Greencoat UK Wind

Langhope Rig Wind Farm Community Fund (Sub Fund A)

Fund Review 2019-2025

Highlights

Strong leverage ratio delivers £1.9 million in community investment

For every £1 awarded, the fund unlocked £4.44 in total project value - turning £428,363 of grants into nearly £1.9 million of community benefit since 2017.

£428,000 awarded across the fund area

53 projects awarded

8 different hall committees have received a combined total of £148,009

Contents

Executive Summary

The Langhope Rig Sub Fund A Wind Farm Community Fund supports projects benefiting communities within the three Community Council areas of Ettrick & Yarrow, Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem, and Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water in the Scottish Borders. The Fund was established in 2017 following community consultation, supported by Greencoat UK Wind as part of their commitment to community benefit from the Langhope Rig Wind Farm development.

Between 2017 and September 2025 the Fund received 82 applications and awarded £455,705 to 53 successful projects across the three Community Council areas, achieving a 64.6% application success rate and generating £1.9 million in total community investment (leverage ratio 1:4.44). During this period, three grant offers totalling £27,342 were withdrawn after award stage (further details can be found in the Withdrawn Applications Detail section). As such, £428,363 has been awarded and ratified to support projects across the Fund area.

The review identifies consistent performance against key metrics, with strong priority alignment and a leverage ratio of 1:4.44 across the 53 funded projects. However, the data shows variation in per capita investment across the three Community Council areas: Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem received £88.56 per capita, compared to £168.12 in Ettrick & Yarrow and £214.84 in Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water — a difference of 2.4 times between the highest and lowest.

The recommendations set out in this report address this variation through targeted outreach, a simplified small grants process, and annual geographic distribution monitoring.

Fund Performance Summary (2017 – 2025)

Total Applications **55**	Successful Awards **53**
Applicant Success Rate **96.4%**	Total Amount Awarded **£428,363**
Total Community Investment Generated **£1,902,432**	Leverage Ratio **1:4.44**
Average Award Size **£8,082**	Award Range **£1,466 - £20,000**
Unique Organisations **29**	Community Council Areas Served **3**

Geographic Distribution Framework

The Fund serves three Community Council areas with distinct characteristics and population profiles:

Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem

1,134 residents (2021)

Semi-rural communities with established community facilities. This area represents the largest population within the Fund catchment and benefits from more concentrated settlement patterns and established community infrastructure. The area has good transport links to larger service centres and maintains a strong tradition of community organisation with substantial volunteer capacity.

Ettrick & Yarrow

915 residents (2021)

Remote rural valleys with strong community development company presence. Sparsely populated area covering extensive valley systems with scattered settlements, making community coordination challenging but fostering strong local identity. The area has significant heritage and environmental assets and benefits from a strong community development company providing leadership and coordination.

Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water

471 residents (2021)

Rural area with dispersed settlements and emerging community capacity. This area faces particular challenges with community cohesion due to its scattered population across a wide geographic area and limited organisational infrastructure. The area demonstrates developing community development capacity and potential for growth in community-led initiatives.

Fund Priority Overview

The Fund provides grants to support charitable activities that align with the following priorities. Below is a breakdown of all awards administered since the Fund commenced in 2017, organised according to the Fund's strategic priorities.

1.	Develop or Maintain Community Assets	£158,060	(36.9%)	21 projects
2.	Build Community Capacity and Cohesion Between Groups	£84,943	(19.8%)	7 projects
3.	Ensure Adequate Access to Services for All Community Members	£59,110	(13.8%)	6 projects
4.	Encourage Community Activity and Promote Community Spirit	£47,735	(11.1%)	10 projects
5.	Improve Local Transport Infrastructure	£45,555	(10.6%)	6 projects
6.	Build the Local Economy	£32,960	(7.7%)	3 projects

Summary Introduction and Background

Review Aims and Methodology

The Langhope Rig Sub Fund A Wind Farm Community Fund was established in 2017 to provide community benefit funding from the Langhope Rig Wind Farm development operated by Greencoat UK Wind. Sub Fund A receives 50% of the annual community benefit contribution (£40,000 rising with inflation) to support the three Community Council areas most directly affected by the wind farm. In accordance with Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments, Foundation Scotland conducted this Fund Review covering performance from 2017 to the final award round of 2025.

The review aimed to:

- Evaluate Fund achievements and impact through project outcome analysis.
- Assess Fund alignment with evolving community priorities and stakeholder needs.
- Review community awareness levels of, and access patterns to, the Fund across the benefit area.
- Review Panel decision-making processes and geographic distribution patterns.
- Consider the need for, and options for, revisions to Fund Strategy and operational improvements.
- Develop strategic planning approaches for continued Fund effectiveness.

This review employed several methodologies, including stakeholder surveys, a Panel consultation, detailed analysis of application and project outcomes data, and financial performance assessment.

Operating Context and Challenges

Establishment Phase (2017-2019) The Fund's initial years focused on building community awareness, establishing grant-making processes, and developing relationships with local organisations whilst awarding funding to support community projects. A key challenge included promoting Fund awareness across the dispersed rural communities. The period saw initial investments in community assets and the emergence of anchor organisations, particularly the Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company, which began developing its role as a key community enterprise.

Consolidation Period (2020-2022): This phase was shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought unprecedented challenges to rural communities whilst also demonstrating community resilience and adaptation. The Fund adapted its approach to support pandemic response and recovery. Community organisations faced reduced volunteer capacity, cancelled events, and increased operational challenges due to health restrictions. However, this period also saw communities develop new ways of working, enhanced digital engagement, and strengthened mutual support networks. The Fund supported important infrastructure projects and emergency response capabilities, including defibrillator networks and community facility improvements that proved essential during the crisis.

