**Rural Development Programme 2014-2020**

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**Final Version 12/02/16**

The Village Renewal Scheme will provide financial support (£8m) primarily for the drafting of integrated village plans and also for the renewal of rural villages through Village Plans. 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 Community Plans and integrate with the Village Renewal plans supported under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme. The measure will aim to build on the overarching fabric of a village/town integrating with other funding from other government departments and agencies. The measure will aim to address rural dereliction and prioritise reuse of existing derelict buildings, particularly to provide community infrastructure.

### Description of the Operation

Support will be limited to within the ‘village’ development limits or in simple terms 30 miles per hour zone and may include:

* Development or updating of integrated village plans for Local Government Districts
* Village investments emanating from the integrated village plans such as:
  + 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

### Type of Support

Support will be provided through grant aid. No advance payments will be available.

### Eligiible Costs

Support will be provided through:

1. Technical support to help with the development and implementation of integrated village action plans.
2. Grant aid towards the costs of small-scale capital investment with a lesser amount of resource investment.
3. Identity features that promote the shared community heritage and cultural aspects of the village.
4. Marketing support to assist project promoters to create greater awareness and interest of the concept of the respective project under the village renewal scheme.
5. Bespoke training intrinsic to implementing projects and programmes under this scheme. The bespoke training would be defined as any training not currently provided by a statutory body such as colleges, Invest Northern Ireland, Local enterprise Agencies or other council funded scheme.
6. 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 licences, up to a total maximum of 10% of the eligible project grant amount. Feasibility studies are eligible expenditure even if there is no expenditure under points (a) and (b) as long as the activity was capable of being supported;

**Ineligible Costs**

The following costs are **not** eligible for support under LEADER;

1. 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;
2. Investments which are considered by the LAG to have an unacceptable negative effect on the environment (or proposed investment fails to meet environmental regulations);
3. The purchase of land, including through leasing of property as part of a project;
4. Replacement investments i.e. like for like and maintenance costs for existing buildings, plant or equipment;
5. Investments in new build self catering accommodation, hotel accommodation, guest houses or hostels or additional bed space in existing ones;
6. Lease-purchase/hire purchase of new machinery and equipment;
7. Purchase and installation of renewable energy technologies;
8. The purchase of cars, vans, motorcycles, bicycles and any other form of personal transport[[1]](#footnote-1)1 (for whatever purpose);
9. The purchase of vehicles[[2]](#footnote-2)2 for transportation (such as lorries, buses, vans, minibuses or any other kind of vehicle used to transport or move goods or people);
10. Tractors and Agricultural machinery;
11. Expenditure incurred or work commenced/goods purchased before the letter of offer project start date or after the letter of offer project end date;
12. Payments for gifts and donations or personal entertainments (including alcohol);
13. Training i.e. any training currently provided by a statutory body such as colleges, Invest Northern Ireland, Local Enterprise Agencies or other council funded scheme;
14. Reprinting of marketing materials;
15. 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;
16. Statutory fines and penalties, criminal fines and damages;
17. Legal expenses in respect of litigation;
18. Any cost associated with meeting a legislative or statutory requirement for the business;
19. Reclaimable VAT;
20. Feasibility studies for renewable energy;
21. Projects which are not an integral part of the Local Authority Community Plan and not financially supported by the Local Authority.

### Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Village Renewal Scheme are local authorities and community groups. Local authorities must work in partnership with the rural community to roll out the village plans.

* Local Council
* Local Council / Community Voluntary Sector partnership (where the Local Council is the grant recipient)

### Eligibility Conditions

Villages within the programme definition of rural that don’t already have a village plan. Also villages that have an integrated village plan that was funded under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme or from some other source (e.g. Council).

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

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### Amounts and Support Rates

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Min Grant | Max Grant | Level of support |
| Capital Grant | £5,000 | £500,000 \*\* | 75% for Local Authority and Community sector/third sector |
| Technical support and bespoke training | £500 | £5,000 | 75% for Local Authority and Community sector/third sector |

**State Aid**

All aid under this Scheme will comply with EU rules on State aid. State aid falling within the following aid categories will be paid in accordance with block exemption Regulation (EU) 651/2014 as follows:

* Aid for culture and heritage conservation will comply with Article 53.
* Aid for sport for multi-functional recreational infrastructure will comply with Article 55.
* Aid to local infrastructure will comply with Article 56.

Alternatively the measure can utilise de minimis Regulation (EU) 1407/2013.

A State Aid checklist must be completed for each application received under this Scheme.

1. 1 **Used to transport people for any reason** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 **Vehicle is something used as an instrument of conveyance. It can include any conveyance used for transporting passengers or things by land, water, or air.** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)