Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review



Community Led Local Development



Scottish Rural Action

Scottish Rural Network







Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review

- Independent review reporting to Scottish Government, led by SRUC
- Project aims:
 - To evaluate the delivery of CLLD, SRA, SRN
 - To examine their strategic fit in relation to wider public and third sector interventions, identify their unique role and impact, any gaps or areas of duplication
 - To consider and propose options for their future role, focus and delivery, including in relation to the Rural Support Plan and wider rural policy, and in the context of the forthcoming Rural Delivery Plan
 - To consult and engage with a range of stakeholders, and
 - To produce practical recommendations.
- An implementation and process evaluation, which looks at <u>what</u> is happening, as well as <u>how</u> and <u>why</u>

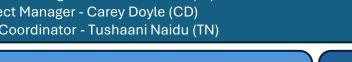






Project Management - SRUC.

Principle Investigator – Jane Atterton (JA) Project Manager - Carey Doyle (CD) Project Coordinator - Tushaani Naidu (TN)



Stage 4: Reporting, workshops, publication, dissemination. **Lead Partner - SRUC**





1.1. ToC Scoping

1.2. ToC Workshops

Stage 1: Theory of Change

Development

Lead Partner - Ipsos

1.3. ToC Outputs

3.1. Evidence gathering with key CLLD

3.4.

Engagement

with young

people

3.2. Evidence gathering for SRA and SRN

Science

Ceilidh

3.5.

Monitoring

and

evaluation

approaches

Stage 3: Field Work

Lead Partner - UHI

research Impact Hub

> 3.6. Wider stakeholder interviews/fo cus groups

Inverness

3.3. Place-

based

SRUC, Grounded Insight

4.1 Analysis, synthesis and drafting report

Ipsos, Rurali Ltd, SRUC, Grounded Insight, UHI

4.2 Stakeholder workshops

SRUC, UHI

and dissemination

Ipsos, Rurali Ltd, SRUC, Grounded Insight, UHI



Grounded



Stage 2: Evidence Review

SRUC, UHI, Grounded Insight, Rurali Ltd

Lead Partner - SRUC

Regeneratio, 2.3. Assess 2.1 & 2.2. Grounded Review policy and Insight available delivery Rurali Ltd data landscape 2.6. 2.4. Review 2.5. Case Evidence additional studies review evidence reporting **Sub-contractors**





Research Process

January 2025

- Stage 1: Theory of Change
- Stage 2: Evidence Review
- Stage 3: Fieldwork
- Stage 4: Reporting ← We are here

January 2026

Many opportunities for everyone to get involved at each stage and particularly in Stage 3

Stage 1: Four Theories of Change

Figure 1.1 Community Led Local Development (CLLD) theory of change

VISION: Community Led Local Development (CLLD) empowers local communities to build on their own strengths and tackle their local challenges. By taking a strengths-based approach, building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation, CLLD helps to create viable and resilient communities which are catalysts for wider systems change and more participatory democracy.

build co-operation with similar groups in Scotland, UK and Europe; drive community action on climate change; empower communities to be independent led and realise their potential to build opportunities for all; encourage innovation and community wealth building at micro level; enhance rural services and facilities, including transport/food initiatives; enhance tourism and leisure; facilitate the exchange of learning and knowledge sharing; normalise natural/cultural heritage and language to protect social cohesion, nurture identity and ensure strong communities.

INPUTS -

Funding:

Core Community Led Local Development funding (Scottish Government)

Match funding (local and specialist funds)

Other Scottish Govt funding (e.g. Investing in Communities Fund, Aspiring Communities Fund, Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund for Adults) UK Government funding (e.g. UKSPF)

Remaining EU funds

People and skills:

Paid Community Led Local Development

Local Action Groups (LAG) (public, private, third sector etc based partnerships) and Accountable Bodies

Scottish Government

Scottish Rural Network

Rural and island communities

Policy and legislative framework:

Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act

Local Place Plans (Planning (Scotland) Act 2019)

National Performance Framework

The National Islands Plan

Scottish Rural Development Programme

EU policy (to be adapted) Rural Support Plan (emerging)

Rural Delivery Plan (emerging)

Wider policy and legislation:

E.g. Community-led climate action, Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill, Just Transition Plan, Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. Scotland National Strategy for Economic Transformation

Academic and applied research about what works for rural development

ACTIVITIES

Local Action Group activities

Enable communities to identify needs and aspirations, and support in the development of ideas and solutions

Stimulating and supporting innovation and investment in local priorities through businesses, social enterprises, charities and grass roots initiatives.