Recent Expansion Phase (2023-September 2025): The most recent period has seen significant growth in Fund activity. This represents the Fund's most active period, reflecting both increased confidence in accessing funding and the emergence of larger, more strategic projects. The period has been characterised by rising living costs affecting both residents and community organisations, ongoing public sector service reductions, and increased recognition of rural service challenges. Despite these pressures, communities have demonstrated enhanced capacity for project development and delivery, with several multi-year and larger-scale projects receiving support. The expansion phase has also seen improved geographic distribution of funding and the development of stronger partnerships between Community Council areas.

Contextual Challenges Throughout the Period: Stakeholders and applicants identified a number of contextual pressures over the review period. These included economic challenges such as inflation, rising energy costs, and reduced household incomes, which were reported to have affected both community organisations' operational costs and residents' capacity to volunteer and participate in community activities. Post-pandemic effects were noted as continuing to influence community dynamics, with some lasting changes in how people engage with local activities and services. Respondents also highlighted concerns around reductions to public sector services, including transport links, library services, and council-provided community support, and the withdrawal of some commercial services from rural areas, including shop closures and reduced delivery services. These factors were cited as increasing the importance of community-led solutions and volunteer-led initiatives across the Fund area.

Fund Area of Benefit and Eligibility

The Fund supports projects that benefit and support the communities located within three Community Council areas surrounding the Langhope Rig Wind Farm:

Ettrick & Yarrow Community Council Area: This remote rural valley area encompasses extensive valley systems with scattered settlements, creating challenges for community coordination whilst fostering a strong local identity. The area has significant heritage and environmental assets and benefits from a strong community development company providing leading and delivering projects for the local area. With a population of 915 residents (2021 estimate), this sparsely populated area faces particular challenges due to geographic isolation and limited commercial services.

Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem Community Council Area: Representing the largest population within the Fund catchment area, these semi-rural communities house 1,134 residents (2021 estimate) and benefit from more concentrated settlement patterns and established community infrastructure. The area has good transport links to larger service centres and maintains a strong tradition of community organisation with strong volunteer capacity.

Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water Community Council Area: This rural area supports 471 residents (2021 estimate) across a dispersed settlement pattern with emerging community development capacity. The area faces particular challenges with community cohesion due to its scattered population across a wide geographic area and limited organisational infrastructure.

Fund Priorities Framework

The Fund operates according to six strategic priorities established through community consultation during the initial Fund development phase. These priorities reflect community-identified needs and development opportunities across the diverse geographic area.

Priority 1: Encourage Community Activity and Promote Community Spirit: Supporting projects that strengthen social connections, cultural programming, recreational activities, and community events that build local identity and pride whilst fostering volunteer engagement and community participation.

Priority 2: Ensure Adequate Access to Services for All Community Members: Addressing service accessibility challenges through supporting healthcare access, emergency response capabilities, social support services, and essential service provision, recognising that geographic isolation can create significant barriers.

Priority 3: Improve Local Transport Infrastructure: Enhancing transport connectivity through supporting travel pathway development, public transport initiatives, road safety improvements, and infrastructure that improves mobility and access to employment, healthcare, and education opportunities.

Priority 4: Build the Local Economy: Stimulating sustainable economic growth through community enterprise development, skills development programmes, tourism initiatives, and support for local businesses whilst creating employment opportunities and strengthening economic resilience.

Priority 5: Build Community Capacity and Cohesion Between Groups: Investing in organisational development, partnership working, knowledge sharing, and coordination activities that strengthen community infrastructure and enable more effective collective action and resource utilisation.

Priority 6: Develop or Maintain Community Assets: Supporting physical infrastructure development, including community facility improvements, recreational asset development, heritage preservation, and technology infrastructure that provides the foundation for community activities and long-term sustainability.

Summary Operational Data & Analysis

Financial Performance and Distribution Patterns

Annual Income and Distribution: The Fund receives an annual donation from Greencoat UK Wind, rising with inflation from the initial £80,000 in 2017 to over £118,000 in 2025.

Grant Distribution Analysis: The Fund has supported 53 successful applications out of 82 submissions, achieving a 64.6% success rate for applicants, with total grants awarded reaching £455,705 as of September 1, 2025.

Year	Total Applications	Successful Awards	Withdrawn[1]	Rejected	Success Rate	Total Awarded	Average Award
2016[2]	1	1	0	0	100.0%	£6,800	£6,800
2017	12	8	2	2	66.7%	£52,163	£6,520
2018	6	4	0	2	66.7%	£26,869	£6,717
2019	10	6	2	2	60.0%	£28,759	£4,793
2020	6	3	1	2	50.0%	£22,619	£7,540
2021	7	5	2	0	71.4%	£51,823	£10,365
2022	12	9	2	1	75.0%	£82,037	£9,115
2023	11	8	1	2	72.7%	£68,188	£8,524
2024	8	4	2	2	50.0%	£58,887	£14,722
2025*	9	5	1	3	55.6%	£57,560	£11,512
TOTAL	**82**	**53**	**13**	**16**	**64.6%**	**£455,705[3]** **£428,363[4]**	**£8,082**

[1] Withdrawn applications include applications withdrawn at various stages of the application process.
[2] The Fund officially launched in 2017, however, FS supported GE with administering an award in 2016 during the Fund handover which is why there is a 2016 award.
[3] Total awarded amount includes £27,342 from three withdrawn applications. Amount ratified to successful applications only: £428,363.
[4] Total ratified awarded amount following withdrawn applications.

Analysis of Unsuccessful Applications

Of the 29 unsuccessful applications (35.4% of total submissions):

- Withdrawn applications: 13 applications were withdrawn by applicants before completion, typically due to changed circumstances, incomplete information, or applicant recognition that projects required further development. Three awards were withdrawn following awarded stage. (Please see below for further details).
- Rejected applications: 16 applications were either rejected at the preliminary eligibility criterion stage or during Panel decision-making.

