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Sustainable Steps Wales – Action Grants

# Land and Buildings Guidance & Checklist

For projects applying for £10,000 or more



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# Introduction

We want to help more communities in Wales take action to address climate change and live in a more sustainable way.

This guidance is for organisations applying for a grant of £10,000 or more that involves buying, refurbishing or developing land and buildings or other construction-related works.

**You should also read the guidance on the [Sustainable Steps Wales - Action Grants](#)**

This guidance contains:

- **A checklist of information we need to see for land or buildings projects.**  
Complete this if we've asked you to submit an application for funding.
- **Advice on important considerations for land or buildings projects**, to make sure that you are well prepared to deliver your project.

## Supporting you with your land and buildings application

Get in touch if you would like more information, or if anything in this guidance is unclear. You can call us on **0300 123 0735** or email our team at [sustainablestepswales@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](mailto:sustainablestepswales@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk).

If you've already discussed your proposal with us you can contact your Funding Officer for help.

## What we can fund

We can fund costs including:

- improvement of land and buildings
- construction
- professional fees
- surveys.

We can fund projects where we are the only funder, or where more than one funder is involved.

You should demonstrate wider community support for your idea and that your project has been well planned.

# Checklist and considerations

**Project name**

**Name and address of organisation**

**Main contact telephone number**

**Main contact email address**

**Address of the project site**

**Postcode for the project site**

**Local Authority for the project site**

You should review each section of the checklist. We understand that projects are all different, so the information we ask for will depend on the size and type of your project. If you are applying for £100,000 or more, we'll ask for more detailed information.

You must comply with construction legislation and regulations in Wales. If you have any concerns about this, seek independent legal advice.

## 1. Options appraisal

**Send us a copy of your options appraisal.**

This is a description of the options you have considered for delivering the project outcomes.

### Your options appraisal should include:

- a description of the current situation and the alternatives you've considered
- how your proposals will help deliver your planned activities
- how you have engaged with your members, users and local community
- the constraints and opportunities you face with each option
- the estimated costs of each option
- the risks of each option
- a delivery plan for your preferred option.

## 2. Confirmation of lease or ownership

We have specific terms and conditions that you must meet if you are buying, refurbishing or developing land or buildings with our funding. They cover your ownership of the land or buildings and the security we may take over it. You may need help from a legal professional to make sure you meet our requirements.

### If you have a leasehold

**Send us a copy of your options appraisal.**

This is a description of the options you have considered for delivering the project outcomes.

### Your options appraisal should include:

For awards between £10,000 - £350,000 a lease of at least 5-years (after the work is complete) is required and it should:

1. not contain any early termination rights for either party in the 5-year period
2. be freely transferable
3. not allow for an automatic return of the land and buildings to the landlord in the event your organisation becomes insolvent.

### If you have freehold ownership

**Send us a copy of your Land Registry title document.**

### If you plan to buy a freehold interest in land or buildings you must send us:

**A description of the land or buildings you want to buy**

**An independent surveyor's report on the land or buildings covering:**

1. its condition
2. its current open market valuation for the purposes of this project. The valuation should be less than 6 months old (with any restrictions upon usage noted)
3. whether it is suitable for the intended purpose.

**Details of any potential issues** such as access to the site, contamination or rights of way.

**Evidence that Heads of Terms for the purchase have been agreed.** Payment towards the purchase price should have not been made.

**A timetable for the purchase**

## Security over land and buildings

If we offer you funding of £100,000 or more for land or buildings, we'll need to take security over them.

This security will be in the form of a deed that restricts the use of the land or buildings to the use agreed when we award the funding. It also limits your ability to dispose of the land or buildings unless we agree to it first.

If we offer you funding, you'll need to instruct solicitors to work with our legal department to make sure the security is in place. We cannot pay more than 5% of any funding awarded until these legal matters are resolved.

## Asset liability and monitoring periods

The security will remain in place for a period of at least 5 years from the completion of your capital project, known as 'practical completion'. We call this the 'asset liability period'. During this time we'll stay in contact with you to make sure the land or buildings are being used as agreed when you were funded.

### 3. Design information - drawings and surveys

The items on the following list will help us understand your proposals.

#### If applicable, send us:

**An existing site plan** showing the outline of the buildings and the site, surrounding properties and access routes at an appropriate scale.

**Colour photographs of the existing site or buildings** (inside and outside).

**Survey information undertaken or planned** (for example covering the existing layout, or asbestos, structural, or ecological surveys).

