

Sustainable Economy Fund

Applicant Guidance Notes – October 2026

About the Fund

The Sustainable Economy Fund provides grants of up to £5,000 for projects that deliver clear economic benefits within Stroud district. Projects may also deliver social and environmental benefits, but applicants should demonstrate how their project will support a stronger, more sustainable local economy.

The fund is open to businesses, charities, community organisations, social enterprises, councils and education providers delivering impactful projects within Stroud district. We are looking for creative and innovative projects taking place across the district that support one or more of the following themes:

- Green & Inclusive Economy
- People & Skills
- Investment & Enterprise
- Sustainable Tourism, Market Towns & Villages
- Rural Enterprise & Infrastructure

The Council welcomes projects that support skills development, employability, enterprise, mentoring, work experience and pathways into employment for young people.

Before You Apply

Please make sure that:

- Your project will be delivered within Stroud district.
- The project has not already started.
- Any required permissions or approvals are in place.
- You can complete the project by 31 October 2027.
- You are able to provide the information requested in the [application form](#).
- You have a UK bank account in the name of the applicant organisation or business.

Who Can Apply?

- Sole traders*
- Start-up businesses*
- Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs)
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Charities
- Constituted voluntary and community organisations
- Social enterprises
- Cooperatives and mutual organisations
- Town and parish councils
- Schools, colleges, universities and training providers
- Partnerships led by an eligible organisation

* Sole traders and start-up businesses (trading for less than two years) may apply for Tier 1 grants of up to £2,000 only. Applicants should provide information about their business, customers and growth plans within the application form. We may request further information during the assessment process.

Partnership applications are welcome. If applying as a partnership, one organisation must act as the lead applicant and receive the grant on behalf of the project.

Organisations based outside Stroud district may apply, provided the project is delivered within Stroud district and will benefit the local economy.

Grant Payments

- Successful applicants must have a UK business or organisational bank account in the name of the applicant organisation
- Grant payments cannot be made to personal bank accounts
- The account details provided must match the legal name of the applicant organisation
- Grants under £1,000 will be paid in a single payment
- Grants over £1,000 will normally be paid 60% in advance and 40% following satisfactory evidence of project delivery
- We will send a purchase order. Grants will be paid on receipt of a valid invoice from the applicant, and on receipt of a signed grant agreement.

How Much Can I Apply For?

Grant Tier	Grant Amount
Tier 1	Up to £2,000
Tier 2	£2,001 - £5,000

Match funding is welcomed but is not required.

Grants to businesses may constitute a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Applicants may be required to provide additional information to demonstrate compliance.

What Can be Funded?

Funding can support both capital and revenue costs where they are directly related to the project and demonstrate a clear economic benefit.

This may include:

- Equipment, machinery and specialist tools
- Training equipment and facilities
- Digital technology and innovation
- Workspace and facility improvements
- Enterprise and business development
- Tourism and visitor economy projects
- Community enterprise initiatives
- Employability, skills and training projects

A separate Example Projects document is available on the webpage to provide further guidance and inspiration.

What Cannot be Funded?

The fund cannot support:

- Day-to-day operating costs or business-as-usual activities
- Retrospective expenditure
- Vehicle purchases or fuel costs
- Loan repayments
- Accredited courses or qualifications
- General consumable items
- VAT (where recoverable)
- Organisations in financial difficulty
- Projects without required permissions or approval

Planning Permission and Property Ownership

If your project requires planning permission, all necessary permissions must be in place before you submit your application. Applications for projects requiring planning permission that has not yet been granted will not be eligible for funding. If you are unsure whether planning permission is required, you should seek advice before applying. Information on planning permission and pre-application advice is available on the Stroud District Council Planning and Building Control webpages.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary permissions and consents are in place. Eligibility checks will be carried out as part of the assessment process.

Applicants seeking funding for capital improvements to buildings or land must either own the property or have sufficient security of tenure to demonstrate that the benefits of the investment will remain with the business or organisation for a reasonable period.

Where the applicant does not own the property, they will normally be expected to demonstrate a long-term lease or tenancy arrangement and provide written consent from the property owner or landlord before funding can be awarded.

How To Apply

Applications can be submitted using the Sustainable Economy Fund [online application form](#). Paper copies will also be available from Ebley Mill Reception and the Stroud Growth Hub.

Applicants will need to provide information about:

- Their organisation
- Their project
- Project costs
- Expected outcomes and benefits

If you require the application form in an alternative format, or need support to complete an application, please contact the Economic Development Team before applying. Most applications take around 20–30 minutes to complete, provided you have the necessary project information available.

Fund Timetable

Round	Applications Open	Deadline
Round 1	16 October 2026	22 November 2026
Round 2	2 April 2027	16 May 2027

All funded projects must be completed by 31 October 2027. Final project reports must be submitted by 30 November 2027.

How Applications Are Assessed

Applications will be assessed against:

- Alignment with fund priorities
- Economic impact
- Environmental impact
- Community benefit
- Deliverability
- Value for money
- Long-term sustainability

Applications will first be checked for eligibility and assessed against the published criteria. Following this initial assessment, Applicants may be contacted and asked to provide further information or supporting documents before a final funding decision is made. This may include quotations, business plans, evidence of permissions or consents, proof of match funding, or other information relevant to the project.

This is a competitive grant programme. Due to limited funding, meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee a grant award.

If Your Application Is Successful

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Enter into a grant agreement before funding is released.
- Deliver the project as approved.
- Acknowledge support from Stroud District Council.
- Provide project monitoring information and a final report.
- All grant recipients are required to host a visit from SDC officers and to acknowledge the funding in promotion and on social media.

Need Help?

If you are unsure whether your project is eligible, please contact the Economic Development Team before applying. Email: economic.development@stroud.gov.uk