Key Insights

The success rate reflects several contributing factors: clear Fund priorities that guide both applicants and decision-makers, the availability of pre-application support, and Panel expertise that recognises both strategic value and community development potential.

The proportion of withdrawn applications demonstrates the value of the pre-application process in helping applicants assess project readiness, whilst rejected applications primarily reflected projects that fell outside Fund priorities or lacked sufficient demonstration of benefit to the community, rather than fundamental unsuitability.

Withdrawn Applications Detail

Applications withdrawn with awards (3):

- 2017: Currie Memorial Hall (FR-0039972) - £4,341
  This grant was withdrawn due to changes in the applicant's project scope. The applicant then reapplied to the Fund for a larger grant amount, which was subsequently approved and awarded.
- 2024: Friends of Yarrow (FR-0081007) - £10,721
  Foundation Scotland withdrew this grant offer after the applicant ceased communication. Despite several attempts to contact the applicant, no response was received and the grant was subsequently withdrawn. The applicant was invited to reapply should they wish to progress their project in the future.
- 2025: Roberton Show Society (FR-0093997) - £12,280 (please see below)

Application Withdrawal Case Study: Roberton Show Society

Background and Context
In 2025, Roberton Show Society submitted an application (FR-0093997) requesting £12,279.60 towards their total project cost of £12,629.60. The application was initially processed, and an award was approved through the standard assessment procedures.

Withdrawal Circumstances
Following the Fund's approval of the application, Roberton Show Society successfully secured funding from the National Lottery for its project. In accordance with good practice principles for avoiding duplicate funding and ensuring optimal use of community benefit resources, the organisation voluntarily withdrew its application from the Langhope Rig Fund. This withdrawal demonstrates several positive aspects of the Fund's operational framework:

- **Good Funding Practice:** The withdrawal highlights a responsible approach to multiple funding applications, ensuring that community benefit funds are not duplicated for the same project elements and that resources remain available for other community initiatives.

- **Successful Alternative Funding:** The organisation's success in securing National Lottery funding demonstrates the Fund's role in supporting community groups to develop strong project proposals that are competitive across multiple funding streams.

- **Resource Optimisation:** The withdrawal released £12,279.60 back into the Fund's available resources, enabling support for additional community projects during the funding period.

This case demonstrates the Fund's flexible and responsive approach to changing circumstances, and it considered a successful outcome for the applicant and the Fund.

Leverage Analysis

The Fund demonstrated strong leverage capability, with 53 successfully awarded projects receiving £428,363 in ratified awards, leveraging £1,902,432 in total project costs. This represents significant additional community investment unlocked beyond the direct Fund awards, demonstrating the Fund's effectiveness as a catalyst for accessing larger resources from other funding bodies, private investment, volunteer contributions, and match funding sources.

A leverage ratio of 1:4.44 means that for every £1 awarded by the Fund, £4.44 of total project value was delivered to communities. Put another way, the Fund's investment represents 22.5% of total project costs, with the remaining 77.5% (£1,474,069) coming from other sources. This represents strong value for money and strategic impact.

Fund Performance Against Strategic Priorities

The Fund's £428,000 investment across 53 successful projects demonstrates strong alignment with community development priorities. Analysis of awards by the Fund's strategic priorities shows:

Develop or maintain community assets

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
21	£158,060	36.9%

Village halls remain the cornerstone of rural community life, providing essential spaces for gatherings, events, and services. The Fund's largest investment in this priority reflects the critical infrastructure needs across the region, supporting ongoing maintenance, improvements, and modernisation of these vital community facilities.

Project Examples:

- Teviothead Hall (£34,328 across 4 awards)
- Forman Memorial Hall (£23,907 across 3 awards)
- Currie Memorial Hall (£11,467 across 2 awards)

Build community capacity and cohesion between groups

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
7	£84,943	19.8%

Strengthening organisational capacity and fostering collaboration across communities represents the Fund's second-largest investment. Support for community development companies, youth organisations, and capacity-building initiatives enables communities to address complex challenges and develop sustainable, locally-led solutions.

Project Examples:

- Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company (£39,978 across 3 awards)
- In2Venture capacity building (£20,000)
- Cheviot Youth development programme (£13,000)

Ensure adequate access to services for all community members

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
6	£59,110	13.8%

Addressing service accessibility in remote rural areas requires targeted investment in health, wellbeing, and support services. The Fund supports initiatives that bring essential services closer to communities, including palliative care, advice services, mountain rescue, and programmes supporting vulnerable children and families.

Project Examples:

- Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau (£19,035)
- Nurture the Borders wellbeing support (£15,955)
- Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue Team (£15,000)

Encourage community activity and promote community spirit

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
10	£47,735	11.1%

Social connection and community participation are fundamental to wellbeing in rural areas. The Fund supports diverse activities that bring people together, from youth theatre and playgroups to pastoral societies and sports clubs, fostering social bonds and reducing isolation across all age groups.

Project Examples:

- Upper Teviotdale Pastoral Society events (£16,665 across 3 awards)
- Ettrick Forest Sports & Recreation Club (£11,210)
- Borders Youth Theatre programme (£6,800)

Improve local transport infrastructure

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
6	£45,555	10.6%

Transport remains a challenge in rural areas where public transport is limited. Investment in community transport solutions, including minibus provision for accessing services and employment, alongside footpath and cycling infrastructure improvements, addresses mobility and connectivity barriers affecting residents' daily lives.

