The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**7**
Report No	**SCC/33/26**

Committee: **Sutherland County**

Date: **30 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 five funding requests to the Sutherland Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) budget for 2026-27, for discussion and decision by Members. The report also updates Members on the Sutherland CRF budget position for 2026-27.

The five applications are provided as **Appendix 1** to this report, and a technical assessment summary is provided as **Appendix 2**. An update on the Sutherland 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 Sutherland;
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** – Sutherland has available CRF funding of £798,029.62. The applications under consideration make a total request of £200,420.59. 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 funds are controlled by local Members, it is currently comprised of the Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF). This is a Scottish Government funding stream to support economic regeneration and sustainable development in Highland. In previous years, Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funds have also been available at Local Area Committee level. No PBIP funding has been made available by the Scottish Government for 2026/27. Area Committees are awarded devolved allocations of HCCF funds according to an approved formula, and decision making on which projects should receive funding sits with elected Members.

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

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

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

Projects should be able to demonstrate that they are:-

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

5.3 Applications brought to this committee have been identified by Members as addressing priorities set out in the Sutherland 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 Sutherland at Area Committee on 30 November 2026 is as follows:

Funding Source	**Designation**	**Amount**
Highland Costal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Tranche 7	Capital or Revenue	£679,292.75
Highland Coastal Communities Fund (HCCF) – Tranche 6	Capital or Revenue	£550,865.25
Total confirmed Sutherland CRF budget for 2026-27		**£1,230,158.00**
Less Awards Made from Sutherland CRF Budget 2026-27 To Date		£432,128.38
Available CRF budget on 30 November 2026		**£798,029.62**

Five applications are under consideration by Members today, with a total grant request value of **£200,420.59.**

If Members were to approve all the applications, there would be **£597,609.03** remaining in the Sutherland CRF budget for 2026-27.

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

- **Appendix 1** – Project Application Forms
- **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:	10 November 2026
Authors:	Fiona Cameron, CRF Programme Manager Chloe Murray, Project Officer
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Project Application Forms Appendix 2 – Project Technical Assessment – RAG Summary

Community Regeneration Funding (CRF)
Application Form

(August 2026 – 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 9am on 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**	**CRF4249**
1.2	**Organisation**	Golspie Primary School Parent Council
1.3	**Project title**	Golspie Primary School Playpark
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Golspie Primary School Parent Council want to install new playground equipment at Golspie Primary School, which can also be accessed by children in the community outwith school hours. The previous playground equipment was condemned following a Highland Council inspection, and so the school currently has minimal outdoor play facilities.

		Following a whole school consultation, and allowing children to choose their playpark, we chose Highland Council approved supplier Proludic as our supplier of choice. Phase 1 (smaller climbing frame and play panels) funding is confirmed from Kilbraur CBT and our own fundraising, with installation happening within the next 6 weeks. We are now seeking funding for phase 2, which will include 1 large climbing frame for older children and a rotating climber.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£38853.45
		Match funding	Unconfirmed
		CRF grant requested	£38853.45
1.6	**Start date**	Click or tap to enter a date. August 2026	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	Click or tap to enter a date. August 2027	
1.8	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.9	**Artificial Intelligence Assistance Declaration**	Have you used any form of AI assistance in the preparation of this application? Yes ☒ No ☐	
	For guidance on the appropriate use of AI in funding applications, please refer to ***Use of AI in Funding Application Guidance.***		

SECTION 2: CONTACT AND ORGANISATION DETAILS		
2.1	**Organisation**	Golspie Primary School Parent Council
2.2	**Address and postcode**	[redacted]
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**	[redacted]

2.8	**Organisation type**	☐	Company limited by guarantee
		☒	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☐	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	N/A	
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.**		
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.**	**KW10 6RW**
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.**	Highland Council owns the land and playground for Golspie Primary site. The Parent Council will transfer funds to The Highland Council to purchase and install the play equipment. The Parent Council will cover maintenance costs.
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.**	There are no statutory or regulatory consents required, however the Parent Council has followed the correct procedures through the Highland Council to obtain approval.

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

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

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
Consultation with all children at Golspie Primary School	07/05/2025
Obtain 3 quotes from Highland Council approved suppliers	October 2025
Fundraising	April 2027
Purchase and installation	April 2027
	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?

A new playpark is an important investment in our community because it provides a safe, inclusive space where children can play, learn, and develop essential life skills. Access to outdoor play supports physical health by encouraging regular exercise and improves overall wellbeing. The playpark will also support children's social and emotional development. Through play, children learn to build friendships, co-operate, share, and develop confidence. These experiences are especially valuable in today's increasingly digital world, where opportunities for active, face-to-face interaction can be limited. With access available outwith school hours, it is another space for our community and children to play which will build on community resilience for years to come. The play equipment has a life-span of 25 years plus, so will be here for a long time.

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

Yes. Golspie Place Plan vision states the aim is to build a thriving, resilient, self reliant and supportive community where all ages can live, work, learn and play and having a play park will not only do this, but will help build on community spirit.
From the local place plan a need for Community Assets and local community infrastructure was identified. The play park will be available out of hours during weekends and evenings which will allow families the use of the playpark.

From the Prosperity section in the Sutherland Place Plan the playpark will allow outdoor learning opportunities and create ways families and children can enjoy youth space and activities.

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

Consultation with Golspie Primary School pupils

Engagement and discussion with local families

Engagement with local organisations such as GoGolspie and Golspie Youth Action Project

Social media engagement requesting feedback and support of the 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?

The playpark could be used by over 200 children in the short term as there are circa 90 pupils at Golspie Primary School currently and we anticipate more children will use the playpark at weekends and after school. It will improve community cohesion as families will be brought together in a shared environment. Parents, carers and children will have opportunities to connect, strengthening relationships and fostering a stronger sense of belonging within the area. It will be a free, local facility for families, reducing barriers to play for those who may not have access to transport or have finances for other recreational opportunities.

One way of measuring the output would be feedback from families after installation.

(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 positive outcome on the children will allow them to have more fun, more exercise, become healthier and reduce bullying and behaviour problems.

We can measure this by observations from school staff and Parent Council members of the use of the equipment during school breaks, physical education, outdoor learning and outwith school hours.

We hope it will promote equality and inclusion across the community.

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

We are aware that there will be ongoing maintenance costs associated with the installation of any play equipment. We have a very active parent council who are already maintaining the current trim trail and all equipment will be subject to an annual inspection by Highland Council. There is some confusion about whether the Highland Council are currently doing inspections, but we will ensure that an annual inspection by a regulatory body is carried out. Proludic also give an estimated annual maintenance cost which shows the projected figures for upkeep and maintenance over the 25 year warranty period. The parent council are responsible for the maintenance costs which we are committed to funding over the lifespan of the equipment.

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.**

Providing a playpark will increase children being outdoors and will reduce the use of screens, and therefore energy use. The areas are also intended to be used as outdoor classrooms. We also intend to plant willow to provide natural living play structures. The parent council have also just implemented a polycrub in the school where children grow vegetables.

The supplier Proludic who we chose, actively incorporates recycled materials without compromising strength, safety or design quality. 75% of proludic products contain recycled raw materials, while 88% of materials used in production are recyclable. This supports a circular approach heping to reduce waste and lessen demand for new raw materials.

They provide a 25 year guarantee for equipment quality and a life-time guarantee against structural failure. Having long lasting equipment will ensure that the playpark is there for years to come.

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?**

We have spent some time on meetings with the playpark strategist for the Highland Council, Lynn MacGilivary in ensuring that the choice of play equipment is fully inclusive so that no child will be excluded or disadvantaged from benefitting from the project. **The project will ensure all children are able to play together.**

The large climbing cube play frame, although has quite challenging climbing is very open in nature, so allows children who possibly can't climb to still play in and around the unit. There is horizontal bars linking the 2 sections to allow those with limited mobility to utilise their upper body strength.

The phase 2 units are not being installed in isolation and are part of a wider inclusive approach that has been taken into consideration with phase 1 and also the existing trim trail. Items from phase 1 will cover aspects of accessibility, and alternative play values, than what is being included in phase 2. Phase 1 multiplay unit provides accessible and inclusive features (easy access steps, tactile elements, etc), plus we are also including lower level play and quieter/sensory play through music and games panels. Therefore there is already a good level of accessible and sensory items in the playground, with phase 2 equipment being more

challenging to cater for those who need more dynamic and challenging play. The climbing cube will cater for 30 users at once, encouraging children to play together allowing good social interaction, cooperation and group play.

For a play area to be fully inclusive, it needs to to cater for all abilities, and this includes those older and more physically able. Risk management and motor development are also a huge part of the benefits of play. There are lots of different hanging and climbing features on the cube unit all with varying levels of difficulty. This ensures that a wide range of ages and abilities are catered for.

Climbing and rotating items can have a soothing and calming effect for those with cognitive disabilities or neurodivergence, but those who would like a quieter approach have been catered for in Phase 1 with quieter sensory areas we have created.

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.(

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?	**10 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
Playpark Equipment	Diablo Multiplay Unit and installation		£24,505.80
	Rotating climber and installation		£5,671.00
	Surfacing, Travel/Accomodation, Prelims, Post Install Inspection, Additional Delivery Zonal & Fuel Surcharge Delivery		£8676.65
	*see attached quote from Proludic		
		Total revenue expenditure	£
		Total capital expenditure	£38853.45
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£38853.45**
		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 sought 3 quotes from companies approved by The Highland Council. Wicksteed and Sutcliffe were also consulted and similar project costs were given. We chose proludic as preferred supplier due to children preferring their equipment in surveys with them. The play equipment will last 25 years or more.

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 £
Gordonbush Community Fund	Yes ☐ No ☒	06/10/2026	20,000
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
		Total match funding	**£unconfirmed**
		CRF requested	**£38853.45**
		Total funding	**£38853.45**

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.

Although we have been extensively fundraising within the community, the amount we can raise falls significantly short of what it would cost to purchase and install safe, approved equipment. Highland council have strict criteria of which suppliers can be used so that the equipment will meet safety standards. Neither the council or the school have got funds available in their budget to install a playground. In a small rural community, fundraising is limited.

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

£32053.53 is the remaining bank balance in our account.

£24976.34 is from Kilbraur for Phase 1 of the playpark which we are awaiting details to transfer to the Highland Council to purchase Phase 1 equipment.

The parent council also pay for transport to Eden Court for the schools annual pantomine trip at Christmas, which costs around £1500.

We pay for the primary 7 leavers hoodies and quite often will cover costs of the schools "Seesaw" yearly membership (this is to be confirmed this year at our next meeting) but usually comes to £1500.

We also pay for gardening supplies and weekly gardening classes in our polycrub, with £1450 from the Pebble Trust included in this.

The final £2627.19 reserves are to be used for continued maintenance of the existing trim trail and future maintenance of the new equipment.

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 reserves are to be used for continued maintenance of the existing trim trail and future maintenance of the new equipment, and as explained above.

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

We have also applied for Gordonbush Community Benefit Trust for £20,000 but having spoken to Kirsty Partridge there are no guarantees that we will get this funding. We will hear from Gordonbush on 6th October whether we are successful and we can communicate this with you ahead of the panel meeting in November.

