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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

20 February 2024

## Cabinet

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**Title:** Community Wealth Building Strategy Refresh

**Purpose:** To update on progress of the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025 and seek approval of the refreshed Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027

**Recommendation:** That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the progress against actions of the Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025; and
  - b) Approves the refreshed Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027, provided at Appendix One.
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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council launched Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy in May 2020. Since the launch of the strategy, the North Ayrshire economy has seen a series of significant impacts including the immediate and longer-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing energy costs, workforce shortages across various industries and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis.
- 1.2 A first year progress report on the Strategy was considered and approved by Cabinet on 28 September 2021 and this outlined the significant progress achieved despite challenging economic conditions. Since then, it has become evident that the significant challenges in the wider UK and global economy have created a different context in which the CWB Strategy operates. National interest in Community Wealth Building has also grown considerably in this period resulting in an increased focus at a local, regional and national level. In response to this and the learning gained over the past three years, there was a recognition that a refreshed CWB Strategy could better respond to these new challenges.
- 1.3 The refreshed strategy for 2024-2027 aims to provide a Community Wealth Building focussed approach to economic development in North Ayrshire in the coming years, allowing the Council to remain at the forefront of this innovative policy area. This report provides an update of progress against the actions of the original strategy and seeks approval of a refreshed strategy, provided at Appendix One.

## 2. Background

2.1 The Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025 was launched in May 2020. This was in response to a commitment in the 2019-2024 Council Plan to develop and implement a CWB Strategy for North Ayrshire under the Priority Outcome 'North Ayrshire has an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy'.

2.2 CWB is a radical and bold approach to economic development which has seen the Council, along with regional Anchor Institution partners, use our economic levers to create a more resilient local economy. The aim of the original CWB Strategy, carried through to the refresh, is that this new economic model will support economic, social and environmental sustainability for our communities, through an approach centred on wellbeing and inclusion.

2.3 Prior to the launch of the original strategy, the Council:

- Established a CWB Commission chaired by the Council Leader and comprising of senior Elected Members, North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Anchor Institutions and Council Officers;
- Commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to undertake a CWB diagnostic for the Council, providing recommendations to support the development of an ambitious CWB strategy;
- Established an officer CWB Working Group, chaired by the Head of Service for Economic Development and Regeneration, to drive CWB activities across the Council; and
- Delivered a CWB NAC Staff Leadership Conference to around 100 senior leaders, and a CWB training session and e-learning video for Elected Members.

2.4 Since the launch of the CWB Strategy in May 2020, the Council has made significant progress towards embedding CWB practices within the North Ayrshire economy and this approach has taken on a regional dimension. In parallel with our achievements and progress on CWB, the Scottish Government is taking forward CWB Legislation in the current Parliament which, if approved, may place a duty on public bodies to embed CWB principles into their economic development approaches. During this period, the Council has:

- Developed the North Ayrshire CWB Commission into a regional Ayrshire CWB Commission, supported by a Lead Officer Working Group.
- Led on the development of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan, embedding CWB principles throughout as a cross-cutting theme- a first in Scotland.
- Hosted and managed the £3m Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building programme.
- Created a Community Benefits Wish List to match organisations delivering Council contracts with community organisations in need of support.
- Developed and delivered the Repurposing Property Grant Fund (RPGF) which directly supports and provides benefits to our local communities to bring underutilised land and property back into positive use.
- Achieved our target of 26% local procurement spend one year early. Since launching the CWB Strategy in 2020 our local procurement spend has improved from 19.75% in 2020-21 to 26.04% in 2022-23.

- Considered Community Wealth Building implications as part of all Committee reports.
- Delivered several key CWB capital projects including Phase One of Lochshore Park comprised of the Lochshore Park Hub, 5k circular loop, woodland planting and active travel links.
- Established an Expert Panel, comprising experts in CWB from across the globe to provide advice, from organisations including The Democracy Collaborative, CEIS and Future Economy Scotland.
- Created additional capacity aligned to CWB across services in Economic Development and Regeneration and Connected Communities, including seven posts funded through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- Delivered Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Conference to an audience of over 100 delegates from across the country and further afield.
- Participated in the Scottish Government's CWB Bill Steering Group.
- Submitted a comprehensive response to the CWB legislation consultation, in favour of a CWB Duty being placed on public sector organisations.
- Developed the membership of the CWB Working Group to continue to drive CWB activities across the Council.

2.5 National interest in Community Wealth Building (CWB) has also grown considerably in the three years since the strategy launch, with the Scottish Government supporting five pilot authorities to follow in the footsteps of North Ayrshire Council. Recognised by our role as pioneers in CWB, there has been significant interest in our approach from a range of Scottish local authorities, Anchor Institutions and the third sector and we regularly share our expertise with other organisations. This culminated in the Council hosting Scotland's first CWB conference in October 2022 which brought together over 100 delegates from across Scotland and further afield.

2.6 The original strategy had a series of 55 actions. These were aligned across six objectives comprised of "Community Wealth Building Council" plus the five CWB pillars as follows:

- **Community Wealth Building Council:** We will work across all our services and wider local and regional partners to implement Scotland's first approach to Community Wealth Building. Looking at how we do things differently and with CWB ambitions in mind;
- **Procurement:** We will use our spend to actively encourage and support a growing, diverse and resilient local business base, and to support our net zero carbon ambitions;
- **Fair Employment:** We will encourage the creation of fair and meaningful jobs with progression opportunities to unlock the potential of our residents;
- **Land and Assets:** We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all of our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit;
- **Financial Power:** We will invest locally and encourage regional and national institutions to invest in our communities; and
- **Plural Ownership of the Economy:** We will support the creation and sustainability of a range of business models including SMEs, social enterprise, employee ownership, cooperatives, municipal activity and community enterprises.

- 2.7 Our proposed 2024-2027 CWB Strategy, provided at Appendix One, builds upon the pioneering approach of Scotland's first CWB Strategy, and outlines our approach to creating a more inclusive and sustainable economy through CWB. Having emerged from the Covid-19 Pandemic into a Cost of Living Crisis and dealing with the effects of our changing climate, compounded by the conflict in Ukraine, we continue to face a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. The refreshed strategy aspires to a vision of a Wellbeing Economy- an economy which works for both people and planet- providing an economically and environmentally sustainable future for our communities and young people to flourish. The Strategy outlines the steps in our journey to creating a Wellbeing Economy and to support the Council Plan's vision of a North Ayrshire that is 'Fair for All'.
- 2.8 The refreshed CWB Strategy has a total of 53 actions aligned to the same six objectives. This reflects the fact that some actions from the original strategy have been completed, some actions have been updated to reflect the changing economic environment, and several new actions have been developed. Our commitment to environmental sustainability and climate action is regarded as a cross-cutting theme which relates to all six objectives.
- 2.9 The refreshed CWB Strategy has been developed using a cross-service approach, with broad engagement to refine existing and create new actions. This includes Economic Development, Regeneration, Growth and Investment, Employability, Connected Communities, Finance, HR, Procurement, Planning, and Sustainability. It has also been reviewed by and informed by feedback from the Expert Panel and the Council's Policy Advisory Panel.
- 2.10 The strategy recognises the significant progress achieved in 2020-2023 through the inclusion of a wealth of case studies and aligns to the wider Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy. It identifies 53 actions across the six objectives of Community Wealth Building Council and the five CWB pillars. Several new actions and revised are identified, building on the continuing actions from the first strategy. These include:
- Refresh the CWB Anchor Charter and work with partners to establish a wider Anchor Network to promote CWB across the region.
  - Proactively engage with our communities and Third Sector organisations, for example community and development trusts, to provide a voice within CWB activities and support to develop, co-produce and maximise CWB opportunities.
  - Informed by our commitment to place-making, we will explore options for developing Community Wealth Building approaches at a locality level including consideration of unique island contexts.
  - Work with the Scottish Government to establish a Regional Intelligence Hub in Ayrshire and explore options for further analysis and evaluation of Community Wealth Building.
  - Develop our approach to using our land and assets for community benefit through the delivery of our Repurposing Property Grant Fund, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy and the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme.
  - Explore the feasibility of creating a CWB assessment framework for development proposals.
  - Support our business base to embed fair work practices, workplace innovation and reducing their environmental impact.
  - Embed CWB within the development of Ayrshire Growth Deal business cases to ensure lasting benefits for our businesses and communities.

2.11 Regular monitoring of progress on the 53 actions will be undertaken to ensure that objectives are being delivered across all CWB pillars and that we are on track for achieving our vision of a Wellbeing Economy for North Ayrshire.

### **3. Proposals**

3.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the progress against actions of the Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025; and
- b) Approves the refreshed Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027, attached as Appendix One.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

4.1 The refreshed strategy aims to support and maximise the impact of the investment being made through existing Council resources and external funding. It will also inform our priorities for securing and delivering against local, regional and national external funding sources.