Project Examples:

- Borders Forest Trust community minibus (£10,000)
- Midlem Village Hall e-bike storage & charging (£7,925)
- Currie Memorial Hall pathway access project (£7,150)

Build the local economy

PROJECTS	TOTAL AWARD	PERCENTAGE
3	£32,960	7.7%

Economic sustainability in rural communities requires investment in skills, employment, and enterprise development. Support for social enterprises providing training and employment opportunities addresses the challenge of limited local job prospects whilst building workforce skills and promoting economic resilience.

Project Examples:

- Live Learn Earn CIC employment programmes (£27,560 across 2 awards)
- Forman Memorial Hall core accounting activities (£5,400)

Balanced Investment Across Priorities

The Langhope Rig Sub Fund A Fund demonstrates a balanced approach to rural development, with the largest investments directed towards maintaining community infrastructure (36.9%) and building organisational capacity (19.8%). These priorities form the foundation for sustainable rural communities, providing both the physical spaces and organisational capability needed for community resilience.

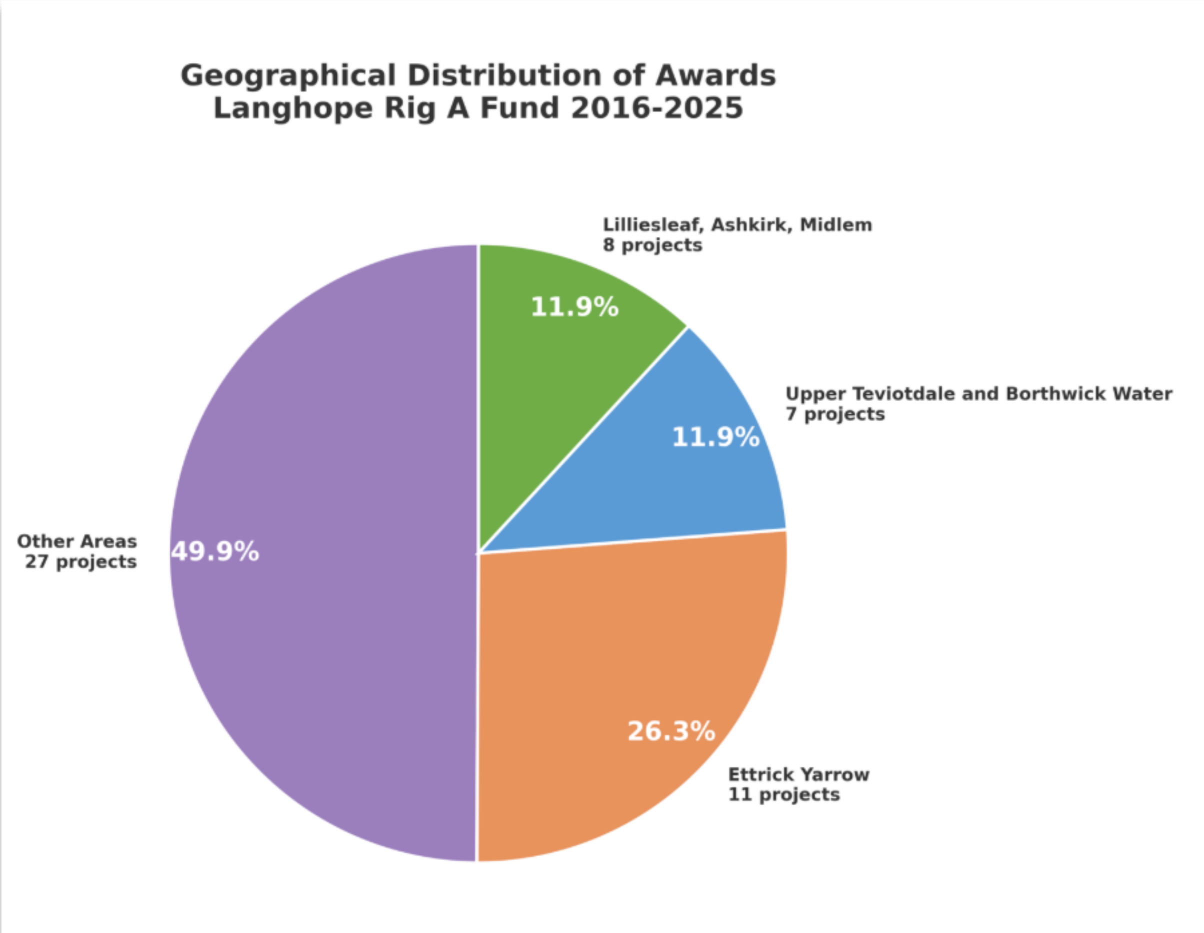
Significant investment in service accessibility (13.8%) and community activities (11.1%) addresses social isolation and ensures residents can access essential services. Targeted support for transport infrastructure (10.6%) and economic development (7.7%) addresses specific gaps whilst recognising that community asset development and capacity building remain the fundamental enablers of thriving rural communities. This distribution reflects responsive funding that balances immediate infrastructure needs with longer-term capacity development, ensuring communities have both the facilities and the organisational strength to address their own priorities.

