

AYRSHIRE REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MEETING – 15 JANUARY 2024

Report by North Ayrshire Council

AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING PROGRAMME

PURPOSE

1. To present the summary mid term review of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Community Wealth Building (CWB) Programme for endorsement and to seek authorisation for the submission of a change request proposal for a one-year timescale extension to the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board:
 - (i) Notes the progress of the AGD CWB Programme and endorses the summary mid term review;
 - (ii) Endorses the project change request proposal to extend the programme by one year;
 - (iii) Notes that the project change request proposal has been supported by the Scottish Government with confirmation received on 18 December 2023; and
 - (iv) Agrees to the submission of the change request to the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee for approval.

BACKGROUND

3. The aim of the AGD CWB Programme is ‘to develop an Ayrshire approach to Community Wealth Building that enhances wealth, ensures fair and meaningful work, and creates successful places throughout the region’. The programme seeks to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a large and more diverse business base. The programme focuses on support to businesses around the themes of procurement, employment, ownership and assets.
4. The programme has three key elements to support achievement of the aim:
 - CWB Business Locality Officers: based within each local authority who work with local enterprises to facilitate CWB across the region;
 - CWB Fund: a £1 million fund to support place-based activity and the work of the CWB Business Locality Officers;
 - Fair Work Ayrshire: a dedicated service that works across the Ayrshire region to support employers to adopt Fair Work principles.

5. The programme commenced in April 2021 with an original timescale of three years and an anticipated completion date of March 2024. The overall programme budget is £3 million, funded entirely by the Scottish Government. Two thirds of the budget supports employing a total of thirteen members of staff to deliver the programme. This includes a Programme Manager, Fair Work Ayrshire (FWA) Programme Manager and two FWA Delivery Officers, in addition to the nine Business Locality Officers. Project management is provided by North Ayrshire Council as lead authority. The Programme Manager is based within the Economic Policy Team with lead officer oversight provided by the Senior Manager for Economic Policy. Associated financial and HR services are resourced within the wider Council. In addition, the Fair Work Ayrshire Programme is also hosted by the Council's Employability Team.
6. The programme aligns with existing resources within the three local authorities, including business development teams, employability programmes and economic development services. Business Locality Officers are based within the Economic Development Service of each local authority. This allows the AGD CWB service provided to enterprises to be aligned with the wider business support offer and for cross-referral of businesses to add value. A programme Steering Group, comprising regional Business Support leads from across the three Authorities, meets monthly to discuss progress.
7. The programme is currently performing well against the targets set out in the approved Full Business Case and in some cases exceeding the key outputs. However, there have been challenges in achieving all outputs and outcomes mainly due to delays in recruitment in the early stages of delivery. The full staffing complement was not realised until April 2022, one year after the original intended start date. This condensed the delivery period of the programme, resulting in an underspend in terms of salary costs and grant funding for businesses.
8. A summary mid-term review document has been prepared by the Programme Manager. This has been approved by the AGD CWB Programme Steering Group and is attached as Appendix 1. This outlines the achievements of the programme. It highlights that real momentum and confidence has been gained within the delivery team and more widely amongst the regional business community. The underpinning recommendations within the review for a one-year extension aim to enable all outputs and outcomes to be realised.
9. The Programme Manager has worked closely with members of the Steering Group to develop a fully funded extension proposal that uses existing regional funding to extend the contracts of eight of the Business Locality Officers until March 2025. The post extensions are being funded through alternative sources including the Shared Prosperity Fund. This, combined with the underspend from the programme, will allow for a full year's extension without the need for additional resource from the AGD. The underspend will support the extension of the Programme Manager and one FWA Delivery Officer. The FWA Programme Manager has already been realigned to support the ADG Ayrshire Skills Investment Programme.

10. The Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (RES), launched in October 2023, recognises the impacts made by the AGD CWB Programme to date. The RES is underpinned by a cross-cutting theme of CWB and recognises that taking this approach to regional economic development is essential to deliver a wellbeing economy for future generations. There are actions aligned to the AGD CWB programme within the RES, including a commitment to considering a mainstreaming approach to delivering CWB-focused enterprise support. A one year extension to the programme would allow for this to be fully considered as part of a wider review of regional economic development.
11. Furthermore, the Scottish Government is fully supportive of the extension proposal, having identified that there are no financial implications for the AGD with the ability for funding to be drawn down from other sources, as set out in the review. Confirmation of this support was received on 18 December 2023.