#### **Human Resources**

4.2 The Economic Policy Manager- Community Wealth Building will lead on the implementation of the CWB Strategy with cross service support. The delivery and ownership of the identified actions has been agreed with the relevant services, recognising that the Council's CWB approach is embedded across all Services' remit.

#### **Legal**

4.3 Legal advice is sought where relevant and will be sought in future in relation to any impending legislation that may result from the Scottish Government's CWB Bill.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 The refreshed strategy continues to present a transformational approach to an inclusive economy. In particular, actions on Fair Employment support excluded groups in North Ayrshire and contribute to our aim to reduce child poverty in North Ayrshire.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 The refreshed strategy actions aim to contribute to our ambition as a Council to become carbon neutral by 2030 and align with the Sustainable North Ayrshire strategy.

#### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The refreshed strategy aims to develop a Community Wealth Building approach to a wellbeing economy, which is a key activity of the Council Plan. The strategy contains

several actions to meet Council Plan priorities, primarily under the Wellbeing and Sustainable Council priorities. It aims to support the strategic aim of a Community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources on our priorities.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 The strategy is key to delivering a cross-cutting approach to Community Wealth Building and will continue to promote North Ayrshire as a CWB Council.

### **5. Consultation**

5.1 Engagement on the Council's CWB Strategy has taken place widely since its inception in 2020. This includes with the Community Wealth Building Commission, Locality Planning Partnerships, wider communities, stakeholders, Elected Members and with senior leaders via the staff Leadership Conference. The 2022 CWB Conference enhanced this engagement. A cross-service approach has been taken to the development of the refreshed strategy with senior officers from several services inputting directly into the appraisal and revision of existing actions and the formulation of new actions. It has been reviewed by and informed by feedback from the CWB Expert Advisory Panel and the Council's Policy Advisory Panel.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON  
Executive Director (Place)

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### **Background Papers**

Emergency Governance Decisions (Covid-19 Outbreak) Report – Community Wealth Building, 24 April 2020  
North Ayrshire Council Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025

North Ayrshire Council  
Community Wealth Building Strategy  
2024 - 2027

Delivering a Wellbeing Economy

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## Leader's Foreword

Community Wealth Building has been at the heart of everything we do at North Ayrshire Council since we launched Scotland's first Strategy back in 2020. The local and national economic context has changed considerably over the past few years and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis. Now more than ever we need take an inclusive and people-centred approach to developing our local economy and ensure fair distribution of wealth and opportunities for our communities. This is why we are committed to delivering a Wellbeing Economy for North Ayrshire – an economy which works for people **and** planet – and we see Community Wealth Building as a key mechanism for achieving that vision.

Community Wealth Building is moving forward at quite a pace and shaping the economic landscape in this region and beyond. We are delighted with the progress we have made - the early stages saw us put the building blocks in place, spread the message and get buy-in from partners, businesses and communities across the region. None of the successes of this bold economic strategy would have been possible without the support and shared determination of all our partners. I would personally like to offer my thanks to all those who have signed up and joined us on this important and exciting journey.

It has been heartening to see national support for Community Wealth Building develop over recent years and it's been great to share our story with other Scottish local authorities, Anchor Institutions and the Third Sector. We were delighted to host Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Conference in October 2022, bringing together over 100 individuals and organisations from across Scotland. We are leading the way in this bold new economic approach and we should be immensely proud of what we've achieved.

We've developed new processes and ways of working and have helped dozens of local businesses to take part in the often difficult and complex procurement process. This has seen the amount spent with North Ayrshire businesses from April 2022 to March 2023 increasing by almost £6.4million on the previous year. This equates to 26.04% of our total procurement spend going to local businesses, meaning that we reached our target of 26% local spend one year early.

We have also developed new initiatives which deliver benefits directly to our communities. Our Community Benefits Wish List matches council suppliers with requests from community organisations and has delivered huge benefits including materials, staff expertise and small cash donations. Stage 1 of our Repurposing Property Grant Fund saw a total of £149, 271 awarded to help support community groups and landowners bring vacant and derelict sites back into productive use.

Building upon this strong foundation, this new strategy demonstrates our continued commitment to pioneering Community Wealth Building in Scotland and across Ayrshire. In demonstration of this commitment we recently led the development of a new Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire, ensuring Community Wealth Building principles are embedded throughout.

We are determined to play our part in creating a diverse Ayrshire economy that is more resilient and capable of standing firm in the face of national and global adversity. We have made a promising start and this Strategy lays out our vision and priorities for Community Wealth Building up to 2027. If you haven't already, please join us on this exciting journey.

**Councillor Marie Burns**

Council Leader, North Ayrshire Council



## Executive Summary

Our 2024-2027 Community Wealth Building Strategy builds upon the pioneering approach of Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy which we launched in May 2020. A lot has changed in the three years since including the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic, soaring fuel and food costs resulting in a Cost of Living Crisis and escalating inflation. We remain as committed as ever to the need to create a more inclusive and sustainable economy through Community Wealth Building.

National interest in Community Wealth Building has increased significantly, with Community Wealth Building referenced within the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and a consultation on Building Community Wealth in Scotland in 2023. This strategy builds upon the valuable learning we have gained as pathfinders in Community Wealth Building and recognises the challenges posed by the new economic context. It cements our position as leaders within local economic development and demonstrates our commitment to Community Wealth Building as the key mechanism for achieving a Wellbeing Economy.

A fundamental aspect of Community Wealth Building is working in collaboration with our Anchor partners, local businesses and communities. We reflect on the value of key achievements which have facilitated this collaborative approach such as the creation of the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission and Anchor Charter, delivery of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme and new initiatives such as the Community Benefits Wish List and Repurposing Property Grant Fund (RPGF) which directly support and provide benefits to our local communities.

Having emerged from the Covid-19 Pandemic into a Cost of Living Crisis and dealing with the effects of our changing climate, we continue to face a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. We aspire to the vision of a Wellbeing Economy – an economy which works for both people **and** planet – providing an economically and environmentally sustainable future for our communities and young people to flourish. This strategy outlines our next steps in our journey to create a Wellbeing Economy and to support the Council Plan's vision of a North Ayrshire that is 'Fair for All'.

## Our Vision for a Wellbeing Economy

### What is a Wellbeing Economy?

A Wellbeing Economy is an economy that works **for** people and the planet and delivers social, economic and environmental justice for all. It prioritises fair distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within our society, all on a healthy, thriving planet.

The Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) defines a Wellbeing Economy as: “an economy designed to serve people and the planet, not the other way around. Rather than treating economic growth as an end in and of itself and pursuing it at all costs, a Wellbeing Economy puts our human and planetary needs at the centre of its activities, ensuring that these needs are all equally met, by default.”

This is our aspiration for North Ayrshire’s economy; to be inclusive to all our residents, with wealth and opportunities fairly distributed and for our young people to reach their full potential as part of a sustainable future.

### The role of Community Wealth Building in a Wellbeing Economy

We consider Community Wealth Building to be a key mechanism to achieving a wellbeing economy. Rather than relying on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure for how well an economy performs, Community Wealth Building looks beyond this and aims to ensure our local economies are more inclusive for our residents and enterprises.

The Scottish Government consider Community Wealth Building and other progressive commitments such as the upcoming Land Reform Bill, Just Transition Plans and the Refreshed Fair Work Action Plan as supporting economic reform and the transition to a wellbeing economy.

The 2021-22 Programme for Government set out a commitment to bring forward Community Wealth Building Legislation in the current Parliament. A consultation on “Building Community Wealth in Scotland” ran from January to May 2023 with the purpose of seeking views on a proposal for a new duty to advance Community Wealth Building. It also sought to identify whether new legal measures or changes to existing laws are required to accelerate the implementation of Community Wealth Building.

## National Policy Context

The Scottish Government is committed to transitioning to a Wellbeing Economy and is a founding member of the Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) – an initiative bringing together governments to learn and support each other in the transition to a wellbeing economy. In March 2022 Scotland’s **National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)** was launched by Scottish Government. The strategy outlines a vision to create a wellbeing economy as part of a just transition to a more green and sustainable future. It recognises the need to learn from the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic and develop a more resilient economy, delivering fair work, better employment opportunities and reducing poverty and inequality. Community Wealth Building is highlighted as an example of a practical approach to achieving a wellbeing economy.

**National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)** was adopted in February 2023, providing guidance to support the creation of sustainable, liveable and productive places. It will also play a key role in delivering the National Strategy for Economic Transformation. Community Wealth Building is one of the National Planning Policies outlined within NPF4. It is recommended that Local Development Plans align to Community Wealth Building priorities and seek to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality and provide benefits for local communities.

