

VILLAGE RENEWAL COMMUNITY SCHEME



Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Summary

This scheme will provide financial support primarily for the drafting of integrated Village Plans, for small-scale infrastructure projects and for other capital and marketing initiatives which can be seen to improve the village.

The **Village Plan** is a working document that has the support of the community. It should provide a needs-based strategic framework to co-ordinate specific development actions. Support for Village Renewal must fit with the Council's Community Plan, and integrate with any Village Renewal Plans that were supported under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme. The measure aims to build on the overarching fabric of a village or town, integrating with funding from other government departments and agencies. It aims to address rural dereliction and prioritise the re-use of existing derelict buildings, particularly to provide community infrastructure.

Applicants must submit a robust **Project Plan**, have full **Planning Permission** and evidence of the **required Matched Funding** being in place at the time of application. Applicants must also have **robust procurement documentation** for the items for which they seek funding at time of applying.

Support will be limited to within the 'village' development limits, or put simply, within the 30 miles per hour zone. It may include the development or updating of integrated Village Plans for Local Government Districts Village investments, emanating from the integrated village plans such as (list is not exhaustive):

- Derelict and vacant site enhancement.
- Environmental improvements.
- Shop frontage enhancements.
- Conservation and upgrading of Rural Culture and Heritage (natural and built), except monuments and wall murals which will not be considered eligible for funding.
- Gateway projects.

You must attend a Pre-application workshop before you can apply.

Type of Support

Support will be provided through grant-aid.

No advance payments will be available.

What type of Projects are Eligible for Funding?

Eligible Costs - Can be supported (list is not exhaustive):

- Technical support to help with the development and implementation of integrated Village Action Plans.
- Grant-aid towards the cost of small-scale capital investment.
- Identity features that promote the shared community Heritage and Cultural aspects of the village.
- Marketing support to assist project promoters in creating greater awareness and interest of the village renewal scheme.
- Bespoke training intrinsic to implementing projects and programmes under this scheme. Bespoke training is any training that is not currently provided by a statutory body such as Colleges, Invest Northern Ireland, Local enterprise Agencies or other Council-funded Schemes.
- General costs linked to the expenditure such as architects, engineers and consultation fees, fees relating to advice on environmental and economic sustainability, including feasibility studies, the acquisition of patent rights and licenses, up to a total maximum of 10% of the eligible project grant amount.

Ineligible Costs - Cannot be supported (list is not exhaustive):

- Costs connected with the leasing contract, such as lessor's margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads and insurance charges or anything deemed to be a running cost.
- Investments which are considered by the LAG to have an unacceptable negative effect on the environment, or the proposed investment fails to meet environmental regulations.
- The purchase of land, including through leasing of property, as part of a project.
- Replacement investments i.e. like for like and maintenance costs for existing buildings, plant or equipment.
- Investments in new build self-catering accommodation, hotel accommodation, guest houses or hostels or additional bed space in existing ones.
- Lease-purchase / hire purchase of new machinery and equipment.
- Purchase and installation of renewable energy technologies.

Ineligible Costs - Cannot be supported (list is not exhaustive):

- The purchase of cars, vans, motorcycles, bicycles and any other form of personal transport.
- The purchase of vehicles for transportation (such as lorries, buses, vans, minibuses or any other kind of vehicle used to transport or move goods or people).
- Tractors and Agricultural machinery.
- Expenditure incurred or work commenced / goods purchased before the Letter of Offer Project Start Date or after the Letter of Offer Project End Date.
- Payments for gifts and donations or personal entertainments, including alcohol.
- Training i.e. any training currently provided by a statutory body such as Colleges, Invest Northern Ireland, Local Enterprise Agencies or other Council-funded Schemes.
- Reprinting of marketing materials.
- No aspect of an activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation, or likely to be perceived as discriminatory on grounds of religion, colour, race, gender or disability.
- Statutory fines and penalties, criminal fines and damages.
- Legal expenses in respect of litigation.
- Any cost associated with meeting a legislative or statutory requirement for the business.
- Reclaimable VAT.
- Feasibility studies for renewable energy.
- Projects which are not an integral part of the Local Authority Community Plan, and not financially supported by the Local Authority.

Amounts and Support Rates and State Aid

All State aid under this scheme will be paid in accordance with block exemption Regulation (EU) 651/2014 as follows:

Payments

Activity	Min. Grant	Max. Grant	Level of Support
Capital Grant	£5,000	£60,000*	75% Council and Community/ Third Sector
Technical Support and Bespoke Training	£500	£5,000	75% Council and Community/ Third Sector

*This is the maximum grant level per project, including technical support.

Eligible Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Village Renewal Scheme are Local Authorities and Community Groups who already have a Village Plan, or are applying for funding in order to develop one.

Local Authorities must work in partnership with the rural community to roll out the Village Plans. Activities must be in line with the Council Community Plan (consult with Council to ensure this).

- Local Council
- Local Council / Community Voluntary Sector Partnership (where the Local Council is the grant recipient)

Eligibility Condition

Applicants failing to achieve LOO Targets and Outputs in previous applications to Priority 6 may be debarred from applying until achieved.

Please note that this information may be subject to change as the programme progresses.