

Agenda Item	6
Report No	WRSL/20/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh

Date: 2 November 2026

Report Title: Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/ Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a single funding request to the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) budget, for discussion and decision by Members. The report also updates Members on the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh CRF budget position for 2026-27.

The single application is provided as **Appendix 1** to this report, and a technical assessment summary is provided as **Appendix 2**. An update on the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh CRF budget is provided below in 5.4.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Note** the Community Regeneration Funding currently available in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh;
- ii. **Consider** the application presented and agree whether to approve, defer or reject that application. An approval of funding should detail the amount approved and outline any conditions of funding that Members wish to attach to the approval over and above the required technical conditions. A deferral would allow the applicant to resubmit the current application at a future date with updated information or for the project to be approved subject to further funding becoming available. A rejection would mean that the application will not proceed and any future application to the fund should be brought forward initially as a new expression of interest; and
- iii. **Agree** the approved CRF grant award, subject to any conditions, up to the value of the available area allocation

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** –Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh has available CRF funding of £336,446.95. The application under consideration makes a total request of £38,466.10. Therefore, should the request be approved it can be accommodated from within the funding currently available.
- 3.2 **Legal** - When managing external funding it is imperative that the risks to The Highland Council are assessed / mitigated and any back-to-back grant award letters with third parties, and financial claims management, protect The Highland Council's financial and reputational interests.
- 3.3 **Risk** - A balanced approach to risk is necessary when disbursing grant funds as sometimes it is necessary if a community led project is to proceed, to forward grant payment. Factors such as past knowledge of and project experience of the grant recipient; release of funds related to invoices / works completion certificates etc are considered in such assessments.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No risks arising directly from this report. Risks within projects are identified and managed on a project-by-project basis by the applicant organisation.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - Consideration given within individual project applications in line with the Council's policy.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 A separate screening for impact for each application is not required, however consideration of impacts for equalities, socio-economic impact and consideration of the impact on the individual community is part of the assessment criteria and included within the assessment report. This supports the decision-making process.

5 Background

- 5.1 Community Regeneration Funding is an umbrella term for a number of funds that are available for communities / organisations to access in Highland.

At Local Area Committee level, where decision making rests with local Members, it is currently comprised of the Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF). This is a Scottish Government funding stream to support economic regeneration and sustainable development in Highland. In previous years, Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funds have also been available at Local Area Committee level. No PBIP funding has been made available by the Scottish Government for 2026/27.

Area Committees are awarded devolved allocations of HCCF funds according to an approved formula, and decision making on which projects should receive funding sits with elected Members.

- 5.2 Broad eligibility criteria for the fund is as follows:-

All projects are expected to be able to meet at least one of the following priorities:

- economic recovery;
- community resilience;
- mitigating the impact of the climate/ecological emergency; or
- addressing the challenges of rural depopulation

Projects should be able to demonstrate that they are:

- sustainable/viable;
- providing value for money;
- providing additionality; and
- able to evidence positive impacts and wide community benefit

- 5.3 The application brought to this committee has been identified by Members as addressing priorities set out in the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Area Place Plan. This is in line with the policy direction set by the CRF Strategic Sub-Group in February 2025.

- 5.4 In summary the CRF budget position in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh at Area Committee on 2 November 2026 is as follows:-

Funding Source	Designation	Amount
Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Tranche 7	Capital or Revenue	£337,019.28
Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Tranche 6	Capital or Revenue	£204,288.77
Total confirmed Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh CRF budget for 2026-27		£541.308.05
Less awards & approved change requests made from Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh budget 2026-27 to date		£204,861.10
Available CRF budget on 3rd August 2026		£336,446.95

A single application is under consideration by Members today, with a total grant request value of **£38,466.00**.

If Members were to approve this application, there would be **£297,980.95** remaining in the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh CRF budget for the remainder of 2026-27.

- 5.5 To aid Members in their decision making, the following appendices are provided to this report:

- **Appendix 1** – Project Application Forms; and
- **Appendix 2** – RAG Summary Spreadsheet

RAG status on key criteria is based on the application form and supplementary information provided during the application process. The application presented is technically eligible – if any criteria are marked as red this does not indicate an eligibility concern but reflects the quality of information provided or outstanding requirements that will require technical conditions to be applied to any award of funding.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 8 October 2026

Authors: Fiona Cameron, CRF Programme Manager
Mark Crowe, Project Officer

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Project Application Forms
Appendix 2 – Project Technical Assessment – R.A.G
Summary

Community Regeneration Funding (CRF) Application Form

(May 2025 – CRF Area Funds)

Key considerations

Please refer to the [Application Guidance](#) (link below) and [Fair Work First Summary Guidance](#) when completing the application form as there is important supplementary information you need to be aware of. Answer the questions concisely, describing clearly and directly what the project you are seeking funding for is delivering. Please do not exceed the word limit given.