PROPOSALS

12. That the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board:
 - (i) Endorses the progress of the AGD CWB Programme and endorses the summary mid term review;
 - (ii) Endorses the project change request proposal to extend the programme by one year;
 - (iii) Notes that the project change request proposal has been supported by the Scottish Government with confirmation received on 18 December 2023; and
 - (iv) Agrees to the submission of the change request to the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. As set out in the summary mid-term review, each local authority has aligned funding from other programmes to allow for extended delivery of the programme by extending staff contracts. By extending the programme by one year, this will allow for the programme underspend to support these posts in addition to allowing all authorities to maximise spend under the business grant programme. The resource requirements for the lead authority management of the programme will be met by existing resources.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14. Each local authority has already aligned alternative external funding sources to extend the contracts of the Business Locality Officers. A one-year extension of the programme would allow for the extension of contracts for the Programme Manager and one FWA Delivery Officer post. The cost of this would be fully covered through the AGD CWB underspend. The Fair Work Ayrshire Programme Manager has already been aligned to the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund programme with that funding supporting the continuation of that post.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no legal implications.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. The original Full Business Case was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which remains relevant.

CONCLUSION

17. The AGD CWB programme has been successful in raising awareness of a CWB approach to enterprises across the region. It has taken a regional approach to economic development and has been showcased as an example of best practice in this regard by the Scottish Government. A one year extension would allow the outputs and outcomes to be fully achieved and for the business grant funding to be fully disbursed. It would also align with proposals in the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy to consider a mainstreaming approach post March 2025 which would contribute towards achieving a wellbeing economy for Ayrshire.

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Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme Review Report

A summary of programme development, progress and next steps

October 2023



THREE
YEARS
THREE
MILLION
THREE
AUTHORITIES
ONE AYRSHIRE

The Programme review:

This report details the impact of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Community Wealth Building (CWB) Programme to date, and provides analysis and insight from key delivery stakeholders and Fund beneficiaries to underpin decisions to be made regarding the programme's underspend utilisation.

Key areas of purpose for the programme review report are as follows:

1. **Improve project outcomes:** The review of the programme allows stakeholders to consider opportunities for improvement. By examining the project's performance, identifying areas of underperformance, the programme can enhance outcomes and deliver better results for CWB in the Ayrshire region.
2. **Maximise resource utilisation:** Allocating underspend for best value for money ensures that project resources are utilised optimally. By reviewing the project and identifying areas where funds can be redirected, the programme can avoid wastage and make the most efficient use of available resources.
3. **Adapt to changing circumstances:** Programme requirements and priorities have been subject to change; the review will detail this with specific reference to both internal and external factors.
4. **Enhance stakeholder satisfaction:** By reviewing the programme, the team can ensure that stakeholders' CWB needs are being met and that they have benefitted as originally intended. This, in turn, can contribute a continued raised profile of CWB in the region and to wider transformational change.
5. **Additionality:** The review will identify potential areas where existing and additional funds could lead to further progression of CWB in Ayrshire.

PROGRAMME AIM:

'To develop an Ayrshire approach to Community Wealth Building that enhances wealth, ensures fair and meaningful work, and creates successful places throughout the region.'

Summary of the programme:

Programme Overview:

The AGD CWB Programme seeks to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a large and more diverse business base. Specifically, this project advances activities within the procurement, employment, ownership and asset pillars of CWB.

The project has three key elements to achieve this:

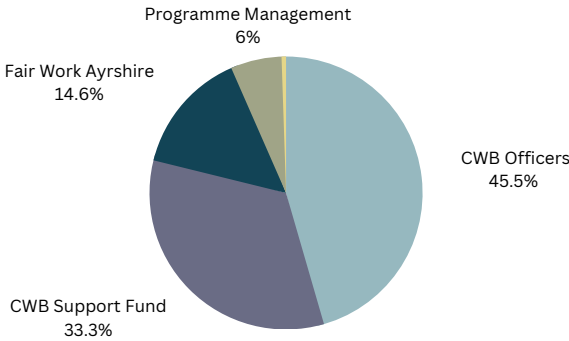
- **CWB Business Locality Officers** – working with local organisations to facilitate CWB activities across the region;
- **CWB Fund** – a fund to support place-based CWB activity, and the work of CWB locality officers;
- **Fair Work Ayrshire** - a dedicated service that works with employers to implement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

Timescales:

The programme was agreed to take place across three years, from March 2021-2024.

