The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**4**
Report No	**CC/24/26**

Committee: **Caithness**

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 six funding requests to the Caithness Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) budget for 2026-27, for discussion and decision by Members. The report also updates Members on the Caithness CRF budget position for 2026-27.

The six applications are provided as **Appendix 1** to this report, and a technical assessment summary is provided as **Appendix 2**. An update on the Caithness 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 Caithness;
ii. **Consider** the applications presented and agree whether to approve, defer or reject those applications. 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 awards, subject to any conditions, up to the value of the available area allocation

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – Caithness has available CRF funding of £603,125.52. The applications under consideration make a total request of £237,155.00. 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 rests 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 Applications brought to this committee have been identified by Members as addressing priorities set out in the Caithness 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 Caithness at Area Committee on 2 November 2026 is as follows:-

Funding Source	Designation	Amount
Highland Costal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Tranche 7	Capital or Revenue	£397,317.45
Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Tranche 6	Capital or Revenue	£387,215.76
Total confirmed Caithness CRF budget for 2026-27		**£784,533.21**
Less awards made from Caithness CRF budget 2026-27 to date		-£231,407.69
Add adjustments for underspends returned to Caithness budget		+£50,000.00
Available CRF budget on 03 August 2026		**£603,125.52**

Six applications are under consideration by Members today, with a total grant request value of **£237,155.00.**

If Members were to approve all of the applications, there would be **£365,970.52** remaining in the Caithness 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 – RAG 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

Application Guidance	**Assessment Criteria Matrix**
CRF_Application_Guidance (v1 MC 2025 CRI	CRF Assessment Criteria (v1 MC May 2

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY		
1.1	**Project reference number**	CRF4243
1.2	**Organisation**	Dunnet Forestry Trust
1.3	**Project title**	Dunnet Community Forest Woodland Regeneration
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	The project will take place in Dunnet Community Forest and involves a number of different activities, including: • The regeneration of areas of woodland from conifer monoculture to mixed species broadleaf. • The creation of specific habitats for priority species. • The removal of invasive species of plants. • Improvements to paths and forest access. • Setting up of a tree coppicing trial area. • Initial planning work to start a tree nursery in Dunnet Community Forest.

		Dunnet Community Forest has been part of the Species on the Edge (SotE) programme, a national conservation programme led by Nature Scot and seven nature conservation charities, since it started in 2023. With SotE coming to an end in 2027, we are keen to continue the work already done, so this project is a natural progression of the SotE programme. The project is also the next key phase in our long term (20 year) plan to maintain and conserve the forest as a community-owned asset. It will bring together members of our local community of all ages and abilities to get the work done, in the course of which they will learn new skills, keep alive traditional forestry practices and open up new income streams to fund future work in the forest.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£54960
		Match funding	£29960
		CRF grant requested	£25000
1.6	**Start date**	01/12/2026	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	30/11/2027	
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? 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**	Dunnet Forestry Trust
2.2	**Address and postcode**	Castlehill Heritage Centre, Harbour Road, Castletown, KW148TG
2.3	**Main contact name**	[redacted]
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	[redacted]

2.5	**Contact number**	[redacted]	
2.6	**Email address**	info@dunnetforest.org	
2.7	**Website address**	https://dunnetcommunityforest.org/	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☒	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☒	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	Registered charity No. SC033096 Registered company no. SC231402	
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 must 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.**	814468129	
2.12	**Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?**	☒	Whole
		☐	Partial
		☐	None
2.13	**Provide details of VAT exemptions.**	None.	

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	**Dunnet Community Forest, Caithess, KW148XD** (the forest does not have a postal address. Postcode given is for the nearby Dunnet campsite)
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☐
3.4	**Is your organisation the lead applicant?**	Yes ☐ No ☐
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 ☒ Years Months
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.**	
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.**	

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL	
4.1	**List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.**

Activity name	**Achieve by (date)**
Regeneration of woodland phase 1	30/11/2027
Regeneration of woodland phase 2	30/11/2027
Trial methods of invasive species removal	30/11/2027
Path improvement	30/11/2027
Habitat improvement/pollinator orchard	30/11/2027
	Click or tap to enter a date.

4.2 (a) What local need or opportunity will the project address?

(500 words max limit)

The project will address two needs which are closely related. The first is that the project will build on our existing legacy of community engagement. Over the past five years, we have built a number of partnerships with other community groups interested in volunteering in the forest, supporting what we do or working with us in hosting events in the forest.

Examples include Busy Bees nursery, local primary schools, supported learning and rural skills groups from University of the Highlands and Islands, Highlife Highland Rangers Service, the Branching Out mental health initiative, RSPB, PlantLife, Butterfly Conservation, British Trust for Ornithology, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Thurso Scouts. Through spring and summer there are an average of two community events held each month.

In addition, our own group of around 40 volunteers ranging in age from early teens to senior citizens, contribute an estimated 3500 hours of work each year in the forest, we employ two people on a part-time basis (1.5 FTE) and our wood fuel business contributes further to the local economy.

Taking all of this together, Dunnet Community Forest provides an opportunity for people of all ages and levels of ability to get active, learn new skills and socialise outdoors. Our work in the forest means it is conserved as an easily-accessible mixed species woodland (rare in Caithness) with an extensive path network (some of which are core paths on the national path network) providing a much-needed recreational space for local residents and visitors to enjoy nature.

Aligned with this is the need to conserve the forest environment and enhance its biodiversity. This will make the forest more resilient against climate change and associated risks, ensuring it remains as an asset for the whole community to enjoy now and in the future. This project is aimed squarely at increasing biodiversity in the forest, including a number of rare priority species, two of which, the great yellow bumblebee and the Scottish primrose, are now only found in the north of Scotland.

In carrying out this project we aim to raise community awareness of the need to increase biodiversity and conserve precious environments, and show that this can be done at a local level through volunteering.

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

(500 words max limit)

The Caithness Area Place Plan, in the section headed 'People/Health and Well-being', notes: 'People also highlighted the importance of accessing the coast and countryside to improve mental health and wellbeing.'

This demonstrates there is a recognised need not only to conserve and sustain diverse natural environments in Caithness but also to make sure they remain accessible to the community. For us, this shows we need to conserve and enhance the habitats in Dunnet Community Forest, increase the biodiversity in the forest, and ensure accessibility through maintaining our network of paths and associated infrastructure such as seating, shelters, car parking and other features.

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)

Our community buy-out of the forest in 2020 demonstrated, and required, public support for the forest and the work we do in it. While we don't have an accurate recent count of visitor numbers, previous efforts have indicated the forest receives thousands of visits each year.

Anecdotally, because people talk to us and show an interest in what goes on in the forest, we have a good indication of support for what we're doing.

Please see the attached letters of support for evidence of professional endorsement of our project.

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)

An immediate increase in available habitat for native species by clearance of conifer monoculture.

An immediate increase in biodiversity by the planting of mixed broadleaf trees.

An increase in skills and capability of our volunteers to get the level and type if work we need done in the forest.

An immediate improvement in the standard of pathways in the forest, particularly our all-abilities trail, enhancing access to it.

An increase in amenity in the forest.

We can measure these elements by counting the number of trees planted, measuring the area of ground cleared, observing and surveying for native species establishing in the cleared areas, measuring the length of paths improved

	(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)

An increase in numbers of our identified priority species as indicated by larger numbers being recorded during surveys (we have already demonstrated increased numbers of small blue butterfly being recorded in a pilot habitat creation project we have been running for two years).

A long term and sustained increase in biodiversity as measured by the variety and extent of species recorded in the areas we have cleared of conifer monoculture and non-native invasive species (this may be trees we have planted or species which will naturally colonise the areas we have opened up.

Assurance of the long term resilience of the forest against climate change and pests/disease as measured by tree health and reduction in losses due to drought or storm damage.

Building the capability to do more for the forest ourselves by increasing skill levels and equipment availability, for example, having the knowledge and tools to make new paths or renovate existing ones or training our young volunteers in tree cultivation or increasing their understanding of the forest habitats and how they need to be looked after.

Maintaining or increasing our level of community engagement as measured by the number of volunteers or partner organisations we have.

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

(500 words max limit)

Our wood fuel social enterprise has been running since 2002 and contributes around 50 to 60% of our operating costs. This will continue for the forseeable future. We will be running a Crowdfunder campaign in 2027, with the aim of raising £30000 in unrestricted funds to cover core costs through 2027 and into 2028. We are in discussion with Scottish and Southern Energy regarding the possibility of a long-term contract to provide Net Biodiversity Gain, which would secure a long-term funding stream for the forest. We are in the process of submitting an application to Scottish Forestry

through their forestry grant scheme. We will continue to seek funding from charitable bodies. Our success in raising £27000 in funding this year provides assurance that we will be able to apply for funding successfully in subsequent years.

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)

We do not anticipate any significant negative environmental impacts arising due to our project. We recognise there will be some impact due to the need to operate powered machinery and the need to use plastic tree guards to protect against deer over-grazing of young trees. We're reasonably sure our carbon emissions will be more than off-set by the amount of carbon capture we will introduce through tree planting.

The plastic waste from our tree guards is more of a concern but we are trialling the re-use of tree guards (they are normally considered as single use) with some success. We may be able to re-use up to 50% of guards removed. We are keeping a watch on developments with biodegradable tree guards but at the time of writing, a suitable alternative at reasonable cost is not available. We are also trialling methods of tree protection that don't rely on tree guards such as stockades and corrals.

We will get in touch with Highland Council to see if there is a route for re-cycling our plastic waste.

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?**

(500 words max limit)

Our volunteering policy for this project remains unchanged – as far as practical we encourage people at all levels of ability to join us, contributing in whatever way they can or wish to. Even as simple as dropping in for a chat once a week. For one of the main parts of this project, creating habitat for priority species, we have chosen locations that are on or close to our all-abilities trail. This is to give easier access to these areas for volunteers and for members of the public when the project is complete.

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 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 decleration template.d

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 ☐
How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	**2 employees, 40 volunteers**
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 ☒
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
Salary	Forest development officer 10hrs per week for 50 weeks @£14.70 per hour and including employers NI contribution of 15% and contingency of 4% for inflationary pay increase.	revenue	8745
Salary	Forester 12 hours per week @ £13.75 per hour for 50 weeks and including employers NI contribution of 15% and contingency of 4% for inflationary pay increase.	revenue	9818
Materials	5000 saplings @ £1.00 per sapling = £5000 5000 Tree stakes @ £0.8 per stake= £4000 5000 tree guards @£1.36 per guard=£6800	capital	15800
Equipment	Compact tractor with flail mower and backhoe attachments	capital	10200
Equipment	Electric pruning saws and battery sets (x3)	capital	1000
Contract costs	Widen all-abilities track along the meadow to 1.5m wide- approx 400m	capital	465
	Remove existing over-grown section of all-abilities pathway, install low track and	capital	2755

	resurface with compacted 0-10mm scalpings - Approx 180m		
	Resurface existing section of all-abilities path way with low track and compacted 0-10mm scalpings. Existing route to be altered around obstructions as discussed during site visit.	capital	3805
	Resurface existing all-abilities path way with low track and compacted 0 - 10mm scalpings. Approx 105m	capital	2372

Total revenue expenditure	£43760
Total capital expenditure	£11200
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£54960**
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 ☐**
5.3	**Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.**	

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 £**
Highlands and Islands Environment Fund direct payment	**Yes ☒ No ☐**	July 2026	5900

Highlands and Islands Environment Fund committed match-funding for Crowdfunder campaign	**Yes** ☒ **No** ☐	July 2026	5900
Stroupster Windfarm Community Fund	**Yes** ☒ **No** ☐	June 2026	10000
National Lottery Community Fund – small eco grants	**Yes** ☒ **No** ☐	August 2026	5500
Self funding	**Yes** ☒ **No** ☐	August 2026	2660
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Total match funding	**£29960**
		CRF requested	**£25000**
		Total funding	**£54960**

6.2	**Will the project involve "in kind" support?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
6.3	**If yes, please detail.**	

The project will be supported by our own volunteer team and volunteers from other community organisations we partner with to carry out the work the project requires.

6.4	**Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.**

Since the forest was transferred to community ownership in 2020, we have relied on a roughly 50/50 split of earned income and grants/charitable funding to cover our annual operating costs. We expect this to continue for at least the next five year period.

Our earned income comes from our wood fuel business but we don't believe there is sufficient demand to expand our business to a significantly greater extent. Hence, we will continue to rely on grant funding for the foreseeable future.

As we are a community-owned asset and we making a contribution to the improvement of our local area as well as working towards the Scottish government's strategy for biodiversity, we believe public funding is appropriate for our project.

6.5	**Please explain what the remaining bank balances are for in your accounts.**

The remaining balances in our bank accounts are to cover overhead costs or other operating costs incurred in managing the trust and the forest but not directly related to this project. We also maintain a cash reserve for contingency or emergency use.

