivery of all elements of the project, including payment of project costs and safety. All necessary permissions and procedures for the safe delivery of the project must in place. Your delivery must not conflict with any Government or other statutory body advice.

The payment of the grant will be dependent on the submission of relevant records (e.g. receipted invoices) as detailed in the grant offer letter or agreed in writing subsequently with the applicants.

Grants are usually paid in arrears, on successful completion of the project and a final monitoring report, and are paid on receipt of an invoice addressed to the Fund. A case can be made with the application, or exceptionally when returning the acceptance of the grant offer, for money to be released up front – i.e. before the project is started. This is to help with issues of cash flow for smaller organisations and is unlikely to be more than 50% of the grant offer. Confirmation of receipt of other funds is also required (where relevant).

If the application is from non VAT registered organisation/body/individual the AAF can fund up to 75% of the gross cost of the project. (i.e. VAT cost can be met by the Fund). If the application is from a VAT registered organisation the AAF cannot meet any VAT costs (i.e. use figures excluding VAT).

Unless otherwise agreed in writing all projects must be completed by the following March (i.e. grants must be completed by the end of the financial year).

11 Monitoring and Publicity

The National Landscape Advisor will monitor the progress of projects and may, if required, carry out site inspections. If this monitoring highlights difficulties with the project there may be the need for discussion and negotiation. It is the desired intention to help all projects reach a satisfactory conclusion, but the AAFG will wish to safeguard the wise and legitimate use of the Fund.

Monitoring

Monitoring forms are required mid-year and are a necessary part of the feedback to the AAFG.

For the final claim, the National Landscape must receive an End of Grant Monitoring Form and a short Final Report by 12th March 2025 to be emailed to grants@suffolkandessex-nl.org.uk. The Final Report (approx. 1 page) should include general information about the project such as:

- An overview of achievements, including measures of success
- How AAF conditions were met - outline the main benefits of the project to the National Landscape i.e. landscape, environmental, social, economic and access enhancements.
- Any difficulties encountered/learning points
- Number of people involved (e.g. volunteers/visitors/those using service).
- Number of events held (if applicable).
- Any feedback or quotes from participants that the AAF Panel and the National Landscape has permission to use in its own promotions

The final claim must also include project documentation as follows:-

- An invoice to the National Landscape for the grant payment
- Evidence to support your final claim such as:
 - final project budget summary
 - supporting evidence for expenditure e.g. receipts
 - evidence of publicity achieved by the project
 - at least two electronic photos of the project that the AAF Panel and the National Landscape has permission to use in its own promotions

12 Promotion and Publicity

The AAFG reserve the right to use any material submitted for publicity purposes.

'The Amenity and Accessibility Fund' must be acknowledged on all completed projects and mentioned in all press releases and publicity material relating to projects.

Projects must comply with the Publicity Guidance for Grant Funded Projects. This document provides guidance on:-

- Publicity conditions and expectations of the Amenity and Accessibility Fund
- Acknowledgement of your grant award
- Mandatory use of Fund logos
- Proof-reading by the National Landscape Team of project materials/publicity before release
- Use of digital platforms
- Planning and delivery of project communications
- Support available to your project from the National Landscape Team

For further guidance on publicity requirements and support available from the National Landscape Team please see the 'Publicity Guidance for Grant Funded Projects'

13 Application Forms

Completed applications (preferably typed, or if not, clearly written in dark ink) should be submitted on the Amenity and Accessibility Fund application form, by midnight on 3rd March 2025.

Submission by e mail is encouraged: grants@suffolkandessex-NL.org.uk

National Landscape Grants Officer
Amenity and Accessibility Fund
c/o Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape
National Landscape Office
1 Whittle Road
Saxon House
Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate
Ipswich
IP2 0UF
Tel: 01394 445225

14 Links

For more about applying to the AAF and other National Landscape grant giving programmes:

Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Management Plan

<https://coastandheaths-nl.org.uk/managing/management-plan/>

National Association for National Landscapes Colchester Declaration

<https://national-landscapes.org.uk/the-colchester-declaration>

The Landscapes Review of National Landscapes and National Parks (the Glover Review)

<https://coastandheaths-nl.org.uk/managing/reference-library/landscapes-review/>

Oka Last Jan 2024