

West Lothian - Rural Community Local Led Development 2024-2025

Application Guidance

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Rural, Community Led Local Development fund (RCLLD) is financed by the Scottish Government Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate.

It is administered by a Local Action Group (LAG), made up of people from the local community as well as public sector organisations. They work in partnership to agree local priorities and make decisions on grants.

The fund is supported by West Lothian Council who act as 'Lead Partner' to administer the grants on behalf of the LAG.

Please read this guidance in full before beginning your application.

2. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Due to the short-term nature of the funding we do not anticipate covering staff costs (please see Section C)
- We do not pay costs upfront
- Projects must not start until you return your signed Offer of Grant
- All project must be complete by 13th March 2026

Dates and Deadlines

Round 1	Dates
Application deadline	Monday 7 th July 2025
Application assessment date	Thursday 17 th July 2025
Project Award notification by	Thursday 24 th July 2025*
Round 2	Dates
Application deadline	Monday 22 nd September 2025
Application assessment date	Wednesday 1 st October 2025
Project Award notification by	Wednesday 8 th October 2025*
Programme Closure	
All projects must be completed	13 th March 2026
Financial claims must be submitted by	23 rd March 2026

*Likely to be sooner.

Eligible Areas

Projects based in, or benefitting, rural areas of West Lothian are eligible. We are currently using the National Records of Scotland population estimate for mid-2022.

List A: Towns and villages with population under 10,000 - **Eligible**

List B: Towns and villages with population under 10,000 but part of a larger conurbation - **Eligible if part of a project that covers a wider area of places from List A or that can demonstrate a high level of fit with rural development -**

List C: Towns of over 10,000 - **Not eligible -**

List A		List B	List C
Addiewell	Loganlea	East Whitburn	Armadaale
Blackburn	Longridge	Pumpherston	Bathgate
Blackridge	Mid Calder	Uphall	Broxburn
Breich	Philipstoun	Uphall Station	Linlithgow
Bridgehouse	Polbeth		Livingston
Bridgend	Seafeld		Whitburn
Dechmont	Stoneyburn		
East Calder	Threemiletown		
Ecclesmachan	Torphichen		
Fauldhouse	West Calder		
Harburn	Westfield		
Kirknewton	Winchburgh		

Eligible Applicants

Organisations and groups eligible to apply include, but are not limited to; CICs, SCIOs, development trusts, community groups, volunteer groups and social enterprises.

- We do not accept applications from individuals
- We are not accepting applications from businesses at this time
- If you are unsure if your organisation/group qualifies please get in contact

Funding Available

- Funding for 2025/2026 is mainly capital with a smaller allocation of revenue funds:
 - Capital expenditure is defined as money spent to acquire physical assets such as property, technology, or equipment
 - Revenue expenditure is defined as grant money used to cover operating costs, administration and services
- You may apply for up to 100% of costs but projects with match funding are encouraged. (match funding must be awarded before the project starts)
- Minimum project size: £500
- Maximum project size: £20,000 unless covering a significant amount of the eligible West Lothian area.
- In accordance with the [Third Sector Fair Funding Charter](#) we support the Full Recovery Costs (FCR) model and will allow operational costs to be added to a project with a limit set at 20% of total project value.¹

Please note, project costs are not paid up front. All cost must be incurred and a claim submitted with relevant evidence before we make any payment. For further information please refer to the claims section.

Funding Priorities

Projects must align with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [Scottish National Performance Framework](#) and achieve progress towards at least one of the Scottish Government's policy priorities which are;

- Eradicating child poverty
- Growing the economy
- Tackling the climate emergency
- Improving public services

Projects should also seek to advance inclusion, equality and diversity in their local area.

The LAG will also be looking for projects that have long term sustainability inbuilt, or that have a clear exit plan.

Networking and Shared Learning

Introducing grant recipients to each other can have a hugely positive impact; This year we are permitting each project to add a small budget to enable them to visit or host other organisations to share what they have learnt or learn from others. If you wish take this opportunity you must provide information on your plans within your application (Project Benefits section). You will also need to set out the cost of doing this in as much detail as possible in the cost section of the application form. You will be expected to write up a report on the visit/event in your final claim.

¹ If you wish to include these costs you must discuss them with the co-ordinator prior to application.

3. INDICATIVE COSTS AND PROCUREMENT

A ‘Cost Workbook’ will need to be submitted with your application. This will be supplied along with the application form.