6.6	**Please explain why unrestricted funding in your annual accounts cannot be used to deliver the project and/or used as match funding.**

As noted above, we need to maintain a level of funding to cover overheads and other operating costs not related to this project. These are mainly related to running our wood fuel business and to developing other projects in the forest. Examples of this are insurance cover, salary costs for our employees carrying out other duties, fuel costs, administration costs, maintenance and repair of vehicles, equipment and forest infrastructure and purchase of consumables.

We also need to retain a cash reserve to cover contingencies such as employee redundancy or unforeseen losses such as catastrophic damage to vehicles and equipment.

6.7	**If you are applying for 100% funding for your project, please explain why no match funding is available.**

Not applicable.

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.**	

7.3	**How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?**

7.4	**Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
7.5	**If not, please state why?**	

We do not consider it appropriate for a community-owned organisation to take on debt and the financial risk it brings with it.

7.6	**Have you previously received public funding?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 £	Public Subsidy?
Forestry Grant Scheme Sustainable Management of Forests	02/03/2026	£6775	Yes ☒ No ☐
Forestry Grant Scheme Sustainable Management of Forests	03/03/2025	£6775	Yes ☒ No ☐
Forestry Grant Scheme Sustainable Management of Forests	04/03/2024	£6775	Yes ☒ No ☐
Highland Council Coastal Communities Fund (held over from award made in 2022)	16/03/2026	£5160	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 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. ***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.***		
Signature: [redacted] **Print:** [redacted]		**Date:** 05/09/2026

<u>Please Ensure You Also Complete the Attachments Checklist Below</u>

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: Job description for one of our two employees (our forester) can't be located. A new version is being drafted and will be forwarded when available. The contract of employment for this person is available if needed.		

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

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

Application Guidance	**Assessment Criteria Matrix**
CRF_Application_Guidance (v1 MC 2025 CRI	CRF Assessment Criteria (v1 MC May 2

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY		
1.1	**Project reference number**	CRF4268
1.2	**Organisation**	THURSO BOWLING CLUB
1.3	**Project title**	THURSO BOWLING CLUB UPGRADES
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Our project is to continue the upgrading of Thurso Bowling Club to meet the needs of the community and ensure that people from all walks of life can continue to benefit from involvement in the club. We are committed to providing a totally inclusive club open to players and visitors. We urgently need a new specialist mower as our current mower is beyond its useful life and is becoming increasingly difficult and costly to repair. The green is. of course, the most important part of a bowling club and requires reliable specialist equipment to keep it in the condition necessary to ensure everyone regardless

		of ability can enjoy bowling with as little effort as possible. We also require to install a ramp system for access to the clubhouse. The ramps we have at the moment are not fit for purpose to ensure safety and confidence for wheelchair or people with mobility difficulties and we wish to ensure no one feels excluded in any way. Our original expression of interest included help towards the installation of fire alarms but these need to be installed in September so I have removed them from this application for assistance.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£12,383.00
		Match funding	£1000.00
		CRF grant requested	£11,383.00
1.6	**Start date**	30/09/2026	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	01/04/2027	
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? No ☐X	
	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**	THURSO BOWLING CLUB	
2.2	**Address and postcode**	MILLBANK, THURSO, CAITHNESS, KW14 8PS	
2.3	**Main contact name**	[redacted]	
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	[redacted]	
2.5	**Contact number**	[redacted]	
2.6	**Email address**	[redacted]	
2.7	**Website address**	n/a	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☐	Company limited by guarantee
		☒	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☐	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):

2.9	**Organisation registered number**		
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 must 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.**	No	
2.12	**Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?**	☐	Whole
		☐	Partial
		☒	None
2.13	**Provide details of VAT exemptions.**		

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	**THURSO BOWLING CLUB, MILLBANK, THURSO, CAITHNESS, KW14 8PS**
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.4	**Is your organisation the lead applicant?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 ☐ 89 Years 10 Months
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.**	
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.**	

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL		
4.1	**List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.**	
Activity name		**Achieve by (date)**
Install a ramp for access to the clubroom		01/04/2027

Purchase a specialised lawn mower suitable to cut bowling greens	01/04/2027
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.

4.2	(a) What local need or opportunity will the project address?

This project will create a safer, accessible, and more sustainable club for the whole community. It will protect the quality of the bowling green, increase access for wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties, and help more people of all ages take part in sport, social activity and community life.

Thurso Bowling Club has been an important part of the Caithness community for nearly 140 years, having opened in 1887, and is likely one of the oldest clubs in the county. This project will protect that legacy while ensuring the club remains relevant, accessible and financially sustainable for future generations. By improving our facilities and replacing outdated equipment, we will strengthen a valued community hub and help it continue to serve local people for many years to come.

We aim to reduce inequality and improve health and wellbeing in the community. We have an open door fully inclusive bowling club and provide a sporting opportunity that is genuinely inclusive regardless of ability, fitness or age. Bowling is a social sport encouraging members of the community to be outside enjoying a few ends of bowls, some relaxing exercise and mixing with other bowlers to spend a few calm hours in good company. These interactions support loneliness and mental wellbeing, particularly for people who are isolated, bereaved or facing difficult times. We provide companionship, routine and a sense of belonging.

We provide a Junior Club which is very popular and teaches the youngsters discipline and good etiquette alongside gaining experience in bowling.

Our Club runs open tournaments which attract players from all over Scotland to come to Thurso stay in hotels, use our shops and restaurants and enjoy Thurso and the surrounding areas.

Affordability is key to our aims at Thurso Bowling Club and we strive to keep the membership very low to ensure cost does not prevent members of the community taking part. Help with funding for our project means that we can continue to keep the Club accessible to everyone for many years to come..

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

The Highland Community Planning Partnership strives to reduce inequality, improve health and wellbeing and support communities and I feel that Thurso Bowling Club fulfils all these points and deserves to be supported to keep the Club viable for the community

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

Thurso Bowling Club is held in high regard by the community and is enjoyed by our 160 members plus many others in the community. Thurso High School pupils and teachers are always delighted to come down to the green bringing around 30 pupils each time, the juniors really enjoy their club as do the businesses who book Thurso Bowling Club to hold their corporate events. Thurso Community Council are more than willing to put in a letter of support as is Councillor Matthew Reiss who takes an interest in the Club. Caithness Bowling Association President has also written a letter of support as Thurso Bowling Club is an integral part of the County Bowling Association.
This project will ensure that the high standard expected at Thurso Bowling Club continues for many years to come.

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?

The immediate benefit will be a lawnmower which is easier to operate, cuts the grass at 4 mm and doesn't keep breaking down.
The installation of a better ramp system will improve access to the clubrooms and benefit all wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties

(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?

The Bowling Club has been striving to become a totally inclusive club and have been working towards this over the past few years. We have ramp access to the green and bowling wheelchairs plus bowling aids to help those less mobile but access to the clubroom has been a big problem. The new ramp will ensure that is one less problem for people to cope with and will provide a better long term environment which can be enjoyed by all.
A new lawnmower is a must and will hopefully last as long as the existing one to give the Club peace of mind for the next 10-12 years. The green is cut around 4mm every day from April to end

September so it requires a very specialised lawnmower to perform this level of precision and this is the reason why the lawnmower is so expensive.
The lasting benefits are self evident as improvements like the new ramp will make accessibility even easier for everyone regardless of their ability of fitness and encourage more people in the community to enjoy a sport open to all ages and skills. The replacement lawnmower is desperately needed to keep the green in the condition required to suit all bowlers and ensure everyone is able to play bowls from 5 years of age upwards.
Our legacy is to pass on to future generations of the community a sport open to one and all regardless of age, ability or fitness.

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

The lawnmower will be maintained and serviced as necessary and these costs will be met out of club funds.
The ramp once purchased should need no further maintenance apart from annual inspection and any costs will be met by the Club.

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.**

There will be no negative environmental impacts from the project.

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?**

The purchase of the lawnmower will ensure that the green is kept at a length which ensures that all members regardless of ability, fitness or age will be able to deliver their bowls without any effort. The installation of the ramp will also ensure that the clubrooms are accessible to everyone.

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 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 decleration template.d

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 ☒

How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	**No employees but we do have a self employed cleaner and a self employed green keeper**
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 ☐
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
Ramp	Materials for ramp and step access	Capital	£1,399.00
Lawnmower	Supply and delivery of lawnmower	Capital	£9,858.30
Contingency	For inflationary price rises or delivery costs (10%)	Capital	£1,125.70
		Total revenue expenditure	£0.00
		Total capital expenditure	£12,383.00
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£12,383.00**

	Is VAT included in these costs?	**Yes ☐ X**
	Can you confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?	**Yes ☐**
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 ☐**
5.3	**Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.** We have obtained competitive quotes for the lawnmower and have approached JGC for the ramp to see if they will make up the ramp as an apprentice project with Thurso Bowling Club paying for the materials.	

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 £**
Highland Hi-life for ramp	**Yes ☐ X**	August 2026	1000.00
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
		Total match funding	**£1000.00**
		CRF requested	**£11,383.00**
		Total funding	**£12,383.00**

6.2	**Will the project involve "in kind" support?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
6.3	**If yes, please detail. The concrete platform which needs to be widened for the ramp will be completed by a member.**	

6.4	Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.

The annual turnover at Thurso Bowling Club is around £30000 per year. We try to carry a balance of roughly that amount every year to make sure that the club can keep surviving if a bad year occurred. If we have major expenses like the lawnmower and ramp and have to deplete our balance this would seriously jeopordise the Club's ability to keep functioning and to keep our membership fees low enough for everyone in the community to be able to play bowls.
We have a very active committee who have been upgrading the club and over the past few years have installed an accessible toilet, refurbished our existing toilets, changed our outdated heating system and installed solar panels. We have purchased new tables to replace the 1970s tables and have plans in October to replace our well worn carpet and redecorate the clubrooms. We are also going to instal a fire alarm system compliant with BS5839 in September at a cost of £6,500 which is a must as the insurance companies are now insisting on audible wired fire alarm systems. The fire alarm system was on the original EOI but has been removed as the system needs to be installed in September which will be before your meeting.
We continuously think of new ways to generate more income without increasing the membership but every year it is harder to do this. Our latest ideas are corporate events and advertising boards and we hire out the clubrooms during the winter as well as hold social events. All these take in funding but it seems to disappear in the ever increasing expenditure costs.

6.5	Please explain what the remaining bank balances are for in your accounts.

With our turnover about £30,000 per year funds have to be kept to ensure that the club can survive if there are any emergencies like damage to the playing surface and if our endeavours to obtain sponsorship from local companies fails.

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 do not have any set aside funds in the account and our balance goes up and down with costs over the season. In case of any emergencies we must have a good balance on the account to meet unexpected costs such as damage to the green, building etc.

6.7	If you are applying for 100% funding for your project, please explain why no match funding is available.

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.

Although the project will not generate income it will enable the Club to keep functioning and improving the facility for many years to come.

7.3	How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?

The local businesses etc. will not be disadvantaged because of the project as the Bowling Club does not affect any businesses being the only bowling club in Thurso. Local businesses all benefit from the Club as we use local businesses for most of our purchases and only go further afield if we cannot source an item in the County. We also use local tradesmen.

7.4	**Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
7.5	**If not, please state why?**	

The Committee do not want to place the Club into the situation of having a debt if it can be avoided as this leaves a burden on the members for years to come.

7.6	**Have you previously received public funding?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 £	Public Subsidy?
Highland Hilife to help towards installing a ramp £1,000 and purchasing bowling wheelchair £1,000 and the rest for bowling aids for disabled bowlers	01/08/2026	£3,300	Yes ☐ No ☒
	Click or tap to enter a date.	£	Yes ☐ No ☐
	Click or tap to enter a date.	£	Yes ☐ No ☐
	Click or tap to enter a date.	£	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 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.

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.