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 are no local organisations/businesses on the approved Highland Council playpark supplier list, so this is not applicable.

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

We have no means of being able to ensure to get enough fundraising to pay a loan.

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?
Kilbraur Windfarm Community Benefit Trust	5th May 2026	£20000	Yes ☐ No ☒
Kilbraur Windfarm Community Benefit Trust	February 2026	£4976.34	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.

Signatur [redacted] **Print:** [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
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

(August 2026 – 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 9am on 7th October 2026. Extended to 14th October @ 5pm due to ill health – thank you.

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**	CRF 4275
1.2	**Organisation**	Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC
1.3	**Project title**	Sutherland Community Seaweed Site Design Planning Phase 1
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Sutherland in the Northwest Highlands is threatened by fundamental challenges of extreme population sparsity, unaffordable housing, chronic depopulation and food and fuel poverty. Alongside this, our biodiversity is under mounting pressure from a range of significant environmental challenges, compounding the vulnerability of already fragile ecosystems. Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC has been set up as an outcome of extensive community work, by

		Assynt Development Trust, Scourie Community Development Company and Kinlochbervie Community Company to address these challenges through seaweed farming, creating quality jobs through sustainable development. We will establish seaweed farming alongside seaweed gathering and primary processing facilities to provide a wide range of quality seaweeds to a wide range of markets. The world is rapidly turning to seaweed as a source of biomaterial for replacement of fossil fuels, human food and animal feed. For this phase of the project and for this application we wish to focus on the design and planning requirements for our processing plant sites in Lochinver and Kinlochbervie and our Nursery site in Scourie. We have identified sites in Kinlochbervie, Scourie and Lochinver and now wish to understand the planning and build considerations in the 3 localities. This funding, if successful, will allow our architect to recce all three sites and do initial drawings to get us to pre-planning and to help us move forward in leasing the three sites. Both Highland Council (Kinlochbervie and Lochinver sites) and the Young Crofter in Scourie need to see our plans before progressing.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£4,500
		Match funding	£ match funding is sought for other aspects of the project but not specifically for aspects outlined in this application.
		CRF grant requested	£4,500
1.6	**Start date**	30/11/2026	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	31/03/2027	
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 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**	Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC	
2.2	**Address and postcode**		
2.3	**Main contact name**		
2.4	**Position in the organisation**		
2.5	**Contact number**		
2.6	**Email address**		
2.7	**Website address**	N/A	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☐	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☐	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify): Community Interest Company
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	SC870173	
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.**	N/A	
2.12	**Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?**	☐	Whole
		☐	Partial
		☒	None
2.13	**Provide details of VAT exemptions.**	CIC has not reached the VAT threshold in income/turnover.	

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	Kinlochbervie – IV27 4RR Scourie – IV27 4TG Lochinver - IV27 4JP
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.**	In negotiation with Highland Council for sites in both Lochinver and Kinlochbervie and with Young Crofter for site in Scourie.
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.**	This funding application if successful will allow the necessary site investigation which will be the foundations for the planning applications.

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

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

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
Recce sites in Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie	11/12/2026
Initial Drawings by Sutherland Drawing Services delivered to Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC	18/01/2027
Drawings Confirmed and delivered to Highland Council and Young Crofter	15/02/2027
Pre-planning applications lodged with Highland Council	15/03/2027
	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?

(500 words max limit)

The project will help economic recovery and sustain economic growth.

CRF kindly funded the development of a robust Business Plan in 2024/25.

With guidance from our consultants (continued funding available for them via HIE) we will bring a new industry to the NW2045 area and with-it multiple jobs.

With increasing depopulation challenges and increasing cost of living issues we need attractive, sustainable jobs to retain our population, bring back residents, attract new residents and offer alternative employment possibilities to those transitioning from the oil and gas industry.

Sutherland Seaweed Community CIC brings a sustainable seaweed industry to the NW2045 area and when fully up and running will sustain at least 13 jobs.

It is hoped that more jobs will be available with associated businesses set up alongside Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC including possible marine waste recycling in both Lochinver and Kinlochbervie.

In the short term, this year and into early 2027 as it continues the development phase, Sutherland Community Seaweed is employing 2 part-time staff located in Kinlochbervie.

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC will focus on the needs and operations of 3 seaweed farming clusters, combining large scale farms with on-pier processing facilities enabling high enough volume of production from the outset to be able to secure contracts for sale with existing seaweed product makers.

This ambition recognises the need for new build dedicated onshore facilities in 3 locations: Lochinver, Kinlochbervie and Scourie.

Each of these facilities will be an innovation centre providing facilities for seaweed company activities and additional space for lease to other local companies, community groups and individuals.

The project will bring jobs and facilities to each of the three locations.

For this phase of the project we wish to explore and develop drawings and pre-planning application for the following:
Processing Plant with ancillary offices open to the wider community in Lochinver.
Nursery with office in Scourie.
Processing Plant with ancillary offices open to the wider community in Lochinver.

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

(500 words max limit)

Yes

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC was developed by Assynt Development Trust, Scourie Development Community Company and Kinlochbervie Community Company to address priorities identified in all 3 areas.

Please see below place plans for Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie.

Scourie
https://www.scouriedevelopment.scot/

https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Scourie-Community-Plan.pdf

Assynt
https://assyntdevelopmenttrust.org/local-place-plan-2025-onwards/

Kinlochbervie
https://irp.cdnwebsite.com/410a7107/files/uploaded/Kinlochbervie_Local_Place_Plan_2024_Draft_For_Consultation.pdf

In addition Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC plans for a processing plant and ancillary offices are included in the Kinlochbervie Masterplan being developed by Highland Council.

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)

We have considerable local support.

As already mentioned, Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC was set up because of development work by Assynt Development Trust, Scourie Development Community Company and Kinlochbervie Community Company.

As part of the development work for the project the Scottish Association for Marine Science in Oban, funded by Crowne Estate, researched the local area to determine if seaweed farming was a viable option.
Meeting local communities formed part of that research.

In the development of Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC's business plan, funded by CRF, significant community consultation took place in Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie with the two consultants meeting multiple community members in each of the sites.

The two part-time funded members of staff are from the local Kinlochbervie community and we have voluntary Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC ambassadors across the whole NW2045 area.

We have engaged with local fishermen and will continue to do so – its critical for us to work in collaboration with them.
As our plans continue to develop community engagement will be a constant.

Both the NW2045 and the NW2045 Regional Land Use Partnership are also supportive of Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC's plans.

Please see below for letter of support from Frances Gunn then Chair of the NW2045 from earlier this year for a match funding proposal – please note we don't have a NW2045 Chair at present but will be recruiting soon.
The NW2045 Steering Group continue to be supportive of our progress
https://www.northwest2045.scot/who-we-are/

This is an innovative, ingenious proposal from Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC to create a genuinely sustainable industry. Not only will it make a meaningful – essential - contribution to both the people and place of this area; it will provide inspiration and a model for others.
The communities in this area are facing an existential crisis. Over the past two decades, the number of young people (aged 0-15) has decreased by 47%, while the population of those aged 65 and over has increased by 45%. On the current trajectory, by 2045 there will be just 40 children across the 7 community council areas that make up the 3000km2 NorthWest2045 area.
This situation is the result of many intersecting issues, but the paucity of opportunities for young

people is a significant barrier to retaining this crucial demographic in the area.
The people of the NW2045 have produced a Vision for our area, which calls for:
- A place that is attractive for young people and families to live and work
- A model for a new diverse rural economy
- A place where communities can determine their own prospects
All the work of the NW2045 collective is striving towards that Vision.
Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC would contribute to all three elements of the Vision, particularly the 'new diverse rural economy'.
Creating sustainable enterprise opportunities in such a rural area is a panacea that is so often discussed but rarely realised in practice. I believe that Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC will achieve meaningful change, for the benefit of both our people and place.

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)

Our immediate and short-term outputs that refer to this funding application are to confirm locations in Lochinver and Kinlochbervie for our seaweed processing plants and ancillary offices and our nursery in Scourie.

- To have full recces with an architect to the proposed sites in Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie.
- To generate the information to proceed with leasing the land in all three locations.
- To get plans drawn up for all three locations.
- To apply for pre- planning in all three locations.
- To get a better understanding of the related costs of planning and building so we can secure additional funding.

These will be measured by all being the above information being delivered by end of March 2027.

<u>Please see quote from Kevin Jack – Sutherland Drawing Services.</u>

Sutherland drawing services fees - £400 per day * (feasibility stage) An additional £100 per day should be allowed to cover travel costs for days on site.

<u>Process</u>
Initial site visit, meeting to include each site and discuss proposals.

Prepare a brief for each building & site requirements and consider any initial potential construction, planning or building warrant issues.
Undertake preparation and submission of early pre-application enquiries with the council planning department and obtain feedback on proposals. This will allow consideration and integration of any early noted issues from the planning authority. (allow 4 - 6 weeks from submission)
Confirm sites.
Contact and arrange digital topographical surveys of each site by specialist surveyors.
Prepare initial designs for each site and building for comment, costing and feedback from client.
Prepare planning drawings/submission and lodge with council for consent (minimum 2 months).
On planning approval, appoint any required specialist such as structural engineer, energy performance specialist etc.
Prepare plans, specifications, documents and submit building warrant together with specialist design information if required for
consent. (allow 2 - 3 months).
Collate all relevant health and safety information as required prior to starting work and undertake duties under CDM for HSE a as required.
Assess and appoint appropriate experienced contractor/s.

	(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)

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC will bring sustainable seaweed industry to create quality jobs and reverse depopulation through sustainable capacity building in the community sector. Our vision is to have activity in Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie. These will cover multiple seaweed farm sites, enabling production of a range of seaweed species. These farms will be within easy reach of established harbour locations with good transport infrastructure and landing facilities. We will also have seaweed processing facilities at pier-side, enabling the elimination of transportation between harvest and processing. Our facilities will be powered by local renewable electricity through our microgrids further reducing our carbon footprint and ensuring that our seaweed is of the highest sustainability possible.

Our long term outcomes benefits and legacy will be a new industry with multiple jobs located in the NW2045 area working directly with Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC.

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

(500 words max limit)

This project has been designed to deliver long-term social, environmental and economic benefits that will continue beyond CFR Funding.

The CRF funding will provide an essential initial focus on our sites and planning processes to really kick start momentum with the confirmation of sites and associated costs.

Our business model is a sustainable model based on a combination of earned income, strategic partnerships, commissioned activity and future grant investment.

The project is building local skills, knowledge and community capacity, creating lasting benefits that will remain within the area after the CRF funding for this phase ends.