Geographic Fund Distribution

Geographic Equity Analysis

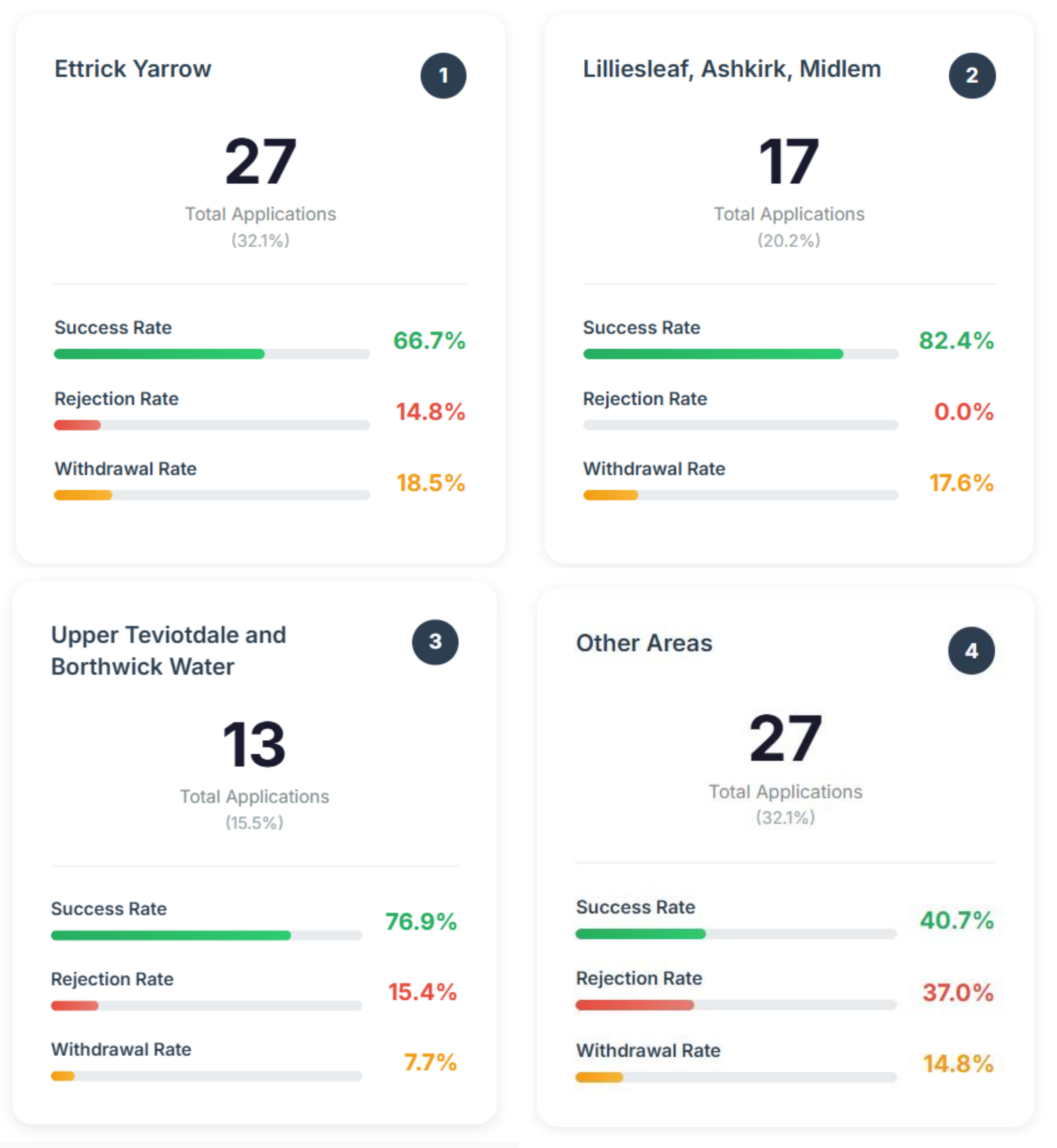
Analysis of funding distribution across the three Community Council areas reveals variations in per capita investment, reflecting both community need and capacity for project development.

The Fund has awarded just over £428,000 across 53 projects, with funding allocated both within specific Community Council boundaries and across the broader Fund area.



Application analysis

Awards, rejections, and withdrawals across the four key geographical areas.



Per Capita Funding Distribution Analysis

Regional Analysis: Project Status & Per Capita Funding (2016-2025)

Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem

POPULATION (2021)	PER CAPITA	TOTAL FUNDING	APPLICATIONS
1,134	£88.56	£100,422	17

As the largest population centre, this area receives per capita funding that reflects its existing infrastructure and transport links, which reduce individual project costs. The established volunteer capacity has enabled efficient project delivery across multiple communities.

Ettrick & Yarrow

POPULATION (2021)	PER CAPITA	TOTAL FUNDING	APPLICATIONS
915	£168.12	£153,834	27

This remote valley community receives substantial per capita funding, reflecting the additional costs and challenges associated with maintaining community infrastructure across extensive geographic areas with scattered settlements. The community development company has effectively leveraged this investment to strengthen connections and community life across the valley.

Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water

POPULATION (2021)	PER CAPITA	TOTAL FUNDING	APPLICATIONS
471	£214.84	£101,191	13

This sparsely populated area receives the highest per capita investment, addressing infrastructure needs across a dispersed settlement pattern. The funding supports community development initiatives and helps build on the area's existing strengths and emerging organisational infrastructure.

Cross-Area Projects

This funding supports initiatives across the three Community Council areas, demonstrating collaborative approaches to addressing shared challenges such as emergency services, regional transport, and specialist health services.

TOTAL FUNDING	% OF TOTAL	APPLICATIONS
£72,916	17.0%	27

Per Capita Percentage Distribution

When analysing funding as a percentage of total per capita investment, the distribution demonstrates how funding addresses geographic challenges:

Ettrick & Yarrow	43.3%
Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water	28.5%
Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem	28.3%

The per capita distribution demonstrates the Fund's commitment to rural equity, with the smallest and most geographically dispersed community, Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water (population 471), receiving the highest per capita investment at £214.84. This is 2.4 times higher than Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem (£88.56 per capita), reflecting the additional infrastructure costs in dispersed rural settlements. Ettrick & Yarrow (population 915) receives £168.12 per capita, balancing its remote valley geography with a slightly larger population base. Looking forward, the Fund should maintain focus on supporting applications from smaller communities while monitoring variation in success rates across areas.