## Local Policy Links

The 2024-2027 Community Wealth Building Strategy has been designed to align and interact with various North Ayrshire Council strategies.

### North Ayrshire Council Plan

The 2023-2028 Council plan outlines how we will deliver the priorities of our communities during the next five years. It was developed alongside North Ayrshire communities and outlines our four key priorities:

- Wellbeing – to transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
- Communities and Local Democracy – we will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- Climate Change – achieving net-zero by 2030.
- A Sustainable Council – a Community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities.

### [North Ayrshire Partnership Plan 2022-2030](#)

The North Ayrshire Partnership Plan is our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and sets how we will work together with our Community Planning partner organisations in North Ayrshire. It will deliver on our vision of “North Ayrshire – Fair for All” and has three key themes:

- Wellbeing – We will address health inequalities. We will promote children and young people’s wellbeing. We will enable community wellbeing.
- Work – We will increase employment. We will develop volunteering. We will better support our young people.
- World – We will work together to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. We will increase active travel. We will increase carbon literacy within our organisations and communities.

### [Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire](#)

Ayrshire’s first ever Regional Economic Strategy was launched in June 2023. It is a ten-year strategy which aims to build wealth for everyone in Ayrshire. It is the first regional economic strategy in Scotland to embed Community Wealth Building principles throughout. More information on the Regional Economic Strategy can be found on page 21.

### [Regeneration Delivery Plan](#)

The 2021-2026 North Ayrshire Regeneration Delivery Plan aims to address local priorities, support changes within communities and deliver a wellbeing economy. It is closely aligned to the priorities of our Council Plan and Community Wealth Building strategy and outlines the delivery of physical regeneration across North Ayrshire through an ambitious project based rolling action programme, working in partnership with our communities.

### [Island Recovery and Renewal Plans for Arran and Cumbrae](#)

To support an inclusive and green economic recovery for our island communities of Arran and Cumbrae, the Council are involved in an Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Working in partnership with island communities, businesses and wider stakeholders, two separate ten-year Island plans have been developed for Arran and Cumbrae. Aligning to the delivery of the National Islands Plan and Community Wealth Building principles, the island plans aim to maximise and develop the economic potential of North Ayrshire’s islands.

### [Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-2027](#)

In June 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to the ambitious target of achieving net zero by 2030. The new Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2023 and sets out a plan to achieve this target and tackle climate

change through the implementation of nine strategic priorities, action across five workstreams and a proposed Carbon Footprint and Project Register. The new strategy has a vision of a sustainable, climate ready North Ayrshire that drives area-wide reductions in carbon emissions in a way which tackles inequality, promotes fair work, supports Community Wealth Building and contributes to achieving a Wellbeing Economy.

#### [North Ayrshire Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy 2023-2028](#)

North Ayrshire has one of the highest proportions of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. The strategy has been informed by consultation with stakeholders and local communities who have highlighted the negative effect of vacant and derelict land on the local economy, environment and communities. The Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy considers how vacant and derelict land fits within the wider context of National and Local priorities and objectives, including Community Wealth Building, the challenge of net zero, the climate emergency and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

The refreshed Community Wealth Building Strategy also takes cognisance of other strategies including the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028 and the Digital North Ayrshire Strategy 2023-2028.



## What is Community Wealth Building?

Community Wealth Building is an approach to economic development which aims to retain wealth, jobs and opportunities within local areas and improve economic prosperity. It uses the economic power and levers of Anchor Institutions – large organisations which are rooted in local areas – to support and improve the local economy. These Anchor Institutions bring wealth to the local area in the form of jobs, buying power and physical assets and can be local authorities, NHS health boards, further and higher education institutions and other public sector organisations.

Community Wealth Building uses five pillars to encourage Anchors to use their organisational power to retain wealth locally and create more economic benefits for our local area.



Community Wealth Building enables communities and businesses to have a greater stake in their local economy, ensuring that money is retained locally and recirculates within communities and makes areas economically stronger, more resilient and sustainable.

It does this by changing the flows of wealth and economic power to bring them closer to communities – such as by increasing community ownership and control of assets; developing and growing more ‘generative’ enterprises such as small, locally-owned enterprises, co-operatives and social enterprises which lock and share wealth within the local area.

## Why do we need Community Wealth Building?

Like many parts of Scotland and the UK, North Ayrshire is facing a range of unprecedented economic challenges following the Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts of high inflation, energy and living costs. The current context has exposed the high levels of inequality that exist within our economy and has further marginalised the most vulnerable within society. Community Wealth Building seeks to rebalance economic inequality by retaining money, jobs and economic power within our local area and provide routes out of poverty for our families. Now more than ever we need mechanisms which create resilient and sustainable local economies which can withstand future economic shocks.

- 28.6% of children in North Ayrshire live in relative poverty (after housing costs). This is the second highest rate in Scotland<sup>1</sup>
- 27.4% of P6 and P7 pupils in North Ayrshire are eligible for free school meals<sup>2</sup>
- 39.8% of our residents live in the most deprived areas as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation<sup>3</sup>
- 38% of households are in fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty<sup>4</sup>
- North Ayrshire has one of the lowest job densities in Scotland (ranked 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in Scotland)<sup>5</sup>
- 27.6% of residents are economically inactive. This is one of the highest rates in Scotland<sup>6</sup>
- North Ayrshire has 12% of all vacant and derelict land in Scotland, making it the local authority with the second highest proportion in the country<sup>7</sup>
- Island specific challenges include access to affordable housing, higher costs of living and doing business and connectivity.

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<sup>1</sup> DWP – Children in low income families – local area statistics 2023

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government – School Healthy Living Survey statistics 2022

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 v2

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government – Scottish House Condition Survey 2021 Key Findings

<sup>5</sup> NOMIS (2023) based on data from Jul 2022 – Jun 2023

<sup>6</sup> NOMIS (2023) based on data from Jul 2022 – Jun 2023

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2021

Despite facing significant challenges, there are a range of strengths within North Ayrshire from which we can seek to maximise and develop:

- 3380 Businesses in North Ayrshire<sup>8</sup>
- 120 Social Enterprises<sup>9</sup>
- North Ayrshire unemployment rate has reduced by 2.4 % points since 2020<sup>10</sup>
- Female Employment Rate has increased by 4% points since 2020<sup>11</sup>
- Significant opportunity to grow the blue economy for example fishing, aquaculture, offshore renewables and leisure activities.
- £251.5 million regional investment across Ayrshire via the Ayrshire Growth Deal

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<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government – Business in Scotland 2022

<sup>9</sup> Social Enterprises in Scotland 2021 Census

<sup>10</sup> NOMIS (2023) based on data between Jul 2020, Jun 2021 and Jul 2022, Jun 2023

<sup>11</sup> NOMIS (2023) based on data between Jul 2020, Jun 2021 and Jul 2022, Jun 2023

## Our Community Wealth Building Journey Continues

Since launching our Community Wealth Building Strategy in May 2020 we have seen significant impacts to the local economy including the immediate and longer-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing energy costs due to the conflict in Ukraine, workforce shortages across various industries and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis.

In light of the changing economic context, we recognise the challenges associated with delivering our Community Wealth Building ambitions and aspirations to create a stronger and more resilient local economy. The Cost of Living Crisis, pressures of rising inflation and ferry disruption for Arran and Cumbrae have been particularly challenging for local businesses, particularly SME's. Our Business Support and Development team worked hard throughout the pandemic to help businesses in immediate distress and provide a package of support focussed on business recovery, diversification and new opportunities aligned to Community Wealth Building and a green recovery. Providing further support, the successful three-year Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme was launched in 2021 and works with businesses to create more local, good quality employment and create a larger and more diverse business base.

Locality community support hubs were established in each of the six North Ayrshire localities immediately after the start of the pandemic to provide urgent support to our local communities. Coordinated by a team of Council, Health and Social Care staff and local volunteers, the hubs provided a range of essential support to communities, children and vulnerable residents including food parcels and deliveries, prescription deliveries, money advice services and health and wellbeing advice.

The effects of climate change and biodiversity loss are being felt around the world and is a fundamental threat facing North Ayrshire residents and businesses. We know the impacts of our changing climate are likely to hit the most vulnerable in society the hardest and the climate crisis is a key concern for our young people. To mitigate these effects, and as demonstrated in our Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-2027, we are committed to using the principles of Community Wealth Building to ensure a fair and green transition to a sustainable society which operates within planetary limits and where no one in North Ayrshire is left behind.

National interest in Community Wealth Building has grown considerably in the past three years. Recognised by our role as pioneers in Community Wealth Building, there has been significant interest in our approach from a range of organisations including other Scottish local authorities, Anchor Institutions and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector. We were delighted to host Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Conference in October 2022, bringing together over 100 individuals and organisations from across Scotland.