Signature: [redacted] **Print:** [redacted]	**Date:** 26/08/2026

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

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- Match funding – National Lottery
- Insurance – Zurich 2022/23 annual policy
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- Organisational policy – Fair Work First statement
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- 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

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

Application Guidance	Assessment Criteria Matrix
CRF_Application_Guidance (v1 MC 2025 CRI	CRF Assessment Criteria (v1 MC May 2

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY		
1.1	**Project reference number**	**CRF4269**
1.2	**Organisation**	Royal British Legion Scotland Club (Thurso) Ltd
1.3	**Project title**	Thurso Legion Community Hall modernisation Phase 2
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Upgrade of our Community Hall to a modern, welcoming, connected, multi-use facility that can be enjoyed by the entire Thurso community and businesses for numerous activities. Phase 2 is the final phase in the modernisation of our Community Hall in the Royal British Legion Scotland Thurso Branch Club by replacing the floor with LVT (Luxury Vinyl Tiles, hardwearing replacement to engineered wood flooring) , installing a new connected Audio Visual system (to allow music venue sound quality reproduction and live audio, high quality projector and drop down screen connected to TV monitors and suitable interface with laptops, satellite TV, aux sound input, etc), and purchase of

		several appliances to assist in the cleaning of cutlery, china and glasses (dishwasher and glasswasher) and a soft drinks chilled tall cabinet. All work will be undertaken by volunteers with suitable trades backgrounds with the exception of the flooring, where the contractor would supply and fit. Phase 1 has been completed and the works certified as required. This included complete rewire, new lighting throughout, dance floor lighting, glass balustrades, complete new bar, servery and redecoration. This work was completed over 8 months in 2023/24, coordinated by the Club Facility Manager, using local volunteers and members, many of whom were local tradesmen. For work involving certification, qualified trades were used. The hall is in operation already, but remains unfinished until the funding is available to make these final improvements that are necessary to attract much greater utilisation. Photographs of the current hall post phase 1 are attached along with the detailed layout drawings for work in phase 1 and 2.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£22,288
		Match funding	£11,144
		CRF grant requested	£11,144
1.6	**Start date**	05/10/2026 Date is flexible	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	26/02/2027 Date will be ~3 to 5 months after receipt of funds	
1.8	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☐x No ☐	
1.9	**Artificial Intelligence Assistance Declaration**	Have you used any form of AI assistance in the preparation of this application? Yes ☐ No ☐x	
	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**	Royal British Legion Scotland Club (Thurso) Ltd
2.2	**Address and postcode**	Riverside Road, Thurso KW14 8BU
2.3	**Main contact name**	[redacted]
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	[redacted]
2.5	**Contact number**	[redacted]

2.6	**Email address**	[redacted]	
2.7	**Website address**	rblsthurso.com	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☐	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☐	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☒	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	Not for profit Mutual Trading Cooperative Limited by Guarantee - Registered No 4919	
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 must 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.**	266328641	
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.**	**Riverside Road, Thurso KW14 8BU**
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.4	**Is your organisation the lead applicant?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 ☒ Years Months
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**

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

4.1 List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
Contract flooring company	16/10/2026
Order all appliances	14/10/2026
Order all AV equipment	21/10/2026
Install appliances	30/10/2026
Install flooring – date is not set until work is contracted	04/12/2026
Install and test AV cablings, system and TVs	26/02/2027
Note – dates are not on the project critical path	Click or tap to enter a date.

4.2 (a) What local need or opportunity will the project address?

The hall is the last remaining large community hall in Thurso, able to accommodate 250 persons. It is used by a multitude of organisations and businesses for things like dance and exercise classes, shows, charity fundraising (quiz, auctions, coffee morning, etc), craft fairs for small businesses, training for local companies (eg. Dounreay), wrestling, weddings, presentations, bingo, NHS vaccinations, blood transfusion service, band practice, music groups, dining venue, mother and toddler groups, amongst many others.

The hall is already relatively well utilised every week and the improvements already completed have helped growth. It is competitively priced to attract business and also to enable groups who would not normally be able to afford this standard of venue to enjoy its benefits.

This further investment is intended to considerably improve the attractiveness and reputation of the facility so that more people will use it to the benefit of the community. In particular, we hope to significantly increase our wedding offering, where we have already purchased pipe and drapes and lighting to provide a "value for money" quality venue that is within reach of a much larger proportion of the community. Having recently reopened our kitchen (currently no permanent chef), this will also enable us to cater for much larger events at a budget price that is affordable both to local organisations and charities, along with local businesses using trusted catering companies. The floor, although not in poor condition is badly marked after 26 years of use and detracts from the otherwise excellent appearance. The present audio system is based on a domestic arrangement and the sound reproduction is poor. The new system will mean excellent quality, a large drop down screen for screening entertainment and connectivity for presentations and all supporting digital interfaces, something which has prevented the Club from holding conferences up until now.

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

Not directly.

The CAS Town Centre Strategy states “Make the most of the seafront and river setting through mixed use redevelopment of vacant and underutilised sites and public realm and streetscape improvements.”. The Club is on the River, but is not involved in upgrading vacant of underutilised sites.

We cannot identify anything else in the various other documents. However, having a location such as the Legion in Thurso for people to gather to help others and interact socially is essential for any community to thrive. The Club certainly fulfils part of this remit.

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

Engagement on the hall improvements has been conducted as follows:

- Phase 1 and 2 were communicated widely with members (650) in 2022, including talks and presentations. The only concerns raised were the significant reduction on the memorabilia cabinets, which was addressed in a slight redesign. The new hall floor and the Audio Visual system, along with the decoration and lighting came in for the most praise.
- Phase 1 and 2 were also verbally communicated with all hall users when they used the hall in 2002. All feedback was very positive.
- The work on Phase 1 and 2 has been regularly communicated on Facebook. The Club and Branch have 1.1k followers.

To provide the much firmer evidence to support Grant applications, we canvassed all users of the facility over one weekend in July, asking them to sign a sheet if they supported Phase 2. We obtained 251 signatures. In addition we received tetters of support from

- Highland Community Planning Partnership
- Thurso Amateur Swimming Club
- [redacted] (Craft Fairs, Car Boot Sales)
- Rt. Hon. Viscount Thurso PC (Lord Lieutenant)
- David Green MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross
- Thurso and District Pipe Band
- Jamie Stone MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross
- [redacted] NRG Dance
- Highlife Highland Children's Cheerleading

These are attached.

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?

The hall is already relatively well utilised every week and the improvements already completed have helped growth.

Short term outcomes – increased utilisation of the hall, specifically to significantly increase our wedding venue offering, where we have already purchased pipe and drapes and lighting to provide a "value for money" quality venue that is within reach of a much larger proportion of the community. Also, working with local catering services, this will also enable us to cater for much larger events at a budget price that is affordable both to local organisations and charities, along with local businesses.

Measurement will be via monitoring our monthly financial income and expenditure that is already a well established process.

	(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?

Long term - This further investment is intended to considerably improve the reputation of the facility so that more people will use it to the benefit of the community. The addition of a built in Audio Visual system with significantly increased attractiveness of the venue with the new floor is anticipated to attract additional footfall that to date, have not used the hall, such as local conferences and community engagement events. The improvements to the servery will also make it easier for groups that use the servery so that rather than being limited to one sink for washing up, there is a short cycle dishwasher available. The vision is to make the club an economically sustainable facility.

As with the short term outcomes, the success criteria is economic first and foremost, therefore income and expenditure monthly monitoring will provide some of this key evidence. In addition, this will be monitored against monthly budget targets set at the beginning of the Financial Year. Additionally footfall/hall usage will be monitored. Prices vs income/expenditure will be monitored to ensure financial success is not just based on price escalation.

This large, multi-use venue is essential for the community of Thurso and the surrounding areas to thrive as a community, a place where local residents and others can come together for the benefit of social cohesion. This type of venue across the country is in decline, under severe financial pressure to survive and modernise. Thurso Legion has managed to continually progress and prosper as a community hub through the efforts of the committee and the generous donations of a few organisations and the provision of free labour. This venue is worth the investment. It is important for community resilience. Without continued investment in the infrastructure, footfall will inevitably decline.

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

This is the second and final phase of the Community Hall improvements. The hall is dealt with as part of the overall club facility and is part of the trading entity that operates and maintains the entire facility.
Like other hospitality venues, Thurso Legion has been subject to cost escalation and the consequential squeezing of margins; economic sustainability is therefore the challenge for the future. The Club Committee has taken considerable pro-active action and implemented a 12 month rolling major events programme, designed to increase footfall. This has already had a substantial impact, where the bank accounts have recovered from deficits in the previous 2 years and continue to improve, where we now project a reasonable profit in the current year. The detailed short term events programme is showing good utilisation of the entire facility. This has not been easy, but is essential for the Club to survive. Wherever possible, prices have been held as low as practicable so that our customers continue to use the facility.

A substantial expenditure reduction exercise, maximising LED lighting throughout, energy reviews and improvements in insulation was implemented as well, that has been coupled with much closer control of gas and electricity usage.

The other point to make that helps the viability of the Club are the substantial numbers of volunteers, skilled and unskilled who readily give their time and expertise. This is helped by being part of the wider national Royal British Legion Scotland family, whose charitable purposes are very relevant to many. Phase 1 work in the Community Hall had substantial volunteer support by professional and ex professional personnel, estimated to have saved the Club ~£45,000.

The Club Committee receives a monthly report from the Facility Manager including work completed, short term and long terms approved works and a prioritised list of unapproved work that enables the committee to agree on what needs to be tackled first as finance comes available. All maintenance is monitored by the Facility manager, including testing and inspection where necessary.

Finally, the Club benefits from the lack of similar venues in Thurso of comparable size and material condition. We already have a substantial cliental that we are building upon. We utilise Facebook extensively, which we have found is the best social media platform to communicate over a wide age range. Currently we have a substantial following, where there is very regular engagement.

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.**

This was all addressed in Phase 1 with the installation of draught proofing, insulation and a 100% fit of LED lighting. All new equipment being purchased for Phase 2 will meet low energy usage as far as is practicable.

The Club is down by the river, so the effects of climate change have also been addressed where there is no direct floor drainage to outside drainage and all access doors have flood protection boards available.

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?**

The Hall is intended for the use of all people in the community. It is available for any member of the public or any company or organisation to hire.

The hall is on two levels, both of which have a flat entrance from Riverside Road and Riverside Place, which enables anyone with disabilities easy access. A separate disabled toilet is available on the lower level, with regular toilets available on the upper and lower levels. The disabled toilet also contains baby changing facilities.

It is separate from the other areas of the club facility so that functions can be held in private if required. It also contains a dedicated bar and servery, with appropriate appliances and washing facilities.

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 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 decleration template.c

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 ☐
How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	Staff employees – 10 Active volunteers - 20
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 ☐
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
Flooring	180m2 LVT flooring – supply and fit	Capital	£12.500
AV	Audio Visual System	Capital	£5,211
Appliance	Glass washer	Capital	£989
Appliance	Bottle cooler – tall	Capital	£709
Appliance	Dish washer	Capital	£1,186
AV	43" TV – entrance foyer	Capital	£339
AV	TV wall bracket for 10mm VESA mount	Capital	£24
AV	50" TV – Upper Hall – 2 in No	Capital	£836
AV	Vertical ceiling stantion for 2 TVs	Capital	£233
AV	Miscellaneous (cables, etc)	Capital	£261
		Total revenue expenditure	£0
		Total capital expenditure	£22,288
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£22,288**
		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 ☐**

5.3 **Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.**

Where possible, large expenditure has quotes obtained from several sources, ie:

- Flooring – The ability to install large floors like the hall (180 sqm) in limited in the region. 2 separate quotes are provided – Munro Flooring is the cheapest of the 2, however, this is based on a click connect floating floor, whereas the Garioch quite is based on glued tiling. The lounge flooring uses click connect flooring and we have noticed that over time with significant foot traffic, the tiles move. We would therefore look to use the glued tiling system.

- AV system – only one quote provided. All others declined to bid. The breadth of suppliers is very limited for the equipment and support required. Sevenoaks Sound and Vision, for example, only operates in England.

All other items under £1,000 were compared on line.
Labour – all volunteers with exception of flooring installation.

All costs are ex VAT, no contingency.

All personnel used have significant experience of conducting this type of work, ie:

- [redacted]
- All have been involved in Phase 1 of this project and also the complete refurbishment of the club lounge, small bar (Peedie Bar), and Hall toilets. The saving from volunteer labour alone in Phase 1 was estimated at ~£45k.

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 £
Caithness and North Sutherland Fund – Ref: CNSF2026A0674-OF1	**Yes** ☒ **No** ☐	3 August 2026	£11,144
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Total match funding	**£11,144**
		CRF requested	**£11,144**
		Total funding	**£22,288**

6.2	**Will the project involve "in kind" support?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
6.3	**If yes, please detail.**	

To install the AV system and additional TVs and screen, we will require a mixture of skilled and unskilled labour. The skilled labour is required for joinery activity and electrical work. All of this will be in-kind. This is approximated at 137hrs@£17.50/hr = £2,398.

6.4	**Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.**

Funding is required for this project, whether public or otherwise:

1. The Thurso Legion Club could fund some of this work, but this is very dependent on external factors such as Government taxation and rule changes. Also, we have some other large expenditures that require work, eg. external paint, toilet facilities on the Riverside Road end of the building complete

refurbishment, window replacements. We would intend that funds we have available will be invested in these tasks, amongst others.