To ensure you have the best opportunity to score well during the assessment, please refer to the [Assessment Criteria Matrix](#) (link below) when completing the application form.

In this current round of CRF, we are seeking well-developed and robust projects that are ready to commence, and can complete within 12 months of funding being awarded.

The deadline for application submission is 12 noon on Monday 7th September 2026.

Double click the icons below to download the documents. If you have any issues with downloading the documents, please contact us at communityregenerationfund@highland.gov.uk

<u>Application Guidance</u>	<u>Assessment Criteria Matrix</u>
 CRF_Application_Guid ance (v1 MC 2025 CRI)	 CRF Assessment Criteria (v1 MC May 2)

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

1.1	Project reference number	CRF4267
1.2	Organisation	Gairloch and District Times SCIO
1.3	Project title	Printer Upgrades 2026
1.4	Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)	Replace our production printing equipment, significantly improving the long-term sustainability and resilience of the newspaper, the service we provide to the community, and the experience of our volunteer production team. We depend on reliable production equipment capable of delivering a consistently high volume of good-quality print. We currently print over 50,000 A4 pages each month. Reliability is critical because of our remote location. Specialist engineer support is based in Inverness and not available at short notice. Even a relatively minor equipment failure can interrupt a timely print run.

		Our two old production printers are worn out, obsolete, and becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. Unreliability is resulting in increasing and substantial wasted consumables; repeat printing and significant volunteer time being spent troubleshooting equipment rather than producing the newspaper. A more serious breakdown has the potential to halt production altogether, resulting in service and reputational damage, as well as financial loss. The proposed new printers are also full-colour models. As well as allowing far better presentation of photographs, this will be an important contribution to sustainability as it will allow greater sales of more highly-priced colour advertising, for which demand currently exceeds supply. Upgrading to modern, reliable production equipment will therefore do considerably more than improve print quality. It will reduce waste, increase production resilience, protect continuity of publication and income, and place the newspaper on a secure and sustainable footing into the future.	
1.5	Project costs	Total project cost	£42,466
		Match funding	£ 4,000
		CRF grant requested	£38,466
1.6	Start date	01/11/2026	
1.7	End date (max 12 months from start date)	28/02/2027	
1.8	Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.9	Artificial Intelligence Assistance Declaration	Have you used any form of AI assistance in the preparation of this application? Yes ☐ No ☒	
For guidance on the appropriate use of AI in funding applications, please refer to Use of AI in Funding Application Guidance .			

SECTION 2: CONTACT AND ORGANISATION DETAILS		
2.1	Organisation	Gairloch and District Times
2.2	Address and postcode	Gairloch Community Hall, Achtercairn, Gairloch, IV21 2BP
2.3	Main contact name	

2.4	Position in the organisation	[REDACTED]	
2.5	Contact number	[REDACTED]	
2.6	Email address	[REDACTED]	
2.7	Website address	https://gairlochtimes.org.uk/	
2.8	Organisation type	☐ Company limited by guarantee ☐ Constituted group ☐ Public body ☐ Charity ☒ SCIO ☐ Other (please specify):	
2.9	Organisation registered number	SC041926	
2.10	Is the organisation VAT registered?	By confirming this, you are declaring the organisation VAT status as per HMRC. If this changes at any time during the project, you <u>must</u> notify the CRF Team as this may affect the offer of grant. Yes ☒ No ☐	
2.11	If the organisation is VAT registered, please provide the number.	GB 255 5955 69	
2.12	Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?	☒ Whole ☐ Partial ☐ None	
2.13	Provide details of VAT exemptions.	n/a	

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	Please confirm the location of the project including post code.	Gairloch & District Times Office, Gairloch Community Hall, Achtercairn, Gairloch, IV21 2BP
3.2	Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	Is there a partnership agreement in place?	Yes ☐ No ☐ n/a
3.4	Is your organisation the lead applicant?	Yes ☐ No ☐ n/a
3.5	Do you own the land or asset?	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.6	Are you leasing the land or asset? If so, what is the term left on your current lease agreement	Yes ☒ No ☐ Indefinite lease of decades standing, confirmed by Community Hall.
3.7	If ownership or lease agreements are not in place, please provide details if applied for and/or the arrangements to obtain these and by when.	n/a
3.8	Does the project require planning permission or other statutory regulatory consents?	Yes ☐ No ☒

