

# Community Led Local Development Funding Programme 2022/23

## Planning for your Rural Community Led Vision - Template

**1. Please briefly summarise your proposed activity against your CLLD funding allocation for 2022/23.**

Our [Regional Economic Strategy](#) identifies the main challenges for the region as:

- Ageing population
- Skills for a changing economy
- Low pay
- Low investment in research and development
- Poor infrastructure
- Low productivity
- Pockets of deprivation

The Regional Economic Strategy has six themes within which are four priorities intended to address the challenges outlined above and also to capitalise on our opportunities which are:

- Our natural assets
- Recovery from COVID-19
- New trading relationships
- The future of work
- Changing factors of competitiveness
- Forecast growth and job opportunities in existing key sectors
- Demographic changes

The Regional Economic Strategy's strategic framework has six themes each of which contains four priorities which can be used to guide delivery of economic development in the south. It is our intention, through the Thriving & Distinct Communities theme of the Regional Economic Strategy to support our communities to address local challenges using this funding. Our vision is that rural communities may apply for grant funding to enable them to progress their place plans allowing them to put in place the building blocks needed to address challenges and opportunities specific to their locality. For those communities that are not yet ready to progress place plans we will use the funding to provide grants to support capacity building, the skills from which could be used to support applications to alternative sources of funding in the future. Where communities already have capacity, we will offer grants to support the development of feasibility studies for community owned assets with an emphasis on making those assets more climate friendly.

During the consultation for the Regional Economic Strategy, it became clear that community capacity was an issue for some communities. This was highlighted by the communities themselves and the organisations that work with communities in the

area ([SOSRES-Stakeholder-Engagement-Summary-July2021.pdf \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/SOSRES-Stakeholder-Engagement-Summary-July2021.pdf)). This was also raised as an issue during the engagement recently undertaken for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. A summary of that engagement is supplied at the end of this document.

**2. Outline the current or aspirational membership of your LAG, including your nominated Chair, the expectations of LAG members and how they are qualified to deliver your local vision?**

The LAG in Dumfries & Galloway was disbanded at the end of the last round of EU funding therefore we would be building a new group. We will advertise on the Council website and social media for applications to participate in the LAG.

After the call for applications, a LAG Recruitment Assessment Panel, made up of neutral parties to consider all the applications. We do not intend for the LAG will have a separate legal status and it will be a stand-alone group serviced by the Lead Partner. We will be seeking members that are representative of our communities with relevant experience, skills and local connections being important. Clearly, there will be some time pressure to get this underway so it will need to be a streamlined process. We will ensure that the sector and gender quotas are met.

**3. Please describe your local partnership structure, including your chosen approach to either nominating or becoming an accountable body.**

Dumfries and Galloway will be the accountable body as was the case in the LEADER programme, it will also be the lead partner. The LAG will be separate and independent. It will not have any legal status. Decision making on grants will lie with the LAG and the accountable body will undertake the management of the funds.

**4. Please describe how your planned activity for this year will contribute to the overarching outcomes for CLLD funding this year?**

Community capacity building: As the opportunities of future UK Government funding streams come online, recent community engagement has highlighted a need for capacity building within communities. The early development of place plans has also highlighted a capacity issue in some communities. It is intended to offer a grant to communities to enable them to commission a study to identify the support needed for capacity building in the community. Having a schedule of requirements will enable communities to apply for additional funding from different sources to support delivery of the schedule of requirements.

Development of place plans: This fund is intended to support the development of place plans by offering a grant to support the engagement of a consultant to facilitate the development of community place plans. The place plans will allow communities to have a more direct role in the decisions that influence their place. Where a community is not ready to undertake the development of a place plan, they will be offered capacity building support instead. It should be noted that this is not the formal place plans that are a recent requirement of the Scottish Government but are, instead, an expansion of the place element of the Borderlands Growth Deal where it is for communities to describe what they envisage their place plans will look like and what issues it will address.

Community project feasibility grant: during recent community engagement a need for feasibility studies for capital projects to prepare project proposals was identified. We propose a funding scheme to commission feasibility work by community organisations to develop projects that will support developments with particular emphasis on developments that are related to climate change and contributions to net zero targets and will result in positive improvements with regard to the climate change agenda.

**5. Please describe how your planned activity for this year will advance inclusion, equality and diversity?**

Rural isolation caused by limited public transport links, a low wage economy that discourages longer travel to work times with their higher costs. The high proportion of the region's population living in rural areas has implications for individuals in terms of their ability to access services and employment opportunities. A focus of the plan is to create a more localised approach to funding support. The presence of additional placemaking and planning services and support to communities located in rural areas can contribute to carbon reduction by offering the opportunity of reduced travel movements and therefore environmental pollution caused by cars.

The funding will contribute to social inclusion by unlocking the economic potential of rural areas where job opportunities are limited, low paid and seasonal. We will do more outreach work in outlying parts of the region and using video conferencing and webinars to deliver animation support. Staff will engage with individual communities and establish and develop networks, solicit participation from new and existing communities and businesses and define a framework for operation which aligns to the aims of the funding and supports the requirements of communities as development needs are identified.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has extensive equal opportunities policies and procedures in place including mandatory staff training. These policies and procedures will be used to guide delivery and are available on request.