2. Accessing grants for businesses, even not-for-profit organisations like the Thurso Legion Club is difficult. They are limited.
3. Our other funder, the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund has confirmed they will cover 50% of costs, but to access those funds we need at least a matching amount.
4. We are emerging from a period where we have experienced losses due to cost of utilities, drink, insurances, etc, alongside a reduction in footfall seen all around the town. In hospitality, we cannot raise prices easily without loosing custom, therefore profit margins have become tight. This is being overcome with a very pro-active event schedule focussed around increasing income by providing new experiences and entertainment that has not been done before, or has been in abeyance for a long time. This is the reason phase 2 is so important to the Club.
5. There are loans available, but this is not a direction of travel the Club Committee wish to go in to ensure we do not build up any unnecessary debt, utilising all funding on improving the Club and making sure everything is done to make it sustainable.

6.5	**Please explain what the remaining bank balances are for in your accounts.**

Operation – mainly staff costs, but also utilities, supplies, insurances, permits, etc
Maintenance – general building upkeep to maintain the present standards of operation, decoration and integrity of the facility.

6.6	**Please explain why unrestricted funding in your annual accounts cannot be used to deliver the project and/or used as match funding.**

The Club's bank account has insufficient funds to support such a project. Hospitality is a volatile business to be in at present and we have been building up a safety net to cope with any further economic shocks. Also, we have some other large expenditures that require work, eg. external paint, toilet facilities on the Riverside Road end of the building complete refurbishment, window replacements. We would intend that funds we have available will be invested in these tasks, amongst others.

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.**	

This project is part of the overall improvements being undertaken to the Community Hall and the other parts of this facility, which include the Club lounge areas. All income is used for the entire facility operations, maintenance and improvements. The Club areas, including the darts, snooker and pool rooms are also available for use and hire by the members of the public. Many of these areas have also been upgraded over the last few years. No money is taken out of the club by the committee or members who work as volunteers. Only staff employees are paid.

A business Plan was produced for Phases 1 and 2 that was presented to Dounreay to allow funding for Phase 1 over three years ago. This is available if required but does not seem relevant for Phase 2 as this only includes a number of large capital cost items (half the project cost is the hall floor).

Therefore, attached is a high level 2 year budget forecast for the entire facility. It includes FY24/25 figures (Nov 1 to Oct 31); FY25/26 year to date figure, FY25/26 EoY estimates, FY26/27 and FY27/28 budget

figures. These highlight were Phase 2 hall expenditure is anticipated to impact on the annual numbers. The monthly income and expenditure is, and will continue to be monitored by the Club Committee from figures produced by our Treasurer and Office Administrator, which are annually audited by Reid and Fraser in Thurso. In addition, total bank balances are monitored monthly so that cash flow can be determined. More detail is available if required.

This year, we have a trained and qualified by experienced bookkeeper as our Treasurer. This now allows for much better forecasting and end of year projections to be undertaken on a monthly basis and will allow the committee to take any mitigating actions early to maximise annual outturn. The budget, including monthly estimates will be approved by the committee in October 2026 before the Financial Year begins on 1 November.

7.3	**How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?**

There is no direct competition to the Legion Community Hall in the Town or local area and certainly nothing with the same capacity. The facility is more an events venue these days, with regulars that frequent the bar. The regular drinking trade is more for the Commercial Bar and Top Joes. Everyone we have discussed this project with is supportive.

7.4	**Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒

7.5	**If not, please state why?**

We do not want to burden the Club with the debt repayment in such a volatile economic environment affecting utility, support and supply costs and unknown Government taxation and rule changes. Also, we have some other large expenditures that require work, eg. external paint, toilet facilities on the Riverside Road end of the building complete refurbishment, window replacements. We would intend that funds we have available will be invested in these tasks, amongst others.

7.6	**Have you previously received public funding?**	Yes ☒ No ☐

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 £**	**Public Subsidy?**
Caithness and North Sutherland Fund	03/08/2026	£11,144	Yes ☐ No ☒
	Click or tap to enter a date.	£	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 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.

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.

Signature: [redacted] **Print:** [redacted]	**Date:** 06/09/2026

Please Ensure You Also Complete the Attachments Checklist Below

(These have all been forwarded separately using "WeTransfer")

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. Attached 3 Accounts	Yes ☒ No ☐
2	Annual financial accounts – latest available. Attached.	Yes ☒ No ☐
3	Constitution or articles and memorandum. Attached. See also Mutuals Public Register: Royal British Legion Scotland Club (Thurso) Limited	Yes ☒ No ☐
4	Committee Members or Directors List. Attached. See also Branch and Club Committees and Documentation - Royal British Legion Scotland - Thurso Branch	Yes ☒ No ☐
5	Policies – relevant organisational policies applicable to the project such as child protection, health and safety, equal opportunities, Fair Work First policy. Attached. See also https://rblsthurso.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Fair-Work-First-Statement-and-Declaration.docx	Yes ☒ No ☐
6	Valid organisation insurance policy. Attached.	Yes ☒ No ☐
7	Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos, feasibility study. See letters and signature sheets attached.	Yes ☒ No ☐
8	Confirmation of match funding letters – Match Funding – CNSF attached. E mails are also included but the labelling just quotes "Words of support". I was unable to add the sender to the title and forward it.	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐
9	Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
10	Business plan (income generation projects only) – High level Budget predictions attached	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 Attached are filed conveyance documents as to ownership of the property. The property was conveyed to named individuals as Local Property Trustees for Thurso British Legion Scotland. These individuals are no longer with us and so we are seeking to update this. We do have in place sufficient Local Property Trustees. The documents show that Local Property Trustees first purchased the property. Later the property was charged (mortgage) to a brewery. That charge appears still in force. The	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐

	charge is no longer relevant and therefore we are seeking to update the Scottish Registers to remove it. the charge. This is not unusual as those with benefit of charge often do not release it just because the customer has paid-up. **Also attached is the Sasine Register record.**	
13	**Valid quotations or estimates See attached 1 quote for AV equipment, 2 quotes for flooring. See also question 5.3 for explanation.**	**Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐**
14	**Partnership agreement**	**Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒**
Reason for missing documentation: 9, 11 and 14 not applicable		

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:

Royal British Legions Scotland Club (Thurso) Ltd 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

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

Application Guidance	**Assessment Criteria Matrix**
CRF_Application_Guidance (v1 MC 2025 CRI	CRF Assessment Criteria (v1 MC May 2

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY		
1.1	**Project reference number**	CRF4270
1.2	**Organisation**	Caithness Mental Health Support Group
1.3	**Project title**	The Haven Upgrade
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	The Haven is in urgent need of an upgrade, this includes flooring, furniture, doors, decoration and blinds. We would love the centre to return to a warm, welcoming and comfortable space for people experiencing poor mental health, loneliness and social isolation. After more than 25 years of continuous use, the interior of The Haven is extremely tired and dated, where doors are not working (too old to fix), flooring is lifting, walls are depressing and discoloured, and furniture and blinds are broken and or not fit for purpose. Estimates have been sought for all work and contractors informed that if successful in securing funding, the charity would like the works to begin at the start of next calendar year. All works have been assessed for risk, and a plan has been put in place to close the centre for a week while the new flooring

		is being laid. Areas will be zoned off when the new patio door and blinds are being installed and walls painted.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£24,588.24
		Match funding	£4,588.24
		CRF grant requested	£20,000
1.6	**Start date**	04/01/2027	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	05/03/2027	
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 ☐ Researching recent Highland Council consultation and Thurso Local Place Plan to support alignment of project priorities - strong support for investment in community facilities.	
	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**	Caithness Mental Health Support Group	
2.2	**Address and postcode**	The Haven, Bankhead, Wick, KW1 5LB	
2.3	**Main contact name**	[redacted]	
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	[redacted]	
2.5	**Contact number**	[redacted]	
2.6	**Email address**	[redacted]	
2.7	**Website address**	www.cmhsg.org	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☒	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☒	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	SC137443 / SC018142	
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.**		
2.12	**Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?**	☐	Whole
		☐	Partial
		☒	None
2.13	**Provide details of VAT exemptions.**	**NA**	

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	The Haven, Bankhead, Wick, KW1 5LB
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.4	**Is your organisation the lead applicant?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 ☒ Years Months
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.**	NA
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.**	NA

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL	
4.1	**List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.**

Activity name	**Achieve by (date)**
Laying new flooring	29/01/2027
Removing old and fitting new blinds	05/03/2027
Painting and decorating walls	05/03/2027
New patio door (also fire escape) in games room	05/02/2027
New furniture (chairs, couch and games table) in lounge	12/03/2027

	Click or tap to enter a date.

4.2	(a) What local need or opportunity will the project address?

The improvements will create a welcoming, modern and accessible centre that encourages existing service users to continue attending and attract new service users in a community where mental health and suicide rates are above the Scottish average. The Haven has been operating for over 30 years and is much more than a building; it is a place of safety for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. For many of our service users, The Haven is a lifeline and the closest thing they have to a family. They are offered understanding and consistent support in a non-clinical environment where they are accepted and valued for who they are.

The centre is currently in disrepair and not inviting when you walk in, as such it does not indicative of a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. By creating a brighter and more comfortable space, we expect members to feel more relaxed, at home and engaged in the support available at The Haven.

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

The Haven is not mentioned in a local place plan; however, the upgrade of a vital community space aligns with local priorities including better community facilities, improving existing community buildings, tackling social isolation and improving facilities for people experiencing mental health difficulties.

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

Discussions have taken place with service users, staff and the board over the last to years with regards to the condition of the building interiors, where comments and feedback have been positive regarding an upgrade and how this will benefit existing and attract new service users. User numbers have declined at The Haven over the last year, and we are not attracting new service users, I strongly believe this is down to the impression the building gives when you enter. Both staff and service users have given feedback on the condition and suitability of the building, specifically trip hazards (state of the flooring in some areas), fire escape route (difficult to open the patio door, where parts cannot be sourced due to age) and the overall feeling of neglect as a result of the blinds and walls in great need of decorating/updating. In addition, the furniture is very dated (was gifted second hand) and as a result it is uncomfortable and dirty looking. The table used for games is small and uneven, making it difficult when playing cards, scrabble and chess. The centre is also used by external groups who support other vulnerable within our community and the Group Manager has discussed the potential upgrade to the hosts of these groups, all of whom has agreed that there is a great need for a complete overhaul of The Haven interiors, offering an inclusive and accessible environment.

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?

Outputs include:

- Replacement of flooring throughout the centre

- Installation of new blinds throughout the centre
- Replacement of worn and outdated furniture with suitable (washable), comfortable and modern furniture
- Replacement of existing patio door to meet fire action plan compliance (it is a fire exit, and the door is very difficult to open)
- Painting and decorating throughout the centre, so we have a fresh, welcoming and more modern space

It is hoped the upgrade project will be completed within a maximum of three months.

The Group Manager will assess the completion of each stage against the agreed project specification, take before and after photographs, record and retain all invoices and receipts to confirm expenditure and monitor project progress against agreed timescales.

	(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?

The outcome of the project is to bring The Haven 'back to life', creating a more inviting and comfortable community space, improving the experience for existing and potential new service users. Another outcome is to strengthen accountability and ownership of the centre across both staff and service users; a new clean and modern centre will improve pride and a sense of ownership in The Haven.

Feedback will be gathered from staff, service users and external groups and over time numbers will be assessed to see if the upgrade has helped retain existing and attract new service users.

A refurbished Haven will benefit people and the organisation for years after the funding has been spent. The legacy will be a new positive, welcoming and sustainable community space where people feel safe, valued and included.

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

The project will be sustained through CMHSG's ongoing management and maintenance of the centre; the Group Manager has put in place a robust Health and Safety policy and maintenance schedule. The upgrade funding is a one-off capital investment which will significantly improve the condition and appearance of The Haven.

Following completion of the project, responsibility for maintaining the centre will remain with the Group Manager, staff and service users. Staff and service users will be encouraged to take pride and ownership in the improved centre and help maintain it as a clean, welcoming and comfortable space.

Routine cleaning and general maintenance will continue to be met through CMHSG's existing operations and budgets. Furniture, fixtures and fittings will be monitored and maintained as part of the normal running of the centre, with repairs or replacement planned as required.

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.**

We will prioritise the reuse and recycling wherever possible of old flooring, blinds and in particular furniture. Several of our service users suffer from poverty and will be offered/gifted old furniture. We will be using a local company to collect all waste, who reuse and recycle the materials where possible, rather than sending all waste directly to landfill. Unusable materials will be disposed of responsibly through the company (J Riddell).

When purchasing new materials and furnishings, we will consider durability and sustainability. For example, the new flooring has been recommended by an experienced joiner and local flooring company as being particularly suitable for a high-traffic environment, with an expected lifespan of approximately 25 years. The new patio door will provide an environmental benefit by improving the building's thermal efficiency and reducing heat loss. This is particularly

relevant given that The Haven is an older building and is used every day of the year. By improving insulation and reducing draughts, the new door should help the building retain heat more effectively and reduce the amount of energy required to maintain a comfortable temperature.