Organisational Capacity Variation

Communities demonstrate different levels of organisational capacity and development readiness, with some areas having well-established anchor organisations such as the Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company, which submitted 7 applications over the period. The data reveals a clear pattern: 69.8% of organisations (37 out of 53 successful applications) made only single applications, whilst 31.5% submitted multiple applications. Only 15.1% of organisations (8 out of 53) can be classified as high-capacity, having submitted three or more applications.

This variation affects both application frequency and project scale, with established organisations like Ettrick & Yarrow requesting significantly larger project values compared to single-application organisations.

It is important to note, however, that a lower application frequency does not necessarily indicate limited organisational capacity. Some groups may have successfully secured funding through alternative sources, such as other grant programmes, earned income, or diverse community fundraising models, reducing their reliance on this Fund.

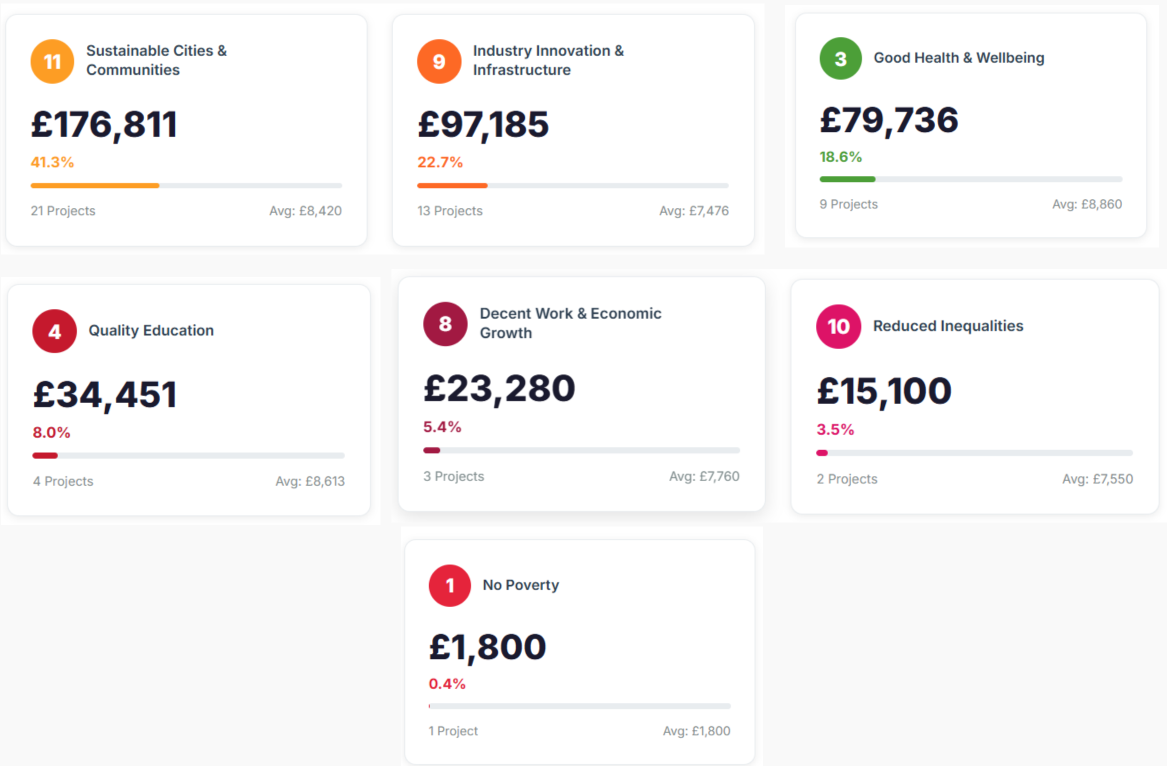
As such, single-application organisations should not automatically be considered less developed, and outreach efforts should seek to understand each group's broader funding landscape before drawing conclusions about capacity.

Sustainable Development Goals

Foundation Scotland has evolved its reporting systems to better align project activities with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Throughout its operational history, the Fund's distributed funding has primarily advanced three Sustainable Development Goals: **Sustainable Cities & Communities (SDG 11), Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure (SDG 9) and Good Health & Wellbeing (SDG 3)**.

The Fund's SDG analysis demonstrates strategic alignment with community priorities, with **Sustainable Cities & Communities receiving 41.3% of funding**, reflecting critical rural infrastructure needs. Combined with **Industry Innovation & Infrastructure (22.7%)** and **Good Health & Wellbeing (18.6%)**.

The remaining funding supports targeted education, economic development, and social equity initiatives that fill essential community gaps. This distribution validates the Fund's approach to rural development while confirming meaningful contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals through locally responsive investment strategies. A breakdown of SDG goals by award is below:



Consultation Findings and Stakeholder Feedback

Panel Decision-Making Effectiveness

Collective Decision-Making Process: Panel members reported positive experiences with the collective decision-making process, emphasising the value of combining local knowledge with community development focus. The bi-annual meeting schedule provides appropriate oversight whilst maintaining responsive grant-making. The Panel agreed to continue with the bi-annual meeting arrangement as it felt it was the most fair and effective timeframes for distribution.

Strategic Investment Approach: The Panel's approach to larger grants has enabled transformational projects whilst maintaining accessibility for smaller community initiatives. For example, Midlem Village Hall SCIO received £45,400 across multiple strategic infrastructure projects including renewable energy heating systems, road improvements, and electric bicycle storage facilities - representing transformational community asset development. Conversely, smaller grassroots initiatives like Selkirk Scout Group's £2,500 project and Friends of Yarrow's £10,721 community facility improvements demonstrate the Fund's accessibility to volunteer-led organisations.

The balance between strategic investments and grassroots support has proven effective in addressing diverse community needs, with funding ranging from under £2,000 for community activities to over £14,000 for major infrastructure upgrades. This illustrates the dual approach: larger strategic investments in infrastructure that transform community capacity (like Midlem's comprehensive facility improvements) alongside smaller, accessible grants that support immediate community needs and volunteer-led initiatives.