The 2021-2022 Programme for Government set out a commitment to bring forward Community Wealth Building Legislation in the current Parliament. We were invited to join a Community Wealth Building Bill Steering Group to help inform the development of the legislation. In May 2023 we engaged across Council Services and with our Anchor partners to provide a comprehensive response to the consultation “Building Community Wealth in Scotland”.

As we continue our Community Wealth Building journey and reflect on the new economic context and learning we have gained over the past three years, we feel it is an appropriate time to revisit our Community Wealth Building Strategy. We remain committed to all five pillars of Community Wealth Building and this new strategy will seek to improve and deepen the benefits of this approach by engaging across Council Services and our Health and Social Care Partnership. We will ensure that Community Wealth Building strengthens and informs our approach to place-making by recognising and responding to the distinct needs and opportunities of our North Ayrshire localities. Community Wealth Building is embedded within our Island Plans for Arran and Cumbrae. In recognition of the unique opportunities and challenges for Community Wealth Building on our islands we will explore options for piloting a locality based approach to Community Wealth Building on Arran.

We are committed to developing our Community Wealth Building approach in partnership with our local and regional Anchor partners. Building upon the strong relationships developed through the Community Wealth Building Commission we will support the delivery of the first Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire and ensure Community Wealth Building remains at the heart of the economic vision for Ayrshire. By nature of our two island communities, the Council also sits within the Highlands and Islands Regional Partnership. We will work with partners to embed Community Wealth Building and maximise opportunities to increase economic wealth and benefits for rural and island communities.

## Scotland's First Community Wealth Building Conference

We were delighted to host Scotland's first ever conference focussed on Community Wealth Building at Saltcoats Town Hall in October 2022. Economic practitioners and policymakers from across Scotland attended to learn more about Community Wealth Building and be inspired hearing about the success stories, challenges and why different approaches to Community Wealth Building are important for urban and rural, mainland and island communities.

The event was well-attended with over 100 guests from 42 different organisations and groups. A total of 35 officers from 20 different Scottish local authorities attended, not including North Ayrshire Council staff. This included representatives from Aberdeen City, Orkney, Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross and Stirling Councils. We were delighted to welcome Mr Tom Arthur, Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance to the conference who spoke of the Scottish Government interest in Community Wealth Building and praised the work underway in North Ayrshire and Ayrshire.



Participants heard about the North Ayrshire approach to Community Wealth Building as well directly from some of our Anchor partners and the development of the Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire. There were presentations from several highly respected guest speakers who shared their knowledge and experience of Community Wealth Building and stimulated lively and engaging discussions:

- A video recording by Ted Howard, Co-Founder and President of the Democracy Collaborative
- Stewart Macgregor, Scottish Enterprise
- Sarah Deas, Wellbeing Economy Alliance
- Sarah McKinley, Democracy Collaborative
- Calum Iain MacIver, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
- Artemis Pana, Scottish Rural Action
- Neil McInroy, Democracy Collaborative

In addition to presentations and Q & A sessions, there were several stalls showcasing key Community Wealth Building projects, allowing attendees to engage directly with officers as well as providing opportunity for wider networking and sharing ideas. The conference also included the premiere of a [Community Wealth Building film](#) showcasing how Community Wealth Building can have a positive impact on the lives of young people in North Ayrshire.





## Community Wealth Building Commission

A key focus of the 2020 Community Wealth Building Strategy was working in partnership with our wider regional Anchor Institutions. All Anchor Institutions have the potential to use their economic power to have a positive influence on the local economy. By working together we can add value to our shared goals around Community Wealth Building and ensure positive long-term transformational change. To facilitate collaboration across a range of partners, we established the Community Wealth Building Commission. Led by North Ayrshire Council it is a partnership of nine Anchor Institutions including all three Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Ayrshire College, The Ayrshire Community Trust (3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Interface), Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise. The CWB Commission drives a strategic approach to Community Wealth Building in Ayrshire and brings partners together to work on shared challenges and opportunities and share best practice and examples of Community Wealth Building.

In December 2020, the CWB Commission agreed a workplan of activity and established a Lead Officer Working Group of senior officers from across the Anchor partners to take the workplan forward. As part of the workplan, three workstreams were established: Fair Employment, Procurement and Land and Assets. Examples of some activities underway within the workstreams include:

- The procurement workstream has developed an Ayrshire wide interactive map which plots 2021/22 and 2022/23 procurement spend of seven Commission Anchor partners. This provides an opportunity to understand potential for redirecting spend locally as well as collaborative procurement opportunities.
- The Fair Employment workstream is focussing on three areas of activity – Recruitment, Volunteering and Apprenticeships to maximise and join-up approaches across the partner organisations.
- The Land and Assets workstream has created a Geographic Information System (GIS) map and spreadsheet of under-utilised assets for all the partners, with the intention of linking this data to opportunities for businesses, communities and the Third Sector.



## Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter

To aid collaboration and support Anchors to use their economic levers and embed Community Wealth Building practices within their respective organisations, we launched a [CWB Anchor Charter](#) in October 2020. The Charter has sixteen pledges across the five CWB pillars and a sixth pillar of Climate Action. There are currently eleven organisations signed up to the Charter: North, East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise, The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT), Police Scotland and the three Ayrshire Joint Integration Boards.

### **Anchor Charter Mission Statement**

To commit to long-term collaboration between Ayrshire Anchor Institutions, supporting shared Community Wealth Building goals to improve collective wellbeing and create a strong, resilient and inclusive local and regional economy. This includes a commitment to the embedding of Community Wealth Building principles and reporting on progress to the CWB Commission.

## Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy

A new ten-year [Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire](#) was approved by the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee in February 2023 and formally launched in June 2023. A Year 1 Delivery Plan was subsequently approved in September 2023. The strategy has been supported by North Ayrshire Council and developed by an industry-led working group with representation from the six regional recovery and renewal workstreams and public sector partners.

The Regional Economic Strategy has six priority themes:

- Support for Enterprise
- Fair Work
- Innovation
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Stronger Places and Communities
- Enhancing Natural Capital

These priority themes are supported by a Culture of Delivery theme and cross-cutting themes of Community Wealth Building, Skills and Digital. It is the first regional economic strategy in Scotland to embed Community Wealth Building principles throughout. It aims to build wealth for everyone in Ayrshire and sets out the vision for 2033 of a region:

- Where wealth is shared fairly;
- Where people of all ages can live full and healthy lives;
- That is attractive to investors and visitors;
- That makes a major contribution to Scotland's economic development; and
- Where protection of natural wealth and culture is prioritised.

Although Community Wealth Building is embedded throughout the Regional Economic Strategy and the Delivery Plan, there are specific Community Wealth Building actions as follows:

- Review Community Wealth Building work across Ayrshire including the CWB Commission and AGD CWB Programme to support regional delivery of Community Wealth Building and the Regional Economic Strategy.
- Develop options for an Ayrshire Anchor Network to support regional delivery of Community Wealth Building.
- Respond to requirements of any forthcoming Scottish Government legislation on Community Wealth Building.
- Refresh the Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter and promote adoption of pledges within Ayrshire Anchor Institutions.

These actions have been reflected in the refresh of the North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Strategy. They offer the opportunity for us to link more widely with partners and to push forward Community Wealth Building at a regional level.



## Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme

Funded by the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) and launched in 2021, the AGD Community Wealth Building Programme is a three-year pan-Ayrshire programme which aims to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a large and more diverse business base. Specifically the project advances activities within the procurement, employment, ownership and asset pillars of CWB. This video explains more about the [Community Wealth Building Programme](#).

The project has three key elements:

- **CWB Business Locality Officers** – working with local organisations to facilitate CWB activities across the region;
- **CWB Fund** – a £1m fund to support place-based CWB activity, and the work of CWB locality officers; and
- **Fair Work Ayrshire** - a dedicated service that works with employers to implement Fair Work in workplaces across the Ayrshire.

The Programme aligns with existing local authority resource, including business development teams, employability programmes, regeneration activities, community development and locality/area partnerships. A total of 13 officers were recruited to support delivery of the Programme which is managed by North Ayrshire Council as the lead authority:

- A Programme Manager to support overall delivery of the programme;
- Nine CWB Business Locality Officers divided across the three Ayrshire Local Authorities (three officers in each council); and
- A Fair Work Ayrshire (FWA) Programme Manager and two Fair Work Ayrshire Project Officers.

The CWB officers and Fair Work Ayrshire team engage with businesses across Ayrshire through an array of support mechanisms. This included 1-2-1 support, Fair Work Action plans, networking opportunities through CWB pillar focused workshops, and providing financial assistance through the CWB Business Support Fund. The programme is performing well against targets and in many instances exceeding its key output targets. As of September 2023, the Programme has engaged with over 800 businesses across Ayrshire on CWB activities and it is likely that the overall programme target of supporting 900 enterprises will be exceeded.