**Proposed floor plans or general arrangement drawings** (including sections and elevations). These should note the gross internal floor area (GIFA) in square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) at an appropriate scale.

**An outline specification of the proposed works.** This is a document that describes the materials and work required.

**A list of any furniture or equipment** essential to the delivery of your project. This should include specialist equipment, as well as common items like desks or chairs.

#### Provide an access plan

**Send us an access plan** that provides more details about how your project will improve access for all.

**Appendix A** has more guidance on what your access plan might include.

We want to support projects that promote inclusive design – that is places and spaces that are designed to be accessible for all. Creating an access plan for the relevant land or buildings will help you make them open to everyone.

#### Provide a carbon savings plan

**Send us a carbon savings plan** to tell us about how your project will help tackle climate change.

**Appendix B** has more guidance on what your carbon savings plan might include.

We want to support projects that will help save energy and promote sustainable living.

## 4. Summary of project costs

**Send us your cost estimate or quotations** showing the outline of the buildings and  
**Send us a summary of your costs using the tables provided**

### How to work out your costs

If you are applying for £100,000 or more, your costs should be prepared by a suitably qualified building professional such as a quantity surveyor.

Where possible, work out the cost per square metre (£/m<sup>2</sup>) of the proposed buildings or landscape project.

<b>Cost per square metre if known (£/m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	
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We know that the costs for land and buildings projects are currently increasing very quickly. Try to consider inflation when planning your project. Think about what you would do if costs rise beyond the funding you are asking for.

<b>Capital cost item</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
a. Land and/or buildings purchase	
b. Construction costs including any preliminaries	
c. Furniture, fittings and equipment	
d. Professional fees (do not include costs already incurred)	
e. Other costs such as legal, administration, statutory and/or survey fees. (Specify what these are in a separate note)	
f. Inflation	
h. Contingency costs (10% of total capital cost, excluding inflation value)	
i. Non-recoverable VAT (seek professional advice if necessary)	
<b>Total capital cost in pounds sterling</b>	

## 5. Permissions, approvals and other consents

**Send us details of any consents you need for your project**

If you do not have the consents you need yet, tell us what progress you have made.

**Most projects need to consider:**

- Planning permission (including Listed Building Consent)
- Building Regulations approval
- Any other statutory consents such as from utility companies or the Environment Agency
- VAT status. You should seek professional advice if necessary.

## 6. Appointing professionals to support your project

**Send us details of any professionals you are using to support your work**

You may want to use an architect, landscape architect, project manager, or a civil or structural engineer to help you develop your proposals. Together these are often known as your professional team, or your design team.

**Do you need professional support?**

- You must appoint a lead building professional if you're applying for £100,000 or more for your land or buildings project.
- We'll take a proportionate approach for smaller projects
- The type of professional support you need will vary based on the size and type of your project

## 7. Health and Safety

**Confirm that you'll adhere to client duties within the Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015)** and tell us about any professional support you've used to help you.

The Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015) place responsibility on clients, designers and contractors involved in construction projects to ensure adequate health and safety processes are put in place.

## 8. Procurement

When engaging building professionals, contractors or suppliers you must use an appropriate procurement process. It must follow your organisation's procurement policy or accepted good practice in the public or charity sector. It should be transparent and fair.

If you have funding from any other public bodies for this project you'll need to make sure you also meet their legal requirements before applying to us.

### You should:

**Obtain at least 3 quotes** for professional fees of £10,000 or more.

We recommend that you use established or reputable suppliers and construction firms when possible.

**Provide us with 3 recent quotes from established contractors** for construction works between £10,000 and £100,000.

**Undertake a competitive tender process** to arrive at the construction costs for your project for construction works that are likely to be above £100,000.

If you decide not to accept the lowest quote or tender received, you should also tell us why.

### We may also ask you to:

**Send us a report on your procurement from a suitably qualified member of your team including:**

- procurement method undertaken (for example, recent quotes or competitive tenders)
- details of the appropriate form of contract to be used, if applicable
- lowest and highest bid, and total number of bids received
- evaluation criteria used to evaluate bids (to show transparency and fairness in the process used)
- name of preferred supplier and price, indicating if this bid was the lowest.

## How we'll inspect construction work

If you're awarded a grant for a construction project, we'll inspect the work being done. We may do this at different stages, and in particular when the work is complete. We need to be satisfied with the quality of the work. We also need to be sure that the new facilities that you have created will let you deliver the outcomes you described in your funding application.

## Claiming your funding for land or buildings work

Before the land or buildings project starts, make sure that you have a financial plan for the length of the project.