3.9	If consents are required, please provide details if applied and/or the arrangements to obtain these and by when.	n/a
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SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

4.1	List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.
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Activity name	Achieve by (date)
[Infrastructure upgrade – prior project]	29/11/2026
Order equipment	30/11/2026
Delivery, installation, and commissioning	29/01/2027
Team training and trial production runs	28/02/2027

4.2	(a) What local need or opportunity will the project address?
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(500 words max limit)

Gairloch and District Times has an integral and important place in delivering Wester Ross news and communications, and has long been regarded as a vital part of our social infrastructure. It plays a key role in maintaining community cohesion and inclusion, playing a vital role for residents, visitors, local groups and businesses in the area.

The paper is the only print medium dedicated to providing local news, public notices, events, other essential updates and commercial advertising for residents and visitors in Gairloch and its surrounding communities. It has been published without fail for almost 50 years, and is a local institution.

We need to protect and enhance this valuable community asset through modern systems and practices, while retaining our traditional values. We are concerned that with the current unreliable equipment, the day may not be far away where we fail in delivery, and so we have an imperative need to carry out the proposed upgrade.

We have experienced an increasing frequency of faults with our old machines, and have come close to being unable to complete print runs on a few occasions, with resulting stress and additional work hours for our volunteers. Lower running costs and improved reliability will deliver a stronger and financially self-sustaining publication, and an enhanced and more consistent product quality for the community to enjoy.

We print around 600 copies of 36 to 48 pages each fortnight – that means well over half-a-million A4 printed pages every year. Our print circulation shows no sign of diminishing – indeed with the new printers we expect print circulation to increase owing to a more attractive publication.

Our current office-grade printers are becoming increasingly unreliable, resulting in extra working hours, substantial paper wastage and additional printing costs. This causes unnecessary stress and frustration for our team of volunteers who have a tight work schedule for printing the papers, packing and distribution to outlets across the area.

Our location makes it impractical to get immediate response when faults arise, which is why we need two printers for redundancy. Running two machines in tandem also reduces total volunteer working hours.

The proposed replacements for our worn-out machines are more heavily engineered and better-suited to the demands we put upon them. They are also capable of further expansion should there be a need for this in the future, and offer substantially greater colour capacity than our current equipment; demand for colour advertising from businesses is steadily increasing, and provides improved income per page.

Finally, a member of our team will be given three days' advanced training to undertake manufacturer-authorised frontline maintenance, and to fit parts sent to us, rather than waiting on an engineering visit. Given our remote location, we regard this as particularly valuable.

(b) Has this need been recognised in a local place plan?

(500 words max limit)

The *Gairloch and District Times* is not explicitly identified in the Gairloch Local Place Plan, however, this does not indicate that the paper is not considered highly important to the community.

Local Place Plans are principally concerned with the development and use of land, buildings and other place-based priorities, and are not intended to provide a comprehensive list of every valued community organisation or service.

In practice, however, the importance of the *Gairloch and District Times* was implicitly recognised during the preparation of the Local Place Plan itself. The Community Council made extensive use of the newspaper to communicate with local residents, publicise the process, encourage engagement, and help ensure that people across the area were informed and able to contribute. Its use in this way reflects its established role as a trusted and effective means of reaching the local community.

The newspaper's wider role is also closely aligned with a number of the aims reflected in the Local Place Plan, particularly strengthening community identity, keeping residents informed and connected, supporting community participation, and helping sustain a resilient rural community.

The *Gairloch and District Times* is an important piece of community infrastructure whose contribution supports both the development and the objectives of the Local Place Plan, even though it is not specifically recognised by name within the document.

4.3 How do you know there is local support for the project? How can you evidence this? Provide evidence as supporting documents as requested at 8.2

(500 words max limit)

The *Gairloch and District Times* has been published as a local newspaper in some form since 1978. A majority of the local population reads this regularly, and has done for many years. In addition to selling 550 or more print copies, the paper has a digitally-delivered option – this now has 353 paying digital subscribers. Online, 917 people also subscribe to our free weekly Wester Ross Round-up email newsletter. These figures grow each month.