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)

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC environmental and social economic aims are as follows:

1. To provide a sustainable food source for humans, animals and plants: Seaweed is a highly nutritious and sustainable food source that is rich in vitamins, minerals, and protein.
2. To ensure we are environmentally friendly: Seaweed cultivation uses no freshwater, fertiliser, or pesticides.
3. To create jobs: Seaweed farming creates jobs in coastal areas where traditional industries such as fishing and crofting may be declining and offer opportunities to those living locally transitioning from the oil and gas industry.
4. To boost the local economy: Cultivating seaweed can create new business opportunities and stimulate local circular economies.
5. To promote Biodiversity: Seaweed farming can promote biodiversity in coastal areas by providing new habitats for marine organisms.
6. To enhance Water quality: Seaweed can help to improve water quality by absorbing excess nutrients and pollutants from the surrounding water.
7. To aid Ecosystem restoration: Seaweed cultivation can be used as a tool for ecosystem restoration by creating new habitats for fish and other marine organisms.
8. To aid Food security: Seaweed cultivation can help to improve food security by providing a locally sourced and sustainable food supply (for humans and animals).
9. To aid Carbon capture: Seaweed can be used to capture and sequester carbon, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
10. To produce Seaweed that can be offered as a biodegradable alternative to traditional plastic.

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)

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC is an inclusive organisation and wish to support all who face barriers into employment.
The Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC core team have practical experience in working with those who are deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent to elevate their employment opportunities and facilitate their access requirements.
They also have experience of working with those who care experienced or are carers, those who have a lived experience of the criminal justice system and those recovering from addictions and individuals returning to work after a period away from employment.

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC is also closely aligned to the NW2045's 5 Year Action Plan (2026 – 2031) has a priority to find opportunities for those who have additional support needs and support them into employment.

Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC is also closely aligned to the NW2045 Skills and Employability Project Work which will help to identify those interested in a career in seaweed farming.

The project will actively explore employing those who may face barriers to employment.

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?		**3**
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
Sutherland Drawing Services Fees	10 days @ £400 per day to recce 3 x shore sites in Kinlochbervie, Scourie and Lochinver and prepare information as per quote,	Revenue	£4000
Travel and Mileage Fees for Sutherland Drawing Services to visit Lochinver, Scourie and Kinlochbervie.	Allow 3 trips @ £100 per day	Revenue	£300
Subsistence and Hospitality for site visits for Sutherland Drawing Services		Revenue	£200
Total revenue expenditure			£4500
Total capital expenditure			£
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS			**£4500**
Is VAT included in these costs?			**Yes ☐ No x☐**
Can you confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?			**Yes x☐ 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 x☐ No ☐**

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

We sought architect/drawing services in our area and considered emissions due to long distance travel, capacity and value for money as key considerations.

Sutherland Drawing Services were the only service locally who were able to service our request offering capacity, a reasonable quote and the smallest travel emissions.

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.** Not sure if these are appropriate to list as they are not exactly match funding for the planning/architecture phase of the project being applied for but are for different areas of work. Have listed in case I should.

Name of funder	**Confirmed?**	**Date Confirmed or Decision Expected**	**Amount £**
HIE – for consultants – confirmation of farm sites, social licence applications, etc.	**Yes** ☐ **Yes** **No** ☐	Confirmed and about to commence claims.	£18,500
North and West Sutherland Trust – for logos/branding, office equipment and business consultancy support.	**Yes** ☐ Yes **No** ☐	Confirmed but not in bank account.	£4770
First Port – Start Up	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ No	Soon, hopefully.	£5000
North Highland Initiative	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ No	Soon, hopefully.	£2000
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Total match funding	**£**
		CRF requested	**£4,400**
		Total funding	**£**

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

At present there is significant in-kind support.

All three Directors of Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC are offering their services for free and have been doing so for many months.
As local community members we are committed to getting Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC up and running and are happy to give our time for nothing.

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

We are at the beginning of Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC's journey and have very limited funds in the bank.

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

The funds we have secured in our bank account are needed for cash flow purposes to allow access to HIE funds that have been secured for our Consultants.

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 don't have unrestricted funds.

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

We are applying to you for 100% for this bespoke architect/planning phase of the project.

We have separate funding bids into a number of other funders (some already successful) to fund – website design, logo design, office equipment, consultancy fees, social licence fees etc.

SECTION 7 – INCOME GENERATION		
7.1	**Will the project generate income?**	Yes ☐ No ☒
7.2	**If yes, how will the income benefit the organisation? Will it be re-invested to help with the sustainability of the project – if so, how? A copy of a business plan and/or budget forecast must be provided with the application.**	

The funding for this phase of the project will not generate income other than for Sutherland Drawing Services.

However, the critical work that will be done by Sutherland Drawing Services in this phase - if the funding bid is successful - will allow Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC to proceed at pace with their strategic plans giving the foundations for the development of all three locations.

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

Local organisations – Assynt Development Trust, Scourie Community Development Company and Kinlochbervie Community Company have all been heavily involved in the development of Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC and remain supportive.

The NW2045 continue to be supportive.

We are working closely with Highland Council including Highland Council Harbours, and no other businesses will be disadvantaged by our project.

We hope that Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC will be an asset to local organisations and businesses.

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

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?**
CRF Funding	28/02/2025	£23,805.2	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: **Print:**	**Date:** 14/10/2026

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

(August 2026 – 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 9am on 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**	CRF **5039**
1.2	**Organisation**	ELKCAL (Elphin Ledmore Knockan Community Association Limited)
1.3	**Project title**	Upgrade of Sustainable Heating System for Elphin Community Hall
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Design, supply, installation and commissioning of a photovoltaic (PV) solar generation renewable energy system with battery storage. Materials, Installation, Carriage and Commissioning of 12.88kW Solar PV System with Sonnen Battery Storage.

1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£26935.14
		Match funding	£0
		CRF grant requested	£26935.14 (80% £21548.12)
1.6	**Start date**	Click or tap to enter a date. October 2026	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	Click or tap to enter a date. May 2027	
1.8	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.9	**Artificial Intelligence Assistance Declaration**	Have you used any form of AI assistance in the preparation of this application? Yes ☐ No ☒	
	For guidance on the appropriate use of AI in funding applications, please refer to ***Use of AI in Funding Application Guidance.***		

SECTION 2: CONTACT AND ORGANISATION DETAILS			
2.1	**Organisation**	ELKCAL	
2.2	**Address and postcode**	Elphin Community Hall, Elphin, Lairg, Sutherland IV27 4HH	
2.3	**Main contact name**		
2.4	**Position in the organisation**		
2.5	**Contact number**		
2.6	**Email address**		
2.7	**Website address**	Elkcal.org	
2.8	**Organisation type**	☒	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☒	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	Company limited by guarantee, registered number: SC381507 Registered Scottish Charity number: SC042007	
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.**	NA	
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.**	**Elphin Community Hall**
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 ☐ 1 Years 11 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.**	In process of community asset transfer. The term has been extended by the Highland Council until the process is complete.
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)**
Supply of fittings for clients own frame ground mounted system.	December 2026
Supply and installation of solar PV panels onto Renusol mounting system	
Supply and install wiring of PV strings from panels to DC isolator located in plant room	

Supply and installation of DC isolators by Sonnen unit.	
Supply and install wiring of PV strings from DC isolator to Sonnen unit.	
Supply and installation of Sonnen unit in Utility and Sonnen power meter by incoming electrical supply	
Supply and installation of AC isolators.	
Supply and installation of single phase generation meter.	
Supply and installation of AC cabling and from Inverter to local distribution board.	
Commissioning of solar PV system.	
MCS commissioning certification and paperwork.	
MCS Handover Pack	
Notification of G98 connection to local DNO	
Supply and installation of ethernet cable from Sonnen unit to internet router	
Dates sequential	End May 2027

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

(500 words max limit)

Increased community engagement:

- increased use of the hall in the colder months as we would be able to afford routine use throughout the winter.

Quiet heating allows ease of use for hearing impaired users, film nights and music groups.

Our project meets current users' needs as well as securing a resilient resource for the future, helping preserve the fabric of the building for future generations.

The project will maintain and enhance the community hall which is a vital meeting and social space for community members of all ages. We have recently reinvigorated use of the Hall by the community and have successfully held regular events throughout the winter and spring of 2025 and 2026. The energy costs associated with heating the hall are becoming increasingly unsustainable. Hall use is increasing and given the priorities in the Sutherland Place Plan, the availability of the Hall is essential to enhancing social wellbeing by providing a venue for:

Facilities and social activities

Monthly photography group

Music classes and monthly ceilidh

Weekly market for croft produce

Christmas dinner and midsummer barbeque

Community making and maintenance days

Election polling station

Support for crofting and cultural activities

Crofty day showcasing work of local crofters and family fun

Classes with local potter

Local history group

Historic Assynt Group

Pottery classes and new regular pottery club

Photography group

Youth groups

Pool table and dart board as requested by local young people

Social evenings and games for all ages (film evening and clubs)

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

(500 words max limit)

The project addresses social isolation and provision of youth activities in this remote Highland location.

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)

Ongoing consultation with the community. Trustees report to the board in minuted meetings and a focused session was run at the early summer BBQ.

Findings are summarised in minutes attached (8 July 2026).

Note that this extends the heating which was installed as a result of being awarded CRF4030 which was granted in 2025.

Increasing use of the hall has been monitored over the last year and will continue to do so.

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)

Immediate reduction in grid energy cost to the community hall.
Reduction in operating costs.
Incereased hall use.
Hall affordable to members of the community who may have previously been limited by cost.

	(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)

Elkcal trustees will be better able to plan increased use of the hall.

The fabric of the building will be better preserved through heating use and addressing issues with damp air and condensation.

Increased community engagement, particularly with young people.

Increased use of the hall in the colder months as we would be able to afford routine use throughout the winter.

Quiet heating allows ease of use for hearing impaired users, film nights and music groups.

Our project meets current users' needs as well as securing a resilient resource for the future, helping preserve the fabric of the building for future generations.

The initial phase of heating with three infrared panels in main hall was completed in 2025. These have successfully maintained a warm room and have prevented damp. They are quiet in operation which is appreciated by the hearing impaired and musicians particularly.

We have increased use of the hall since the infrared panels were installed.

As a result of this increased use and very positive feedback from young people and community members of all ages, we have secured a pool table and darts board to run regular games evenings and a film club for the winter months.

We have also introduced a monthly photography club and pottery taster classes.

We are logging community engagement and can report an increase in hall use and number of users. We sought comments and ideas at the midsummer barbeque, leading to new plans for the autumn: pottery lessons and photography club.

We have worked with Barres Engineering, proposed a solution with an estimated total cost of £26k. The overall outcomes of this project are in line with the business plan published on the ELCKAL website. The business plan is currently being updated with suggestions from Andrew Aldous at COSS.

Building is leased from Highland Council and we are in process of community asset transfer.

Quote attached from Barres Engineering

No other funding applied for.

5. Start anticipated October 2026, finish December 2026.

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

(500 words max limit)

The equipment will be managed as part of the ongoing hall maintenance and compliance schedule. The hall is funded mainly via weekly marked fees, bookings and annual Crofty Day (September).

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)

The project reduces Scotland's carbon dioxide emissions by the use of on site sustainable energy solutions providing 10678kWh per year from solar energy.

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)

Quiet heating allows ease of use for hearing impaired users, film nights and music groups.

All community groups have access to the hall and the hall itself fully accessible and open to all.