During the works, we will minimise disruption and unnecessary energy use by closing or zoning off areas where necessary.

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?**

All operations and proposed and planned projects at CMHSG consider equality issues – CMHSG provide a non-judgemental and welcoming community space for everyone experiencing mental health challenges and social isolation, where every person is respected, valued and included.

The refurbishment will benefit all, regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or marriage or civil partnership.

We are aware that people with disabilities and in some cases additional support needs use The Haven and as such we have considered accessibility and ease of use when selecting furniture, flooring and door.

The project is not targeted at one protected characteristic; it is to improve the space for everyone who uses it and who may use it in the future.

4.8	**All applicants are required to provide a statement on how the organisation is committed to advancing the including the 'Real Living Wage' and 'Effective Workers 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 decleration template.c

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 ☐
How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	20 paid staff (one salaried) 3 volunteers
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 ☒ *With local tradesman where they employ others.*
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
Building improvements	New patio door – materials and labour	Capital	£2610
Flooring	New flooring throughout centre – materials and labour	Capital	£11,772.24
Window furnishings	Blinds throughout centre – materials and labour	Capital	£935
Decoration	Painting and decorating of all walls – paint and labour	Capital	£5940
Furniture	New chairs, couch and games table for lounge	Capital	£3691
		Total revenue expenditure	£0
		Total capital expenditure	£24,588.24
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£24,588.24**
		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 ☐**

5.3 **Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.**

We have chosen good-quality, durable and fit-for-purpose materials and furnishings, rather than focusing on the lowest cost. This will help to minimise maintenance, repair and replacement costs and ensure that the investment provides benefits for many years. For example, the furniture selected has removable and washable covers, allowing individual covers to be cleaned or replaced when required rather than replacing entire items of furniture. The flooring has been recommended by our joiner as a hard-wearing and durable option suitable for high-traffic areas.

We have obtained competitive quotations and compared quality, suitability and durability when making the decisions. This will ensure that the funding is used responsibly and that the project will represent a long-term investment in The Haven.

The investment of £20,000 will provide a long-term benefit to The Haven and the people who use the service. The Haven currently has an average of 74 service-user visits per week, demonstrating a significant level of regular community use.

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 £
CMHSG donation from Puffin Group	Yes ☒ No ☐	Funds already received	£4588.24
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
		Total match funding	**£4588.24**
		CRF requested	**£20,000**
		Total funding	**£24,588.24**

6.2 Will the project involve "in kind" support? Yes ☐ No ☒

6.3 If yes, please detail.

6.4 Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.

The project costs are beyond what CMHSG can fund from existing unrestricted income without compromising the delivery of our core services and ongoing operational costs. Our available income is required to retain skilled staff, cover maintenance costs and support the day-to-day running of our centres. Public funding will allow us to make the improvements and enable us to make a sustainable, long-term investment in The Haven.

6.5	Please explain what the remaining bank balances are for in your accounts.

Restricted funds – £2,100 (remaining funding for Stepping Stones new flooring).

Designated funds – £4548 of donation from Puffin Group to be used as match funding for The Haven Upgrade project.

Committed expenditure – money needed for monthly wages, pensions, utilities, and running costs.

Operating reserves.

6.6	Please explain why unrestricted funding in your annual accounts cannot be used to deliver the project and/or used as match funding.

Unrestricted funding is used for operational costs and also currently ensuring both centres are health, safety and fire compliant. This includes extensive fire assessments and electrical testing inspection reports, both of which are occurring additional costs to ensure everyone's safety.

6.7	If you are applying for 100% funding for your project, please explain why no match funding is available.

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.	

7.3	How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?

There will be no disadvantage to other businesses or organisations as the works are internal and will create no excessive noise or obstructions. In terms of putting any other business or organisation at a disadvantage, the project will not pose this threat as our service is unique within the community.

7.4	Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?	Yes ☐ No ☒
7.5	If not, please state why?	

Taking out a loan would create an ongoing financial commitment that will divert funds away from maintaining a high level of service and retaining skilled staff. In addition, loan repayments would limit our unrestricted monies which are essential for unplanned costs, which is particularly vital for us a both buildings are over 25 years old.

7.6	**Have you previously received public funding?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
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 £	Public Subsidy?
NHS - Core funding	02/04/2026	£60,485.08	Yes ☐ No ☒
Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) – 80% match funding for new sustainable heating (Final Instalment – The Haven)	19/03/2026	£26,038.80	Yes ☒ No ☐
Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) – 80% match funding for new sustainable heating (Final Instalment – Stepping Stones)	12/02/2026	£30,767	Yes ☒ No ☐
National Lottery Community Fund (Stepping Stones Upgrade)	03/10/2025	£14,438	Yes ☐ No ☒
Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) – 80% match funding for new sustainable heating (Deposit – The Haven)	23/10/2025	£8679.60	Yes ☒ No ☐
Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) – 80% match funding for new sustainable heating (Deposit – Stepping Stones)	23/10/2025	£10,255.40	Yes ☒ No ☐
NHS – Core funding	03/10/2025	£60,485.07	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS - Core funding	14/08/2025	£30,242.54	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS – Core funding	03/04/2025	£30,242.54	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS – Core funding	30/09/2024	£60,485.07	Yes ☐ No ☒
CRF *Please note that although this funding was paid into CMHSG bank account it was applied for and allocated to Listening Ear (who are no longer affiliated with CMHSG)*	14/08/2024	£16,770	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS – Core funding	16/07/2024	£30,242.54	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS - Core funding	11/04/2024	£30,242.54	Yes ☐ No ☒
Highland Council *Please note that although this funding was paid into CMHSG bank account it was applied for and allocated to Listening Ear (who are no longer affiliated with CMHSG)*	19/03/2024	£3423.93	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS – Core funding	23/01/2024	£12,638	Yes ☐ No ☒
Highland Council *Please note that although this funding was paid into CMHSG bank account it was applied for*	17/01/2024	£18,869.25	Yes ☐ No ☒

and allocated to Listening Ear (who are no longer affiliated with CMHSG)			
NHS – Core funding	03/10/2023	£36,175	Yes ☐ No ☒
NHS Core funding	27/09/2023	£60,485.07	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 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.
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.

Signature: [redacted] **Print:** [redacted]	**Date:** 03/09/2026

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

Community Regeneration Funding (CRF) Application Form

Highland Community Regeneration Funding

Highland Council led projects only

Key considerations

CRF is an umbrella term for a number of different funds aimed at supporting regeneration for Highland communities. Highland Council led projects must demonstrate high levels of community benefits to be eligible for CRF support.

Please note that if a CRF grant is awarded to a Highland Council led projects, the project lead will be expected to fulfil all grant conditions, including post offer meetings, financial claims and monitoring reports. The grant will not be released unless all grant conditions have been met.

CRF funds are external grant funds, with specific reporting and audit requirements that must be fulfilled. These are distinct from internal budget transfers, and it is important that the Officer designated as the main contact in this application is aware of and prepared to meet these requirements.

Please refer to the **Application Guidance** (link below) 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.

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.

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

Application Guidance	Assessment Criteria Matrix
CRF application guidance-THC project	CRF Assessment Criteria (FINAL CRF AR

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY			
1.1	**Project reference number**	CRF4276	
1.2	**Project title**	Picnic bench provision across Caithness	
1.3	**Start date**	31/10/2026	
1.4	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	31/03/2027	
1.5	**Project finance**	**Total project costs**	£10,128
		Match funding	£0

		CRF grant amount requested	£10,128
1.6	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.7	**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 DETAILS FOR PROJECT LEAD		
	Main contact/Project lead	**Secondary contact**
Contact name	[redacted]	[redacted]
Job title	[redacted]	[redacted]
Team/Department	Amenity Services / Place	Amenity Services / Place
Contact number	[redacted]	[redacted]
Email address	[redacted]	[redacted]

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	Please confirm the location of the project including post code.	This project will cover 20 sites across Caithness
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.4	**Does The Highland Council own the land or asset?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
3.5	**Is The Highland Council leasing the land or asset?** **If so, what is the term left on the current lease agreement**	Yes ☐ No ☒ Years & Months
3.6	**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.**	
3.7	**Does the project require planning permission or other statutory regulatory consents?**	Yes ☐ No ☒

3.8	**If consents are required, please provide details if applied and/or the arrangements to obtain these and by when.**	**N/A**

SECTION 4: PROJECT PROPOSAL		
4.1	**Project Summary (max 250 words)**	We propose the installation of 20 benches and picnic tables across Highland Council parks and open spaces within Caithness. This initiative aims to enhance the usability, accessibility, and overall visitor experience of our green spaces for both residents and visitors.
4.2	**List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.**	

Activity name	**Achieve by (date)**
Procurement and installation of 20 picnic tables and benches	31/03/2027
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Click or tap to enter a date.

4.3	**Are any of the project activities considered part of The Highland Council's statutory duties?**	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐No
4.4	**How will the CRF grant enable the delivery of additional outcomes that could not be achieved without it being in place?**	

The following outcomes will be achieved

- Increased Park usage and dwell time
- Improved public satisfaction with Highland Council
- Enhanced perception of Highland Council's investment in local infrastructure
- Contribution to community pride

4.5	**What local need or opportunity will the project address?**

Through discussions with Caithness Members, a clear need has been identified for additional picnic benches and seating within Highland Council parks and open spaces across the county. While these spaces are valued by residents and visitors alike, there is currently a lack of adequate seating provision to support their full use and enjoyment.

Caithness attracts both local users and visitors who wish to spend time outdoors for recreation, picnics, relaxation, exercise and social interaction. However, the limited availability of benches and picnic tables can act as a barrier, particularly for older people, families with young children, and individuals with mobility difficulties who may require regular opportunities to rest.

The project will address this gap by installing 20 benches and picnic tables in key locations across Highland Council parks and open spaces. This will improve accessibility, encourage greater use of these public spaces, and create more welcoming environments for people to meet, relax and enjoy the outdoors. The enhanced facilities will help maximise the potential of existing community assets, supporting health and wellbeing, encouraging social interaction, and improving the visitor experience throughout Caithness.

By providing much needed seating infrastructure, the project will enable residents and visitors to make greater use of parks and open spaces, helping to ensure these areas remain attractive, inclusive and accessible community resources for years to come.

4.6	**In which Area Place Plan/HC strategic development plan has this need been recognised?**

The project aligns with Highland Council's Play Area Strategy, which commits to ensuring public spaces are inclusive for people of all ages and abilities.

By providing additional seating and picnic facilities, the project will help remove barriers to participation for older people, those with mobility challenges, families with young children and other users who may require places to rest while enjoying outdoor spaces.

This supports the Council's objective of creating accessible and inclusive community environments.

4.7	**How will the project contribute to addressing priorities identified in the Area Place Plan and/or other relevant Highland Council strategic development plans?**

The project will contribute to local Place Plan priorities and Highland Council strategic objectives by enhancing the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of public parks and open spaces across Caithness. The installation of 20 benches and picnic tables will improve existing community infrastructure, making these spaces more welcoming and accessible for residents and visitors of all ages.

The provision of additional seating and picnic facilities will encourage greater use of outdoor spaces for recreation, social interaction and relaxation. This aligns with wider Council priorities around improving health and wellbeing, promoting active lifestyles, reducing social isolation and supporting stronger, more connected communities.

The project will also help maximise the value of existing Highland Council assets by improving the visitor experience within parks and open spaces. Enhanced facilities will encourage residents and visitors to spend more time outdoors, supporting community wellbeing and helping to make local green spaces more vibrant, attractive and well-used.

As a long-term investment in durable, low-maintenance infrastructure, the project will leave a lasting legacy for Caithness communities, supporting the continued development of high quality, inclusive and sustainable public spaces for many years to come.

4.8	**How do you know there is local support for the project? How can you evidence this?** Provide evidence as supporting documents.

Discussion has taken place with the Caithness HC Councillors, who in turn have discussed this with the local communities.
I cannot provide paper evidence of this; the communication has been carried out at Ward Business Meetings and at the monthly Amenities meetings with HC Councillors.

4.9	**Outputs and outcomes – Please refer to the application guidance for further information and a definition of what constitutes "outputs" and "outcomes".**
(a)	**What are the immediate and short-term outputs that your project will achieve? How will you measure them?**

The immediate and short-term output is the provision and installation of said benches, which will be visible to visitors to our parks and open spaces. increasing the availability of accessible seating for visitors. These benches will provide opportunities for rest, social interaction, and improved enjoyment of the outdoor environment for residents and visitors of all ages.