Local businesses support the paper, as evidenced by advertising revenue that has increased year-on-year – now at £400+ per issue. There is increasing demand for full-colour advertising that we cannot meet without the new printers.

In addition, the paper provides free and discounted advertising space to charities and local non-profit projects. A 'sponsored subscription' scheme enables us to offer all local secondary school pupils, students and people on low-incomes a free digital subscription.

We engage directly with the community in a number of ways. For example, we help local projects raise cash by promoting fundraising initiatives and promoting community engagement events. We

share essential public service information, celebrate local successes, survey our readers on topical issues, and work with local schools and other local projects to give a platform to the views of local people of all ages and situations.

We believe local non-profit media is an essential public good. *Gairloch and District Times* is regulated by Impress; this means people can trust what we publish, unlike information that is frequently shared on social media.

Each issue of the paper is a true community effort with volunteers contributing to the editorial, proofreading, printing, distribution and management of the paper.

The paper recently conducted a reader survey and asked which aspects of the paper people found most valuable. The five aspects of the paper most valued by respondents were: local news stories, community notices, the events diary, updates from local organisations, and opinions, letters and local columnists.

Qualitative feedback from locals was also heartening. One person said: *"Since its change of format last year this is the best local newspaper I have come across. I'm so lucky to live here and have such a good local newspaper."*

Other quotations from respondents:

"What a great publication. I wish our local regional papers could produce interesting copy like the GT."

"As a former NUJ member, may I also say how impressed I am with the improvements that have been made to the paper.... Please keep up the excellent work!"

"...The story was so well covered and the images and supporting testimony [...] were great. ... Congratulations on a superbly-controlled piece of writing about a highly emotive and distressing situation."

4.4 Outputs and outcomes – Please refer to the application guidance for further information and a definition of what constitutes “outputs” and “outcomes”.

(a) Please select below ONE of the CRF main strategic objectives that you believe your project's outputs and outcomes will best align with.

☒	Increasing community resilience
☐	Tackling poverty and inequality
☐	Addressing causes of rural depopulation
☐	Helping economic recovery and sustaining growth
☐	Tackling the climate emergency and working towards net zero

(b) What are the immediate and short-term outputs that your project will achieve? How will you measure them?

(500 words max limit)

The primary immediate outputs will be:

- two presses acquired, installed and commissioned;
- print processor workflows and stored setups configured;
- stapled booklet finishing tested;
- one operator completing advanced maintenance training;
- all volunteers familiarised with their parts in the new workflow; and

- a full 36–48-page test edition produced successfully.

These will bring these immediate and short-term benefits:

- Increased options for colour content with associated increases in advertising income and print circulation;
- Faster and more consistent print runs, with fewer delays and less disruption;
- A significant reduction in paper wastage; and
- A saving of 30–50 hours of volunteer time each year

All of the above will lead on to a secure and financially sustainable future for the operation. We will measure these effects objectively against existing baselines.

From day one, we also expect improved reliability and product quality to improve the volunteer experience, with reduced operator fatigue and frustration, which will lead directly to our teams of volunteer printers and proof readers feeling greater enthusiasm and satisfaction with what they do for the paper and the community.

We will measure these changes by feedback from volunteers.

(c) What do you think the outcomes of your project will be and how will you measure them? Please note an outcome is the longer-term change that your project will achieve. What will be the lasting benefits and legacy?

(500 words max limit)

This project will deliver specific, practical outcomes for our community: The main outcome will be the long-term reliable and sustainable production of the area's only dedicated local newspaper.

After almost 50 years of unbroken operation, the Gairloch & District Times continues to play an essential role for residents, visitors, local groups and businesses. It is vital that we protect and enhance this valuable community asset, taking advantage of modern systems and practices, while retaining the best of our traditional style.

The long-term impact will be a stronger and more financially sustainable publication, with lower running costs and better use of volunteer time.

Most importantly, the paper will continue to provide an affordable, dependable source of local news and connection across our dispersed settlements. In an area where people can sometimes feel isolated by geography, weather or communications failures, a well-run local newspaper helps maintain community identity, wellbeing and inclusion.

A side-benefit will be a continuing record of the day-to-day life of the community for posterity and future researchers, provided by the paper's archive, which is maintained from issue 1 onwards.

We have agreed the direct support of the equipment manufacturer in servicing and supplies. This includes providing training for frontline servicing by ourselves, minimising delays in handling maintenance and device operations, which is of particular benefit given our remote location.