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?	**None. Volunteers informal and ad hoc based on community engagement.**
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
Deposit			**£2500**
60% of balance for materials to site			£14661.09
40% of balance upon commissioning			£9774.05
	Supply of fittings for clients own frame ground mounted system.	Ground mount frame sourced and installed by community volunteers	£0
	Supply and installation of solar PV panels onto Renusol mounting system		
	Supply and install wiring of PV strings from panels to DC isolator located in plant room		

	Supply and installation of DC isolators by Sonnen unit.		
	Supply and install wiring of PV strings from DC isolator to Sonnen unit.		
	Supply and installation of Sonnen unit in Utility and Sonnen power meter by incoming electrical supply		
	Supply and installation of AC isolators.		
	Supply and installation of single phase generation meter.		
	Supply and installation of AC cabling and from Inverter to local distribution board.		
	Commissioning of solar PV system.		
	MCS commissioning certification and paperwork.		
	MCS Handover Pack		
	Notification of G98 connection to local DNO		
	Supply and installation of ethernet cable from Sonnen unit to internet router		
	Work will be carried out in accordance with the Home Energy Scotland loan conditions for energy storage.		

Total revenue expenditure	£
Total capital expenditure	£26935.14
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£26935.14**
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.**	

The project will drastically reduce the grid based energy cost of the building on an ongoing basis.

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 £
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
	Yes ☐ No ☐		
		Total match funding	**£**
		CRF requested	**£**
		Total funding	**£**

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

Community members have volunteered to complete ground work and construct frames for the solar installation. For the solar, the contribution in kind will be to dig trenches for cables with Croft owned equipment. The ground mount for the frame will take approx 4 people five days. Materials needed are bulk bags of ballast at £75 each plus approx 15 bags cement ay £9.30 so about £290 total. Timber or steel ground mount would need to do a more detailed costing but would be about £1800. The ballast and cement will be partly donated but we will buy some parts and components from hall funds. Our labour in kind should count for £2000+ based on 5x8hr days. Total estimate for in-kind support £4000+

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

Elphin Community Hall is a small essential community resource. While we are able to manage operating costs, our resources do not extend to capital expenses on this scale.

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

The money in our account is for the ongoing operation and the legal costs of the purchase of the Hall from Highland Council.

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

Money is needed for asset transfer legal costs.

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

I don't think we are in a catchment area for any of the schemes. There is one proposed over near Oykel Bridge that we may come under but this is no help for this project. The scheme has not started and is at the proposal stage.

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?**

Local businesses have been consulted and there is no conflict of interest. Many local crofters use the hall for their marked and hope to benefit from hall improvements.

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

We are a charity and limited company with limited income that is not guaranteed.

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?**
CRF 4030	11/09/2025	£3458.77	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: **Print:**	**Date:** 06/09/2026

<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:		

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:

- Quote – U2944 – Elphin Hall
- Organisational policy – Health and safety
- Organisational policy – Equal Opportunities Policy
- Organisational policy – Fair Work First Statement
- Bank statement – Statement – 832801_00206029 Royal Bank of Scotland 28 August 2026. Current Account
- Bank statement – Statement – 832801_00206037 Royal Bank of Scotland 28 August 2026. Business Reserve Account
- Articles of association (proposed)
- Letter of support – Elkcal Gabriel Moyne
- Letter of support – Elkcal Jane Matheson
- Letter of support – Elkcal Lunn
- Organisational policy, Equal Opportunities Policy
- Fair Work First Statement and Declaration
- School lease (Hall building, extended by Phil Tomalin owing to legal work at council)
- Insurance – Elkcal (Zurich annual policy renewed 1 July 2026)
- Elphin Community Hall Attendance - Estimates of attendance from some hall users

Community Regeneration Funding (CRF)
Application Form

(August 2026 – 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 9am on 7th October 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**	CRF 4252
1.2	**Organisation**	Dornoch Heritage Society
1.3	**Project title**	Historylinks Garden Gateway Project
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Project Summary The need to make the outside area of the museum more attractive and usable by the community has been a priority for the organisation for some time. As a result of feedback and conversations with staff, members, visitors and volunteers we are now proposing to create a heritage-themed Community Garden. It will have a performance space, stone heritage features, seating and planting and will enhance the experience of visiting the museum for local people and visitors alike.

Dornoch has a very attractive historic town centre however it has very little relaxing garden/public space for the community to enjoy. The Cathedral Green is hemmed in on the Cathedral side by parked cars and on the other by Castle St with cars, campervans, buses etc passing in close proximity. This new Community Garden in Meadows Road will be a peaceful space for people to engage with and enjoy. With heritage features it will have social impact and promote pride in the place where we live.

(As a second phase, and not part of this application, we are seeking funding for a new entrance porch. Both will combine to create a 'Gateway' into Dornoch's heritage).

b. How will your project contribute to addressing priorities identified in your area's place plan?

Although Dornoch as a town does not have a Place Plan at this time, this project sits squarely in the framework of the Sutherland Place Plan.

People
Community resilience is at the heart of the Historylinks vision. We bring the community, young and old, into heritage activities of all kinds and volunteering opportunities. This contributes to health and well being and a sense of identity and pride in living in Dornoch and district. Although the museum has minimal staffing we have a tremendous volunteer workforce of local people. They are engaged in all kinds of activities from DIY to

archiving to gardening and we are a membership organisation with 200 plus members who support the museum through annual subscriptions and local fund raising. Developing and looking after the garden will continue this tradition of volunteer involvement.

Place
Dornoch lacks green, relaxing spaces where people can sit, meet and chat. The creation of a community garden will not just boost the museum facilities but also the entrance to Dornoch South Retail Park. Dornoch South has a large coach and car park, a MUGA and will in the near future include a new Community Centre and Distillery. This is an important part of the town which needs to be presented in a more distinctive and attractive way.

Prosperity
The museum brings tourists to Dornoch and this benefits many businesses; shops, restaurants, accommodation providers etc. In 2025/26 we hosted over 5000 visitors. This year we have welcomed visitors from 14 different countries from Sri Lanka to Norway. These visitors stay, shop, eat,use leisure facilities and Historylinks is therefore an integral part of the local economy. This project will support the sustainability of the museum in coming years so that we can continue to employ staff and play our part in the local economy as a vibrant tourist attraction. We also offer volunteering and work experience to young people interested in a career in the heritage sector. Two of our ex Young Curators are currently doing work experience at the museum towards gaining their Saltire Awards.

This initiative by Historylinks is fresh thinking about how cultural features can contribute to Dornoch South in particular and coincides with the findings of 2020 TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN. We would suggest that here is a need for proactive planning as to how this area functions in terms of linking footpaths between businesses and attractions and car parking, and how it is laid out and landscaped.

c. What will be the main outcome of your project, and what outputs do you anticipate it will deliver (short and long term)?

How does this outcome link to the strategic objective selected in 4.1?

		Main Outcome Community Resilience • Increased community well being through involvement in the process of creating, using and looking after the garden. Beneficial social interaction between volunteers and members of the community and increased pride in the town's heritage. **Please confirm you have read and understood the Privacy Notice: Yes ☒**	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	**£53,132**
		Match funding	**£13,000**
		CRF grant requested	**£40,132**
1.6	**Start date**	01/02/2027	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	01/06/2027	
1.8	**Please confirm you have read and understood the CRF privacy notice**	Yes ☒ No ☐	
1.9	**Artificial Intelligence Assistance Declaration**	Have you used any form of AI assistance in the preparation of this application? Yes ☐ No ☒	
	For guidance on the appropriate use of AI in funding applications, please refer to ***Use of AI in Funding Application Guidance.***		

SECTION 2: CONTACT AND ORGANISATION DETAILS		
2.1	**Organisation**	Dornoch Heritage Society – Historylinks Museum
2.2	**Address and postcode**	The Meadows
2.3	**Main contact name**	
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	
2.5	**Contact number**	

2.6	**Email address**		
2.7	**Website address**		
2.8	**Organisation type**	☐	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		☐	Charity
		☒	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	SC008747	
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.**		

SECTION 3: PROJECT DETAILS		
3.1	**Please confirm the location of the project including post code.**	**Historylinks Museum, The Meadows, Dornoch IV25 3SF**
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 ☐ 70 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.**	Planning permission has been granted

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

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

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
Community engagement work – January - March	31/03/2027
Landscape contractor on site	01/03/2027
Groundworks completed	19/03/2027
Stone seating and planters installed	01/04/2027
Engraved stones placed in situ	26/04/2027
Planting	07/05/2027
Opening of Garden	06/06/2027
Maintenance programme – monthly by group	05/07/2027
	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 create a user-friendly community garden in Dornoch which at present has very little relaxing space for people to enjoy. The project will engage the community in discussing the layout, planting, and selecting the heritage features which are placed in the garden as well as keeping the garden in good shape in the long term. In the not too distant future we expect Dornoch to develop a Place Plan and this initiative and the interest it generates in the community should stimulate interest in these discussions.

The project will also contribute, if indirectly, to sustaining Historylinks which is the only heritage organisation for Dornoch. Having an attractive and interesting outside space rather than a car park is bound to encourage people to come into the museum. We need to look to the future, offering what visitors expect today from a local attraction – a lively, visually attractive welcome to the museum.

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

(500 words max limit)

As far as we know there is no local place plan for Dornoch at present. The need is well recognised in the Sutherland Place Plan.

PEOPLE
Community Resilience

Historylinks is a community-facing organisation as well as a museum, supporting learning and engagement through the activities we offer. These activities are highly valued by the community offering social interaction and friendships as well as learning and skills development, an important contribution to community resilience. The Heritage Garden, its longer term maintenance and the interest it will foster in the museum, will offer similar opportunities for the community to get involved.

Health and Wellbeing
The Garden will be accessible to all with full disability access and sensory planting. It will create the kind of pleasant space that will improve community wellbeing. For local people the traffic congestion in the town centre is stressful and on occasion dangerous. The impact of so much traffic is to marginalise pedestrians who have no place to relax other than the Cathedral Green, hemmed in by parked cars and passing traffic. The Heritage Garden will mitigate this problem by creating an attractive and quiet space full of interest.

The Sutherland Plan sets out the call for more support for cultural activities. The Garden will encourage participation in the museum's heritage events and will offer the space otherwise not available in the town for story telling and performance eg by CATU the Living History Group.

PLACE
Environment

The Place Plan calls for education on improving biodiversity. In creating a Heritage Garden we have the opportunity to discuss biodiversity in the community engagement sessions which are part of the project. Even on the small scale of a local heritage garden this matters, and learning gained could lead to local awareness and action.

The prior consultation we have undertaken and the engagement sessions between January and March will support this aim. These sessions will be learning opportunities as well as decision making with regard to the Garden features and planting.

PROSPERITY
Cost of living pressures

With cost of living being 15 – 30% higher in rural communities
people on a lower income will be able to use the garden free of charge.

Visiting the Heritage Garden will bring more people to the town, boosting the local economy and supporting the jobs we already have created in the museum and the current and future businesses in Dornoch South.

Employment and economic opportunities
Strengthening the economic position of Historylinks means we can be more confident that our two permanent jobs can be sustained into the longer term. We have ambitions to employ more staff especially apprentices however this would need additional funding. The potential to train and employ young people in the heritage sector is something which could be addressed on a more strategic level in the North Highlands.

Sustainability
The Sutherland Plan also recognises the need for more support and long term funding stability for community organisations. The Heritage Garden will enable Historylinks to grow its audience and supporters which supports our path to greater self sufficiency.