Budget

The total value of the project is £3million, with spending allocated as below. The full £3million is from Scottish Government.



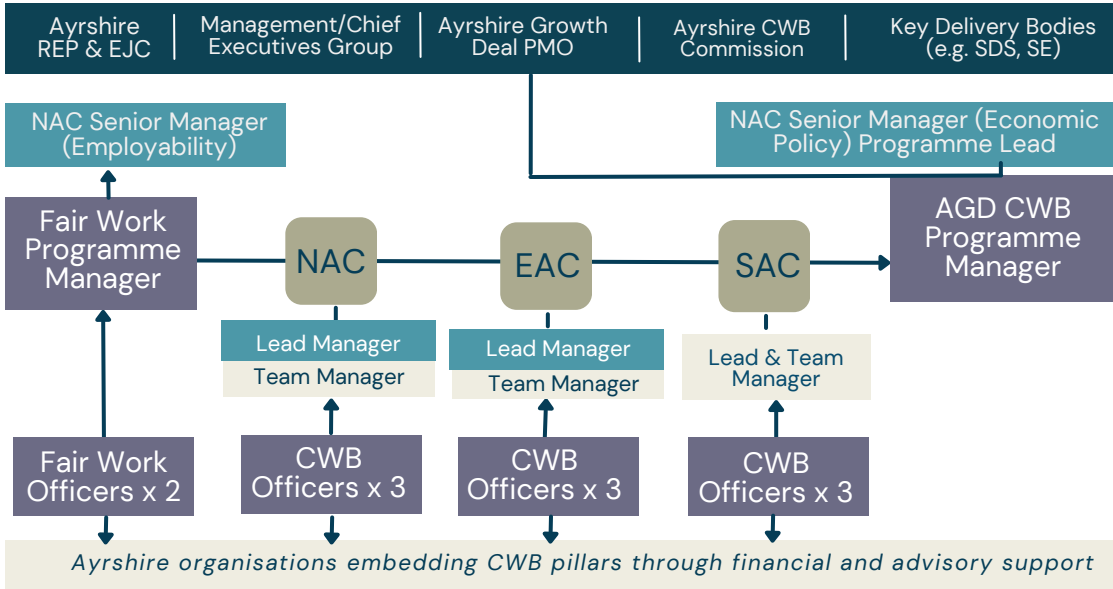
Governance:

The project is managed by North Ayrshire Council as lead authority, with overarching governance by a AGD CWB Programme Steering Group comprising the three Ayrshire local authorities.

The project aligns with local authority existing resource, including business development teams, employability programmes, regeneration activities, community development and locality/area partnerships, as well as Enterprise Agency resource with Scottish Enterprise, Cooperative Development Scotland and Skills Development Scotland.

The Regional Economic Partnership (REP) and the Ayrshire CWB Commission receive regular project updates, outlining project highlights, performance and opportunities for wider collaboration.

The programme’s organisational structure can be seen below, the roles that are coded in purple are funded through the Ayrshire Growth Deal:



Why Community Wealth Building?

Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an economic development approach that seeks to create sustainable and inclusive local economies. It aims to build wealth and improve well-being within a community by prioritising local ownership, cooperation, and social value over traditional economic models focused solely on maximising financial returns.

CWB for Ayrshire

The case for the Ayrshire region to benefit from a dedicated CWB programme was supported by an analysis conducted by the Scottish Government for the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and the Inclusive Growth Diagnostic. Key reasons include:

Addressing Economic Challenges and Vulnerabilities:

The Inclusive Growth Diagnostic highlighted specific economic challenges faced by the Ayrshire region, such as low productivity, unemployment, disparities in income and wealth distribution.

The analysis identified vulnerabilities in the Ayrshire region's economy and showed that North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire have the least resilient economies in Scotland, with South Ayrshire below the Scottish average. The programme was developed to help diversify the economy, foster fair work practices, create new opportunities, and build resilience to external shocks. By focusing on local assets, capabilities, and collaboration, the programme is supporting enterprises in the region to develop a more resilient and sustainable economic foundation.