In March 2023, the Programme hosted an in-person event at Ayrshire College in Kilmarnock. There were 130 attendees including local businesses, Third Sector enterprises and senior officers from across the public sector and further education institutions. There were a wide range of presentations including from Ayrshire businesses owners who shared their experiences of engaging with the Programme and why Community Wealth Building is important to them.



## Fair Work Ayrshire

The Fair Work Ayrshire Team are fully operational and have from April 2022 – September 2023:

- Engaged with 327 businesses across Ayrshire.
- Conducted 245 initial meetings to develop fair work action plans.
- Completed 124 Fair Work Ayrshire action plans.
- 52 Ayrshire businesses have been referred to secure real living wage for accreditation.
- 54 Ayrshire businesses have been referred to secure disability confident accreditation.
- 50 referrals to Working for a Healthy Economy (AGD) SALUS
- 26 referrals for Carer Positive scheme Scotland (following engagement with MSPs in Jan 23).
- 16 Ayrshire businesses have been signposted to create Modern Apprenticeship opportunities.
- 36 Ayrshire business have been signposted to learning & development opportunities.





**Cunninghame Housing Association/Citrus Energy/Cunninghame Furniture Recycling – recently Real Living Wage accredited and investing in local the community.**

Cunninghame Housing Association (CHA) through their Head of Social and Economic Development, Scott Mould, have been working hard over the last six months to reach Real Living Wage accreditation. This involved looking at all aspects of the business and associated contractors to ensure that the Real Living Wage is paid and promoted throughout the business and the social enterprise arm involved in furniture recycling. Due to the size of the organisation this had to be reviewed and staff understood the benefits to all staff in every aspect of the business. Cunninghame Housing Association is Disability Confident registered and are signing up to become a Carer positive and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) inclusive recruiter. Scott is keen to continue attracting talent to the organisation and will be looking at increasing staff development opportunities over the coming months. Cunninghame Housing Association has worked closely with North Ayrshire Council Employability team and have employed several Kickstart recruits and parents returning to work, providing training development and mentoring.



## Strategy Ambitions and Objectives

To ensure consistency in our approach, we remain committed to the five pillars of Community Wealth Building and our aspirations of being a Community Wealth Building Council. These commitments form our strategic objectives for how we will deliver Community Wealth Building in North Ayrshire.

As part of our vision for a wellbeing economy in North Ayrshire we recognise the crucial role of ensuring our local economy operates within safe and sustainable environmental limits and delivers on our Net Zero targets. Our commitment to environmental sustainability and climate action is therefore regarded as a cross-cutting theme which relates to all six of our Community Wealth Building Strategy objectives.



**Community Wealth Building Council** – We will work across all our services and wider local and regional partners to implement our pioneering approach to Community Wealth Building



**Progressive Procurement** – We will use our spend to actively encourage and support a growing, diverse and resilient local business base and to support our net zero carbon ambitions



**Fair Employment** – We will encourage the creation of fair and meaningful jobs with progression opportunities to unlock the potential of our residents



**Land and Assets** – We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit



**Diverse Ownership** – We will support the creation and sustainability of a range of business models including SMEs, social enterprises, employee ownership, cooperatives, municipal activity and community enterprises



**Financial Power** – We will invest locally and encourage regional and national institutions to invest in our communities

## A Community Wealth Building Council

### **We will work across all our services and wider local and regional partners to implement our pioneering approach to Community Wealth Building**

We will continue to develop our pioneering approach to Community Wealth Building and achieve our long-term objective of being a Community Wealth Building Council.

Community Wealth Building is firmly woven throughout our Council Plan (2023-28) and will help us deliver a wellbeing economy and contribute to our vision of 'A North Ayrshire that is fair for all'.

This refreshed strategy recognises our intentions to engage a broader range of council services in Community Wealth Building to ensure that we are maximising all opportunities to leverage economic improvements for our communities. It also informs how we will work with our wider Anchor partners, local business base, communities and the Third Sector to develop, co-produce and maximise Community Wealth Building opportunities. We will ensure that Community Wealth Building strengthens and informs our approach to place-making by recognising and responding to the distinct needs and opportunities of our North Ayrshire localities.

In recognition of the fundamental threats posed by the climate crisis, we will take a Community Wealth Building approach to addressing the climate challenges and ensure a Just Transition for North Ayrshire.

## **What we will do:**

- Work with local and regional anchor institutions through the Community Wealth Building Commission and Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Group to deliver Community Wealth Building across North Ayrshire and the wider Ayrshire economy.
- Refresh the CWB Anchor Charter and work with partners to establish a wider Anchor Network to promote CWB across the region.
- Proactively engage with our communities and Third Sector organisations, for example development and community trusts, to provide a voice within CWB activities and support to develop, co-produce and maximise CWB opportunities.
- Analyse outcomes of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme to inform our ongoing support for businesses and enterprises.
- Ensure all North Ayrshire Council employees have an awareness of Community Wealth Building and undertake their role through a Community Wealth Building lens through provision of regular training and engagement sessions.
- Use our municipalisation strategy as a tool to secure and enhance local public services, fill gaps in provision where necessary and develop local skills to meet changing service needs.
- Use Community Wealth Building to deliver on our ambitions to become a carbon neutral Council and ensure a green and Just Transition for North Ayrshire.
- Encourage our staff and communities to shop and spend locally and highlight the benefit of this to support local jobs in the North Ayrshire and Ayrshire economy.
- Participate in national, regional and international Community Wealth Building and inclusive economy networks to identify and showcase best practice.
- Continue our conversations with young people about what Community Wealth Building and a Wellbeing Economy means to them.
- Deliver digital economic transformation for North Ayrshire by addressing digital constraints to an inclusive economy such as improving digital skills, infrastructure and connectivity, and digital innovation.
- In our role as partner, support both the Highlands and Islands and Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnerships to embed CWB approaches and maximise opportunities to increase local economic wealth and benefits.
- Continue to participate in the Scottish Government CWB Bill Steering Group and respond to requirements of any forthcoming Scottish Government legislation on CWB.
- Deliver CWB workshops for Island Plan Steering Groups to identify opportunities, scale and embed an island-wide CWB approach as the Island Plans are delivered, with the intention of creating greater local economic, community and environmental benefits.
- Develop and implement a CWB Action Plan for North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Informed by our commitment to place-making, we will explore options for developing Community Wealth Building approaches at a locality level including consideration of unique island contexts.
- Work with the Scottish Government to establish a Regional Intelligence Hub in Ayrshire and explore options for further analysis and evaluation of Community Wealth Building.

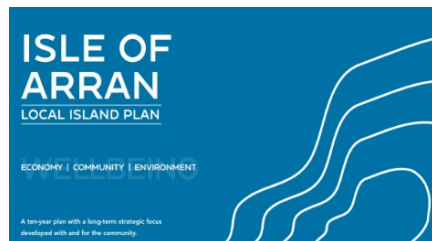
## Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot

The National Islands Plan (NIP) was published in December 2019 and provided a framework for action to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities. Aligned to the National Islands Plan, the Council is participating in an ambitious three-year Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot. Jointly funded by the Council, Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Pilot aims to support an inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's island communities in line with their unique needs. A key part of the recovery and renewal is the development of ten-year socio-economic Island Plans for both [Arran](#) and [Cumbrae](#).

The Local Island Plans were developed in partnership with island communities, stakeholders and partners and were subsequently launched in early 2022. A key area of focus for the Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot is on closer and more coordinated working between the island communities, community planning partners, national and local government and agencies. This aims to ensure a stronger place-based partnership working and a whole systems approach to improve island wellbeing, including in areas such as housing and the economy.

Annual Action Plans for [Arran](#) and [Cumbrae](#) were developed alongside the Local Island Plans and set out the steps and actions to be progressed to deliver the vision for the future of each island. The Action Plans outline a framework to align with each island's key themes and priorities as well as draw on opportunities to contribute to Community Wealth Building principles and net zero objectives. Island geographies provide unique opportunities and challenges for Community Wealth Building and in recognition of this we will explore options for piloting a locality based approach to Community Wealth Building on Arran.

In support of the Island Plan Steering Groups, we will deliver workshops to communicate the benefits of Community Wealth Building and how it can be used to strengthen local economies, making them more resilient and sustainable. The workshops will provide an opportunity to identify opportunities to embed Community Wealth Building approaches within the island economies as well as share practical examples of good practice and consider how to overcome challenges.