Outline Costs

Applications must include indicative costs with quotes and/or cost comparison where relevant. Cost comparison may be screen shots of websites. We do not accept web links as prices may change.

Indicative spend should be submitted using costs headings and the ‘Outline spend’ section of the workbook used to give more detail. This will be checked by the co-ordinator to avoid ineligible costs.

For example:

Cost heading: Marketing

Cost: £500

Outline Spend: Leaflets, posters, design costs

Cost that will not be reimbursed without prior agreement with the co-ordinator may be, but are not limited to:

- Staff costs
- Travel and subsistence costs
- Overheads including utility costs and management fees

Value for Money

The following value for money (VFM) evidence must be carried out on all project costs.

Cost	VFM
Item costing £0 - £999	Provide evidence of how you sought best value
Item(s)* or works costing £1000 - £4,999	2 quotes or price comparisons
Item(s)* or works costing £5,000 - £49,999	3 quotes

*Items from the same supplier

Use of local suppliers are encouraged but fair an open competition, as well as conflicts of interest, must be considered.

Fit for purpose: Price comparisons for capital items should be made on a like for like basis and it should be noted that the cheapest option may not always represent value for money. For example, office chairs bought from low cost online retailers tend to have a limited life span. Specialist retailers of office and hospitality equipment sell chairs made from more robust materials that are built to be used every day and have a much longer lifespan, and often a guarantee. These would therefore be considered better value for money as well as more sustainable.

Please note: Should you wish to proceed with a supplier that is not the cheapest (in a ‘like for like’ comparison) you will need to contact the co-ordinator for approval *prior* to purchases being made.

Staff Costs: Due to the short-term nature of the funding we do not anticipate covering staff costs. However, they may be considered for one off events or similar. Please discuss this with the co-ordinator before submitting your application.

Where staff costs are allowed a cost calculator will be supplied. Evidence of employers NI, pension contributions and hours worked will be required.

Any staff costs not discussed prior to award will not be paid. This includes travel and subsistence costs.

Ineligible Expenditure

Cost that are ineligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

- Expenditure defrayed out with the project period*
- Any Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable by the Grantee**
- Statutory pay e.g. maternity or sick pay
- Payments for unfunded pensions
- Bonus or commission payments
- Gifts and hospitality
- Costs to meet a statutory requirement
- Cost reclaimable by the Grantee elsewhere

*Your project cannot start before your signed offer of grant has been returned to the co-ordinator.

**Value Added Tax is only claimable by organisations that are not VAT registered. Where a partial exemption exists, and you are unable to reclaim VAT on this project, you will be required to submit a letter from your accountants outlining the organisations VAT status.

Match Funding

Match funding is not a requirement but applicants are encouraged to pursue other funds and it may help your request in the event of a high level of applications.

Match funding must be awarded prior to your project start date.

Please note: Where a project has match funding, your award will be made based on the total costs of the project. You will need to submit and evidence claims for the total cost of the project and you will be paid a percentage of this. Please see the example in the table below:

Total Project Costs	RCLLD Funding	Match Funding
£5,000.00 (100%)	£3,000.00 (60%)	£2,000.00 (40%)
Claim 1	RCLLD Payment	Match Funding Contribution
£1,500.00 (100%)	£900.00 (60%)	£600.00 (40%)

If your other funder is paying for an item in full then it is not considered 'match funding' and it should not be counted as part of the project you are applying to RCLLD for. If you are unsure please discuss with the co-ordinator prior to submitting your application.

If you are awarded less than your full application amount you will be expected to supply and equitable amount of match funding. E.g. if you were to be awarded 50% of your total application amount you would be expected to supply 50% of the match funding towards the project.

4. REPORTING

We are currently using the Social Value Engine to measure the social return on investment (SRI) each project contributes to their local community: <https://socialvalueengine.com/>

Please list as much detail about your expected outputs and outcomes, including quantitative and qualitative information, in the Benefits section of your application.

Once your application has been approved the co-ordinator will contact you regarding SRI reporting.

ANNEX A: Supporting Documents

To apply you will need to complete an application form and submit supporting documents.