Leveraging Local Resources:

Key stakeholders realise the potential of untapped local resources and sectors across Ayrshire that can be harnessed for economic prosperity. Key outputs assigned to the programme such as supporting new enterprises, and broader land and asset & procurement related activities enable exploration of this.

CWB emphasises local ownership and cooperation, allowing the Ayrshire region to leverage its unique assets and strengths. By promoting local entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment, the programme is helping the region unlock its potential for inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Inclusive Growth:

The programme realises the importance of inclusive growth, where economic prosperity is shared by all members of society. Practically, the programme delivers on this objective by prioritising plural ownership transitions, fair work practices, reducing inequalities, and fostering social inclusion. The programme works with enterprises and key stakeholders towards an economy that benefits everyone and ensures that no one is left behind.

BTS FACT:

This logo was evolved from the original North Ayrshire CWB branding. It takes colours representing the three Ayrshires to show the united approach to economic development



COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING AYRSHIRE

Current Status:

The programme is performing well against targets set in the Full Business Case and in some cases, exceeding key outputs assigned.

This has not been without challenges especially in early stages of delivery which will be detailed in the review; however, the programme can see that real momentum and confidence has been gained, underpinning recommendations within the review for CWB work to continue beyond the 3-year time-frame in order to continue strengthening Ayrshire's local economic realisation.

In the recent round up of progress, pan-Ayrshire outputs show that over 900 enterprises have been supported by the programme in CWB. Based on an assured start and progression through Year 3 of the programme, it is likely that this headline target will be exceeded by some distance.

Headline achievements to date:

956

unique enterprises supported through the programme

245

Enterprises receiving financial assistance through grant or consultancy support

136

New enterprises supported (<12 months old)

233

Enterprises registered on Public Contract Scotland

387

Enterprises attending CWB pillar specific workshops

222

Businesses supported by Fair Work Ayrshire with Fair Work Action Plans

22

Entities supported in the creation or transition to employee ownership or Co-Operatives

3

large, pan-Ayrshire CWB events featuring industry leaders, public sector executives and economic experts

262

Enterprises receiving 121 procurement or consultancy support

1,027

Jobs safeguarded through CWB interventions and support

1,035

local people attending Fair Work Job Fairs in partnership with DYW

4

videos produced to raise awareness around the issues tackled through CWB

Timeline highlights:

June 2021

- Programme sign off and governance finalised
- Recruitment commenced
- Processes begin to be put in place

Aug 2021

- CWB officers recruited in each Ayrshire local authority
- Fair Work Programme Manager recruited
- 60% of programme team in place
- Commencement of enterprise support activity

Nov 2021

- Programme Manager recruited
- Monthly Programme Steering Group meetings commence

Jan 2021

- Fair Work Ayrshire Referrals commence
- Pan-Ayrshire monthly officer meetings start

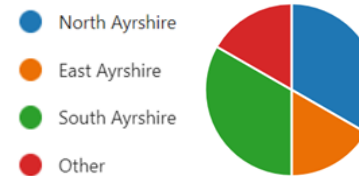
Mar 2022

- Final, successful recruitment push for a complete programme team to be in place for the new financial year

June 2022

- Official programme launch | pan-Ayrshire CWB video produced and screened

123 attendees



Aug 2022

- Scottish Government (SG) Ministerial visit from Tom Arthur MSP
- Programme presentation to Scottish Government Director of Economy Louise McDonald
- Programme presentation at SURF's Annual Conference



Timeline highlights:

Oct 2022

- Over 500 enterprises supported by the CWB programme (achieved 6 months ahead of target)
- Programme Manager supported Scotland's First Community Wealth Building Conference hosted by North Ayrshire Council | Economic Policy Team
- Produced the "A day in the life of a young person in North Ayrshire" video
- Financial assistance provided to 100 enterprises through the £1m business fund

Mar 2023

- East Ayrshire CWB video produced
- North Ayrshire Fair Work Job Fair - 420 attendees
- pan-Ayrshire CWB Gathering hosted in East Ayrshire