A reduction of costs from paper waste and reprints, reduced servicing costs, and more reliable print runs, will be closely monitored and measured against existing baselines.

To summarise, the lasting benefits of the project will be to:

- Provide a valued and dependable community asset for communication and cohesion.

- Protect the asset through greatly increased sustainability (see 4.5 for details)
- Continue to maintain and develop local work and training opportunities, including work experience with schools in the area
- Extend and develop the Gairloch and District Times operation to take into account future media and IT opportunities as they arise
- Achieve all of the above from a secure and stable financial position

By strengthening this community asset, the project will strengthen the broader resilience and social fabric of the area for years to come.

4.5 How will the project be supported/maintained/sustained after CRF funding?

(500 words max limit)

We will purchase the new equipment and operate it with the benefit of a government procurement agreement with the suppliers (Government Commercial Agency framework RM6361). As well as providing dramatically lower capital costs compared with market rates, this will have an ongoing benefit in reduced revenue expenditure. The framework agreement assures best value for the use of public money without the need for a formal tendering process.

In particular, the cost per colour page printed will be reduced to less than half the market rate, and the cost per mono page will be less than a third of the market rate. This means that operation of the new machines will increase our accumulating operating surpluses sufficiently for us to fund eventual capital replacement costs from our own reserves.

The print charges are fixed for five years, providing a good hedge against inflation through the warranted life of the machines. We expect the machines still to be in good running order at the end of five years, and would likely negotiate a further two years' use at a slightly higher per-print charge.

Further supporting the sustainability, we anticipate that being able to offer full-colour print throughout the paper will substantially increase advertising revenue. At present we are able to offer only four full-colour pages (a centrefold) in each issue, and have substantially greater demand for colour advertising and photo features than we can accommodate.

For issue 16 this year, all four available pages were fully sold to advertisers. This has continued to be the case for five further issues this year, and we have been close to sold out for several more. So, we have had to turn down requests for lucrative colour advertising. It is clear that once we have capacity to print more colour pages, we could be selling more colour advertising space, leading to greater income. As well as boosting sustainability, this also funds additional editorial colour pages, which are particularly valuable for nature and local event features.

In summary, we expect the project to provide reduced operating costs and increased revenue opportunities such that the operation will be financially self-sustaining for the foreseeable future.

4.6 Describe how you intend to mitigate negative environmental impacts that may arise in delivering the project. It may be that the project specifically seeks to address climate change issues or implement net zero ambitions/solutions.

(500 words max limit)

One of our core values has always been the efficient, reliable and sustainable operation of the paper, and the improvements and actions proposed in our project are focused on taking advantage of the latest opportunities in these aspects.

In particular, replacement of our life-expired equipment should reduce wastage of paper, reduce electrical operating hours, and reduce replacement and disposal of worn-out parts (currently happening every few weeks).

In preparation for the project, we are already implementing a pre-project process of improving our operating environment to make the most of the new equipment, with humidity control of the paper store, an uninterruptible power supply, and more energy-saving lighting.

Our paper is from a PEFC-certified sustainable source, with 100% recyclable packaging.

In terms of wider activities and sustainability, while we value the human involvement and social benefits of producing the paper through the face-to-face teamwork involved in the actual copy production, the facilities offered by the new print processors and our related infrastructure improvements will allow us to cut unnecessary journeys by the editorial team when preparing the paper content, as they will be able to do so more effectively from home.

The training and fault diagnosis hardware included in the system will also reduce the frequency of unscheduled visits from maintenance engineers and local technical volunteers, all of which have their own environmental impacts.

The social environment of the area benefits our active promotion of community arts, culture and recreation. Reporting on activities and encouraging participation, we support the establishment and sustainability of local small businesses and social enterprises, and encourage support for the natural environment of the local area through articles featuring local landscapes, habitats and biodiversity.

4.7	In developing the project, explain how you have considered equalities issues and taken groups with protected characteristics into account in the development/delivery of the project. How will you ensure that no one is excluded or disadvantaged from benefitting from the project? Will the project target specific groups?
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(500 words max limit)

The paper is an integral and important part of the Gairloch area's news and communications. As such we regard it as a key part of our social infrastructure. We aim to ensure that all groups with protected characteristics benefit equally with all residents from the effective and dependable editing, production and distribution of the paper. It is of particular benefit to the elderly and housebound, and those with limited online facilities or skills.