## Progressive Procurement

### **We will use our spend to actively encourage and support a growing, diverse and resilient local business base and to support our net zero carbon ambitions**

Our 2020 Strategy set an ambitious target of increasing Council procurement spend with local businesses from 19.75% in 2020 to 26% by 2024. Following the launch of the strategy, new staff were appointed within the Business Support and Development team and new processes implemented across the Procurement and Business Support teams including:

- Engaging and supporting local suppliers to enable them to bid for contracts.
- Alerting local suppliers of future procurement opportunities and considering procurement options to promote local spend.
- Publishing a contracts register and two-year forward plan within an Annual Procurement Plan to provide visibility of opportunities.

As a result of this coordinated approach, we were able to achieve our local spend target one year early. In the year from April 2022 to March 2023 the amount spent with North Ayrshire businesses had increased by almost £6.4million on the previous year, equating to 26.04% of our total procurement spend going to local businesses. To build upon this success, a new target of 27% local spend has been set for achievement by 2027/28.

### **What we will do:**

- Maintain the corporate culture and status of procurement as a key feature of Community Wealth Building.
- Continue to work with anchor institutions through the Community Wealth Building Commission Procurement Workstream to explore opportunities for more local spend and identify and progress joint opportunities locally and regionally.
- Support our business base – including a wide range of business models – to enhance their capacity to bid for public sector contracts.
- Continue our proactive approach to procurement wave-planning which enables deeper market and locality engagement before commissioning.
- Proactively promote upcoming Council procurement opportunities including through Meet the Buyer events, early supplier engagement events and Prior Information Notices (PINs).
- Increase knowledge of local suppliers and identify gaps in the market to create locally-driven economic opportunities.
- Continue to maximise our approach to Community Benefits to ensure they meet our CWB ambitions and the needs of our communities. This will include exploring the creation of further apprenticeships through Community Benefit Clauses, building on the review of our Community Benefits policy and creation of the Community Benefits Wish List.

### Community Benefits Wish List – Barrmill and District Community Association

Our Community Benefits Wish List was launched in October 2021. This is an online “noticeboard” where community groups can submit “wishes” to the Council’s network of public sector contractors who can respond to the requests as part of Community Benefits within the procurement process. A total of 61 wishes have been delivered between October 2021 and August 2023. Wishes can involve requests for supplier time, expertise or materials that will help a community organisation – for example volunteering staff time to clear an overgrown community garden, support with developing architectural plans or supplying fresh baked rolls to community larders.

Barrmill and District Community Association run a successful community centre from a prefabricated former army barracks building in the centre of the village. The age of the building is beginning to show through general wear and tear, exacerbated by the centre having to pause lets and other activities due to COVID restrictions. Water is running into the centre in a few places from the roof, and the windows are reaching the end of their life. The association requested support through the Community Benefits Wish List in September 2021, with the first offer of support received a month later from City Building LLP, a Glasgow-based construction firm who delivering a contract to supply new kitchen units for North Ayrshire Council. Based on the association’s wish submissions, City Building undertook a roof survey for the group in December 2021. This provided an up to date picture of the hall’s structure along with recommended next steps regarding further work and the type of advice required to inform the future of the building. One of these recommendations was to undertake a more in depth structural survey to investigate some of the areas the roof surveyor highlighted.

A surveyor was identified 7 months later, in July 2022. Faskin Group, a roofing contractor for the Council, covered the cost of a fabric condition survey report. These two surveys updated the information the association held about their building, which was previously a barrier to identifying appropriate solutions. Using the surveys as match funding evidence, the Council’s Funding Officer, with support from the Regeneration Team, has been supporting the group through an application to the Repurposing Property Grant Fund (RPGF). The group’s RPGF application has been successful and they have been awarded £10,000 to allow them to carry out a feasibility study to provide options in respect of refurbishing/rebuilding the community centre to ensure that it is not lost to the community.





## Fair Employment

**We will encourage the creation of fair and meaningful jobs with progression opportunities to unlock the potential of our residents**

We are ambitious for our North Ayrshire residents and are committed to providing good quality jobs, with training and progression opportunities. In collaboration with a range of partners we have successfully delivered a range of employability services including:

- EQUAL Supported Employment Programme supports people with disabilities or long-term health conditions into sustainable employment. It also supports employers to create an environment where a person with disabilities can work effectively.
- Skills for Life offers 6 month placements for parents within a vocational mentored programme. Between 2017 and 2022, the programme supported 132 placements in council services and 45 placements within Anchor and Third Sector organisations.
- Streetscene Training Academy provides high quality vocational 26 week real living wage placements for long term unemployed participants. These provide training and accredited qualifications to support progress into sustainable employment within the Council and externally whilst delivering environmental improvements across North Ayrshire.

As demonstrated by the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter, we are driving engagement on Fair Employment

### **What we will do:**

- Continue to work with anchor institutions to review workforce policy and planning and ensure Ayrshire is recognised as a Fair Work region, building on success of the CWB Commission Fair Employment workstream.
- Support our businesses to implement Fair Work principles and flexible working opportunities including promotion of case studies and good practice.
- Deliver employability programmes which support residents to improve their income from employment, reducing child poverty and the impacts of the cost of living crisis.
- Recognising health as an ongoing barrier to an inclusive and wellbeing economy in North Ayrshire, deliver our 'EQUAL' supported employment programme and work with Ayrshire partners to deliver Working for a Healthy Economy as part of the AGD.
- Aspire to align employability support with locality partnerships to ensure enhanced access to provision across North Ayrshire.
- Support other employers to achieve Disability Confident status, following our attainment of this status.
- Develop a video to promote the Council as an 'Employer of Choice' highlighting our good Terms and Conditions and opportunities for flexible working.
- Work with key partners and anchor institutions to deliver a new apprenticeship programme which supports future workforce needs and provides high quality opportunities for young people across a range of apprenticeship offers including Modern, Graduate and Foundation.
- Engage with services and anchor partners to better understand the barriers to recruitment and particularly for entry level roles, take steps to make the recruitment application process more accessible.
- Support the creation of an Island Skills Coordinator post, as identified in the Arran CVS Skills Audit Report 2023 that links the local curriculum officer and skills development initiatives to the needs of the Arran economy, providing choice, chance and collaborative approaches to addressing labour and skills shortages, upskilling and re-skilling and to address depopulation and improve opportunities for the working age population.

with our local and regional Anchor partners. Delivered through the Fair Employment workstream as part of the CWB Commission workplan, our Anchor partners are looking at ways to encourage more local recruitment, including from priority groups, as well as growing local skills and ensuring Ayrshire has a broad offering of accessible apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities.

### Step Into Business

North Ayrshire has over 1100 lone parents claiming universal credit. Family poverty remains high in North Ayrshire and is currently the second highest rate in Scotland. To help move more families into good quality, local employment, the Council developed Step Into Business – a pilot programme which works with our local and regional Anchor Institutions and private sector to encourage fair and flexible recruitment pathways for parents entering or returning to the labour market.

The programme has been shaped by discussions with parents who identified the key challenges associated with entering the labour market. Informed by these conversations, the programme provides pre-employment advice, childcare support, money management advice, wellbeing advice, in-work support and ‘moving on’ sessions. Delivered in partnership with Ayrshire College, We Work for Families and supported by the wider employability partnership, it is a truly collaborative approach between the Council and Anchor partners to improve employment opportunities for local residents.

Nine parents are being supported via the programme with employers hosting six month fully funded placement opportunities within administration or customer service roles. Parents are paid the Real Living Wage and given the option of flexible working patterns to support family life. Employers are encouraged to provide meaningful, positive, and supportive mentored placements that allows parents to gain the knowledge required to complete their SVQ qualification.

To date the programme has been very successful. One parent within the cohort recently secured a new post within the NHS. To allow parents to gain more experience, posts hosted by Anchors have also been extended for a further six months at a reduced cost to the employer. It is hoped that two further cohorts of parents will be supported by the programme in the coming months.



**YOUR  
NEXT MOVE**  
Working North Ayrshire   
North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

## Land and Assets

### **We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit**

We are committed to supporting our communities and businesses to use and take ownership of local assets, in a way which is appropriate for them and which helps address unique local issues or aspirations.

In 2022 Lochshore Park Hub opened to the public, regenerating a major long-term strategic site and bringing 64.73ha of vacant and derelict land back into productive use. A site of a former steelworks, it was purchased by the Council from Scottish Enterprise in 2021 and now is an excellent example of a productive asset for the community with a café, accessible public toilets and meeting space.

Millport Town Hall was purchased by the community in 2019 and is currently undergoing a significant renovation programme to create a sustainable, accessible and multifunctional space for the people of Cumbrae. The renovation has been supported by a range of sources including Community Investment Funding (CIF) from the Council and the Scottish Government's Islands Programme and Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

Repurposing of council owned land also provides an opportunity to tackle the climate emergency and reinvest financial returns from renewable energy generation back into North Ayrshire. The construction of solar photovoltaic farms at two former landfill sites in Irvine, Nethermains and Shewalton is now imminent. Together they are expected to provide two-thirds of the council's energy needs.