Community wealth building development support

Taking a strategic approach to the targeting of funding/investment.

Capacity building:

Training for community leaders, entrepreneurs, and volunteers

Recruiting more Local Action Group members, including young people, developing next generation of leaders

Support for organisational development for community groups

Network and communications:

Reports, case studies, publications & presentations

Local, regional, national & international networking/peer learning events (e.g. workshops, conferences, exchanges)

Online platforms and forums

Engagement with similar groups (e.g. Scottish Rural Network and Scottish Rural Action) Engagement with policy

Influence policy development and implementation

cottish Government activities:

Internal advocacy

Engagement with other policy teams Providing guidance

Partnering with researchers to decide budget allocations

Monitoring and evaluation:

Data collection

Capacity building for evaluation

OUTPUTS

Local Action Group projects funded and

Projects addressing rural inequality (e.g.

Projects creating/safeguarding jobs

Agricultural support

Projects benefitting young people

climate adaptation/resilience

Community facilities created/improved

or services.

Projects supporting health and wellbeing

Arts and cultural heritage activities

Community wealth building development

Projects supporting businesses (e.g. SMEs -

Capacity:

Community members trained

Community groups receiving organisational

Network and communications:

Number and reach of events/networking opportunities

Number and reach of publications or resources

Local Action Groups have sufficient capacity and skills to

Local Action Groups have sufficient funding to leverage

Continued political support for Community Led Local

Development following 2026 Scottish Parliament election.

Councils and supporting bodies commit to supporting Local

Action Groups in the long-term (in the absence of long-term

Local Action Groups are willing to keep going.

Engagement with policy teams

Monitoring and evaluation:

manage funding.

Monitoring and evaluation outputs

SHORT/MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES ->

Increased community engagement in climate

More effective and sustainable community-led

Enhanced community wealth building activities

Reduced barriers to accessing skills and jobs

Increased availability of affordable housing

Natural/cultural heritage and language

normalised (for communities not tourists).

Enhanced community infrastructure and

Improved health and wellbeing

Increased local food security

and nature focused projects.

Sustainability and innovation:

Infrastructure and resources:

Improved business viability

Resilience:

projects

community transport)

Projects contributing to a low carbon economy,

Projects supporting communities to use assets

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises)

Increased community leadership

Increased community skills and capacity (incl. to bid for funding)

Increased community control over / use of

Network and communications:

Effective knowledge at local, regional, national and international levels

Improved community engagement and participation (including among young people)

Increased influence on policy development Increased understanding of impact of Community Led Local Development supported projects, including increased capability of Local Action Groups to deliver social value.

LONG TERM IMPACTS

Strengthened and more resilient communities

Natural/cultural heritage and language help sustain communities Improved quality of life and wellbeing Increased climate change mitigation and adaptation

Business sustainability and nnovation:

Sustainable businesses and social enterprises that are regenerative, scalable and transferable to other

Empowerment:

Enhanced community confidence and empowerment

Increased community ownership and leadership of local development

Rural communities have increased access to, and control over, the resources they need

Reduced rural poverty and inequality Stable or growing populations Enhanced community benefits

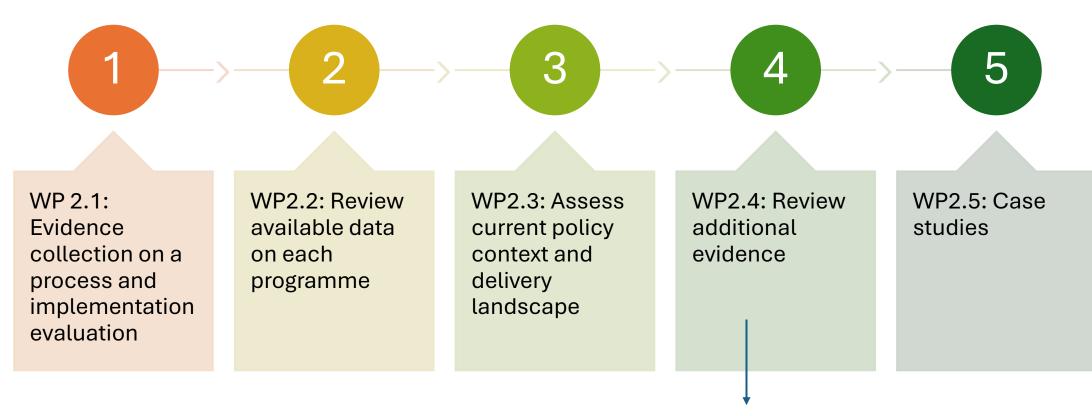
More integrated and holistic approaches to rural development Increased collaboration and partnership working