The project outputs will be measured by:

- The number of benches purchased and installed.
- Completion of installation within the agreed project timescale.
- Visual inspection and photographic evidence of the completed installations.
- Increased availability of seating across identified locations within the parks and open spaces.

The installed benches will provide a visible and tangible improvement to the visitor experience and will be readily accessible to all park users.

(b)	**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?**

The longer-term outcome of the project will be improved accessibility, comfort and enjoyment of our parks and open spaces for residents and visitors. By providing seating, the project will encourage people to spend more time outdoors, support social interaction, and enable older people, those with mobility difficulties, and families with young children to make greater use of these community spaces.

The benches will help create more welcoming and inclusive environments, allowing a wider range of people to access and enjoy the parks. Over time, this is expected to contribute to improved wellbeing, increased community use of the spaces, and greater opportunities for people to meet, rest and engage with their local environment.

Outcomes will be measured through:

- Observations of bench usage and visitor activity in the areas where benches are installed.
- Feedback from park users, local community groups and stakeholders.
- Monitoring any comments, compliments or requests received regarding seating provision.
- Assessing the ongoing condition and continued use of the benches over time.

The benches will provide a long-lasting community asset that will benefit residents and visitors for many years. Their installation will leave a visible legacy by enhancing the attractiveness, accessibility and usability of our parks and open spaces. The project will support healthier, more connected communities by creating opportunities for people to rest, socialise and enjoy the natural environment, ensuring that public spaces remain welcoming and accessible

(c)	**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

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

The specific type of bench (composite recycled plastic) is completely maintenance free, apart from a periodic wash to get rid of any algae build up.

4.11	**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.**

The benches are made from recycled plastic, and have there are no foreseeable negative environmental impacts

4.12	**Please describe how your project will demonstrate value for money. What level of community and/or economic benefit will the project deliver in proportion to the CRF grant amount requested?**

This project represents excellent value for money by investing in high-quality, low-maintenance benches that will provide long-term benefits to the community for many years. Unlike traditional timber benches, which typically require regular maintenance and replacement within 10 -15 years, the proposed benches are effectively maintenance-free and are expected to have a lifespan of at least 25 - 30 years. This significantly reduces ongoing revenue costs associated with repairs, painting, treatment and replacement, ensuring a greater return on the initial investment.

The project will deliver substantial community benefit in proportion to the CRF grant requested. The benches will enhance parks and open spaces across Caithness, providing accessible and comfortable seating for residents and visitors of all ages. They will encourage people to spend more time outdoors, support healthier lifestyles, and promote the use of public open spaces for recreation and relaxation.

The benches will provide benefits for families, allowing parents and guardians to supervise children while enjoying amenities such as picnic areas and open play spaces. They will also support older residents and those with limited mobility by providing opportunities to rest and socialise, helping to reduce social isolation and encouraging greater participation in community life.
As a durable community asset, the benches will continue to deliver social, health and wellbeing benefits long after the grant funding has been spent. The combination of low lifetime costs, extended service life and widespread public use ensures that the project offers strong value for money and a lasting legacy for the communities of Caithness.

4.13	**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?**

Equalities considerations have been an important part of the development of this project. The provision of picnic benches and seating within parks and open spaces will help ensure that these areas are welcoming, accessible and inclusive for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

The project will support individuals who may find it difficult to walk long distances without resting, including older people, people with disabilities, those with mobility impairments, and families with young children. The availability of seating will enable a wider range of people to access and enjoy outdoor spaces comfortably and safely.

The benches and picnic seating will be located in accessible public spaces that are free to use and open to everyone, ensuring that no individual or group is excluded from benefiting from the project. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to the positioning of seating to maximise accessibility and ease of use.

The project is designed to benefit the whole community and provide particular advantages to those who may otherwise face barriers to fully enjoying public open spaces. By creating more opportunities for rest, social interaction and outdoor recreation, the project will promote inclusion, wellbeing and community participation for all residents and visitors.
Overall, the project will help ensure that our parks and open spaces remain accessible, welcoming and enjoyable environments for everyone, regardless of age, ability or personal circumstances.

SECTION 5: PROJECT BUDGET

5.1 **Costs should be accurate and current, based on quotes or tenders as per Highland Council standing orders.**

Internal Council fees (i.e. fees charged by Council services or departments) are generally not eligible for claiming against CRF. If project costs listed below include internal fees, these must be funded via Council core budget or other external funders.

Highland Council Staff costs can only be claimed against CRF for new and additional posts not already funded via THC core budget.

COSTS TO BE FUNDED BY CRF GRANT

Budget Heading	Detailed Costs	Revenue/Capital	Amount (excl. VAT)
	16No, Brown heavy duty picnic benches		**£6,448**
	4No, Brown extra heavy-duty picnic benches		£2.180
	Carriage and packing		£1,500
		TOTAL	£10,128

COSTS TO BE FUNDED BY OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Budget Heading	Detailed Costs	Revenue/Capital	Amount (excl. VAT)
		TOTAL	

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£10,128**
I can confirm all costs listed above are exclusive of VAT	**Yes** **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
I can confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?	**Yes** **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
I can confirm that the project costs listed above are based on valid quotes/tenders.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ Yes

1304 Sales - Quote SQ021744 Benches.p *Please provide all quotes/tender documents as supporting evidence to this application.*	

5.2	**Please detail the steps taken to ensure Procurement is/will be compliant with Highland Council standing orders**	
Items will be purchased through the HC approved procurement suppliers.		
5.3	**Do you have a budget code set up for this project?** ***Please note a specific project budget code must be provided to CRF team prior to project start.***	**Yes** ☐ **Not yet** ☐ Not yet
	If yes, please add budget code here:	

SECTION 6 – PROJECT FINANCE

6.1 **Please provide details below of match funding if applicable. If funding is via THC core budget, please add the name of the Budget Holder.**

Funding source	Budget holder name (if relevant)	Confirmed?	Date Confirmed or Decision Expected	Amount £
		Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
			Total match funding	£0.00
			CRF Grant amount requested	£10,128
			TOTAL FUNDING *This should be equal to the Total Project costs listed at 5.1*	**£10, 128**

6.2	**Will the project involve "in kind" support?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
	If yes, please detail.	The cost is for purchase only, installation costs will be borne by Amenity Services

6.3	**Please explain why Community Regeneration Funding is required to deliver the project.**	The project is not included within existing capital or revenue budgets, and there are no alternative funding sources currently available to procure these assets.
6.4	**If you are applying for 100% funding for your project, please explain why no match funding is available.**	There is currently no allocated Highland Council budget available for the purchase of additional benches and picnic tables within parks and open spaces across Caithness. As a result, no cash match funding can be provided towards the capital costs of this project. However, Highland Council Amenity Services will make an in kind contribution through the delivery of the installation works. This will include officer time, site preparation, construction of foundations where required, transportation of materials, and the installation and securing of the benches and picnic tables. These works will be undertaken by Council staff and will represent a significant contribution to the successful delivery of the project.

SECTION 7 – INCOME GENERATION		
7.1	**Will the project generate income?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
	If yes, how will the income benefit the wider Highland community? 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.	
7.2	**How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?**	This will encourage use of the amenities in the area, and will have a positive effect on the area, encouraging visitors, and they will be more likely to use not only these facilities, but will be more likely to use other facilities and business's in the area.

SECTION 8 – SIGNATURE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION		
8.1	**Project lead, Service/Department Lead or equivalent – the person signing this application has the authority within the organisation to apply for grant funding.**	
I declare that the activity funded by the costs proposed to be funded by CRF is not a statutory duty and the CRF grant would enable the delivery of additional outcomes that could not be achieved without it being in place.		
I declare that procurement within the project is compliant with Highland Council standing orders and a record of this will be retained in line with the grant conditions if the funding is approved.		
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. 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.		
	Signature: [redacted]	**Date:** [redacted]

	Print: [redacted] **Job title:** [redacted]	

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
	Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos, feasibility study	Yes ☐ No ☒
	Confirmation/evidence of match funding	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Evidence of valid and current insurance	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Business plan (income generation projects only)	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Job descriptions (for CRF funded posts)	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Valid quotations or estimates	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐
	Partnership agreement	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
Reason for missing documentation: This project was discussed at length during regular meetings with local HC councillors who have discussed this within communities. This has support from Cllrs and the communities.		

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

Community Regeneration Funding (CRF) Application Form

Highland Community Regeneration Funding

Highland Council led projects only

Key considerations

CRF is an umbrella term for a number of different funds aimed at supporting regeneration for Highland communities. Highland Council led projects must demonstrate high levels of community benefits to be eligible for CRF support.

Please note that if a CRF grant is awarded to a Highland Council led projects, the project lead will be expected to fulfil all grant conditions, including post offer meetings, financial claims and monitoring reports. The grant will not be released unless all grant conditions have been met.

CRF funds are external grant funds, with specific reporting and audit requirements that must be fulfilled. These are distinct from internal budget transfers, and it is important that the Officer designated as the main contact in this application is aware of and prepared to meet these requirements.

Please refer to the **Application Guidance** (link below) 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.

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.

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

Application Guidance	**Assessment Criteria Matrix**
CRF application guidance-THC project	CRF Assessment Criteria (FINAL CRF AF

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY			
1.1	**Project reference number**	CRF4278	
1.2	**Project title**	Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements	
1.3	**Start date**	12/10/2026	
1.4	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	30/04/2027	
1.5	**Project finance**	**Total project costs**	£900,830
		Match funding	£741,330

		CRF grant amount requested	£159,500
1.6	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.7	**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 DETAILS FOR PROJECT LEAD		
	Main contact/Project lead	**Secondary contact**
Contact name	[redacted]	[redacted]
Job title	[redacted]	[redacted]
Team/Department	Economy and Regeneration	Economy and Regeneration
Contact number	[redacted]	
Email address	[redacted]	[redacted]

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	Whaligoe Steps, Whaligoe, Lybster KW2 6AA
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
3.4	**Does The Highland Council own the land or asset?**	Yes ☒ No ☐
3.5	**Is The Highland Council leasing the land or asset?** **If so, what is the term left on the current lease agreement**	Yes ☐ No ☒ Years & Months
3.6	**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.**	
3.7	**Does the project require planning permission or other statutory regulatory consents?**	Yes ☒ No ☐

3.8	**If consents are required, please provide details if applied and/or the arrangements to obtain these and by when.**	Planning permission was granted in June 2026, attached to this application.

SECTION 4: PROJECT PROPOSAL		
4.1	**Project Summary (max 250 words)**	Whaligoe Steps is one of Caithness' most iconic visitor attractions and a nationally important heritage asset, located on the east coast of the Highlands and accessed directly from the A99 and North Coast 500 route. Steeped in Norse history and the region's fishing heritage, the site attracts significant numbers of domestic and international visitors each year. The Highland Council has secured planning permission and match funding, making the project fully shovel-ready and ready for immediate delivery. Growing visitor numbers have placed unsustainable pressure on the site's inadequate infrastructure. Informal parking adjacent to residential properties regularly reaches capacity, resulting in congestion, blocked access, unsafe roadside parking, environmental damage, and significant disruption for local residents. Safety concerns are acute, with poor visibility, pedestrian and vehicle conflict, and visitors, including families and older people, forced to navigate hazardous road conditions. Without intervention, these risks will continue to increase. The project will deliver a purpose-built visitor car park with accessible bays, upgraded trunk road access, safer pedestrian routes, interpretation, wayfinding, and safety signage. Crucially, visitor traffic will be diverted away from the single-track residential road, reducing congestion, improving road safety, protecting local amenity, and preventing further environmental degradation. The scheme will also enhance the visitor experience through high-quality interpretation celebrating Whaligoe's unique Norse and fishing heritage, encouraging responsible visitor behaviour and greater appreciation of the site. By addressing critical safety, access and capacity issues, the project will protect a nationally significant heritage asset, improve accessibility, support community wellbeing, and strengthen the local economy through sustainable tourism. Strongly supported by the local community, this investment will secure Whaligoe Steps for future generations while delivering lasting benefits for residents and visitors alike.
4.2	**List the main activities required to deliver the project including timescales.**	

Activity name	**Achieve by (date)**
Planning permission approved	01/06/2026
Design stage completed	29/06/2026
Legal/Property	29/07/2026
Pre Construction Preliminaries	26/10/2026
Construction Period	14/09/2026

Construction Retention Period	30/04/2027

4.3	**Are any of the project activities considered part of The Highland Council's statutory duties?**	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

4.4	**How will the CRF grant enable the delivery of additional outcomes that could not be achieved without it being in place?**

The CRF grant is critical to the delivery of the Project. While planning permission is in place and significant funding has already been secured, CRF funding is required to complete the funding package and enable construction to proceed. Without this support, the Highland Council would be unable to secure the remaining match funding required within the necessary timescales, placing the project at serious risk of delay or cancellation.