#### **What we will do:**

- Develop our approach to using our land and assets for community benefit through the delivery of our Repurposing Property Grant Fund, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2023-2028) and the Place Based Investment Programme.
- Ensure our commercial property portfolio and business development offer supports the growth of local businesses, social enterprise and entrepreneurial activity.
- Roll out Place Frameworks for towns across North Ayrshire and consider opportunities to add value through CWB such as alternative use of land and property assets, partnership working and supporting diverse ownership models.
- Continue to support Community Asset Transfer and support community capacity building to grow community ownership.
- Review potential sites for increased town centre living, in line with actions from the Regional Economic Strategy.
- Explore the feasibility of creating a CWB assessment framework for development proposals.
- Guided by NPF4, we will embed CWB and related policies such as 20 Minute Neighbourhoods within LDP3, ensuring future developments take account of local economic priorities and provide benefits for communities.
- Utilise our land and property assets to support a green transition including active travel routes and developing low carbon and renewable energy schemes and networks, such as Nethermains and Shewalton Solar PV.

Progress continues to develop a renewable energy framework for i3 aligned to the wider Ayrshire Growth Deal investment.

#### Repurposing Property Grant Fund

The Repurposing Property Grant Fund (RPGF) was created to help support landowners and community groups to bring smaller vacant land and property sites back into use. It provides financial support to investigate these sites and allow business and the community to explore alternative uses. It aims to:

- Enable or support the repair or redevelopment of vacant land and buildings.
- Act as a catalyst to promote future investment from the private sector and external funding.
- Safeguard the future of prominent buildings by indicating how high-quality conversion may be achieved.
- Enable the Council to map development potential and barriers to development.

Stage 1 of the programme supports property owners or community groups to carry out feasibility studies to identify potential options for the sites and their viability. A total of £149, 271 has been awarded to date across thirteen projects. This has allowed one previously vacant site to achieve planning permission for three industrial units in Saltcoats. Three community groups are using the funds to explore the re-use of key assets within their community and are being supported to understand the steps required to acquire the sites and access funding streams to improve the area for their communities.

Stage 2 of the fund commenced in summer 2023 and will build upon the feasibility works undertaken at Stage 1. Grants of up to £50,000 are available to support landowners to prepare detailed designs, obtain necessary consents, confirm costs and to identify sources of funding. The assessment process prioritises applications relating to North Ayrshire Locality priorities, long-term vacant sites, and historic or prominent buildings or sites in proximity to Town Centres.

## Diverse Ownership

**We will support the creation and sustainability of a range of business models including SMEs, social enterprises, employee ownership, cooperatives, municipal activity and community enterprises**

By supporting the creation and transition to more diverse business ownership models within North Ayrshire we are putting more economic control into the hands of local people and communities. Local enterprises are more likely to care about what happens in their communities and often have strong social and environmental values that respect the needs and views of local people. We recognise the strong links between Diverse Ownership and other pillars of Community Wealth Building. For example we will ensure our approach to maximising use of our Land and Assets includes consideration of new organisations and enterprises and actively supports diverse ownership models.

Diverse ownership models include social and community enterprises, employee owned companies, co-operatives, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) (including family businesses) and municipal ownership.

Together with Cooperative Development Scotland (CDS), our Business Support and Development team are committed to supporting local enterprises to explore alternative business models. In 2022 they supported Kilwinning based Shuttle Buses to transition to employee ownership, giving all 70 members of staff a meaningful stake in the business and a genuine voice in how it is run. Employee-owned businesses are more resilient during times of economic crisis, as well as more profitable, more productive and have greater staff engagement.

### What we will do:

- Support the development of wider forms of progressive business ownership including employee ownership, cooperatives, community businesses, and social enterprises.
- Support our business base to embed fair work practices, workplace innovation and reducing their environmental impact.
- Support work via the RES to undertake research to map and analyse the 3rd sector in North Ayrshire and provide support for the sector to grow and develop.
- Encourage and support the conversion of existing businesses to employee ownership.
- Continue to offer specialist support to family owned businesses through Scotland's first Family Business Advisor.
- Consider alternative delivery models and feasibility studies for large scale regeneration opportunities.



### Jack's Alt Stays – Cumbrae

Jack's Alt Stays is a unique accommodation offering on the Isle of Cumbrae. Established by cousins Daniel and Adam, they provide five alternative eco-cabins only a short walk from Millport.

Since the early stages of design and construction Daniel and Adam have demonstrated a strong commitment to using local suppliers and tradespeople. The cabins were brought to life by Largs based architects Stewart Associates and Stevenston based local builders System 5. Being based locally, Daniel and Adam were able to work closely with the architects and builders, ensuring they were involved in every step of the process and could make decisions along the way. It also enabled the production of a series of You Tube videos tracking the [construction journey](#) which raised awareness to the public and became a powerful marketing tool for attracting visitors.

Jack's Alt Stays is also committed to supporting other local businesses on Cumbrae, demonstrating the value that locally owned SMEs bring to the economy. They use local produce and suppliers where they can and signpost guests to other local businesses and attractions, helping to keep tourist spend local and within other SMEs. For example their optional breakfast add-ons includes produce from the Cumbrae butchers and milk and orange juice from a dairy on Largs. Offering these high quality items supports other local businesses and encourages visitors to purchase food on the island rather than doing their shopping at large mainland supermarkets before they arrive.

Jack's Alt Stays recognise the importance of employing locally and supporting their staff. It provides much needed secure and year-round employment for five members of staff, all of whom live on Cumbrae, including three Ukrainians who have recently settled on the island.

As plans for the future develop, Daniel and Adam remain committed to the principles of Community Wealth Building and keeping it local, having seen the benefits and opportunities it creates for their business and the local economy on Cumbrae.

## Financial Power

### **We will invest locally and encourage regional and national institutions to invest in our communities**

We know that investing locally empowers our communities and enterprises and acts as a catalyst for delivering a wide range of social, economic and environmental outcomes. We are committed to ensuring that our communities have a voice and are fully engaged in how money is invested locally. Our innovative Community Investment Fund (CIF), Communities and Place Fund, and excellent track record in delivering Participatory Budgeting are examples of how we use our financial power as a local authority to invest in projects and causes which are important to our communities.

As part of an action within the 2020 Community Wealth Building Strategy we investigated the feasibility of establishing a mutually-owned Community Bank within North Ayrshire. Although the research concluded a bank within North Ayrshire was not currently feasible, we know that other banking options such as locally based credit unions are important services which provide safe, inclusive and accessible finance options for our residents.

#### **What we will do:**

- Continue to promote work with 1st Alliance Community Bank to increase financial literacy and encourage progressive finance.
- Continue to empower our communities through our Community Investment Fund (CIF).
- Showcase North Ayrshire as part of the wider Ayrshire region to promote our investment opportunities to regional and national institutions to gain investment in our communities, in partnership with actions under the RES.
- Develop our progressive and leading approach to Participatory Budgeting by moving towards mainstreaming participatory budgets, including through our approach to allocating external funding and further empowering our local communities.
- Embed CWB within the development of Ayrshire Growth Deal business cases to ensure lasting benefits for our businesses and communities.



## How we will monitor our progress

We will regularly monitor progress on each of the 53 actions detailed within this 2024-2027 Community Wealth Building Strategy. This will ensure we deliver our objectives across all Community Wealth Building pillars and are on track to achieving our vision of a Wellbeing Economy for North Ayrshire.

We will also use our Inclusive Economy Dashboard to track our progress on delivering a Wellbeing Economy. Our Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach published in September 2020 outlined an action to ‘develop an Inclusive Economy Dashboard to track inclusive and green economic recovery.’ Based on the Doughnut Economics model, the Inclusive Economy Dashboard recognises that an inclusive and wellbeing economy must be based upon an acceptable social foundation and operate within safe and sustainable environmental limits. The revised Dashboard will act as a framework to ensure our Community Wealth Building approach is being used to develop our local economy in a way which is socially inclusive but also within safe environmental limits.

The Inclusive Economy Dashboard also provides insight to the broader national context within which we operate as a Council and forms part of our Council Plan Performance Management Framework. These contextual indicators give a sense of national trends and complex social, economic and environmental challenges facing a variety of councils. It will act as a guiding framework for collaborating with our Anchor partners and wider national organisations on shared goals and challenges.

### The Stevenston Community Hub

The idea behind Stevenston Hub was developed by Raise Your Voice with Ardeer (RYVwA) and initially focussed on re-establishing public toilets at Stevenston Beach. Following a community consultation, it was determined that in addition to public toilets, the community also wanted somewhere to meet and socialise, inspiring the idea of establishing a ‘community hub’.