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)

We have consulted the community by displaying the plans for the project in the museum Community Room and it has been advertised on Facebook with feedback encouraged. Groups using the Community Room have also commented positively. The idea of a garden is unlikely to attract negative criticism. We have an enthusiastic project steering group ready to become fully involved once we know we have the funding in place.

We feel the best evidence of support is from the local organisations who have a community focus, Dornoch BID, DADCA and DACIC. The Dornoch Area Community Council have also given their support to the project by providing a grant from the Common Good Fund. Letters of support are uploaded.

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

- The garden as a physical space – seating, planting and heritage features will attract local people, museum users and passing visitors such as the frequent coach and cruise liner groups, to sit and enjoy the space, looking at the features in the garden and becoming more aware of Dornoch's heritage legacy. Measured by completion of garden as planned and occasional anecdotal feedback which we will collect.
- Performances by children and adults, demonstrations and story telling. Measured by numbers of outdoor events of this kind. We estimate 10 events in the summer season.
- Increased frequency and diversity of guided town tours. The garden will be an ideal meeting point for groups taking part in the tours. Measured by numbers of tours and participants. We estimate 15 tours each year meeting in the garden or c 150 participants. Informal sitting in the garden could conservatively be estimated at 10 per day x 365 = 3650 ad hoc garden users.

- A focal point for cultural activity which fits well with Dornoch BID Spring and Autumn Festivals. Measurement: increased involvement of Historylinks with the BID Festivals in future years.

	(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?

Outcomes

- Increased community well being through involvement in the process of creating and looking after the garden. Beneficial social interaction and increased pride in the community and the town's heritage. Measured by engagement of the steering group and volunteers. Interaction with visitors to gauge their reaction to the heritage garden.
- Increased environmental awareness through consideration of the planting, thinking about biodiversity, native species and climate change implications. Selecting the range of plants, then planting them. We will ask a local plants expert to assist in making the decision on species and after care. Measured by increased knowledge on the part of participants and wider awareness raised in the community.
- Increased awareness and involvement in local heritage. The resources of the museum offer a huge range of possibilities based on different historical eras, events and notable people. We plan to stimulate discussion amongst our Facebook followers and Instagram posts. The project steering group and Curator will facilitate this. We will also engage Dornoch Academy students, our Young Curators group and other community groups in a similar process, looking at key historical figures, native flora and fauna. These will form the heritage engraved features located in the garden.
  Measured by recording interaction on social media and planning and carrying out face to face workshops for children and adults from which we will collect evaluative material.

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

(500 words max limit)

- Maintenance and care will involve bringing together a volunteer garden team to look after the space and the plants. Measured by continuing volunteer involvement in garden maintenance and checking the heritage features to ensure upkeep.

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 negative environmental impact in delivering the project. Although it is a modest contribution, the garden will absorb carbon in the area where the museum is located at the entrance to Dornoch South which is currently a predominantly a hard surfaced area.

The environmental awareness raised by the project will be a contribution to the community's learning and engagement in environmental issues.

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)

Historylinks ensures that staff and volunteers promote equality for all in our service to the public and in our day to day practice as employers. As an accredited museum we have been assessed for accessibility by Museums Galleries Scotland. We have taken account of groups with protected characteristics in developing the project. The garden is fully wheelchair accessible and has two designated disabled parking spaces. Plants which can offer touch and smell to visually impaired people will be included. The project is designed to accommodate all groups not one specific group although we particularly want to engage young people and when possible in good weather conditions, elderly people from our two local care homes.

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?	We employ 1 part time Curator Manager and 1 part time Seasonal Museum Assistant, 1 part time Club Leader and 1 Club Assistant.
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
Landscaping as per quote	• Removal of walling and appropriate disposal of spoil • Construction of disabled parking bay • Construct bench style seating • Construct planters • Prepare and pave c100sq metres of pedestrian areas using mixed colour Caithness stone • Form transitions in paving between levels	Capital	£49,800
Hours from Historylinks staff to plan, deliver and evaluate community engagement	Dornoch Academy, Young Curators Club, Open community engagement sessions, Meadows Care Home – 60 hrs in total @ £13.88 per hour	Revenue	£832
Overhead and management costs	5% of total project cost	Revenue	£2,500
		Total revenue expenditure	£3,332
		Total capital expenditure	£49,800
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£53,132**

	Is VAT included in these costs?	**Yes x☐ No ☐**
	Can you confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?	**Yes x☐ 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 x☐ No ☐**
5.3	**Please explain how your project will achieve value for money.**	

At a reasonable overall cost the project provides excellent value for money and social value in the following ways:

- For the town the project will achieve value for money in terms of increasing community space, fostering learning and social engagement.
- For the museum's sustainability the project will stimulate more footfall which is essential to keep the museum open and thriving into the future.
- The work on the design and achieving planning approval has been delivered at no cost by a local architect which is clearly tremendous value and has reduced what would otherwise be the full cost of the project.

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 £**
Dornoch Heritage Society	**Yes** √☐ **No** ☐	Confirmed September 2026	2,400
Private donation from DHS member	**Yes**√☐ **No** ☐	Confirmed September 2026	2,000
Dornoch Community Council	**Yes**√☐ **No** ☐	Confirmed September 2026	3,600
Hugh Fraser Foundation (pledged for release on completion of project, confirmation available)	**Yes** √☐ **No** ☐	September 2026	5,000
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Total match funding	**£13,000**
		CRF requested	**£40,132**
		Total funding	**£53,132**

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

The development of the project and completion of the application has been led by the Chair of the Trustees at no cost. Other office bearers have contributed to developing and costing the proposal. Estimated cost £800

The concept design of the garden and the Planning Application has been undertaken pro bono for the charity by a local architect. Estimated cost £600

The maintenance of the Garden will be carried out by volunteers. Estimated cost – monthly maintenance by group = £250

The project steering group is guiding the development and will advise and overview the community engagement programme. Estimated number of meetings – 6 x 8 participants £450

TOTAL - £2,100

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

We require public funding to supplement the funds we have applied for from independent trusts and from our own fund raising. We understand that public funds such as the CRF have been created to support projects such as this.

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

The remaining bank balances are for paying staff wages and bills until the end of the financial year. We are currently running a small deficit and working very hard to generate income until 31/3 so that we come in on budget.

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 unrestricted funds as shown in our annual accounts are designated for an emergency, such as the closure of the museum and associated costs. We keep a minimum amount as recommended by the charity regulator OSCR.

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.**	

We are not charging for access to the Garden which would be impractical and contradict the purpose of giving access to all. However we are confident that the garden will stimulate more visitors to come into the museum by creating an attractive area to sit and enjoy. The museum depends for its continued existence primarily on admission charges so we do anticipate benefit for the museum in the longer term.

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

The project can only enhance the trade of local businesses, e.g. the Spar and the Angry Seagull and other local businesses in the town. The footfall of businesses in the immediate area is only likely to increase not decrease.

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

The Trustees feel it would be inappropriate to apply for a loan given the challenge we have annually to come in on budget at the year end and our small unrestricted reserves which are kept for an emergency scenario. We would be very unlikely to be granted loan finance and even if we were, it would be high risk to take on a burden and a risk of this kind.

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?

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: **Print:**	**Date:** 08/10/2026

<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:		

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

(August 2026 – 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 9am on 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**	CRF4250
1.2	**Organisation**	Dornoch & District Community Association
1.3	**Project title**	New Dornoch Community Centre
1.4	**Summary of project you wish to be funded (max 250 words)**	Dornoch and District Community Association (DADCA) is seeking funding towards the development of a new purpose-built Community Centre at Dornoch South. The project will replace the existing Social Club, a former school building dating from 1845 which, despite serving Dornoch for over 45 years, is now at the end of its useful life. It has poor accessibility, limited parking and capacity, high running and maintenance costs, and can no longer meet the needs of a growing community.

		The new centre will provide a modern, fully accessible and energy-efficient community facility, with a large flexible hall, meeting space, commercial kitchen, improved storage and facilities capable of accommodating several activities at the same time. This will allow existing groups to grow while creating opportunities for more youth activities, fitness and wellbeing sessions, theatre, live music, learning, weddings and larger community events. The project is well advanced. A site has been identified on community land at Dornoch South, a professional project team is in place and a fully costed design has been developed. DADCA has also secured a significant level of its own and other funding towards the overall project. The new centre will give Dornoch a sustainable community asset for the long term, bringing people together, reducing social isolation and providing a much-needed focal point for community activity in a town that continues to grow.	
1.5	**Project costs**	**Total project cost**	£1,800,000
		Match funding	£1,700,000
		CRF grant requested	£100,000
1.6	**Start date**	01/04/2027	
1.7	**End date** ***(max 12 months from start date)***	31/03/2028	
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**	Dornoch & District Community Association
2.2	**Address and postcode**	
2.3	**Main contact name**	
2.4	**Position in the organisation**	

2.5	**Contact number**		
2.6	**Email address**		
2.7	**Website address**		
2.8	**Organisation type**	X	Company limited by guarantee
		☐	Constituted group
		☐	Public body
		X	Charity
		☐	SCIO
		☐	Other (please specify):
2.9	**Organisation registered number**	SC013716	
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 X	
2.11	**If the organisation is VAT registered, please provide the number.**	N/a	
2.12	**Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC?**	☐	Whole
		☐	Partial
		X	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.**	Dornoch, IV25 3RZ
3.2	**Are you applying on behalf of a partnership project?**	Yes ☐ No X
3.3	**Is there a partnership agreement in place?**	Yes ☐ No X
3.4	**Is your organisation the lead applicant?**	Yes X No ☐
3.5	**Do you own the land or asset?**	Yes ☐ No X
3.6	**Are you leasing the land or asset?** **If so, what is the term left on your current lease agreement**	Yes ☐ No X 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.**	Transfer of the asset from Highland council is at an advanced stage with transfer expected to be complete by Sept/Oct 2026. Emails can be supplied if required
3.8	**Does the project require planning permission or other statutory regulatory consents?**	Yes X No ☐ (Full Planning Permission and Building Warrant is required)

3.9	**If consents are required, please provide details if applied and/or the arrangements to obtain these and by when.**	**Full Planning Application and Building Warrant is to be submitted in September 2026** **Preplanning Application Number is** 26/02000/PREAPP/DABO/LAUC

SECTION 4: THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

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

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
£1m of funding secured towards the project - DONE	31/08/2026
Planning Application & Building Warrant Submission	**30/09/2026**
Tenders out to contractors	31/10/2026
Appoint Contractor (Funding Dependent)	12/12/2026
Full Funding Package Secured & Planning BW Granted	31/01/2027
Commence on Site	01/04/2027

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

The need for a new Community Centre has been identified over a number of years and is becoming increasingly pressing. Dornoch is unusual within Sutherland in that its population is growing, now exceeding 1,600, with further housing development planned. Tourism and commercial investment are also increasing, but the community facilities available to local people have simply not kept pace with that growth.