Community Asset Development Success

Strong consensus emerged around the success of community asset investments, with visible improvements to village halls, recreational facilities, and community infrastructure creating lasting positive impact and enabling further community development activities. Village halls were particularly prominent and successful, with 27 applications submitted by 8 different hall committees, resulting in £148,009 awarded across 23 successful projects – with an 85.2% success rate.

This represents 34.6% of all awarded funding going to village halls alone. Notable successes include Midlem Village Hall SCIO (£45,400 across 7 projects), Teviothead Hall (£34,328 across 4 projects), and Forman Memorial Hall (£23,907 across 3 projects), validating the strategic focus on tangible community assets that serve as foundations for ongoing community development.

Past Applicant Survey Findings

Foundation Scotland consulted with past and present applicants, receiving 10 responses representing organisations across all three Community Council areas. This represents 18% of applications to the Fund. The survey assessed Fund performance, strategic priorities alignment, application processes, and areas for improvement.

Application Success and Community Impact

Metric	Result	Finding
Funding success rate	90%	9 funded, 1 declined
Projects completed as planned	70%	7 of 10 projects
Projects dependent on Fund	70%	Could not proceed or severely restricted

Key impacts delivered:

- Emergency services: New mountain rescue vehicle (£15k awarded of £20k requested).
- Community facilities: Multiple village hall improvements enabling sustained community activities.
- Youth programmes: Mountain biking access overcoming barriers for young people in Selkirk area.
- Essential services: Citizens Advice Bureau outreach services established.

Strategic Priorities Feedback

Priority	Very Important	Combined
Ensure adequate access to services	80%	100%
Develop or maintain community assets	70%	100%
Encourage community activity	60%	100%

Emerging priorities suggested:

- Reduce isolation (particularly elderly residents)
- Community resilience and emergency preparedness

Application Process Feedback

Overall satisfaction: Overall satisfaction: 7 of 10 respondents (70%) provided positive feedback on process accessibility, efficiency, and support quality. **Positive quotes from the feedback included:**

"Effective and innovative Fund which adds value to the area"
"Relatively easy to access" and "allows local projects to proceed quickly"
"Funds were made available in a quick/efficient manner"
"Very understanding" Foundation Scotland contact who "offers helpful advice"

Areas for improvement:
“Reduce perceived bureaucracy and process duplication”
“Simplify application paperwork where possible”

Fund Awareness and Promotion

Discovery Method	Percentage
Word of mouth	40%
Online search	30%
Community Councils	20%

Operational Insights

Funding frequency:
7 of 10 respondents (70%) preferred maintaining bi-annual rounds; 3 of 10 (30%) would prefer more frequent assessment.

Insights to consider:

- Rural accessibility and transport challenges affecting elderly residents
- Recognition of volunteer capacity constraints
- National organisations delivering focused local programmes

Declined applicant insights:

- Project cancelled following funding decline
- Requested reminders about future funding rounds
- Highlighted challenges for specialist organisations demonstrating local connection

Feedback & Finding Summary

Based on 10 survey responses, 9 of 10 respondents (90%) reported a funding success rate, 7 of 10 (70%) reported projects were completed as planned, and 7 of 10 (70%) indicated the Fund enabled projects that could not otherwise have proceeded. Strategic priorities received strong support from respondents, with 8 of 10 (80%) rating service access as very important and 7 of 10 (70%) rating community assets as very important. These findings align with the actual funding distribution patterns recorded over the review period.

Application processes received positive feedback from 7 of 10 respondents (70%), with comments emphasising accessibility, efficiency, and quality of support, alongside suggestions for process streamlining and document coordination. Word of mouth was the primary discovery method cited by 4 of 10 respondents (40%), and 7 of 10 (70%) indicated they would be willing to promote the Fund to others.

Overview of Panel Consultation

Following a review of the Fund performance, past applicant survey results, and grant distribution across the Fund area, the Panel has identified areas for enhancement whilst recognising the Fund's strong foundation and community impact.
The review process confirmed that the current priority framework is effective, while highlighting opportunities to improve geographic equity and strengthen community engagement, particularly in raising the Fund's profile in Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk, Midlem, Upper Teviotdale, and Borthwick Water.

Fund Priority Assessment

During the review process, the Panel evaluated the existing six Fund priorities against current community needs and funding performance data. Through analysis of all time awarded funding, the Panel reached a unanimous conclusion that the current priority framework remains highly effective and should be maintained.

Evidence-Based Fund Priority Performance
Analysis of funding distribution across the six priorities validates their continued relevance and demonstrates responsive alignment with community needs:

- **Develop or Maintain Community Assets:** (36.9%, £158,060 across 21 projects) continues as the Fund's primary investment focus. Village hall maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and facility modernisation represent essential foundations for rural community life. The scale of investment reflects both the age of existing facilities and the central role these assets play in enabling all other community activities and service delivery.

- **Build Community Capacity and Cohesion Between Groups:** (19.8%, £84,943 across 7 projects) emerges as the second-largest priority area, demonstrating the Fund's commitment to strengthening organisational infrastructure. Investment in community development companies and capacity-building programmes enables sustainable, community-led approaches to addressing local challenges whilst fostering collaboration across different groups and settlements.

- **Ensure Adequate Access to Services for All Community Members:** (13.8%, £59,110 across 6 projects) addresses the persistent challenge of service accessibility in remote rural locations. Funding bridges gaps in health provision, advice services, emergency response capability, and support for vulnerable populations, ensuring geographic isolation does not prevent access to essential services.