We do not pay for construction work in advance - we release funding as you incur costs during the project. You must evidence these costs, most likely with invoices or certificates from your professional advisor(s).

# Appendix A

## The Access Plan

### Introduction to inclusive design

We want to support projects that promote ‘inclusive design’ and are inclusive and accessible to all. The UK Government defines inclusive design as a ‘process that ensures that all buildings, places and spaces can be easily and comfortably accessed and used by everyone’.

We can fund projects that include a change of use, alterations or refurbishment, extensions, new builds and landscape improvements. An inclusive environment is one that everyone can benefit from, by not just being able to move in it with independence, but also without barriers or fears. People should be able to use their environment regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, culture, economic circumstances or whether travelling with children, on a cycle or carrying and using equipment.

### Your access plan

To help make your land or buildings project inclusive, we ask that you develop an access plan. This should accompany your application. We do not have a template plan as there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution for the wide range of ideas that we fund. We ask that you develop your own, and we expect it to be proportionate to the size and type of your proposals.

### What your access plan should address

As a minimum your access plan should include:

- an assessment of the ease of access and use of your buildings or landscape, along with the details of the specific design measures that you propose
- a policy commitment to become an inclusive organisation, building or open space.

### Advice on developing your access plan

#### Involve people in your planning from the start

It is important to try to involve your board, team, users and visitors when thinking about your access arrangements and carrying out an access audit. Ideally this should be at the beginning of the design process. Overcoming access barriers at a later stage in the project can result in a building or open space that is not inclusive and may be expensive to change.

## Understand the important legislation and regulation

The Equality Act (2010) protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. Service providers must take reasonable steps to remove physical features that may place somebody at a disadvantage by limiting their access to goods, facilities or services.

They should take one or more of the following steps:

- alter it so that it no longer has that effect
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available.

Part M of the Building Regulations (or equivalent regulations in your country), promotes an approach to building design that reflects the needs of all people. It requires that reasonable steps are taken to allow all people to gain access and use building and their facilities.

You may be required to produce a design and access statement as part of a planning application. This is a separate document to an access plan.

## Examples of accessible design features to consider

These include both buildings and outdoor spaces.

<p><b>Approach</b></p>	<p>Think about how you get to, arrive at and exit your building or open space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are path widths and surfaces appropriate for all users? This could include baby buggies, bikes, scooters and walking aid users.</li> <li>• Is the approach level or gently ramped, slip resistant, well illuminated, with clear signage (including the building name and number)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there suitably designed, marked and signed parking spaces on accessible surfaces, as close as possible to all accessible entrances?</li> <li>• Is there an appropriately located and signed dropping off point?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Entrances</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be at least one entrance door that is accessible to all. It should be level or adequately ramped and stepped if necessary, with appropriately designed handrails, automatic or assisted doors and of contrasting colour.</li> <li>• Landings should allow a wheelchair user to move clear of one door before opening the second door.</li> </ul>

<b>Lobbies and receptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floor surfaces should not impede movement. They should avoid dips, changing surfaces, or busy patterns which can be confusing particularly for those with dementia.</li> <li>• Think about providing hearing enhancement systems, lowered wheelchair accessible counters and door handles designed to aide those with limited manual dexterity.</li> <li>• Consider if it is possible to reduce hard surfaces that cause noise reverberation.</li> </ul>
<b>Horizontal or vertical circulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where possible areas above or below ground floor should be accessible.</li> <li>• A lifting device and suitable stairs to all storeys above and below ground should be provided. In a new build this should be a full passenger lift.</li> <li>• Ensure adequately wide corridors and door openings free from obstructions.</li> <li>• To help navigation, think about providing clear and well-lit signs with universally recognised pictograms, particularly at key decision points (like when getting out of a lift).</li> <li>• Include contrasting colour schemes for walls and floors to help those with visual impairment.</li> </ul>
<b>WC facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All shared amenities should be designed so they are accessible to all. Consider the different users of the space.</li> <li>• Allow for the provision of wheelchair accessible unisex toilets.</li> <li>• You should also consider government guidance around the provision of “changing places” toilets. Wherever possible we encourage the installation of changing places toilets and the provision of separate space for baby changing.</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor space</b>	<p>Think about whether the space feels safe and welcoming to all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it easy to navigate through, with supportive signs and places to rest and shelter?</li> <li>• Have you thought about how the space might reflect the users and the wider community?</li> <li>• Could you introduce sensory features or create spaces for outdoor exercise, play or growing?</li> </ul>

## Help and support

You may wish to seek further help and guidance of organisations who are experienced in supporting inclusive design projects, such as:

- [Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method \(BREEAM\)](#)  
Inclusive and accessible design
- [Centre for Accessible Environments](#)
- [Changing Places](#)
- [Design Council: Inclusive Environments](#)
- [The Welsh Government - Guide to Building Regulations in Wales](#)
- [Landscape Institute](#)
- [The National Register for Access Consultants](#)
- [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](#)
- [Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors \(RICS\)](#)

This list does not cover everyone - there are many more organisations and professionals that can help you plan your inclusive design and accessibility.