The existing Social Club has served Dornoch well for over 45 years, but the building dates from 1845 and is no longer suitable for what the community needs. It has poor accessibility, only 10 parking spaces, high heating and maintenance costs and insufficient capacity for larger events. Its layout also makes it difficult for different groups to use the building at the same time. Previous feasibility work looked at refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing building, but concluded that neither offered a viable long-term solution.

This is not simply an identified need from DADCA. There has been extensive community consultation over many years, with five separate engagement exercises since 2009. Most recently, the March 2026 community ballot attracted 703 responses, with 85.7% supporting a new Community Centre at Dornoch South. Feedback has consistently highlighted accessibility, parking, warmth, lack of space and the inability to hold larger events as problems with the existing building.

There is also clear evidence that existing activity is being constrained. Fibre Fest would like more space, while the Young Curators Club has identified opportunities for additional youth activity which cannot currently be accommodated. Even allowing for some existing Social Club bookings not transferring to the new centre, overall use is forecast to increase through both existing groups expanding and new users coming into the building.

The project also presents an opportunity to bring activities to Dornoch which currently cannot take place locally. This includes touring theatre and drama, live music, larger community events, weddings and celebrations, as well as greater use by UHI students. There is evidence that events are currently going elsewhere simply because Dornoch does not have a suitable venue.

The new centre therefore addresses both an immediate need to replace an ageing and unsustainable building and a wider opportunity to provide the space Dornoch needs as it grows. It

will give local people a warm, accessible and flexible place to meet, take part in activities and develop new opportunities, while helping tackle isolation and supporting community wellbeing.

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

The need for the project is clearly recognised within the wider place-planning framework for the area. The Caithness and Sutherland Place Plan identifies Dornoch South as an important location for future development, and the proposed Community Centre is strongly aligned with that direction. It will sit alongside the Multi-Use Games Area, UHI student accommodation, improved parking and planned commercial development, helping to establish Dornoch South as a genuine community and economic hub rather than a collection of separate developments.

This is important because Dornoch has changed significantly in recent years. The town has seen population growth, new housing, increased tourism and major commercial investment, but the community infrastructure available to residents has not developed at the same pace. That imbalance is recognised in the project evidence and is central to the case for a new centre. The project will provide the modern, accessible and flexible community facility that is currently missing and will help ensure that local people benefit from the wider growth taking place around them.

There is also a very direct place-making connection. The Business Plan notes that the Caithness and Sutherland Plan specifically identifies the former abattoir site, now known as Dornoch South, as a place-making priority. Locating the Community Centre there is therefore consistent with the wider strategy for the area and gives the project a role beyond simply replacing the existing Social Club. It will become an anchor facility within Dornoch South and help create a more connected, usable and attractive area for residents, community groups, students and visitors.

The project also supports wider local priorities around wellbeing, inclusion, community resilience and rural regeneration. The new centre will provide a welcoming place where people can meet, learn, volunteer and participate in cultural, recreational and educational activities. It will also create opportunities for events, performances, weddings, conferences and other activity which can bring additional footfall and spend into Dornoch and support local businesses.

The project has a strong strategic fit. It responds to an identified weakness in local community infrastructure, supports the planned development of Dornoch South, and contributes directly to wider aims around place-making, wellbeing, regeneration and long-term community resilience. It is not a stand-alone building project, but part of the wider future development of Dornoch as a growing and sustainable 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

There is a substantial and long-standing body of evidence demonstrating local support for the new Dornoch Community Centre. Importantly, this is not based on a single recent consultation undertaken to support a funding application; the community has been involved in discussions about replacing the existing Social Club for many years.

Five separate community engagement exercises were undertaken in 2009, 2013, 2015, 2019 and 2025, consistently demonstrating support for improved community facilities and ultimately a new purpose-built centre. Support increased from 54% in 2009 to 75% in 2013 and 93% in 2015. The 2019 engagement again identified a clear consensus for a flexible, modern facility, with 85% supporting the new-centre proposal considered at that time.

The project was tested again extensively during the 2025 feasibility work. This involved engagement with 120 community members together with interviews with 19 stakeholders and existing Social Club users. The findings identified a clear demand for a modern multi-use venue,

better facilities for young people and cultural activities, affordable and accessible meeting space for community groups, and a suitable venue for drama, theatre and live music.

Having developed the proposal further and identified Dornoch South as the preferred location, DADCA then undertook a further community-wide ballot in March 2026. An online survey was supported by a leaflet drop to approximately 1,600 homes, specifically asking whether residents supported the proposal to build the new Community Centre at Dornoch South. This generated 703 responses, of which 603 (85.7%) support not simply for the principle of a new centre, but for the current proposal and location.

Support is also demonstrated through existing and prospective users. Consultation identified groups whose activities are currently restricted by the existing building. Fibre Fest, for example, is constrained by available space, while the Young Curators Club would like to provide additional youth activities. Demand modelling also identifies potential new and expanded use including drama and theatre, live music, weddings and events, and use by UHI students.

The evidence therefore demonstrates both sustained community support over many years and strong support for the specific project now being progressed. This has directly influenced the design and proposed uses of the new centre rather than consultation being undertaken after the project was developed.

Supporting evidence includes the Business Plan and consultation/ballot evidence, together with letters of support from community organisations and stakeholders. The Business Plan itself includes letters of support as an appendix.

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 outputs will be the practical steps required to move the project from development into delivery and then into operation. In the first instance this means completing the remaining statutory, technical and funding work so that DADCA has a fully deliverable and investment-ready project. This includes final planning and design work, technical surveys, Building Warrant documentation, tender documentation, completion of the funding package and procurement of the construction contractor.

These outputs will be measured against clear project milestones: planning consent secured; Building Warrant application submitted and approved; technical drawings and specifications completed; funding agreements confirmed; tender documents issued; compliant tenders received; preferred contractor appointed; and a signed construction contract in place. The Business Plan already sets out this progression from planning and funding through procurement and construction.

The next short-term output will be the construction and opening of the new Dornoch Community Centre at Dornoch South. The completed building will provide a substantially improved community facility, including a large flexible hall, meeting space, commercial kitchen, improved storage, accessible facilities and modern energy-efficient systems. The layout will allow more than one activity to take place at the same time, which is a major limitation of the existing Social Club.

Delivery will be measured through normal capital project controls, including contractor progress reports, professional team meetings, cost monitoring against the approved budget, certification of works and achievement of agreed construction milestones. Final completion will be evidenced through practical completion, statutory approvals and the centre becoming operational.

Once open, DADCA will also measure whether the facility is beginning to deliver the level and range of use anticipated. This will include monitoring booking hours, number of user groups, new activities, commercial bookings, community events and income generated. The Business Plan assumes that bookings will initially reflect current Social Club use, with activity increasing as existing groups expand and new users begin using the facility.

Particular attention will be given to whether the new building is enabling activities which cannot currently be accommodated, including youth activities, theatre and drama, live music, weddings, larger community events and potential UHI use.

DADCA will measure success at two levels: firstly, delivery outputs such as permissions, procurement, construction and opening; and secondly, early operational outputs including increased use, new activities and greater flexibility for existing community groups. Financial performance will also be monitored against the five-year Business Plan so that any variance in bookings, income or running costs can be identified early and addressed.

	(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 main long-term outcome will be a stronger and more resilient Dornoch community, with a permanent, sustainable facility that enables people to participate in community life in ways that are simply not possible within the existing building. The lasting benefit is therefore not the building itself, but what the building allows to happen over many years.

A key outcome will be greater community participation and stronger social connections. The centre will provide a warm, welcoming and accessible place for people of different ages and backgrounds to meet, take part in activities, learn and volunteer. Over time, this should help reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and create more opportunities for people to become involved in their community.

We also expect existing organisations to become stronger because they will have space to grow, while new groups and activities will be able to establish themselves. The flexibility of the new centre creates opportunities for cultural activity, youth provision, education, fitness and wellbeing, theatre, music and larger community events. This should mean more activity can be provided locally and reduce the need for residents to travel elsewhere to participate.

A further outcome will be greater inclusion. A fully accessible modern facility will remove many of the physical barriers associated with the existing Social Club and provide a community space that can be used comfortably by people with different mobility and access requirements.

There will also be a longer-term economic benefit. The ability to accommodate performances, conferences, weddings and larger events will bring people into Dornoch, creating additional

opportunities for local caterers, accommodation providers, shops and other businesses. This complements the social purpose of the centre and supports wider community wealth building by retaining activity and expenditure locally.

Environmental and financial sustainability are equally important parts of the legacy. The new energy-efficient building will have significantly lower energy and operating costs than the existing facility. The Business Plan forecasts a surplus in each of its first five years, providing the basis for a community asset which can maintain itself and reinvest in its facilities and activities.

DADCA will measure these outcomes over time through annual monitoring of number and range of user groups, booking levels, new activities established, attendance at events, volunteer involvement and repeat use. User and community feedback will be gathered to assess accessibility, satisfaction, wellbeing and whether the centre is meeting changing local needs. Financial accounts, energy consumption and operating costs will be compared with Business Plan forecasts to monitor sustainability.

The legacy will be a community-controlled asset capable of adapting as Dornoch changes, giving future generations the space and capacity to develop activities and opportunities that cannot all be predicted today.

The existing Social Club currently accommodates approximately 50–60 bookings per month, demonstrating a strong foundation of community activity. Our Business Plan anticipates that the new Centre will retain much of this existing use while attracting additional groups, activities and events which cannot currently be accommodated.

We propose the following indicative targets:

- Increased participation**:** Attract at least 100 new individual participants during the first full year of operation, increasing to 200 additional participants annually by Year 3. These will be people who were not previously participating in activities at the existing Social Club.
- Increased community activity**:** Establish at least 5 new regular activities or user groups within the first two years, particularly involving young people, arts and culture, fitness, wellbeing and learning.
- Greater use of the facility: Maintain the existing substantial level of community activity, with an ambition to increase overall weekly bookings by approximately 15–20% by Year 3, subject to demand and the availability of groups.
- Larger community events: Host at least 4 additional community, cultural or entertainment events annually during the first year, increasing to 12 by Year 3. These could include live music, theatre, community celebrations and other events not currently possible within the existing building.
- Stronger community connections**:** Through annual user feedback, aim for at least 50% of surveyed participants to report that attending activities at the Centre has helped them meet people, feel more connected to their community or improve their wellbeing.
- Improved accessibility and inclusion: Monitor participation from different age groups, particularly young people and older residents, with a target of at least 70% positive feedback on the accessibility and suitability of the new facilities.

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

After CRF funding, the project will not rely on ongoing grant support for its core operation. The Business Plan has been developed around a model where the completed Community Centre is

capable of meeting its day-to-day operating costs through its own activities, while remaining affordable for community users.

DADCA will retain responsibility for the asset and its long-term financial stewardship. Strategic oversight will remain with the DADCA Board, with responsibility for budgets, financial monitoring, compliance and ensuring that the Centre continues to operate in accordance with its charitable purposes. Day-to-day management will follow the model already successfully used for the existing Social Club, with DADCA overseeing bookings and finances, supported by a part-time cleaner/caretaker and volunteers. This deliberately keeps the staffing structure proportionate and avoids creating a high fixed-cost operating model.