135 attendees

- North
- East
- South
- Pan-Ayrshire
- Other



April 2023

- South Ayrshire Fair Work Job Fair - 230 attendees
- Programme surveys, review & options appraisal development
- The programme extended its benefits realisation to include jobs and leveraged finance - over 1000 jobs safeguarded, and £700k private investment leveraged

Sept 2023

- Pan-Ayrshire Gathering hosted in South Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire CWB video production

160 attendees

- North
- East
- South
- Pan-Ayrshire
- Other



Oct 2023

- East Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event - 160 attendees
- East Ayrshire Fair Work Job Fair - 380 attendees
- Ayrshire Chamber Awards – first ever CWB Category
- Headline target of supporting 900 unique enterprises surpassed
- Protocols for programme extension to 2025 underway

Events Impact Overview:

Feedback further reveals that people were inspired to think more collaboratively across sectors, while some attendees express a greater interest in AI and a desire to explore its applications further, potentially in their own work. Others aim to engage more with the local community and Ayrshire councils, and to support and promote the Ayrshire economy. The event has encouraged attendees to become more involved in various initiatives, such as local procurement, consortium cooperatives and asset transfers, and to consider the culture and values of their organisations in alignment with CWB principles.

Overall, the event motivated individuals to take action in different ways, from learning about new topics relating to CWB which will help improve work practices and further economic realisation in Ayrshire.



Key stakeholders engaging with Ayrshire's first CWB Marketplace



Vanessa Good of the Good Travel Company presenting on her CWB approach in business and the coordination of Ayr's first consortium cooperative

Attendees vote 'best practice CWB presentations' as most desired for future programme engagements.

Challenges & Solutions

The programme experienced key headline challenges which will be summarised in the next pages of the review, alongside some of the solutions exercised.

Education and Awareness

Challenge: Translating the theory of Community Wealth Building to practice within the local region has been a complex challenge. Community is at the heart of CWB, but often stakeholders have mistaken the community oriented terminology to mean community/third sector exclusive development instead of all-encompassing economic development.

Solution: Officers were able to address this through explanations as well as using local wealth building as an alternative term which many stakeholders found easier to understand. Discussions and training amongst officers enabled consistency in understanding and articulation.

Challenge: CWB is a transferrable economic development tool but any approach is relative to the subject/context/circumstances that it is being applied to.

Solution: Where the programme officers have been able to bring great value is through using their knowledge, experience, skills and tools to tailor the meaning of CWB to individual enterprises and local contexts. Often this has taken shape in the form of action plans or support in developing applications for funding.

Challenge: More broadly in wider Ayrshire when the programme commenced in 2021, the concept of CWB was somewhat unfamiliar. From the offset, the programme understood that lack of understanding and awareness about the principles and benefits of Community Wealth Building would hinder its adoption. Therefore, education and outreach efforts have been at the forefront of programme delivery, ensuring that local stakeholders understand the value of CWB.

Solution: The programme overcame CWB education and awareness challenges through several approaches:

- 'Boots on the Ground' - daily officer engagement with local stakeholders, predominantly recipients of programme support
- Workshops and event engagement
- An Ayrshire CWB video series - shared below
- Other online resources such as press releases, and in some cases, businesses and partner organisation themselves creating blog articles with some examples of this listed below:
 - [Utopia Computers: CWB Story | Craig Hume - Director](#)
 - [CWB: Building Sustainable & Inclusive Economies in Ayrshire | Martin Avila - Chief Executive CEIS](#)

To help improve understanding of CWB and the programme, the team produced a short video series:

pan-Ayrshire



North Ayrshire



East Ayrshire



South Ayrshire



Resource Limitations

Broadly speaking, crises have forced many economic stakeholders, particularly SMEs, to be reactive instead of proactive, hindering this key approach required for successful community wealth building. The cost crisis, especially in regards to energy costs for businesses is a crucial challenge and the project is limited in the resource that it can offer. In some cases, the programme officers rely on third parties to support, and as the need for energy interventions heighten, third party capacity to meet demand has decreased.