## Contact us

We are here to help. Please get in touch with your Funding Officer if you need additional help with this.

If you are not sure who your funding officer is, phone us on **0300 123 0735** or email our team at [sustainablestepswales@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](mailto:sustainablestepswales@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk).

# Appendix B

## The Carbon Savings Plan

### Introduction to carbon savings plans

We're committed to supporting ideas that help tackle climate change. We recognise that the damaging carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions associated with developing and running places and spaces can be higher than other projects we support. So we ask you to send us a carbon savings plan. This should set out how you plan to minimise the environmental impact of your proposals. The plan could help you save money as well.

We do not have a template for the plan as we recognise that there is no 'one size fits all' solution for the wide range of ideas that we fund. So, we ask you to develop your own plan and expect it to be proportionate to the size and type of your proposals. We would also recommend that the carbon savings plan is something you consider together as a committee or with a selection of your members and or beneficiaries so that the plan is viewed by a diverse group of people, to inspire discussion and ownership.

### What your carbon savings plan should address

As a minimum your plan should:

- an assessment of the ease of access and use of your buildings or landscape, along with the details of the specific design measures that you propose
- a policy commitment to become an inclusive organisation, building or open space.

We recognise that the other considerations set out here will not be applicable to all projects.

### Advice on developing your carbon savings plan

Here are a few areas that you may want to think about when developing your plan.

#### Develop an environment and energy efficiency policy

An environment and energy efficiency policy sets out your aims, objectives and procedures to encourage low carbon behaviour in your organisation.

It might include things like:

- waste management
- using a green supplier for your energy
- recycling
- travel using low carbon forms of transport like cycling walking or car sharing
- use of renewable fuels.

### Consider how you could conserve water

A good way of doing this is by re-using 'grey' water from sinks, baths and washing machines to flush toilets. You could also 'harvest' rainwater for re-use by installing water butts or other larger forms of water storage. You may also consider the use of low-flush fittings on toilets and flow-restrictor settings on taps, as well as regular maintenance to stop leaks.

### Reduce your energy demand

One of the best ways of reducing the energy demand is to take a 'fabric first' approach by improving the fabric of your building. By the building's fabric we mean its walls (including windows and doors), floor and roof.

A survey to assess your building's current condition could identify the most effective measures to improve its energy efficiency. These might include adding insulation, more efficient glazing and better doors or heating controls to allow the zoning of internal spaces.

### Consider low or zero-carbon technologies (LZCs)

We have traditionally created heat by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil or gas. These fuels produce high amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. Have you considered low or zero carbon technologies such as heat pumps or solar panels, to produce the energy needed for your building? These technologies use renewable fuels like the wind, the air or the sun.

### Use sustainable materials

When planning your project, you may choose to use materials which have low 'embodied carbon'. 'Embodied carbon' means the greenhouse gas emissions that come from the materials' extraction, manufacture, transportation and assembly. The embodied carbon used in constructing a building can be as much as the carbon emissions that come from running the building over its entire lifetime.

### Improve your landscape

Outdoor spaces provide an opportunity to deliver services, save carbon and reduce pollution. It is worth getting specialist advice about how planting trees, shrubs and wildflowers, reducing water run-off and noise, can all combine to create a beneficial micro-climate around your venue or neighbourhood. Your landscape could help with offsetting carbon, while contributing to the well-being of your users.

## Help and support

You may wish to seek further help and guidance from organisations who are experienced in supporting projects to save energy, such as:

- [Renew Wales](#)
- [Community Energy Wales](#)
- [The Building Research Establishment](#)
- [The Carbon Trust](#)
- [Association for Environment Conscious Building \(AECB\)](#)
- [Centre for Alternative Technology](#)
- [The Landscape Institute](#)
- [The Passivhaus Trust](#)
- [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#)
- [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](#)
- [Energy Saving Trust](#)

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Website: [tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/sustainable-steps-wales-action-grants](https://tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/sustainable-steps-wales-action-grants)

## Connect with us

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