**6. Please describe how your aspirations for this year will contribute to Scottish Governments top 3 priorities for 2022/23 of tackling poverty, addressing net zero and just transition goals, and contributing to a wellbeing economy?**

By supporting the development of place plans the funding can help communities to understand what they want to be like in the future and help to develop a positive community identity. Place plans and the development community capacity can help to strengthen local connections and collaborations and consequently improve social capital thus contributing to the development of community wealth building within the region. The plans and capacity building can support community aspirations such as responding to the global climate emergency and tackling inequalities.

**7. If applicable, please describe how your aspirations for this year will contribute to any other Scottish government's key priorities for 2022/23?**

The proposed grants will support community capacity building and community project feasibility studies. The intention is to build resilience and leadership within communities. This will support the community wealth building agenda with local

democracy and governance, community empowerment. The grass roots work with capacity building will enable communities to identify the issues, needs, support and training and will empower people involved in local community development.

**8. If applicable, please outline the project selection and decision making process that your LAG will employ when allocating funding, including selection criteria, procedures for projects led by the LAG itself and how you will set the process for any delegated decision making?**

We will take a light touch approach to project selection and decision making. Our stated aim of supporting the development of place plans or associated capacity building will provide quite narrow funding criteria. We would be seeking applications for funding to engage consultants to help with the development of place plans. For capacity building we would be looking for animators to engage with communities. These projects will be relatively short and focused with defined outcomes. Applications will need to comply with any Scottish Government requirements.

The projects should contain the objective (place plan or capacity building); the associated outcomes; the costs; milestone dates; compatibility with other work being undertaken locally and demonstrate a need for the support.

Upon receipt of applications, we will assess them against any technical criteria and appraise them against the funding criteria, following which they will be sent to the LAG for a funding decision. If the application is successful a funding contract will be drawn up and after this is signed by the applicant and the accountable body the project can commence.

**9. Please outline the appeals process you will use as part of your project selection procedure**

Applicants will be informed by email as to the success of their application and, if they were unsuccessful, they will be advised of the reason why their application was unsuccessful and whether it might be possible to address the reasons for declining their application enabling resubmission. Where an applicant wishes to appeal their declined application, they will need to submit a written appeal which should contain the grounds for their appeal. An Appeals Panel will be convened to consider the appeal. The panel will consist of a member of the LAG who was not involved in the decision-making process; an Economic Development Service Manager (or delegated Officer) from Dumfries & Galloway Council; a Senior Finance Officer from Dumfries & Galloway Council; the CLLD Programme Manager (non-voting); To be quorate, the Appeals Panel requires all three voting members attend. The Appeals Panel may take place either in person or online. Projects submitted for appeal will be considered in a fair, impartial and democratic manner.

The Appeals Panel will meet within 14 days of receiving the written notification of appeal from the applicant. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be communicated to the applicant within 7 days of the meeting of the Panel. Appeal decisions will be final.

**10. Please describe the process by which you will record conflicts of interest?**

We will maintain a list of the LAG members' declared interests and request that LAG

members declare interests at the start of each meeting. They will then be either excluded from any scoring or vote, or sometimes from the discussion and decision making altogether. We will issue LAG members with a brief statement confirming that the LAG is required to avoid or manage conflicts of interest. This will be followed by an explanation of conflict of interest and requesting that they inform admin staff of any potential conflicts of interest. The register of conflicts of interest will be a permanent record of interests. Individual declarations at meetings will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and the circumstances recorded in the register which will be submitted to the Scottish Government along with our final grant claim form.

**\*\*PLEASE INSERT ANY SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON A NEW PAGE BELOW\*\***

## **UKSPF Engagement Summary**

A sub-group of the Regional Economic Partnership (REP) was convened, and two workshops were held with the subgroup on the 12 and 19 July 2022.

Members of the REP were:

- Dumfries & Galloway College
- Independent Community Representative Dumfries & Galloway
- Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway
- Independent Community Representative Scottish Borders
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- Scottish Borders College
- Scottish Borders Housing Association
- Visit Scotland

The main themes raised by attendees at the workshops were:

- Identify skills gaps; retrain and upskill as well as attract people who are already qualified; this means there needs to be decent local health services; affordable housing; etc.
- Strengthen community capacity and build resilience for place planning and if required pre-place planning.
- Encourage small business: councils must break up procurement opportunities to make it easier for local SMEs to bid
- Improve the condition of existing housing stock (RSLs and private landlords) using local businesses to carry out improvements. Local business needs to have the capacity and skills to take advantage.

## **Dumfries & Galloway Council Webinar**

A webinar was held by Dumfries & Galloway Council on 14 July. 28 attendees included representatives from:

- Community groups
- Department of Work & Pensions Dumfries & Galloway
- Dumfries & Galloway College
- Dumfries & Galloway Council Delivery Teams
- Economic Leadership Group
- National Health Service Dumfries & Galloway
- Small & medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Social enterprises
- Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway

The main themes raised by attendees at the webinar were:

- Wellbeing
- Poverty reduction
- Both physical and mental health are important. Early interventions through, for example, youth clubs and organisation for people in later life to support getting people into the workforce could be considered
- Capacity building is needed in community groups, social enterprises, and SMEs to enable them to bid for and manage contracts

- Cost of living crisis
- Net zero
- Reskilling for second careers. There are key skills shortages and more could be done to support lifelong learning and professional qualifications
- Housing and access to housing, there are issues around barriers of access to a secure home to build a life from, for example, poverty
- Travel can be a barrier of access to opportunities
- A “broad brush” should be taken to allow us to maximise the opportunities to deliver the outcomes our communities need