

Strategic Economic Plan Enabling Fund - Guidance Notes for Applicants

1. About the Cultural Action Zone call for projects

Since the launch of our Towns and Local Centres (TLC) Framework in March 2019, GBSLEP has provided revenue funding to support the development of numerous projects aimed at laying the foundations for the places of the future. This funding aims to support the creation of thriving and dynamic places where people want to visit, work, and live.

Given the success of these projects, we are delighted to announce that our next revenue funding call for culture- and heritage-focussed projects is now live, with £250,000 in revenue funding available.

We are interested in receiving applications to set up **Cultural Action Zones**, which can operate at various scales, from city centre to local high street, and can involve a range of actions such as:

- Reconfiguring the use of high street retail space, such as experimenting with ‘meanwhile use’
- Piloting new festivals, markets, and other activities
- Testing traffic re-routing and other activities which require consultation and planning
- Making better use of heritage and other unique features, such as canals
- Developing branding, tourism, communications, and VR/AR apps
- Installing street art and other attractions
- Improvements to the night-time economy

Through these kinds of activities, Cultural Action Zones can shape the identity of a place, sustain footfall and draw in visitors, and invigorate local centres.

As well as inviting proposals for Cultural Action Zones, we will also be inviting proposals specifically focused around **Heritage**. Heritage assets can often become an anchor within a place; bringing together multiple commercial and non-commercial uses, enabling businesses and culture to flourish, providing opportunities around tourism and skills development.

2. About the Strategic Economic Plan Enabling Fund

The Strategic Economic Plan Enabling Fund (SEP EF) is a revenue fund for place-focussed cultural projects. The funding is available to support a range of revenue activities focussed around cultural and heritage projects. We expect that applications will be for sums in the range £20,000 to £90,000 with an average award size of around £40,000.

Our expectation is that officers in the GBSLEP Executive will be aware of your proposal before it is formally submitted and will have offered advice as required. It should be noted that this advice from the executive does not guarantee project funding approval, as a process for assessment is in place to score the project’s strategic fit for this funding stream.

3. How to Apply

In the first instance, if you have not already done so, you should contact the LEP Executive (via culture@gsblep.co.uk) to discuss your project, and to confirm its eligibility for the fund. Once you have discussed the project with the LEP Executive and confirmed that this is the appropriate fund, please fill in the application form provided.

Your completed application should be sent to culture@gsblep.co.uk as a PDF by noon on Monday 21st June 2021.

4. Completing the application

In this section, we have included specific guidance for completing each section of the application form. If you have any queries about this, please contact the LEP Executive.

1. Summary Project Details	
Project name	
Location / area covered by the project	We need to be sure that your project falls within GBSLEP's geographical area. Please be specific about the boundary of your project and provide a map if this would help to add clarity.
Applicant organisation	
Applicant address	
Lead officer at applicant organisation (please include name, job title, telephone number, and email address)	This should be the individual that will act as the project's main contact with the LEP.
Short summary description of what the project will do	(150 words max)
Project start date	
Project end date	
Estimated total project cost	
Amount of revenue funding required from the SEP Enabling Fund	
Which partners and stakeholders have been engaged in the development of the proposal?	Please keep this brief but include partners you will be working with and who are crucial to the project. If you have undertaken any initial work with stakeholders, please outline this here.
2. Strategic Fit	
Which of GBSLEP's cultural investment priorities will this project support? How will it support these priorities?	For further information, please refer to the list of documents, with web links, at the end of this guidance note. Please be as specific as you can, linking your proposed activities to the appropriate objectives with details of how your activity would contribute to each.
How will this project contribute to low or zero carbon recovery and growth?	For further information please refer to the list of documents, with web links, at the end of this guidance note.

How will this project contribute to inclusive recovery and growth?	For further information please refer to the list of documents, with web links, at the end of this guidance note.
How will your project's activities help to mitigate the impact of Covid-19?	Please tell us how Covid-19 has affected the cultural and/or heritage activities in your project area, and tell us what your project will do to help address these impacts.
3. Case for funding	
Why is the SEP Enabling Fund required to deliver this project? What would happen if this support was not forthcoming?	
What alternative approaches to deliver the required outcomes have been considered, and why were they dismissed?	
4. Project management	
Please describe the procurement processes (if applicable) that you will use for any SEP Enabling Fund monies that are awarded to the project.	We need to ensure that any procurement that your organisation carries out follows open procurement processes, where these are necessary.
What are the key outputs for your project?	Please list the specific and measurable output(s) that this project will deliver. PLEASE BE SPECIFIC.
What are the key outcomes for your project?	Please tell us about the more qualitative, indirect, and long-term impacts that you expect to see from this project. PLEASE BE SPECIFIC.
How will you monitor and evaluate the contribution you have outlined above? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC. (Please be aware that grant recipients are contractually required to provide a short evaluation report after the completion of the project.)	
What are the governance arrangements (e.g. steering group, project board, delivery team, etc) for the project?	For example, is there a project board or steering group? Where does accountability lie? What decision making processes have you put in place?
5. Due diligence	
What is the legal status of your organisation? Please provide evidence of this status along with the completed application form.	
If your application is successful, we will use DocuSign to complete the appropriate grant forms. The DocuSign process will require TWO AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES from within your organisation to sign	

the form. Please provide their names, job titles, and email addresses.	
Should your project be approved are you able to provide 3 years of accounts?	Yes [] No []
Are there any State aid implications to be addressed? Please give a brief explanation for your answer. Please also note that it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with State aid regulations.	You can find more information about State aid here .
Is your organisation / anyone within your organisation: 1) Involved in the running of the LEP 2) An existing supplier of the LEP 3) A relative of any LEP staff or board members Please state yes or no in the box to the right. If your answer is yes to any question, please provide further details.	1) 2) 3)

6. Finance

Please indicate below the SEP Enabling Fund required, as well as match funding secured (or in train). Please remember that SEP Enabling Fund is **revenue funding**. All SEP funds must be spent by 31 March 2022.