The grant will unlock a fully shovel-ready project that addresses longstanding infrastructure and safety issues at one of Caithness' most significant visitor destinations. It will enable the delivery of a purpose-built visitor car park with accessible bays, improved trunk road access, safer pedestrian routes, visitor interpretation, and associated infrastructure designed to accommodate increasing visitor numbers in a safe and sustainable manner.

Without CRF investment, existing issues would remain unresolved, including inadequate parking provision, poor visibility at the trunk road junction, conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, congestion on the single-track residential access road, and the ongoing impact on local residents' amenity and access. Continued visitor growth would place further pressure on the site, surrounding environment, and local infrastructure.

The project will deliver lasting economic, social, environmental, and heritage benefits by improving accessibility, enhancing visitor safety, protecting a nationally significant heritage asset, and supporting sustainable tourism growth in Caithness. Strongly supported by both the local community and elected members, the project represents a long-term solution to a recognised hotspot. Without CRF funding, these benefits would not be realised, and the pressures currently affecting residents, visitors, and the wider area would continue.

4.5	**What local need or opportunity will the project address?**

The Project will address a longstanding and increasingly urgent infrastructure challenge at one of Caithness' most popular visitor destinations. Significant growth in visitor numbers has placed increasing pressure on existing infrastructure, which is no longer adequate to safely accommodate demand.

The project will address critical road safety concerns arising from informal roadside parking, poor visibility at the trunk road junction, and conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. During peak periods, visitors frequently park along verges and on the single-track residential access road, resulting in congestion, restricted access for residents and emergency services, and increased safety risks.

The project will also respond directly to the needs of the local community, which has experienced ongoing disruption from visitor traffic, reduced amenity, and difficulties accessing homes and properties. There is strong support from both residents and elected members for a permanent solution that balances the needs of the community with the site's continued popularity as a visitor attraction.

Alongside addressing these pressures, the project presents a significant opportunity to enhance and future-proof the visitor experience. The creation of a purpose-built visitor car park with accessible bays, improved pedestrian infrastructure, upgraded access arrangements, and high-

quality interpretation will improve accessibility, encourage responsible visitor behaviour, and enhance understanding of Whaligoe's unique heritage and cultural significance.

The investment will safeguard an iconic tourism asset, support sustainable tourism growth, protect the surrounding environment from further degradation, and strengthen the local economy by enabling visitors to access and enjoy the site safely. In doing so, the project will deliver lasting benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors while addressing a recognised infrastructure hotspot within the Council's Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP).

4.6	**In which Area Place Plan/HC strategic development plan has this need been recognised?**

The need for the Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project has been formally recognised within The Highland Council's Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP). The site was identified as a tourism infrastructure pressure point due to increasing visitor numbers, insufficient parking provision, traffic congestion, road safety concerns, and the impact on the local community. In May 2026, elected Members approved the project's upgrade from Tier 2 to Tier 1 status within the STIDP, reflecting both the urgency of these issues and the priority attached to delivering a long-term solution.

The project directly supports the objectives of the STIDP by addressing infrastructure deficiencies at a recognised tourism hotspot, improving visitor management, enhancing road safety, reducing impacts on local residents, and supporting the sustainable growth of the visitor economy.

The project also aligns with wider Highland Council priorities relating to improving infrastructure, supporting sustainable tourism, protecting communities, enhancing accessibility, and safeguarding cultural and natural heritage assets. The proposed improvements will help balance the needs of residents and visitors while ensuring the long-term sustainability of this nationally significant heritage destination.

The need for investment is further reinforced by strong support from the local community and elected Members, who recognise the importance of addressing longstanding infrastructure and safety issues to protect both local amenity and the visitor experience

4.7	**How will the project contribute to addressing priorities identified in the Area Place Plan and/or other relevant Highland Council strategic development plans?**

The Project directly supports the priorities of The Highland Council's Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP), where Whaligoe Steps has been identified as a tourism infrastructure hotspot requiring investment to address visitor management, road safety, accessibility, and community impacts. The project's upgrade to Tier 1 status in May 2026 reflects its strategic importance and priority for delivery.

The project will contribute to Highland Council objectives by improving essential infrastructure, supporting sustainable tourism, enhancing community wellbeing, and protecting nationally significant heritage assets. The provision of a purpose-built visitor car park, accessible parking bays, improved trunk road access, safer pedestrian routes, and visitor facilities will address existing infrastructure deficiencies, improve visitor management, and create a safer and more accessible environment for all users.

The project also supports the Council's commitment to ensuring that tourism growth benefits local communities. By removing visitor parking from the existing single-track residential road, the scheme will reduce congestion and safety risks, improve access for residents and emergency services, and minimise the impact of visitor traffic on local amenity.

In addition, the project will enhance the long-term sustainability of Whaligoe Steps as a visitor destination by protecting the site's unique heritage, improving interpretation and visitor

understanding, and helping to manage increasing visitor numbers in a responsible manner. This will support the local economy through sustainable tourism while safeguarding the environmental and cultural qualities that make the site significant.

Overall, the project delivers a long-term infrastructure solution that balances the needs of residents, visitors, and the environment while supporting Highland Council priorities for sustainable economic growth, community wellbeing, improved infrastructure, and heritage conservation.

4.8	**How do you know there is local support for the project? How can you evidence this?** Provide evidence as supporting documents.

There is strong local support for the Project from residents, community representatives, and local elected Members. The project has been developed in response to longstanding concerns regarding road safety, traffic congestion, inadequate parking provision, and the impacts of increasing visitor numbers on the local community.

Local residents have consistently highlighted issues associated with visitor vehicles parking on the single-track residential road and surrounding verges, creating access difficulties, safety risks, and loss of amenity. The proposed project directly addresses these concerns by providing dedicated visitor parking and diverting visitor traffic away from residential properties.

The strength of local support is demonstrated by the attached joint letter of support from local elected Members, which reflects a shared recognition of the urgent need for investment. The letter highlights the significant safety concerns affecting residents and visitors, the importance of protecting local amenity, and the wider economic and tourism benefits that the project will deliver. The project's upgrade from Tier 2 to Tier 1 status within The Highland Council's Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP) further demonstrates the recognised need for intervention and the priority attached to delivering a long-term solution.

Supporting Evidence Attached:

- Joint letter of support from local elected Members.

While only the Members' letter is being submitted as supporting evidence, it represents broad local backing for the project and reflects the concerns and aspirations that have been consistently raised by the community regarding safety, accessibility, visitor management, and the long-term sustainability of Whaligoe Steps.

4.9	**Outputs and outcomes – Please refer to the application guidance for further information and a definition of what constitutes "outputs" and "outcomes".**
(a)	**What are the immediate and short-term outputs that your project will achieve? How will you measure them?**

The Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project will deliver a range of tangible outputs that address existing infrastructure deficiencies and improve safety, accessibility, and visitor management.

Key outputs will include:

- Construction of a purpose-built visitor car park with dedicated accessible parking bays.
- Upgraded trunk road access to improve vehicle safety and traffic flow.
- Creation of safer pedestrian routes between the car park and visitor attraction.
- Installation of wayfinding, interpretation, and safety signage.

- Removal of visitor parking from the existing single-track residential road.
- Improved accessibility for visitors, including those with mobility impairments.
- Enhanced visitor understanding of the site's nationally significant Norse and fishing heritage.

How These Outputs Will Be Measured

- Number of parking spaces and accessible bays created.
- Completion of trunk road access and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.
- Number of interpretation, wayfinding, and safety signs installed.
- Monitoring of visitor parking patterns and reduction in parking on the residential road.
- Feedback from residents on reduced congestion and improved access to their properties.
- Visitor feedback on accessibility, safety, and overall visitor experience.
- Project completion against agreed budget, programme, and specification.
-

In the short term, the project will provide a safer and more welcoming gateway to Whaligoe Steps, reduce traffic and parking pressures on the local community, improve accessibility, and enhance the overall visitor experience. These outputs will establish the foundations for longer-term economic, social, and environmental benefits while protecting an important heritage asset for future generations.

(b)	**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?**

The Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project will deliver lasting benefits for residents, visitors, the local economy, and the environment. The project's long-term outcome will be the creation of a safe, accessible, and sustainable visitor destination that protects a nationally significant heritage asset while reducing the impacts of tourism on the local community.

Key long-term outcomes will include:

- Improved road and pedestrian safety through the provision of dedicated visitor parking, safer access arrangements, and the removal of visitor traffic from the existing single-track residential road.
- Improved quality of life for local residents, with reduced congestion, unrestricted access to homes, and a significant reduction in visitor-related disruption.
- Enhanced accessibility and inclusion, enabling a wider range of visitors, including those with mobility impairments, to access and enjoy the site.
- Protection and enhancement of a nationally important heritage asset, ensuring Whaligoe Steps remains accessible and valued for future generations.
- More sustainable tourism management, reducing environmental damage caused by informal parking and unmanaged visitor activity.
- Increased visitor satisfaction and longer dwell times, supporting local businesses and the wider Caithness economy.

How outcomes will be measured:

- Feedback from residents on reductions in traffic congestion and improved access.
- Monitoring of visitor parking behaviour and use of the new car park.
- Reduction in instances of roadside and inappropriate parking.
- Visitor feedback on safety, accessibility, and overall experience.
- Increased engagement with interpretation and heritage information.
- Ongoing monitoring of visitor numbers and site conditions.
- Evidence of continued use and maintenance of the infrastructure.
-

The project's legacy will be a permanent infrastructure solution that balances the needs of visitors and residents, supports sustainable tourism growth, safeguards an iconic heritage attraction, and strengthens the long-term economic resilience of the Caithness area.

(c)	**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

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

Following completion, the infrastructure will be owned, managed, and maintained by The Highland Council, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the investment and the continued delivery of project benefits.

The project has been designed as a permanent solution to the infrastructure, safety, and visitor management challenges at Whaligoe Steps. Ongoing maintenance of the visitor car park, access infrastructure, pedestrian routes, signage, and associated assets will be incorporated into The Highland Council's existing asset management and maintenance programmes, ensuring that the site remains safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.

The project will also generate long-term value by reducing the ongoing impacts of unmanaged visitor activity, including roadside parking, traffic congestion, and environmental degradation. By providing appropriate infrastructure from the outset, future maintenance liabilities associated with damage to verges, access routes, and surrounding land will be minimised.
The interpretation and wayfinding elements have been designed using durable, low-maintenance materials to ensure a long operational lifespan, while the car park and access improvements have been engineered to accommodate future visitor demand.

The lasting legacy of the project will be a sustainable visitor management solution that protects local residents, enhances road safety, safeguards an important heritage asset, and supports the continued growth of the visitor economy in Caithness. The infrastructure will continue to provide benefits for many years beyond the funding period, ensuring that Whaligoe Steps can be enjoyed safely and responsibly by future generations while maintaining its value as a key tourism and cultural asset.

4.11	**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.**

The Project has been designed to deliver significant social and economic benefits while minimising environmental impacts during construction and operation. Environmental considerations have been embedded throughout the project design and delivery process.

Construction activities will be carefully managed to minimise disturbance to the surrounding landscape, habitats, and local environment. Contractors will be required to implement appropriate environmental management measures, including pollution prevention controls, responsible waste management practices, dust suppression, and measures to minimise noise and disruption during construction.

The project will actively address existing environmental pressures caused by unmanaged visitor activity. At present, informal parking on verges and roadside areas is causing damage to vegetation, erosion, and visual impacts on the landscape. By providing a purpose-built visitor car park and clearly defined access routes, the project will reduce these impacts, protect surrounding land, and improve the overall environmental quality of the site.

The scheme supports sustainable tourism by directing visitors through appropriate infrastructure, reducing congestion and improving traffic flow. Improved visitor management and interpretation will encourage responsible behaviour, increase awareness of the area's natural and cultural heritage, and help protect the site for future generations.
Where practical, materials will be sourced responsibly, and durable, low-maintenance infrastructure will be used to maximise the lifespan of the investment and reduce future resource requirements. Appropriate landscaping and environmental enhancement measures will also be incorporated into the project design.
Overall, the project will deliver a net environmental benefit by reducing the adverse impacts of unmanaged visitor pressures, protecting the local landscape, and providing sustainable infrastructure that supports the long-term stewardship of this nationally significant heritage destination.

4.12	**Please describe how your project will demonstrate value for money. What level of community and/or economic benefit will the project deliver in proportion to the CRF grant amount requested?**

The Project represents excellent value for money, delivering substantial and lasting community, economic, environmental, and heritage benefits for a relatively modest CRF investment. The grant will unlock a fully shovel-ready project that addresses longstanding infrastructure and safety issues at one of Caithness' most important visitor attractions.