Financial sustainability will come from a mixed income model rather than dependence on any single source. Community bookings will remain the core activity, supplemented by income from larger and commercial bookings such as weddings, private functions, concerts, performances and conferences. The Business Plan takes a deliberately cautious approach to these income streams, with Year 1 based substantially on existing levels of community use and only modest growth thereafter.

The five-year financial forecasts show the Centre achieving an operating surplus from Year 1 onwards, with projected income increasing from £32,739 in Year 1 to £49,618 in Year 5. Importantly, the forecasts are not dependent on aggressive assumptions about use. This provides scope for surpluses to be retained and reinvested in the building, helping DADCA meet future repair, maintenance and replacement costs rather than allowing another maintenance backlog to develop.

The capital cost plan also includes £50,000 of working capital, providing an important financial buffer during the Centre's establishment and early operation.

Operating costs will be actively controlled. The purpose-built, energy-efficient design will significantly reduce the energy and maintenance pressures associated with the existing historic building. Hire charges will be reviewed annually against actual operating costs, comparable facilities and community feedback, allowing DADCA to respond to changes in costs without losing sight of affordability.

DADCA will monitor performance through management accounts, booking levels, income and expenditure, energy costs and maintenance requirements, with actual performance reviewed against the five-year Business Plan. This combination of established management arrangements, diversified earned income, controlled staffing, lower operating costs, working capital and planned reinvestment provides a realistic basis for sustaining the Centre well beyond the period of CRF support.

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.**

Environmental impact has been considered as part of both the design of the new Community Centre and the way the project will be delivered. The aim is to make sure that the new building is not only more efficient than the existing Social Club, but also that construction is managed responsibly and any avoidable environmental impacts are reduced as far as possible.

One of the biggest environmental benefits will come from moving away from the existing historic building, which is expensive to heat and difficult to improve because of its age and location within the conservation area. The new centre will be purpose-built and designed to a much better energy

standard, with low-carbon heating and lower overall energy use. This should mean a significant reduction in running costs as well as a lower environmental impact over the life of the building.

During construction, DADCA will expect the appointed contractor to manage waste properly, recycle and reuse materials where practical, source materials responsibly and keep unnecessary waste to a minimum. The contractor will also be required to manage noise, dust, deliveries and site traffic so that disruption to the surrounding area is kept under control. These matters will form part of the normal contract management process and will be monitored by the professional team throughout the build.

The location at Dornoch South also helps from an environmental point of view. The site sits alongside other community infrastructure, including the MUGA, existing parking and UHI student accommodation. This means the new centre will form part of an existing and developing community hub rather than creating a completely separate facility with its own new supporting infrastructure.

There should also be a reduction in some journeys outwith Dornoch. At present, a number of activities and events cannot be accommodated locally because there is no suitable venue. By providing space for more community, cultural, educational and recreational activity within Dornoch, people will be able to access more locally.

Once the building is operating, DADCA will monitor energy use and running costs as part of its normal management arrangements. This will make it possible to compare actual performance against expectations and identify further improvements if required.

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?**

Equalities have been considered throughout the development of the project, particularly because one of the clearest weaknesses of the existing Social Club is that it does not work well for everyone. Poor access, a steep approach, restricted internal circulation and limited toilet arrangements have all been raised through previous surveys and consultation. The new Community Centre therefore gives DADCA the opportunity to remove barriers rather than simply work around them.

The new building is being designed as a fully accessible, modern community facility, with improved circulation, better access to rooms and facilities, and a layout that allows different activities to take place at the same time. The lesser hall will have improved access and separate toilet facilities, while storage and other parts of the building will also be easier to reach and use.

This is particularly important for people with disabilities, older people, people with mobility difficulties and anyone who may currently find the existing building difficult to use. However, the project is not intended to benefit only one group. The aim is to create a facility that can be used comfortably by the whole community, regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, or any other protected characteristic.

The consultation process has also helped shape this approach. Community engagement has consistently identified the need for an affordable and accessible meeting place, better youth provision and a wider range of cultural and community activities. The 2025 work specifically

identified demand for improved facilities for young people and accessible meeting space for local groups.

Affordability is another important equalities consideration. DADCA does not want the improved building to become financially inaccessible to existing community groups. Community use will remain at the heart of the operating model, with charges set to balance affordability with the cost of running the building. This should help ensure that lower-income groups and voluntary organisations are not priced out of using the facility.

The Centre will not exclusively target one protected group, but some of the activities enabled by the new building are expected to particularly benefit young people, older residents, people with disabilities and those at risk of social isolation. The flexible spaces will also allow groups to develop activities around changing local needs rather than being restricted by the building itself.

Once operational, DADCA will continue to listen to users and review how the building is working in practice. Feedback, complaints, booking patterns and requests from groups will help identify any barriers that remain. Where reasonable adjustments are required, DADCA will work with users to make sure that people are not excluded from participating.

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.(

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 X No ☐
Can you confirm if you have the Living Wage Accreditation or are planning to be certified?	Yes ☐ **No X** Applied ☐ Will Apply when we have staff
Is the Fair Work First statement on your organisation's website?	Yes ☐ No X Do not have a website ☐ As Above
How many people do you employ or how many volunteers do you have?	0 Staff and Approx 20 Volunteers
Do you currently pay the Real Living Wage hourly rate?	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA X
As part of your procurement assessment process, do you ensure that traders/suppliers also pay the Real Living Wage hourly rate?	Yes X No ☐
How do you provide channels for Effective Voice in the workplace for staff and/or volunteers?	X Line Management Relationship X Staff /Engagement Surveys X 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
New Dornoch Comnmunit Centre	Construction Costs (As professional fees and Planning/BW costs have already been committed by DADCA)	Capital	£1,800,000 (inc Vat)
		Total revenue expenditure	£0
		Total capital expenditure	£1,800,000
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**£1,800,000**
		Is VAT included in these costs?	**Yes X No ☐**
		Can you confirm that the costs above have not already been incurred or committed to?	**Yes X 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 X Costs have been provided by QS as**

		Estimate, Tenders are to go out to contractors in coming months.

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

The project has been developed with value for money as a key consideration, both in terms of the initial capital investment and the long-term cost of operating the new Community Centre.

DADCA has invested considerably in developing the project properly before committing to construction. A professional team, including an architect, quantity surveyor and specialist consultants, has been appointed and a fully costed design and Business Plan prepared. This means decisions on the building, specification and funding are being made on a sound evidence base rather than progressing with an inadequately developed proposal.

The construction contract will be competitively tendered, providing an opportunity to test the project costs against the market and demonstrate that the successful contractor represents best value. Cost and quality will both be important considerations: the cheapest solution would not necessarily represent best value if it resulted in higher maintenance, energy or replacement costs in future.

Value for money has also been considered through the design. The Centre will be flexible and capable of accommodating different activities and groups simultaneously. This maximises the use that can be achieved from the building rather than creating spaces with limited or occasional purposes. The new Centre will also be substantially more energy-efficient than the existing Social Club, reducing the long-term financial burden associated with heating and operating an ageing and inefficient property.

Importantly, DADCA has examined whether continued investment in the existing building would provide better value. The feasibility work concluded that refurbishment or redevelopment of the Social Club was not a viable long-term option and that continued use of the building was unsustainable. The existing building already requires significant expenditure simply to remain safe and operational, estimated at a minimum of £10,000 per year over the next 5–10 years. Continuing to invest limited charitable resources in a building which still could not overcome its fundamental accessibility, capacity and location constraints would therefore represent poor value.

The investment will instead create a modern community-owned asset designed to serve Dornoch for decades. It will accommodate existing community use while allowing additional events and activities to take place locally, and the Business Plan demonstrates that the completed Centre can generate income and operate sustainably.

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 £
Dornoch Community Good Fund	**Yes X No** ☐	Secured	£280,000

DADCA – Own funds	**Yes X** **No** ☐	Committed	£720,000
Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF)	**Yes** ☐ **No X**	DADCA has gone through Highland Council process, if successful Decision is Jan/Feb 2027	£600,000
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	**Yes** ☐ **No X**	Nov/Dec 2026	£100,000
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
	Yes ☐ **No** ☐		
		Total match funding	**£1,700,000**
		CRF requested	**£100,000**
		Total funding	**£1,800,000**

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

There have been countless hours of committee and volunteer time and also financial commitment to this point but does not form part of the main development. There will be project management from qualified and experienced trustees and advisors.

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

Public funding is required because the scale of the capital investment needed to deliver the new Community Centre is beyond what a community organisation such as DADCA could reasonably finance from its own resources or future trading income.

DADCA has already made a very significant financial commitment to the project. The funding package set out at Expression of Interest stage included £722,000 of DADCA's own funds together with £280,000 already confirmed from the Dornoch Common Good Fund. This means the organisation is not looking to public funding to meet the whole cost of the project; it is using substantial resources of its own and seeking public investment to bridge the remaining funding gap.

The overall project cost is approximately £1.8 million, reflecting the cost of constructing a substantial, fully accessible and energy-efficient community facility together with the associated professional and development costs. A project of this scale cannot realistically be funded through

hall hire, fundraising or borrowing without putting unacceptable financial pressure on the organisation and, ultimately, on the affordability of the Centre for local users.

This distinction between capital funding and future operation is important. The Business Plan demonstrates that the completed Centre can operate sustainably, with income from community bookings and larger events supporting its ongoing costs. However, that operating income cannot generate the level of capital required upfront to construct the building.

DADCA has also explored the alternatives. Continued use or major refurbishment of the existing Social Club has been assessed and found not to offer a viable long-term solution. Previous attempts to progress a replacement facility have also been constrained by funding, despite strong community support. The current project has only become realistic because DADCA has assembled a substantial contribution of its own, secured a site, developed the design and put together a wider funding package.

Public investment is therefore needed to unlock a project which has already attracted significant community resources and commitment. It will allow those existing funds to be converted into a permanent community asset rather than leaving DADCA with an identified need and substantial match funding but insufficient capital to complete the development.

Without the remaining public funding, the project would not proceed. With it, DADCA can deliver the full project while keeping future community charges affordable and avoiding an unsustainable level of debt.

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

The remaining bank balances are held to support the charity's ongoing activities and to make sure DADCA retains sufficient flexibility to manage its commitments responsibly.

They are not surplus funds with no identified purpose. Part of the balance is required to meet normal operating costs, including routine administration, property-related costs and other expenditure connected with delivering DADCA's charitable activities. The Board also considers it important to retain a sensible cash reserve so the organisation can deal with unforeseen costs or short-term fluctuations in income without placing pressure on its wider activities.

In addition, some of the remaining cash will provide working capital as the new Community Centre moves into operation. This will help cover the initial period while bookings, events and other income streams build up and will allow the Centre to start from a stable financial position.

The balances therefore have a practical role in protecting the charity's ongoing viability, supporting day-to-day delivery and providing sufficient resilience during the transition to the new Centre. This approach sits alongside DADCA's wider fundraising and project funding strategy and reflects the Board's intention to maintain a prudent and sustainable financial position.

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

Although DADCA has unrestricted funds within its annual accounts, these are not available to provide further match funding without weakening the charity's overall financial position.