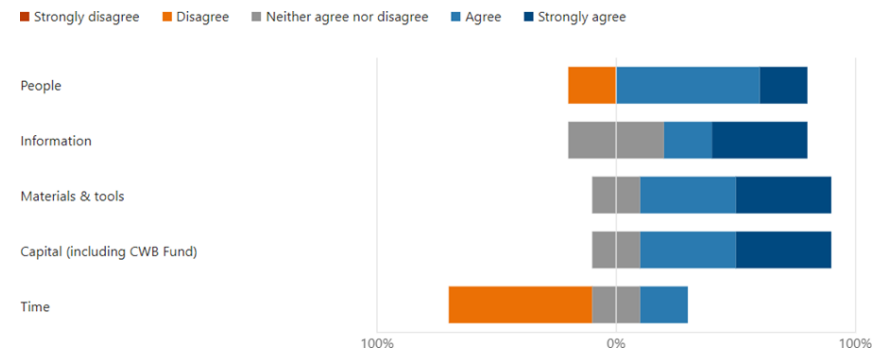
Rising costs have also had an impact on Fair Work uptake, where employers have limited resource to invest in their workforce, such as paying the Real Living Wage (RLW) or enabling staff training opportunities.

Community Wealth Building often involves long-term strategies that may not show immediate economic benefits. Communities may face pressure to prioritise short-term gains, making it challenging to stay committed to the CWB approach.

Done properly, CWB requires significant resource to deliver as an all-encompassing approach with long-term gain for local economies and communities. It is time intensive to connect the daily activity of the programme to wider strategies and it makes the case for upcoming potential CWB legislation to come with adequate resource.

Ayrshire has well-documented economic challenges, and with that, often local communities and enterprises have limited resources to invest in the necessary infrastructure and initiatives required for Community Wealth Building. This is where the CWB Business Support fund is valuable in building capacity and implementing new strategies.

CWB management leads were asked if they felt that there has been enough resource to deliver key CWB outputs for the programme. All agreed or were neutral on information, materials and capital funding being sufficient. The majority agreed people resource was sufficient with one lead in disagreement, but predominantly, stakeholders highlighted that time resource had been lacking:



In qualitative feedback, the key theme running through comments reiterated the need for extended or longer programme durations. Respondents believe that the current project timelines are insufficient to achieve the desired outcomes effectively, arguing for more time and resources to be allocated in order to engage a wider audience, sustain the activities, oversee the programme more effectively, and allow for substantial changes to be implemented by enterprises.

“To fully realise the benefits in relation to leverage and fuller economic development benefits the programme would have benefited from being longer.”

AGD CWB Programme Steering Group Representative

Recruitment has affected budgets and consistency of programme delivery significantly. Especially in the first year of programme as things were set up and developed without the Programme Manager in post. Suitable candidates for the CWB officer posts were difficult to attract. One solution used to overcome this challenge was to rename the officer posts as it was realised the term Community Wealth Building Locality Officer required explanation and therefore was a potential barrier. This solution was effective.

The temporary nature of the roles has seen officers leave to take up permanent employment, and others mentioning need for more security amid cost of living and other challenges. It is likely that further departures are imminent as the programme has entered its final set year of delivery. It is unlikely that the space will be filled in the timeframe remaining in programme funding period, affecting targets met and general financial management. The options appraisal informed by the review seeks to address these issues.

Pan Ayrshire Approach

There is great strength in the pan-Ayrshire approach to CWB, but there are also challenges due to each local authority being at different stages, and having unique and differing issues to tackle. This has been an ongoing aspect to monitor and manage and a clear solution is yet to be determined. This has been especially stark in the distribution of the CWB Fund. The criteria agreed in early stages by the steering group has allowed each LA to adapt and this has meant that differences. For example, one authority initially had a £5k cap on grants and mandatory match funding, whilst another has operated without any of these restrictions.

Internal & External Alignment

As this is a new economic approach for the Ayrshire region that requires collaboration from key economic influencers and practitioners, the programme officers have had to take time to build trust and relationships with council services and wider anchor organisations, and this could have perhaps been initially underestimated. This is an ongoing process, and more is being done to strengthen inter-service connections as well as work with anchor institutions specifically in areas such as local procurement.

Strategically, there is opportunity for the programme to join up activity more prominently with regional anchor CWB interventions as well as in anticipation of wider AGD capital projects. This has happened naturally in areas of procurement, but more could be done to maximise resource and impact from the programme at all levels.