All applicants must submit:

1. CLLD Costs and Management workbook and value for money evidence
2. Bank statement showing:
 - a. organisation name and address
 - b. account number
 - c. sort code(Sensitive information may be redacted)
3. Your most recent management accounts
4. Constitution and/or Memorandum of Association
5. List of board members and positions held

Where applicable you will also need to submit:

6. Title deeds or valid lease and owners' permissions
7. Evidence of asset transfer
8. Evidence you have met with any statutory requirements
9. Evidence of operational cost agreed with the co-ordinator

Where staff costs are agreed you will need to submit:

10. Staff contracts (if not yet contracted these will need to be supplied prior to payment)
11. Costs calculators
12. Evidence of employer's NI and pension contributions
13. Fair Work First policy (see Annex E)

You may also wish to submit the following to support your application:

14. Evidence of need or demand
15. Evidence of local support for the project

ANNEX B: Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed by the LAG against the following:

- Fit with Scottish Government priorities
- Contribution to the local community
- Community engagement and support
- Outcomes and outputs
- Inclusivity/equality
- Project management
- Legacy and exit strategy
- Partnership/knowledge sharing
- Meeting a need or demand
- Reasonableness of costs/value for money
- Our capital and revenue budgets

In the instance of high levels of applications, we may also use the following criteria:

- Ability to fund your project without our support
- Area distribution of projects
- Collaborative working

ANNEX C: Successful Applications

Publicity

All publicity must include WLC and Scottish Government Logos and the text 'Funded by the Rural Community Led Local Development Fund'. Logos can be found in [Annex D](#).

Change Requests

The co-ordinator must be made aware of any changes to your project as soon as possible and ahead of the change (unless circumstances exclude this). Change requests made after the fact may not be approved and may not be reimbursed.

- Up to a 10% overspend will allowed per cost headings without a Change Request. This must be offset by underspends in other headings
- Requests for additional funds will require a change request. Please note additional funds are not guaranteed and may not be available
- Purchase of items or activity not outlined in the application will require a Change Request (i.e. those that do not fit with an existing cost heading or activity)
- Financial Change Requests up to and including 25% of total project costs will be assessed by the RCLLD Co-ordinator
- Financial Change Requests of 26% or more than the of total project costs will be assessed by the LAG and will take a *minimum* of 1 week for approval.
- Changes to project scope or beneficiaries will also require a Change Request. This will be assessed by the RCLLD Co-ordinator and may be passed to the LAG if deemed necessary

Please contact the co-ordinator for a change request form.

Claims Guidance

A claim form and reporting template will be supplied by the co-ordinator.

Costs must be paid by card or bank transfer from the bank account for which you have supplied a statement for at the time of application. If you use an alternative payment system this must be discussed with the co-ordinator prior to application.

We do not accept:

- Purchases made from personal accounts unless agreed with the co-ordinator at the time of application
- Credit card payments unless agreed with the co-ordinator at the time of application

Evidence

To make a claim for a purchase it must be evidenced by an:

- Invoice or receipt

To make a claim for staff costs they must be evidenced by:

- Payslips
- Timesheets where relevant
- Evidence for payment of employers NI and pension contributions (first claim only)

All claims must be evidenced by:

- Bank statement showing the funds have defrayed from your bank account:
 - Statements must show:
 - account number
 - sort code
 - organisation name.
- Items being claimed should be numbered on the bank statement to match the numbers on the claim form

- You may redact personal or private payments from the bank statement that is not relevant to your claim
- Downloads and screenshots from online bank accounts are accepted as long as the above information is visible and clear

Submission

Your claim, along with supporting evidence, should be submitted via the RCLLD mailbox. All documents should be saved, prior to sending, using the naming conventions below:

Invoice/Receipt:

Organisation - Project Name – Claim number – Item – Item number - Date of purchase

Bank statements:

Organisation - Project Name – Claim number – Date of statement

Please note: Each item must be identifiable on the invoice and bank statement. If an invoice has purchases outwith your project then the relevant items must be highlighted and calculated on the invoice. E.g. If the total invoice amount is for £500 but only £250 worth of items are relevant to this project then these items should be highlighted and the costs totalled.

Not using the cheapest quote/supplier

If you wish to use a supplier that is not the cheapest available it will need to be approved prior to spending the funds. To do this please email the RCLLD mailbox with the cost comparison and an explanation of your choice. Approval will be given by the co-ordinator or the LAG depending on the significance of the price difference.

Payment:

All reasonable endeavours will be made to pay your grant within 2 weeks of receipt. Please be aware that delays to payment are usually due by missing information or poorly notated invoices.

If the claim needs reworking the co-ordinator will email you to explain what needs doing. If you need help with your claim please contact the co-ordinator.

Payment will be made via the council's payment system. If you are not registered with this system you will be required to complete a new supplier form prior to your first payment. **Please note** the system is cleared periodically meaning even if you have previously had payment from the council, you may still need to complete a form.