The requested CRF funding will help secure the remaining match funding required to deliver the project in full, enabling significant public benefits that far exceed the grant value. The project will provide permanent infrastructure, including a purpose-built visitor car park, accessible parking bays, improved road access, pedestrian routes, and interpretation infrastructure, creating a long-term asset that will serve residents and visitors for decades.

The project will deliver measurable community benefits by reducing congestion, improving road safety, removing visitor traffic from the single-track residential road, and restoring residents' ability to safely access their homes. It will also improve accessibility and inclusion, ensuring a wider range of visitors can enjoy the site.

Economically, the project will support the continued growth of sustainable tourism in Caithness by enhancing the visitor experience at a nationally significant heritage attraction on the North Coast 500 route. Improved infrastructure will encourage longer visits, increase visitor satisfaction, and support spending within local businesses and communities.

The investment will also protect a nationally important heritage asset and reduce environmental impacts caused by unmanaged parking and visitor activity.

By leveraging significant partner funding and delivering lasting benefits across multiple priorities, the project represents a highly cost-effective investment that will generate long-term value for the community, economy, environment, and visitors well beyond the period of grant support.

4.13	**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?**

The Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project has been developed with accessibility, safety, and inclusion as key considerations. The project seeks to improve access to the site for all users while ensuring that no group is disadvantaged or excluded from benefiting from the investment.
A key element of the project is the provision of dedicated accessible parking bays within the new visitor car park, improving access for people with disabilities and those with reduced mobility. Improved pedestrian routes and clearer wayfinding will make the site easier and safer to navigate for a wide range of users, including older people, families with young children, and visitors who may require additional support when accessing the site.

The project will also improve safety for all visitors by reducing conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and creating a more welcoming and accessible arrival experience. Interpretation and visitor information will be designed to be clear and easy to understand, enabling more people to engage with and learn about the site's rich Norse and fishing heritage.

The project is not targeted at any specific group but is intended to benefit all users of the site. Particular consideration has been given to groups who may currently face barriers to accessing or enjoying the site, including disabled people, older adults, and families. By providing safer, more accessible infrastructure, the project will enable a wider range of people to visit and enjoy this nationally significant heritage attraction.
Overall, the project will create a safer, more inclusive, and more accessible visitor experience, ensuring that the benefits of the investment can be enjoyed by residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

SECTION 5: PROJECT BUDGET

5.1 **Costs should be accurate and current, based on quotes or tenders as per Highland Council standing orders.**

Internal Council fees (i.e. fees charged by Council services or departments) are generally not eligible for claiming against CRF. If project costs listed below include internal fees, these must be funded via Council core budget or other external funders.

Highland Council Staff costs can only be claimed against CRF for new and additional posts not already funded via THC core budget.

COSTS TO BE FUNDED BY CRF GRANT

Budget Heading	Detailed Costs	Revenue/Capital	Amount (excl. VAT)
Landscaping			£2000
Legal Fees			£30000
Landscaping			£12000
Interpretation			£2000
Signage			£6000
Construction			£107,500
		TOTAL	£159,500

COSTS TO BE FUNDED BY OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Budget Heading	Detailed Costs	Revenue/Capital	Amount (excl. VAT)
Staff Salary			£40,000
Construction			£313,500
Employer costs			£20000

Travel/Subsistence			£2000
Preliminaries			£119000
Construction Retention			£14230
Contingency			£42100
RISK/OPTIMUM BIAS 30%			£142500
Inflation			£48000
		TOTAL	£741,330
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£900,830**
		I can confirm all costs listed above are exclusive of VAT	**Yes x No ☐**
		I can confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?	**Yes x No ☐**

I can confirm that the project costs listed above are based on valid quotes/tenders. *Please provide all quotes/tender documents as supporting evidence to this application.*	**Yes** x **No** ☐ **The project cost are based on prices provided from our Project Design Unit.**

5.2	**Please detail the steps taken to ensure Procurement is/will be compliant with Highland Council standing orders**

As the project will be delivered by The Highland Council, all procurement activities will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and approved procurement procedures. The Council's Procurement Team will support the tendering and contract award process to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, transparency, fairness and value for money. Appropriate competitive procurement processes will be used for all works and services associated with the Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project, with full audit trails maintained throughout.

5.3	**Do you have a budget code set up for this project?** ***Please note a specific project budget code must be provided to CRF team prior to project start.***	**Yes** ☒ **Not yet** ☐
	If yes, please add budget code here:	

SECTION 6 – PROJECT FINANCE

6.1	**Please provide details below of match funding if applicable. If funding is via THC core budget, please add the name of the Budget Holder.**

Funding source	Budget holder name (if relevant)	Confirmed?	Date Confirmed or Decision Expected	Amount £

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund		Yes ☐ No ☒	02/10/2026	£621,330
Highland Council Capital Loan		Yes ☐ No ☒	28/09/2026	£120,000
		Yes ☐ No ☐		
			Total match funding	£741,330
			CRF Grant amount requested	£159,500
			TOTAL FUNDING *This should be equal to the Total Project costs listed at 5.1*	**£900,830**

6.2	**Will the project involve "in kind" support?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
	If yes, please detail.	

6.3	**Please explain why Community Regeneration Funding is required to deliver the project.**	Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) support is essential to the delivery of the Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements Project. The project requires a fully funded package before construction can commence, and the CRF contribution is a critical element of the match funding needed to bridge the remaining funding gap. While the Highland Council has secured and is seeking funding from other sources, there is no alternative funding currently available to replace the CRF contribution. Without CRF support, the project would not be financially viable and would be unable to proceed. As a result, the significant infrastructure, safety, accessibility and visitor management issues at Whaligoe Steps would remain unresolved, and the economic and community benefits associated with the project would not be realised.
6.4	**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 ☐
	If yes, how will the income benefit the wider Highland community? 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.	Yes. The project will generate income through parking charges at the new purpose-built visitor car park. This income will play an important role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project and the continued management of the site. The income generated will be used to repay The Highland Council's £120,000 Capital Loan over a 20-year period.
7.2	**How will you ensure that local organisations/ businesses are not disadvantaged because of the project? Are they supportive of the project?**	The project has been developed to support, rather than disadvantage, local businesses and organisations. The proposed infrastructure improvements will address existing issues associated with unmanaged visitor numbers, including congestion, unsafe

		roadside parking and pressure on local infrastructure. Bys providing a dedicated visitor car park, safer access arrangements and improved visitor facilities, the project will create a more positive and sustainable visitor experience, encouraging visitors to stay longer in the area and increase spending within the local economy. The project will help protect and grow the local visitor economy by improving access to one of Caithness' most significant tourism assets. Enhanced infrastructure will enable the site to accommodate visitors more safely and effectively, supporting existing tourism businesses while creating opportunities for further economic growth. Improved visitor facilities are expected to increase visitor satisfaction, encourage repeat visits and strengthen the area's reputation as a destination, benefiting accommodation providers, food and drink businesses, retailers and other local enterprises. The project does not restrict access to existing businesses or organisations, nor does it create any barriers to trade. Instead, it aims to strengthen the local economy by ensuring tourism can be managed sustainably, reducing the negative impacts of visitor pressure while maximising the economic benefits generated by tourism. The project benefits from strong local support, including support from elected members who have provided a united letter in support of the proposals. Members recognise the need to address longstanding safety and infrastructure issues at Whaligoe Steps and the importance of the project in supporting both the local community and the wider economy.

SECTION 8 – SIGNATURE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	
8.1	**Project lead, Service/Department Lead or equivalent – the person signing this application has the authority within the organisation to apply for grant funding.**
I declare that the activity funded by the costs proposed to be funded by CRF is not a statutory duty and the CRF grant would enable the delivery of additional outcomes that could not be achieved without it being in place.	
I declare that procurement within the project is compliant with Highland Council standing orders and a record of this will be retained in line with the grant conditions if the funding is approved.	
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.	

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.		
	Signature: [redacted] **Print:** [redacted] **Job title:** [redacted]	**Date:** [redacted]

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
	Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos, feasibility study	Yes ☒ No ☐
	Confirmation/evidence of match funding	Yes ☐ No ☒ NA ☐
	Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐
	Evidence of valid and current insurance	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Business plan (income generation projects only)	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Job descriptions (for CRF funded posts)	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒
	Valid quotations or estimates	Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐
	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.

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
4243	Dunnet Forestry Trust	Dunnet Community Forest Woodland Regeneration	This project is the next key phase in DFT's long term plan to maintain and conserve the forest as a community-owned asset. It seeks to bring together members of the local community of all ages and abilities to undertake the work required, in the course of which the intention is that they will learn new skills, keep alive traditional forestry practices and open up new income streams to fund future work in the forest.	£ 54,960.00	£ 25,000.00	45.5%	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	28	The application forms part of a phased programme of improvements at the club. The proposed works are deliverable within the required timescale and address identified accessibility and sustainability requirements. The project is expected to improve access for people with mobility challenges and support the ongoing operation of the club through replacement of essential equipment. The proposal demonstrates a clear need and is supported by a wider plan for improvements at the club
4268	Thurso Bowling Club	Thurso Bowling Club upgrades	This project is to continue the upgrading of Thurso Bowling Club to meet the needs of the community and ensure that people of all abilities can continue to benefit from involvement in the club. Thurso Bowling Club state they are committed to providing a totally inclusive club open to both players and visitors.	£ 12,383.00	£ 11,383.00	91.9%	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	28	The application presents these improvements as priorities in a phased developed plan. The outputs are deliverable within the required timescale and address clear identified needs around accessibility and sustainability of the bowling green. The project will deliver equality benefits through improved access for people with mobility challenges, and ensure sustainability of the club with a new greens mower, improving reliability and reducing maintenance costs. Overall, the proposal represents good value for money and aligns well with community resilience objectives.
4269	Thurso Royal British Legion	Thurso Legion Community Hall modernisation Phase 2	The application seeks to upgrade the Thurso Legion Community Hall to a modern, welcoming, connected, multi-use facility that can be enjoyed by the entire Thurso community and businesses for numerous activities.	£ 22,288.00	£ 11,144.00	50.0%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	27	The application seeks to continue the modernisation of the community hall venue. The project is ready to proceed, has secured 50% match funding and benefits from volunteer involvement and community support. The proposed improvements are intended to increase the quality and capacity of the facility and support its longer term use. While the application provides less detail on equalities and environmental outcomes, it demonstrates a clear need for investment in a widely used community venue.
4270	Caithness Mental Health Support Group	The Haven Upgrade	The applicant is seeking to upgrade and improve the existing Haven which is looking tired and worn, this includes flooring, furniture, doors, decoration and blinds. CMHSG wish to see the centre to return to a warm, welcoming and comfortable space for people experiencing poor mental health, loneliness and social isolation.	£ 24,588.24	£ 20,000.00	81.3%	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	28	The project will upgrade the Haven facility in Wick through improvements to flooring, furniture, doors and internal decoration. The application identifies maintenance, safety and condition issues which the project seeks to address. The improvements are intended to enhance the quality of the environment for those accessing support services at the facility. The application demonstrates a clear need and community benefit.
4276	Highland Council	Picnic bench provision across Caithness	The application is for a project to install 20 benches and picnic tables across Highland Council parks and open spaces within Caithness. This initiative aims to enhance the usability, accessibility, and overall visitor experience of public green spaces for both residents and visitors.	£ 10,128.00	£ 10,128.00	100.0%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	27	The application seeks to improve public access to and use of open spaces across Caithness through the installation of benches and picnic tables. The proposal aligns with local priorities and provides a lasting improvement to public amenities. The project addresses an identified need and can be delivered using existing Council staff resources for installation. While no financial match funding is provided, the use of internal resources reduces overall costs.
4278	Highland Council	Whaligoe Steps Access and Visitor Infrastructure Improvements	The project seeks to deliver a purpose-built visitor car park with accessible bays, upgraded A9 trunk road access, safer pedestrian routes, interpretation, wayfinding, and safety signage. A significant aim is that visitor traffic will be diverted away from the single-track residential road, improving road safety, protecting local amenity, and preventing further road and verge damage.	£ 900,830.00	£ 159,500.00	17.7%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	28	The application seeks to address visitor management, access and road safety issues associated with the Whaligoe Steps visitor site. The proposal aligns with the Council's Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan and has been identified as a Tier 1 priority project. Planning consent is in place and significant match funding has been secured. The project is expected to improve parking provision, accessibility, pedestrian safety and visitor information, while helping to reduce traffic impacts on nearby residents and local infrastructure.

Caithness CRF allocation following August 2026 Committee	£ 553,125.52
Funding returned to Caithness CRF allocation from underspend	£ 50,000.00
Total Caithness CRF available at November 2026 Committee	**£ 603,125.52**
Total applied for at November 2026 Caithness Committee	**£ 237,155.00**
Remaining funding if all applications are approved	**£ 365,970.52**

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 usually suggest that additional conditions will be attached to the award to address these concerns.