

Scottish Rural Network

Operational Plan 2026-27





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Scottish Rural Network (SRN) Operational Plan 2026-27

1. Purpose and Strategic Context

The Scottish Rural Network (SRN) supports and encourages rural development by building the capacity and capabilities of rural and island communities and stakeholders and by sharing information, good practice and funding opportunities. SRN works across rural and island communities, delivery organisations and Scottish Government policy areas to help create sustainable, resilient and vibrant places to live, work and study.

SRN Objectives 2026-27

The operational plan will contribute to the established aims of the SRN:

1. **Support participation in policy development** by rural and island communities, businesses and stakeholders.
2. **Support delivery of rural policy and funding programmes**, including Community Led Local Development (CLLD), rural support measures and emerging rural policy priorities.
3. **Promote funding and development opportunities** relevant to rural and island communities.
4. **Encourage innovation and knowledge exchange** across agriculture, food production, forestry and rural development sectors.

Key Priorities for 2026-27

- Implementation of Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review (SRCPR) recommendations.
- Delivery of thematic grant-funded work strands.
- Capacity building for Youth Local Action Groups (YLAGs).
- Support for the Scotland's National CLLD Network and community-led development approaches.
- Enhancement of digital platforms, including the SRN website and CLLD Knowledge Hub.
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement through events, publications, social media and case studies.
- Development work supporting future Scottish Rural and Islands Parliament activity and youth engagement initiatives.

2. Operational Delivery Programme

Policy and Programme Delivery

Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review (SRCPR) - The review highlights the SRN's role in connecting stakeholders, sharing information, supporting events and delivering targeted funding activities. SRN will support implementation of Scottish Government's response to the review as agreed by Ministers. This will likely include stakeholder engagement, dissemination of findings and development of practical delivery approaches.



Thematic Work Strands (Grant Funding) - Funded thematic work will be delivered through commissioned stakeholders and partners, aligned with Scottish Government rural priorities (See Annex A for list of funded delivery partners).

The SRN team works with a range of stakeholders and delivery partners to identify networking and capacity building activities that benefit rural communities. Funding constraints limit the amount of activity that can be funded each year, but as specific projects/pilots come to an end, funding can be made available for new initiatives.

Activity in 2026-27 will focus on:

- Rural community capacity building.
- Knowledge exchange and networking.
- Research and evidence gathering.
- Community-led development approaches.
- Innovation and rural enterprise support.

YLAG Capacity Building - A programme of support for Youth Local Action Groups will be delivered, including:

- Videography and digital storytelling training.
- Peer learning opportunities.
- Promotion of youth-led rural development activity.
- Increased visibility of youth perspectives within rural policy discussions.

Scotland's National CLLD Network - SRN will continue support for CLLDNet through:

- Network coordination.
- Event delivery.
- Knowledge sharing between Local Action Groups and community organisations.
- Dissemination of good practice from community-led projects.

3. Communications, Engagement and Stakeholder Delivery

Communications and Engagement

SRN will maintain a consistent programme of engagement with rural and island audiences through:

Regular Publications

- Weekly newsletter - 1,869 subscribers
- Weekly funding bulletin.
- Quarterly activity review bulletin.

The SRN newsletter and digital channels remain important mechanisms for sharing rural policy developments, funding opportunities and examples of good practice.

Social Media

Daily use of social media platforms to:

- Promote events.
- Highlight funding opportunities.
- Share policy updates.
- Showcase stakeholder projects and achievements.
- Encourage stakeholder participation in consultations and discussions.

Case Studies

Case study production will continue throughout the year to demonstrate the value of rural development investment and community-led activity. Previous SRN activity has highlighted projects such as funded youth and community development initiatives delivered through Community Led Local Development programmes.

Digital Platforms

Website Enhancements

Building on SRN's existing role as a primary information and engagement platform, improvements will focus on:

- Enhanced user experience.
- Improved event and case study presentation.
- Better integration with social media and stakeholder communications.

Knowledge Hub Development

Development of the Knowledge Hub will:

- Capture and share learning from SRN-funded activity.
- Improve access to case studies, reports and resources.
- Support networking across Community led Local development stakeholders.
- Promote replication of successful projects and approaches.