Match Funding

If your project has match funding you will be paid a percentage of the total costs claimed as outlined in your Offer of Grant.

Underspends:

If you have underspend on your project and would like to use the funds for additional purchases you will need to contact the co-ordinator and complete a change request form. If we are nearing the end of the programme this may not be possible.

Please inform the co-ordinator of any underspends as soon as possible. This allows us to reallocate underspends that you cannot use to other projects.

Claims that do not adhere to the guidance may not be reimbursed.

More than one claim may be submitted but your final claim must be submitted by 23th March 2026

End of Project Reporting

Reporting methodology for the Social Value Engine will be agreed with the co-ordinator on receipt of your grant award. You will also be asked to submit a short report for the Local Action Group along with supporting evidence, this may include, photographs, videos, feedback forms and diaries.

Reporting Terminology

- Outputs: activity taking place as a result of the project e.g. 4 mental health workshops
- Outcomes: results of the activity undertaken e.g. improved mental health in participants
- Quantitative: data that involve numerical information e.g. number of people participating in a workshop
- Qualitative: information that is descriptive and non-numerical e.g. feedback from those participating in the workshop
- Social Return on Investment: a principles-based method for measuring extra-financial value not otherwise reflected or involved in conventional financial account
<https://socialvalueuk.org/about-us/>

Retention of Assets and Documentation

Your award letter will outline retention schedules for assets and documentation relating to the projects. Please ensure you read this carefully.

- All projects receiving funds may be subject to monitoring and audit checks on capital items and claim evidence
- They must be produced on request for inspection by a LAG representative or delegate appointed by them
- Capital items will need to be used for the purpose for which they were bought for a minimum period of 5 years from the date of purchase
- Evidence must be retained for 6 years from the date of expenditure

ANNEX D: Logos

All publicity must include WLC and Scottish Government Logos and the text: 'Funded by the Rural Community Led Local Development Fund'.

- You may include your own logos
- All logs should be equitable size
- If you require logos in a different format please contact the co-ordinator

Scottish Government logo:



West Lothian Council logo:



ANNEX E: Fair Work First

Fair Work First guidance for organisations seeking and awarding public sector grants, contracts and other funding.

[Fair Work First Guidance: Supporting the implementation of Fair Work First in workplaces across Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

Key considerations to take into account are:

Evidence of appropriate channels for effective workers’ voice

Although it is to be encouraged in all organisations, the collective element of voice does not have to be evidenced by organisations with fewer than 21 workers. This aligns with conditions for application for statutory union recognition and is therefore considered as a benchmark in terms of the size of workforce where collective representation would be expected. In all other cases, evidence must be provided to show that voice exists at both an individual and collective level in the organisation. The table below explains how the different channels of voice can be evidenced, the expectation being that at least one channel at both levels (individual and collective) is evidenced.

Evidence of payment of the real Living Wage

Grant value	Evidence			
	Directly employed staff	Apprentices	16-17 year old workers	Contracted and agency staff
Below £100k (cumulative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Living Wage Accreditation; <u>or</u>Self-declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Self-declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Self-declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Self-declaration
Equal to or above £100k (cumulative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Living Wage Accreditation; <u>or</u>Anonymised payroll; <u>or</u>Accountant certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anonymised payroll; <u>or</u>Accountant certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anonymised payroll; <u>or</u>Accountant certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anonymised copy of contract for relevant contractors/ agency workers

Living Wage Employer Accreditation

Living Wage Employer Accreditation applies to only:

- directly employed staff aged 18 years of age and over
- those who are not apprentices

Further supporting documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/fair-and-inclusive-workplaces/>

ANNEX F: Queries, Complaints and Appeals

Applications must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the West Lothian RCLLD Guidance. Applications will be awarded based on the criteria outlined in [Annex B](#).

Project may only appeal on grounds of LAG administrative, governance or management failures e.g. issues with applying, undeclared conflicts of interest, mishandling or other organisational errors.

Appeals should be made in writing and submitted to the co-ordinator (or the head of Economic Development should the co-ordinator not be appropriate) within 30 days of receipt of the outcome letter. The request must contain the nature of the appeal and provide information and evidence as to demonstrate why the original decision should be reconsidered.

All unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback and the opportunity to reapply should time and funds permit.

Complaints will follow West Lothian Councils complaints procedures.

CONTACTS DETAILS

RCLLD Co-ordinator: Kat Purser
Email: RCLLD@westlothian.gov.uk