A significant proportion of the funds held by DADCA has already been committed to the new Community Centre project, primarily through the proceeds generated from the sale of sites and other assets. These funds form an important part of the project's existing contribution and demonstrate the very substantial financial commitment the charity has already made towards delivery.

The remaining unrestricted funds are comparatively modest and are required to support the charity's normal day-to-day activities and responsibilities. DADCA needs to retain sufficient reserves to meet ongoing costs, respond to unexpected expenditure and continue delivering its charitable purposes while the new Centre is being developed. The Board considers it prudent to maintain approximately six months' running costs as a reserve. This is particularly important for a community organisation responsible for managing assets and services on behalf of the local community.

It would not be responsible financial management to commit all remaining unrestricted funds to the capital project and leave the charity without an adequate operating reserve. Doing so could create unnecessary risk to the wider organisation and potentially affect its ability to meet its existing commitments.

DADCA also intends that part of its available unrestricted resources will provide working capital for the new Community Centre once it opens. This will give the organisation a sensible financial buffer during the initial operating period while bookings, events and other income streams become established. Retaining this capacity will help ensure that the Centre is financially stable from the outset rather than immediately becoming dependent on further external support.

The Board believes this approach represents sound financial management. DADCA has already committed a very significant proportion of its available resources to the project, while retaining an appropriate level of unrestricted funding for ongoing charitable activity, reserves and future working capital. Alongside this, DADCA has continued to pursue a robust fundraising strategy to secure the remaining capital required.

Taken together, these measures provide a balanced approach: maximising the charity's own contribution to the project without placing the organisation itself at financial risk, while ensuring DADCA remains in a strong position to operate and sustain the new Community Centre once completed

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.**	

Yes. The new Community Centre will generate income, principally through hire charges from regular community users, together with income from larger events and commercial bookings such

as weddings, performances, concerts, conferences and private functions. The Business Plan forecasts income increasing from Year 1 to Year 5, with the Centre generating an operating surplus from its first year.

The purpose of generating income is not to maximise profit, but to make sure the Centre can support itself financially while remaining affordable and accessible to the community. Community bookings will continue to be at the heart of the Centre, with larger events and commercial activities providing additional income which helps support the overall running costs.

Any surplus generated will be retained within DADCA and reinvested for charitable purposes, with the new Community Centre being a key priority. This will allow the organisation to build financial resilience and contribute towards future maintenance, repairs, equipment replacement and improvements to the facility. It will also help avoid the situation experienced with the existing Social Club, where the age and condition of the building have resulted in increasing maintenance and running costs.

The Centre has deliberately been designed around a relatively lean operating model, supported by a part-time cleaner/caretaker and volunteers, while the modern energy-efficient building should help control running costs. Income and expenditure will be monitored by DADCA against the five-year financial forecasts, allowing the Board to review charges and expenditure and ensure sufficient resources are being retained for the building's future needs.

This approach means that the capital investment being sought now will create an asset which has a realistic means of sustaining itself over the longer term. The Centre will generate its own income, meet its operating costs and, where surpluses are achieved, reinvest these back into the facility and DADCA's wider charitable purposes rather than distributing them elsewhere.

A detailed five-year Business Plan and financial forecast has been prepared and is being submitted in support of this application.

7.3	**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 complement existing local organisations and businesses rather than compete with or displace them. DADCA recognises that Dornoch already has a range of community groups, businesses and venues, and the new Centre is intended to address gaps in what can currently be provided locally, particularly for larger events and activities which the existing Social Club cannot accommodate.

Engagement undertaken during the development of the Business Plan included community groups, existing Social Club users and local stakeholders. This identified demand for affordable meeting space, improved youth and cultural facilities and a venue capable of accommodating performances and larger events.

There is also evidence of support and potential demand from the local business and wider organisational community. Discussions with local caterers identified potential demand for weddings and larger functions, while an events company currently stages live music elsewhere in Sutherland because Dornoch does not have a suitable venue. UHI has also expressed an interest in using the Centre for occasional training events and activities.

Rather than taking activity away from local businesses, these additional events should create opportunities for them. Weddings, concerts, performances, conferences and other larger gatherings can generate demand for catering, accommodation, hospitality, transport and other

local services. Where appropriate, DADCA will work with local suppliers and businesses to maximise these opportunities.

DADCA will also be mindful of existing community facilities when developing the Centre's programme and pricing. The intention is not to duplicate activities unnecessarily or undercut other local organisations, but to provide facilities which are currently unavailable or constrained. Relationships with local groups and businesses will continue after opening so that any concerns can be raised and addressed.

The Centre will add to Dornoch's existing offer rather than compete with it. By enabling activities and events that are currently unable to take place in the town, the project has the potential to increase local activity and spending, creating benefits for community organisations and businesses as well as for DADCA itself.

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

No. DADCA has considered the overall financing of the project carefully and does not believe that taking on commercial borrowing would represent a prudent or sustainable approach for the charity.

The new Community Centre is a community asset rather than a commercial development designed to generate significant profits. While the Business Plan demonstrates that the completed Centre can generate sufficient income to support its ongoing operation, that income is deliberately based on affordable community use supplemented by larger events and commercial bookings. Introducing loan repayments and interest charges would place an additional fixed financial burden on the Centre from the outset.

As a charity, DADCA has a responsibility to manage its resources prudently and protect its long-term financial position. Borrowing a substantial sum for a capital project would transfer part of the construction cost into future years and require future trustees and users of the Centre to service that debt regardless of changes in energy costs, demand or other operating pressures. The Board does not consider that an appropriate risk where a grant-funded capital model is available.

It could also work against one of the fundamental aims of the project. DADCA wants community hire charges to remain affordable. If significant annual loan repayments had to be built into the operating model, this could ultimately result in increased charges, reduced expenditure on maintenance and activities, or greater reliance on future fundraising simply to service debt.

DADCA has instead taken a financially cautious approach by committing substantial resources of its own to the capital project, securing and pursuing external grant funding, retaining appropriate operating reserves and providing working capital for the new Centre. The five-year Business Plan then demonstrates how the completed facility can operate sustainably without carrying a significant debt burden.

The Board believes this provides a much stronger financial foundation for the project. Public funding will be invested directly into a long-term community asset, while the income generated by the Centre can be used for its operation, maintenance and future sustainability rather than being diverted towards interest and loan repayments.

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?
	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 ☐
	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: **Print:**		**Date:** 31/08/2026

<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** X **No** ☐
2	**Annual financial accounts – latest available.**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
3	**Constitution or articles and memorandum.**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
4	**Committee Members or Directors List.**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
5	**Policies – relevant organisational policies applicable to the project such as child protection, health and safety, equal opportunities, Fair Work First policy.**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
6	**Valid organisation insurance policy.**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
7	**Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos, feasibility study**	**Yes** X **No** ☐
8	**Confirmation of match funding letters**	**Yes** X **No** ☐ **NA** ☐
9	**Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences**	**Yes** ☐ **No** X **NA** ☐
10	**Business plan (income generation projects only)**	**Yes** X **No** ☐ **NA** ☐
11	**Job descriptions (for CRF funded posts)**	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **NA** X
12	**Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds**	**Yes** ☐ **No** X **NA** ☐
13	**Valid quotations or estimates**	**Yes** ☐ **No** X **NA** ☐
14	**Partnership agreement**	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **NA X**

Reason for missing documentation:
5. Various Other Policies can be found on DADCA website
9. Planning and BW Application to be submitted September 2026 (Pre-planning has been submitted)
11. No Job Descriptions
12. Land to be transferred to DADCA (Sept/Oct 2026) emails can be supplied if required
13. Tender process to start in Oct 2026 following BW submission with final drawings
14. N/A

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

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1	**Appendix 2 - Project technical assessments - RAG Summary Spreadsheet**																		
2	**Sutherland Committee -30th November 2026**																		
3	**Ref No**	**Organisation**	**Project title**	**Project description**	**Area Place Plan Priority**	**Total project cost**	**Grant Requested**	**% 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**
4	**CRF4249**	Golspie Primary School Parent Council	Golspie Primary School and Community Playpark	Golspie Primary School Parent Council want to install new playground equipment at Golspie Primary School, which can also be accessed by children in the community outwith school hours. The previous playground equipment was condemned following a Highland Council inspection, and so the school currently has minimal outdoor play facilities.	**People –** Health and wellbeing. Page 11. **Prosperity** –Young People's Priorities: Page. 22	£38,853.45	£28,853.45	74%	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	**28**
5	**CRF5039**	ELKCAL (Elphin Ledmore Knockan Community ssociation Limited)	Upgrade of Sustainable Heating System for Elphin Community Hall	Design, supply, installation and commissioning of a photovoltaic (PV) solar generation renewable energy system with battery storage.	**People -** Community Capacity and Resilience - Community centres and hubs. Page 14. **Place -** Environment and Climate. Page 16.	£26,935.14	£26,935.14	100%	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	**26**
6	**CRF4275**	Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC	Sutherland Community Seaweed CIC - Phase 1 - 2026	The project will establish seaweed farming alongside seaweed gathering and primary processing facilities to provide a wide range of quality seaweeds to a wide range of markets, starting at a scale that enables access to existing markets. The world is rapidly turning to seaweed as a source of biomaterial for replacement of fossil fuels, human food and animal feed. Sutherland Community Seaweed will be ready to meet those demands.	**People -** Community Capacity and Resilience - Seaweed farming. Page 13. **Place -** Environment and Climate. Page 16. **Prosperity** - Employment and Economic Opportunities. Page 21.	£4,500.00	£4,500.00	100%	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	**28**
7	**CRF4252**	Dornoch Heritage Society	Historylinks Heritage Gateway	The need to make the outside area of the museum more attractive and usable by the community has been a priority for the organisation for some time. As a result of feedback and conversations with staff, members, visitors and volunteers we are now proposing to create a heritage-themed Community Garden. It will have a performance space, stone heritage features, seating and planting and will enhance the experience of visiting the museum for local people and visitors alike.	**People -** Community Capacity and Resilience. Page 14. **Prosperity -** Young People's Priorities. Page 22.	£53,132	£40,132.00	76%	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	**25**
8	**CRF4250**	Dornoch & District Community Association (DADCA)	New Community Centre	Dornoch and District Community Association (DADCA) is seeking funding towards the development of a new purpose-built Community Centre at Dornoch South. The project will replace the existing Social Club, a former school building dating from 1845 which, despite serving Dornoch for over 45 years, is now at the end of its useful life. It has poor accessibility, limited parking and capacity, high running and maintenance costs, and can no longer meet the needs of a growing community.	**People** - Community Capacity and Resilience - Community centres and hubs. Page 14.	£1,800,000	£100,000.00	6%	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	**28**
9																			
10		**NOTE - RAG assessment criteria scoring.** Red Amber Green ratings are based on information provided during the application process and are provided as a guide only. The ratings are converted into scores as follows: Red - 1, Amber - 2, Green - 3. This allows a total score for each project to be provided. All projects presented above are eligible for funding. Where a project has been awarded Red or																	
11		Amber against any criteria, this does not reflect an eligibility issue but does flag up that there are outstanding concerns, or that only brief information was provided within the application. If Members wish to approve projects that have Red or Amber ratings then we would seek to address these concerns by applying technical conditions to any funding award made.																	