4. Success Measures

Success during 2026-27 will be assessed through:

- Delivery of the planned events programme.
- Implementation progress against Scottish Government's response to the SRCPR recommendations.
- Stakeholder participation and engagement levels.
- Increased use of SRN digital platforms.
- Production and dissemination of case studies and good practice resources.
- Delivery of funded thematic projects and Scotland's National CLLD Network activity.

Through these activities, SRN will continue to strengthen connections across rural and island Scotland, support policy delivery and ensure communities, businesses and stakeholders are informed, engaged and able to contribute to rural development outcomes.

Useful links

- SRN website: [Scottish Rural Network](#)
- SRN quarterly review (most recent): [SRN Quarterly Review](#)
- [Scottish Rural Network on X](#) (6,782 followers)*
- [Scottish Rural Network on Facebook](#) (4,613 followers)*
- [Scottish Rural Network on Instagram](#) (2,606 followers)*
- [Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review](#)

**Figures correct as of July 2026*



Funded Work Delivered by Stakeholders

During 2026-27 SRN-funded stakeholders will deliver activity across the following areas:

Organisation	Work Stream	Grant Amount (£)	Description
Bioregioning Tayside	Tayside Learning Journey - local food production	20,000	Pilot project - seeks to translate the insights and recommendations from earlier efforts into actionable planning tools that promote local self-determination in addressing food-related challenges, enhance community capacity, and inform the development of regional food policy frameworks. Learning to be utilised across RAI*
CoDeL	Uist Beo model roll out	22,000	Build on the successful development and delivery of the Uist Beo platform, taking the learning and trialling in two other rural locations – Glenkens (Dumfries and Galloway) and Assynt (Highlands).
Improvement Services	Poverty Network Capacity Building	60,000	Continues a programme of work to build a network of RAI Local Authority Child Poverty Officers, building capacity, sharing good practice and opportunities for collaboration/co-operation.
Improvement Services	Community Council Capacity Building	45,000	Continues a programme of work to build capacity of community councils across rural and island Scotland. Activity is focused to support First Minister's four key priorities.
NRIMHF	Mental Health and Wellbeing	35,000	National Rural & Island Mental Health Forum - Support development and delivery of a network of mental health and wellbeing orgs focused on supporting RAI communities and organisations.
Plunkett UK	Scottish Rural and Islands Community Pubs Network	60,000	Advice, support and capacity building service for rural and island community pub network throughout RAI Scotland - linked to Community Led Local Development, Good Food Nation and Community Wealth Building opportunities.
Scottish Agritourism	New Agritourism Cohort	40,000	New Agritourism Cohort - support new entrants into the sector, build capacity and further strengthen the sector.
Scottish Rural Action	Networking Capacity & Operational	187,000	Support the network and engagement activity of Scottish Rural Action (SRA) to progress the wider RAI movement in Scotland, including secretariat of RAI Youth Local Action Groups (YLAG) and a range of thematic work strands.
SCVO/Other	Village Hall and Community Hub Capacity Building	40,000	Further development of the Village Hall Handbook and lead development and delivery of a national conference (May/June 2026) and three regional events inc. study trips.
		509,000	*RAI = rural and islands

Period (2026-27)	Event/Activity
May	Oban Workshop
May	Village Hall Conference, Glasgow
June	Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh
June	Global Agritourism Conference, Aberdeen
September	SRCPR Delivery Recommendations Hybrid Presentation
September	Last Provider Fund Hybrid Workshop for Policy and Enterprise Agencies
November	Scotland's National CLLD Network Conference, Glasgow
November	Village Hall learning exchange
January/February	Development of 2027-28 SRN operational plan
February/March	Rural Stakeholder Forum
March	Village Hall learning exchange
Throughout 2026-27	Website enhancement programme
Throughout 2026-27	Knowledge Hub development
Throughout 2026-27	Thematic grant-funded programmes
Throughout 2026-27	YLAG capacity building programme
Throughout 2026-27	SRIP/SRIYP development and preparation for future 2027 activity