- **Encourage Community Activity and Promote Community Spirit:** (11.1%, £47,735 across 10 projects) recognises that social connection forms the bedrock of resilient communities. Supporting activities from sports and recreation to cultural events and intergenerational programmes strengthens community bonds whilst directly addressing isolation and promoting mental wellbeing across all demographics.

- **Improve Local Transport Infrastructure:** (10.6%, £45,555 across 6 projects) responds to mobility barriers that restrict access to services, employment, and community participation. Community transport solutions including minibus provision, active travel infrastructure such as e-bike storage and charging facilities, and pathway improvements provide practical alternatives where conventional public transport cannot viably serve dispersed rural populations.

- **Build the Local Economy:** (7.7%, £32,960 across 3 projects) delivers focused support for skills development, employment initiatives, and organisational financial capacity. Whilst representing a smaller funding proportion, these investments address fundamental economic sustainability challenges by creating pathways to employment, building workforce capacity in areas with limited job opportunities, and enabling professional financial management within community organisations.

Panel's Decision and Rationale

The Panel's assessment confirmed that the current six-priority framework effectively captured the multifaceted needs of rural communities whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to respond to evolving circumstances. The funding distribution demonstrated balanced investment across physical infrastructure, organisational capacity, service access, and social cohesion.

As mentioned above, the Panel concluded that no changes to the Fund priorities were required. The funding distribution patterns demonstrate that all six priorities serve distinct community needs and collectively address the full spectrum of rural development challenges across the three Community Council areas.

Whilst transport infrastructure represents a smaller proportion of current funding (10.6%, 6 projects), this reflects limited project generation rather than reduced need. The Panel requested this remain a priority with active support for generating future project opportunities, recognising that transport challenges remain significant barriers to accessing services, employment, and community participation in rural areas.

Enhanced Assessment Criteria

During the consultation, the Panel agreed that clearer guidelines for 'Additional Fund Criteria' should be outlined on the Fund page to support both the application process and Panel decision-making process. These enhanced recommendations included:

- **Community Impact Assessment**: Enhanced focus on demonstrating sustained community benefit and proportionate reach, ensuring funding delivers meaningful outcomes for individuals and broader communities.
- **Partnership and Collaboration**: Increased emphasis on projects that foster collaboration between Community Council areas and organisations, strengthening connections across the Fund area.
- **Sustainability and Innovation**: Recognition of projects that demonstrate environmental sustainability, innovative approaches to community challenges, and long-term sustainability.

Operational Improvements

To support an even geographical spread across the Fund area, the Panel discussed opportunities to reach Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem through:

- Targeted outreach to underrepresented areas
- Case study development and sharing to inspire applications
- Strengthened relationships with Community Councils for local promotion
- Annual analysis of geographic distribution patterns
- Proactive engagement with areas showing lower application rates

The Panel reflected on the geographical spread for Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water and discussed the development of the Community Action Plan (CAP). The Panel agreed that this development will help generate project opportunities for Fund applications in the longer term.

Fund Review Recommendations

Following the conclusion of the Fund review, a set of recommendations was identified and subsequently agreed upon with the Panel for implementation into the Fund strategy.

These recommendations represent a strategic response to the findings of the review and have been carefully considered to enhance the Fund's operational effectiveness and alignment with its core objectives.

1. Geographic Equity and Engagement and Fund Promotion: Enhanced Outreach to Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem

The review noted variation in per capita funding across communities, with Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem receiving a comparatively lower allocation than areas such as Ettrick & Yarrow and Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water. This partly reflects the area's existing infrastructure and the nature of projects brought forward to date. There may, however, be an opportunity to further support these communities in building awareness of the Fund and strengthening group capacity, ensuring they are well-placed to benefit in future funding rounds.

Recommended Actions:

- Consider hosting information sessions or workshops within the community to build awareness and support with applications.
- Develop a communications strategy utilising print, social media, local and newsletters with support from the Panel members for distribution.

2. Strategic Investment Balance: Supporting large and small project applications

The Fund's success in supporting both transformational strategic investments (such as Midlem Village Hall's £45,400 across multiple projects) and accessible grassroots initiatives (such as smaller grants under £3,000) should be maintained. However, to support smaller projects and applicants, as well as reduce the application pressures highlighted in past applicant surveys, changes to processes should be considered.

Recommended Actions:

- Implementation of the small grants assessment form for projects £5,000 and below.

3. Geographic and Priority Distribution Monitoring

The Fund's geographical distribution has indicated that Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk and Midlem Community Council area has received the least amount of funding since the inception of the Fund.

Recommended Actions:

- Implement annual analysis of geographic distribution patterns against population indicators and present to the Panel on an annual basis.
- Track application patterns across Community Council areas to identify emerging trends.

All abovementioned recommendations are planned to be implemented throughout 2026 and beyond, with particular focus on early engagement with underrepresented communities and the introduction of the simplified small grants process. Progress will be reviewed following each round to ensure measurable improvements in geographic equity and Fund accessibility.

Conclusion

The Langhope Rig Sub Fund A has performed consistently across key metrics over the review period. The Fund has awarded £428,363 to 53 projects, achieved a 64.6% application success rate, and generated £1.9 million in total community investment through a leverage ratio of 1:4.44 — meaning that for every £1 awarded, £4.44 of total project value was delivered. This ratio reflects strong value for money and indicates the Fund's role in enabling communities to access wider resources alongside direct grant support.

However, the review identifies variation in per capita investment across the three Community Council areas, ranging from £88.56 in Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem to £214.84 in Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water. This reflects the varied contexts and capacity of communities at this stage. The data points to scope for continued outreach and support, helping to ensure the Fund's benefits are accessible as broadly as possible across the areas of benefit.

Implementation of the recommendations will be monitored following each funding round, with progress reported to the Panel on an annual basis. This will ensure the Fund continues to respond to the needs of communities across Ettrick & Yarrow, Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem, and Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water throughout the remaining operational period.

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