We promote and publicise all local groups without discrimination, and often feature articles and press coverage of their activities. No local or regional groups are excluded from our content, and we have a firm commitment towards both freedom of the press and public access to press content.

The paper provides free advertising to other local community groups in every issue and no-cost digital access to the library, to local school pupils and to people on low incomes via a 'sponsored subscription' scheme. We have extensive local arrangements to ensure the widest availability of the paper, ensuring that no-one need miss out.

This project is aimed at ensuring the paper moves forwards, and will be of continuing benefit to everybody in the community.

4.8	All applicants are required to provide a statement on how the organisation is committed to advancing the Fair Work First Policy including the 'Real Living Wage' and 'Effective Workers
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Voice' criteria. The statement should be agreed jointly by the employer and an appropriate workplace representative or a trade union representative if one is in place. PLEASE NOTE- This statement is applicable to all groups and organisations even if you do not employ staff and/or only work with volunteers. Projects cannot progress without a signed statement - refer to the Fair Work First guidance for more information. Complete the following Fair Work First Statement and Declaration form and submit with the application. Double click the icon to download.  FWF statement and declaration template.x	
Have you provided a Fair Work First statement in a separate document with this application? Please ensure it is signed by an appropriate workplace representative.	Yes ☒ No ☐
Can you confirm if you have the Living Wage Accreditation or are planning to be certified?	Yes ☐ No ☒ Applied ☐
Is the Fair Work First statement on your organisation's website?	Yes ☐ No ☒ Do not have a website ☐ This will be attended to.
How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	Two employees, plus a team of 25 volunteers and a management committee of six.
Do you currently pay the Real Living Wage hourly rate?	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐
As part of your procurement assessment process, do you ensure that traders/suppliers also pay the Real Living Wage hourly rate?	Yes ☒ No ☐ as far as practical. Our major suppliers are accredited Living Wage Employers
How do you provide channels for Effective Voice in the workplace for staff and/or volunteers?	☒ Line Management Relationship ☒ Staff /Engagement Surveys ☒ Suggestions Schemes ☒ Intranet/Online Platforms ☒ Staff Forums / Networks ☐ Trade Union Recognition/Collective Bargaining

SECTION 5: PROJECT BUDGET

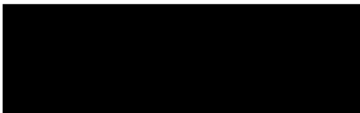
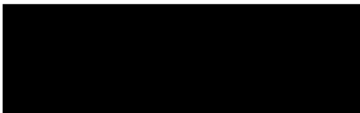
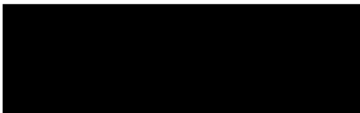
5.1	Main project expenditure – costs should be as accurate and current as possible from recent quotations or price comparisons. Please refer to the guidance note on eligible expenditure. Only download and complete the overheads and management fees summary spreadsheet below, if you would like to claim more than 10% of total project costs as overheads.  CRF overheads and management fees sun		
Budget Heading	Detailed Costs	Revenue/Capital	Amount
Printer replacement	Package proposal under Government framework agreement: Two sets AccurioPress C4070 fitted with PF-707 vacuum feeder, IC-419 print controller, FS-532m finisher with SD-510 booklet maker. Plus, maintenance and service	Capital	£42,466

	accessories, and advanced operator training.		
Total revenue expenditure			£0
Total capital expenditure			£42,466
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS			£42,466
Is VAT included in these costs?			Yes ☐ No ☒
Can you confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?			Yes ☒ No ☐
5.2	Reasonableness of cost – Are the project costs listed in 5.1 based on valid quotes as per the procurement guidance provided? Please provide any quotes as supporting documents to this application .		Yes ☒ No ☐ Supplied
5.3	Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.		
We have taken advantage of a government procurement framework agreement RM6361, which assures best value for public money without the need for a formal tendering process. This reduces the capital costs to around 50% of the typical commercial cost, with commensurate reductions in future revenue charges. As a check on the validity of this approach, we obtained an informal quotation from our existing supplier, the leading commercial supplier of such equipment in Highland. This came out to over £95,000, plus £190/month support charges, and without the benefit of advanced technical training and maintenance equipment. We arranged a site visit and survey by a senior communications print specialist from the manufacturer to assess our situation. Having agreed a suitable configuration of equipment for our needs, we have a detailed proposal document from the supplier covering all aspects of cost and ongoing support (<i>as supplied</i>).			
SECTION 6 – MATCH FUNDING (if applicable)			
Please note match funding for this round is not essential, however efforts to secure match funding for the project is reflected within the assessment criteria.			
6.1	Please provide details of any match funding applied for and whether it is awaiting a decision or confirmed.		
Name of funder		Confirmed?	Date Confirmed or Decision Expected
		Amount £	
Gairloch & District Times (own reserves)		Yes ☒ No ☐	March 2026
		Yes ☐ No ☐	
Total match funding			£ 4,000