Through various funding streams, RYVwA raised nearly £500,000 which included Scottish Government’s Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and £250,000 from North Ayrshire Council’s Community Investment Fund (CIF). Initially RYVwA received £100,000 in CIF funding however post lockdown it became apparent that material and other costs had risen substantially. The group returned to the Three Towns Locality Planning Partnership (TTLPP) requesting a further £150,000 to complete the build. CIF money was used to undertake another community consultation, fund concept and design, architectural and planning activities as well as the supply of utilities and project build management.

In February 2023, RYVwA held a ‘soft’ opening of the community facility and ‘Doon the Beach’ café. The hub and café very quickly became a go-to meeting place and refreshment stop for locals, dog walkers, cyclists and walking groups. A formal public opening and fun day was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July with over 2000 people in attendance and taking part in a range of activities.

The support received via the CIF allowed the project to become a reality and is not only meeting the needs and expectations of the local community, but also contributing to the delivery of the Three Towns Locality Priorities.



## Appendix 1 – Our 2024-2027 Community Wealth Building Strategy Actions

Number	Pillar	Action
1	CWB Council	Work with local and regional anchor institutions through the Community Wealth Building Commission and Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Group to deliver Community Wealth Building across North Ayrshire and the wider Ayrshire economy
2	CWB Council	Refresh the CWB Anchor Charter and work with partners to establish a wider Anchor Network to promote CWB across the region
3	CWB Council	Proactively engage with our communities and Third Sector organisations, for example community and development trusts, to provide a voice within CWB activities and support to develop, co-produce and maximise CWB opportunities
4	CWB Council	Analyse outcomes of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme to inform our ongoing support for businesses and enterprises
5	CWB Council	Ensure all North Ayrshire Council employees have an awareness of Community Wealth Building and undertake their role through a Community Wealth Building lens through provision of regular training and engagement sessions
6	CWB Council	Use our municipalisation strategy as a tool to secure and enhance local public services, fill gaps in provision where necessary and develop local skills to meet changing service needs
7	CWB Council	Use Community Wealth Building to deliver on our ambitions to become a carbon neutral Council and ensure a green and Just Transition for North Ayrshire
8	CWB Council	Encourage our staff and communities to shop and spend locally and highlight the benefit of this to support local jobs in the North Ayrshire and Ayrshire economy
9	CWB Council	Participate in national, regional and international Community Wealth Building and inclusive economy networks to identify and showcase best practice
10	CWB Council	Continue our conversations with young people about what Community Wealth Building and a Wellbeing Economy means to them
11	CWB Council	Deliver digital economic transformation for North Ayrshire by addressing digital constraints to an inclusive economy such as improving digital skills, infrastructure and connectivity, and digital innovation

12	CWB Council	In our role as partner, support both the Highlands and Islands and Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnerships to embed CWB approaches and maximise opportunities to increase local economic wealth and benefits
13	CWB Council	Continue to participate in the Scottish Government CWB Bill Steering Group and respond to requirements of any forthcoming Scottish Government legislation on CWB
14	CWB Council	Deliver CWB workshops for Island Plan Steering Groups to identify opportunities, scale and embed an island wide CWB approach as the Island Plans are delivered, with the intention of creating greater local economic, community and environmental benefits
15	CWB Council	Develop and implement a CWB Action Plan for North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
16	CWB Council	Informed by our commitment to place-making, we will explore options for developing Community Wealth Building approaches at a locality level including consideration of unique island contexts
17	CWB Council	We will work with the Scottish Government to establish a Regional Intelligence Hub in Ayrshire and explore options for further analysis and evaluation of Community Wealth Building
18	Progressive Procurement	Maintain the corporate culture and status of procurement as a key feature of Community Wealth Building
19	Progressive Procurement	Continue to work with anchor institutions through the Community Wealth Building Commission Procurement Workstream to explore opportunities for more local spend and identify and progress joint opportunities locally and regionally
20	Progressive Procurement	Support our business base – including a wide range of business models – to enhance their capacity to bid for public sector contracts
21	Progressive Procurement	Continue our proactive approach to procurement wave-planning which enables deeper market and locality engagement before commissioning
22	Progressive Procurement	Proactively promote upcoming Council procurement opportunities including through Meet the Buyer events, early supplier engagement events and Prior Information Notices (PINs)
23	Progressive Procurement	Increase knowledge of local suppliers and identify gaps in the market to create locally-driven economic opportunities

24	Progressive Procurement	Continue to maximise our approach to Community Benefits to ensure they meet our CWB ambitions and the needs of our communities, including exploring the creation of further apprenticeships through Community Benefit Clauses, building on the review of our Community Benefits policy and creation of the Community Benefits Wish List
25	Fair Employment	Continue to work with anchor institutions to review workforce policy and planning and ensure Ayrshire is recognised as a Fair Work region, building on success of the CWB Commission Fair Employment workstream.
26	Fair Employment	Support our businesses to implement Fair Work principles and flexible working opportunities including promotion of case studies and good practice
27	Fair Employment	Deliver employability programmes which support residents to improve their income from employment, reducing child poverty and the impacts of the cost of living crisis
28	Fair Employment	Recognising health as an ongoing barrier to an inclusive and wellbeing economy in North Ayrshire, deliver our 'EQUAL' supported employment programme and work with Ayrshire partners to deliver Working for a Healthy Economy as part of the AGD.
29	Fair Employment	Aspire to align employability support with locality partnerships to ensure enhanced access to provision across North Ayrshire
30	Fair Employment	Support other employers to achieve Disability Confident status, following attainment of our Disability Confident Leader status.
31	Fair Employment	Develop a video to promote the Council as an 'Employer of Choice' highlighting our good Terms and Conditions and opportunities for flexible working.
32	Fair Employment	Work with key partners and anchor institutions to deliver a new apprenticeship programme which supports future workforce needs and provides high quality opportunities for young people across a range of apprenticeship offers including Modern, Graduate and Foundation.
33	Fair Employment	Engage with services and anchor partners to better understand the barriers to recruitment and particularly for entry level roles, take steps to make the recruitment application process more accessible.

34	Fair Employment	Support the creation of an Island Skills Coordinator post, as identified in the Arran CVS Skills Audit Report 2023 that links the local curriculum officer and skills development initiatives to the needs of the Arran economy, providing choice, chance and collaborative approaches to addressing labour and skills shortages, upskilling and re-skilling and to address depopulation and improve opportunities for the working age population
35	Land and Assets	Develop our approach to using our land and assets for community benefit through the delivery of our Repurposing Property Grant Fund, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2023-2028) and the Place Based Investment Programme.
36	Land and Assets	Ensure our commercial property portfolio and business development offer supports the growth of local businesses, social enterprise and entrepreneurial activity.
37	Land and Assets	Roll out Place Frameworks for towns across North Ayrshire and consider opportunities to add value through CWB such as alternative use of land and property assets, partnership working and supporting diverse ownership models.
38	Land and Assets	Continue to support Community Asset Transfer and support community capacity building to grow community ownership.
39	Land and Assets	Review potential sites for increased town centre living, in line with actions from the Regional Economic Strategy.
40	Land and Assets	Explore the feasibility of creating a CWB assessment framework for development proposals.
41	Land and Assets	Guided by NPF4, we will embed CWB and related policies such as 20 Minute Neighbourhoods within LDP3, ensuring future developments take account of local economic priorities and provide benefits for communities.
42	Land and Assets	Utilise our land and property assets to support a green transition including active travel routes and developing low carbon and renewable energy schemes and networks, such as Nethermains and Shewalton Solar PV farms.
43	Diverse Ownership	Support the development of wider forms of progressive business ownership including employee ownership, cooperatives, community businesses, and social enterprises
44	Diverse Ownership	Support our business base to embed fair work practices, workplace innovation and reducing their environmental impact

45	Diverse Ownership	Support work via the RES to undertake research to map and analyse the 3rd sector in North Ayrshire and provide support for the sector to grow and develop.
46	Diverse Ownership	Encourage and support the conversion of existing businesses to employee ownership.
47	Diverse Ownership	Continue to offer specialist support to family owned businesses through Scotland's first Family Business Advisor.
48	Diverse Ownership	Consider alternative delivery models and feasibility studies for large scale regeneration opportunities.
49	Financial Power	Continue to promote work with 1st Alliance Community Bank to increase financial literacy and encourage progressive finance.
50	Financial Power	Continue to empower our communities through our Community Investment Fund (CIF).
51	Financial Power	Showcase North Ayrshire as part of the wider Ayrshire region to promote our investment opportunities to regional and national institutions to gain investment in our communities, in partnership with actions under the RES.
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