GBSLEP funding requirement	
SEP Enabling Fund	£
Match funding secured or applied for	
Public Sector	£
Private Sector	£
Other	£
Total project cost	

N.B. When you submit this application form, please also provide evidence of confirmed match funding if it is identified above.

7. What happens now

- Applications will be assessed during week beginning 21 June, and further clarification sought if required.
- Projects will be notified of the outcome of the assessment by early July, with delivery expected to begin from August 2021 onwards.

- Projects must be completed by 31 March 2022, with evaluations provided to GBSLEP by 31 March 2023.

Once your application form is completed, please send it to the appropriate member of the LEP Executive team.

5. Assessment Process

Projects over £100,000 and/or of a strategically significant nature must be approved by the LEP Board. Otherwise, projects can be approved by a LEP Director.

Following submission of your application, an internal panel will be convened consisting of representatives from the LEP Strategy Team, who will check that the application is eligible for Enabling Fund support. For those which are eligible the content of the form will be assessed based upon the information provided. An overall rating (A-D) will be provided for each EoI. The criteria for assessment will include the following:

- Does the project proposal articulate a strong case and demonstrate a clear rationale for investment?
- Is the strategic case well defined?
- Is the project fit for purpose?
- Does it clearly align with the LEP's cultural and heritage objectives?
- Are there clear outputs and outcomes?

The panel will score the applications with an appropriate rating (A-D) to form a recommendation regarding the application. Scores will be made on the following basis:

- A – Meets all the criteria (strategic fit, clear outputs and outcomes etc) and is deliverable within the agreed timescales.
- B – Meets most of the criteria with some minor queries
- C – Does not meet the criteria fully with additional clarity required
- D – Ineligible

Should clarity be required on applications the LEP Executive will liaise with the applicant for further information. This will then, if required, be presented to the assessment panel for a final decision.

Projects will then be presented in summary to the LEP's Place Board for endorsement / comments, with issues resolved if required. The LEP Executive will then contact the applicant with the outcome of the application. If the application is successful, the applicant organisation will enter into a contracting process with the LEP.

Our proposed timeline for this process is as follows:

- Applications will be assessed during week beginning 21 June, and further clarification sought if required.
- Projects will be notified of the outcome of the assessment by early July, with delivery expected to begin from August 2021 onwards.
- Projects must be completed by 31 March 2022, with evaluations provided to GBSLEP by 31 March 2023.

6. Match funding

Please note that, whilst there is no fixed requirement for cash match funding, our expectation is that all proposals will come with some form of match (e.g. through in-kind contributions). As part of the development of the proposal, all parties should be satisfied that all other funding sources have been exhausted. Where match funding from other organisations is identified we will require confirmation that this is in place prior to a final allocation being confirmed.

7. Monitoring

The LEP Board has agreed to light-touch monitoring. The LEP Executive will work with you to understand how the proposal is proceeding and when the project will be completed.

Monitoring information will be submitted by the applicant to the LEP Executive at least every 6 months. All claims for payment should be accompanied by a short project progress report which will be checked against the grant agreement and authorisations made for payment. Should further information be required the applicant will be contacted prior to the release of funds.

8. Project closure

A condition of funding includes a short evaluation report, demonstrating how funding the has contributed to the delivery of the LEP's cultural and heritage priorities.

Evaluation reports will vary from project to project, but may include some or all of the following:

- Milestones achieved or slipped
- Outputs achieved
- Outcomes achieved
- Outputs and outcomes expected to accrue in future
- Identification of any good practice and lessons learned from the project / process.

9. Useful information to help you with your application

We have included links below to relevant strategies and plans which should be considered when making your application.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and you may wish to use other sources in preparing your application. You do not have to align your plan with every document in the list below.

For strategic fit with GBSLEP's cultural and heritage priorities:

- Cultural Toolkit <https://gbslep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CC-CULTURAL-REPORT-Dec19-FINAL-web-friendly-Hyperlinked.pdf>
- Cultural Action Framework <https://gbslep.co.uk/upload/files/NewFolder/GBSLEP-Cultural-Action-Framework-2020-2030-FINAL-Dec19.pdf>
- Toolkit for Heritage Investments <https://gbslep.co.uk/resource/report/a-toolkit-for-delivering-economic-value-through-heritage-investments/>
- [GBSLEP Strategic Economic Plan \(2016-30\)](#)

For green recovery and green growth information:

- [West Midlands Combined Authority](#)
- [Local Government Association](#)

For place-based projects:

- [Towns and Local Centres Framework](#)

For responses to Covid-19 in town and local centres:

- [High Street Task Force](#)
- [Local Government Association](#)
- [Centre for Local Economic Strategies](#)
- [People & Places](#)

For inclusive growth information:

- [WMCA Inclusive Growth Decision-Making Tool](#)
- [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)
- [Local Government Association](#)
- [The Preston Model](#)