		CRF requested	£38,466
		Total funding	£42,466
6.2	Will the project involve “in kind” support?	Yes ☒ No ☐	
6.3	If yes, please detail.		
No specific “in kind” support is involved for procurement of the initial equipment, but there will be a substantial later in-kind contribution for the commissioning and operational familiarisation processes required of our staff and volunteers once the acquisition and installation of the new printers is complete.			
6.4	Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.		
In recent years we have stabilized the day-to-day finances of the paper, which had been trending negatively prior to establishment of the present management committee. However, to go beyond this with a step-change to make the operation wholly self-sustaining for the long-term, we urgently need a one-off capital investment that is well beyond our ability to self-fund.			
6.5	Please explain what the remaining bank balances are for in your accounts.		
As a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organisation, it is important that we retain sufficient reserves to ensure cashflow, meet employment obligations, manage rising costs and protect immediate continuity of service against future circumstances that might arise.			
6.6	Please explain why unrestricted funding in your annual accounts cannot be used to deliver the project and/or used as match funding.		
We propose to contribute £4,000 match funding from our reserves, which is the most we feel prudent to use from current reserves without compromising their primary purpose of maintaining organisational resilience. Our unrestricted funds and working balances are required to meet day-to-day cash flow requirements including salaries, PAYE and VAT, bulk paper purchases, insurance, software, maintenance and other ongoing operating commitments. In a remote rural area, unforeseen costs such as power and weather disruptions, IT equipment faults or supply delays can arise quickly, making it essential to maintain a reasonable financial buffer. Using a larger proportion of our unrestricted reserves to fund the project would weaken our resilience as it would reduce our ability to respond effectively to these situations.			
6.7	If you are applying for 100% funding for your project, please explain why no match funding is available.		
n/a			
SECTION 7 – INCOME GENERATION			

7.1	Will the project generate income?	Yes ☒ No ☐
7.2	If yes, how will the income benefit the organisation? Will it be re-invested to help with the sustainability of the project – if so, how? A copy of a business plan and/or budget forecast must be provided with the application.	
The success of this project will enable the paper to become financially self-sustaining into the future, and enable us to plan our development with a degree of confidence – even to the point of planning for the next generation of printers and IT developments, and ultimately being able to acquire these without substantial grant support. Income generated from sales of the paper and advertising provides for revenue costs (including paper purchases, local employment, office and business administration costs). Surpluses after revenue costs will be reinvested in ongoing development and eventual future printer replacements. A business plan covering the period 2025 to 2031 has been included.		
7.3	How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?	
No local organisations or businesses will be disadvantaged – quite the reverse. This is the <i>only</i> publication of its kind in the area, and we actively work and support with all other groups and businesses here to our mutual benefit. We provide an essential, affordable medium for local organisations and businesses to promote themselves and communicate with residents. The business community, crofters and local third-sector have relied on unfailing production of the <i>Gairloch and District Times</i> to deliver regular local news, official notices and other public information on a fortnightly basis for many years now. Increased income will bolster the financial stability of the paper, and therefore our ability to continue providing these services reliably.		
7.4	Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?	Yes ☒ No ☐
7.5	If not, please state why?	
Although we considered loan finance, we concluded that it would not be a prudent means of funding this project. Although the newspaper generates income, this is necessarily limited and variable, and is used primarily to meet essential operating costs and maintain our affordable community service. Committing the organisation to fixed loan repayments would reduce its financial resilience, and could place the continuing publication of the paper at risk if sales, advertising income or production costs varied unexpectedly. The project is a substantial, one-off investment to replace ageing production equipment, improve reliability and reduce the disruption and volunteer time currently lost through breakdowns and paper-handling problems. Grant support would enable us to make that essential investment without diverting income from day-to-day revenue costs or undermining the reserves needed to keep the newspaper operating. The resulting efficiencies and greater reliability should then allow us to strengthen our finances and build provision for future equipment replacement.		
7.6	Have you previously received public funding?	Yes ☐ No ☒ None in three most recent years