- · Challenges associated with annual funding.
- Loss of experienced staff due to uncertainty around funding.
- Community capacity to support projects and volunteer fatigue.
- Perception of Community Led Local Development programme as purely a 'challenge fund" and lack of understanding around strategic purpose.
- Lack of understanding / recognition of impact and capabilities of Local Action Groups . Diversity of projects / approaches across Local Action Groups and variation in experience, willingness and ability. Perceived duplication of effort with other rural organisations / programmes resulting in
- missed opportunities. Lack of clarity (e.g. from Local Authorities) around what the fund is for.



Community Led Local Development -Scottish Rural **Communities Policy** Review: stage 1 theories of change gov.scot

Stage 2: Evidence Review



Evaluating rural development interventions in Scotland since 1945

International case studies (WP2.5)







Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review - Stage 2. Ireland case study Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review - Stage 2. Canada case study

Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review - Stage 2. England case study



Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review - Stage 2. Finland case study

Agriculture, Environment and Marine



Scottish Governme Riaghaltas na h-Al

Agriculture, Environment and Marine



social

Agriculture, Environment and Marine



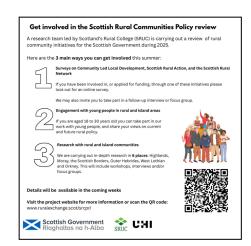
Agriculture, Environment and Marine





Ruralexchange.scot/scottish-rural-communities-policy-review/publications-and-outcomes/

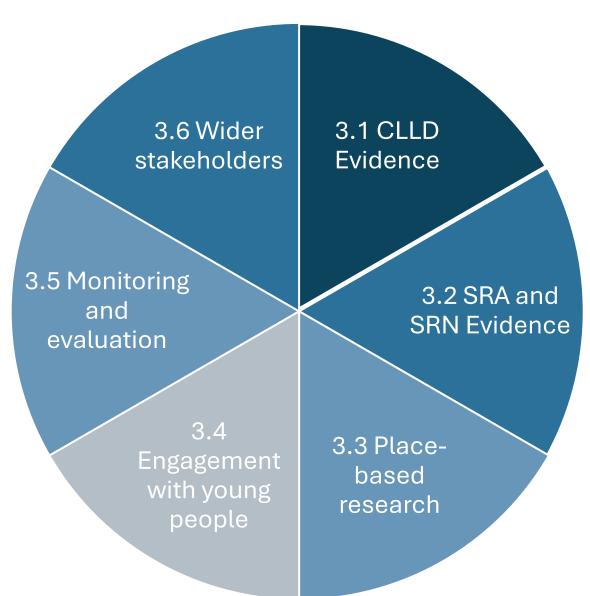
Stage 3: Fieldwork











Theory of Change

Logically
maps the
elements,
activities,
outputs,
assumptions

Fieldwork

Experiences; if intended impacts are being realised (and if not, why not)

- Scottish
 Borders
- West Lothian
- Orkney
- Outer Hebrides
- Moray
- Highland



Some reflections

European Rural Parliament

Rural &

Islands

Parliament

- Scottish Government has funded a Community Led Local Development programme
- Work ongoing to create/strengthen a rural movement
- European Rural Parliament last week in Inverurie; Scottish Rural and Islands Parliament happens every 2 years
- Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024
 - Rural Support Plan
 - Rural Delivery Plan
 - Rural Assessment Toolkit
 - New National Islands Plan
- Upcoming Scottish Parliamentary election
 - Lots of MSPs not seeking re-election
 - Potential for political and policy change?



Thank you

- Jane Atterton
- jane.atterton@sruc.ac.uk
- Rural Policy Centre, SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)
- Rural Exchange
- Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review

Rural Communities Policy Home / Rural Communities Policy

Rural Communities Policy

What is the project?

The Scottish Government has commissioned a review of three core elements of their funding and support for rural communities: Community Led Local Development (CLLD), Scottish Rural Action (SRA) and the Scottish Rural Network (SRN). The evidence generated in this project will inform the new rura Scotland support system which will deliver the provisions of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024.

Publications and outcomes Privacy Notice Stage 2: Evidence Review Stage 3: Fieldwork Stage 1: Theory of Change



Acknowledgements

RESAS

Rural & Environmental Science and Analytical Services