7.7	If yes, please provide details of awards for the last 3 fiscal years and if any were awarded under Public Subsidy.		
	Funding	Date	Amount £
		Click or tap to enter a date.	£
			Public Subsidy? Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION 8 – SIGNATURE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST									
8.1	Main applicant, chairperson or equivalent – the person signing this application has the authority within the organisation to apply for grant funding.								
<i>I declare that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I have read the guidance notes and understand and accept the terms and conditions noted within them.</i> <i>The data provided in the application (and claim) forms are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.</i>									
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Signature:</td> <td></td> <td>Date:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Print:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Signature:		Date:		Print:			
Signature:		Date:							
Print:									

Please Ensure You Also Complete the Attachments Checklist Below

8.2	You must enclose the following supporting documents (where applicable) with the application. If they are not available, please state why.	Yes / No / Not applicable
1	Bank statement – please provide a full bank statement with the organisation address. It must be the latest statement at the time of application submission.	Yes ☐ No ☐
2	Annual financial accounts – latest available.	Yes ☐ No ☐
3	Constitution or articles and memorandum.	Yes ☐ No ☐
4	Committee Members or Directors List.	Yes ☐ No ☐
5	Policies – relevant organisational policies applicable to the project such as child protection, health and safety, equal opportunities, Fair Work First policy.	Yes ☐ No ☐
6	Valid organisation insurance policy.	Yes ☐ No ☐
7	Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos, feasibility study	Yes ☐ No ☐
8	Confirmation of match funding letters	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐
9	Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐

10	Business plan (income generation projects only)	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐
11	Job descriptions (for CRF funded posts)	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐
12	Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐
13	Valid quotations or estimates	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐
14	Partnership agreement	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐
Reason for missing documentation:				

Completed forms and supporting documentation should be emailed to communityregenerationfund@highland.gov.uk quoting your unique project reference number.

Please ensure you have labelled the supporting documents as per 8.2 of the guidance note:

The application form should follow the naming convention example:

(Name of organisation) final application form

Supporting documentation should be labelled as: **document type followed with the title** – for example:

- Match funding – The Highland Council
- Match funding – National Lottery
- Insurance – Zurich 2022/23 annual policy
- Organisational policy – health and safety
- Organisational policy – Fair Work First statement
- Permissions – Planning granted July 2022
- Permissions – Building warrant granted Aug 2022
- Bank statement – Bank of Scotland Nov 2022
- Letter of support – name of Councillor
- Letter of support – community council/group
- Letter of support – name of local business

Appendix 2 - Technical Assessment RAG Summary Spreadsheet

CRF ref	Organisation	Project title	Project description	Total project cost	Grant Requested	CRF % rate	Project Robustness	Engagement & Support	Meeting a need/demand	Legacy & Exit Strategy	Equalities issues/ Impacts	Environmental sustainability	Value for Money	Match funding	Meets Local Priorities	Additionality	Score	Project Officers Comments
4267	Gairloch & District Times	Printer Upgrades 2026	The funding request is to help replace the production printing equipment, significantly improving the long-term sustainability and resilience of the newspaper, the service provided to the community, and the experience for the volunteer production team	£ 42,466.00	£ 38,466.00	90.6%	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	28	The application seeks support to replace ageing printing equipment used by Gairloch & District Times SCIO. The existing equipment is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and presents a risk to the continued efficient production of the newspaper. The proposed investment would improve the reliability and efficiency of operations whilst helping to reduce ongoing costs. The application provides evidence of community benefit, local support and longer term sustainability. Overall, the project aligns well with the assessment criteria.

WRSL CRF allocation following August 2026 Committee	£ 361,446.95
Grant uplift awarded to CRF1018 - Balmacara Community Trust for the Balmacara Community Hall Project	-£ 25,000.00
Total WRSL CRF available at November 2026 Committee	£ 336,446.95
Total applied for at November 2026 WRSL Committee	£ 38,466.00
Remaining if application is approved	£ 297,980.95

All projects are given a rating of red, amber or green against key assessment criteria. As part of the application paperwork applicants are made aware of the criteria for these. These ratings are then converted into scores as follows: Red = 1; Amber = 2; Green = 3. This allows a total score for each project to be provided. Ratings are based on information provided during the application process and are provided as a guide only.

All projects presented are eligible but if Members wish to approve projects that have red or amber ratings it would often suggest that additional conditions will be attached to the award to address these concerns.