The local and national initiatives, frameworks, policies, economic models and overall efforts to tackle the economic, social and environmental challenges faced across Ayrshire and Scotland are countless.

With many approaches and programmes in delivery, there is the risk of duplication of efforts, misalignment, and a disjointed outcome. As the programme works with key stakeholders, it seeks to enhance, not duplicate, existing council service delivery, and on a wider scale, seeks to collaborate rather than compete, wherever possible.

This alignment strengthens the gravitas of measures set to tackle shared crises and challenges, bringing Ayrshire closer to local resilience, wealth and prosperity. Alignment with key partners under the pillars of CWB can be seen on the following page:

Strategic Partners

CWB

National

Regional

Procurement



Fair Work



Land and Assets



Plural Ownership



Financial Power



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

co+operative
development
scotland



fsb⁰⁸



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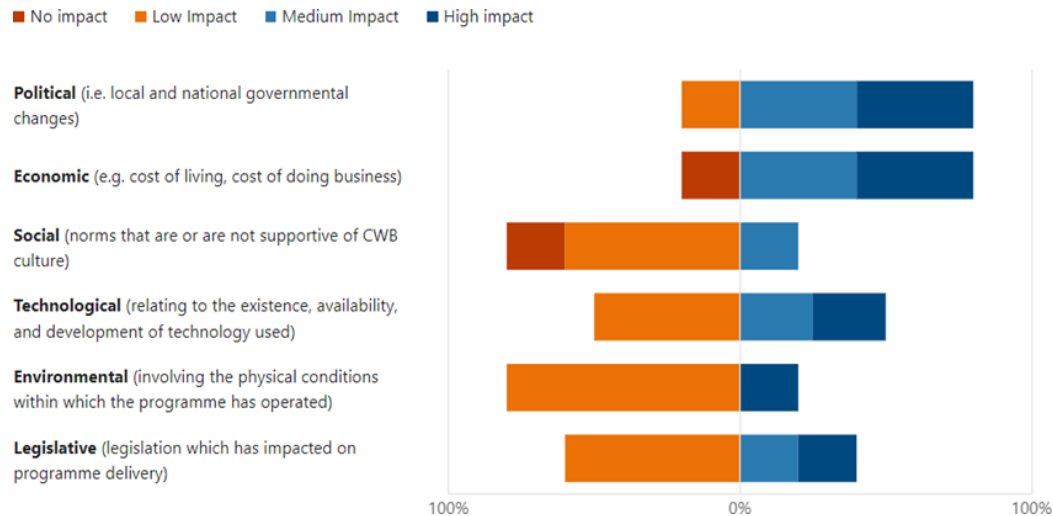
Internal Stakeholder Analyses

The programme has engaged with key internal stakeholders to enable insight into the programme and shape plans going forward. PESTEL and SWOT analyses were applied to enable thorough understanding

PESTEL Analysis

Relating to the macro impacts mentioned previously, management stakeholders were asked to grade PESTEL impacts, as detailed below, to explore how external factors have impacted the programme's progression.

The results can be seen in the graph below:



“Cost of living makes it difficult to encourage business to increase wages when overheads are increasing, also some businesses just have to cease due to cost. Availability of staff is low so then employers have to be more competitive with pay and benefits and leads to struggle to operate in a financially viable way.

- AGD CWB Steering Group Representative

four key qualitative themes:

1. Economic and Financial Challenges: The cost of living is mentioned as a significant hurdle for enterprises, making it difficult to increase wages and sustain operations. Rising overheads and the need to compete for staff with attractive pay and benefits are cited as factors that hinder financial viability. However, the cost-of-living crisis is seen as a catalyst for enterprises to consider different approaches and strategies to navigate the challenging economic environment. This recognition has led to an increased uptake of support services. An example of where the programme has responded to the financial challenges in business is where flexibility was enabled with match funding, and as a result, far more businesses have been able to benefit from the fund.

2. Political Perception and Pragmatism: There is a mention of the change in leadership administration impacting the perception and structure of the CWB programme, with initial associations to specific political agendas. The comment suggests the need to emphasise the pragmatic aspects of CWB that can transcend political ideologies.

3. Limited Collaboration: The comment highlights the challenges arising from collaboration among three different local authorities at varying stages of understanding. Limited collaboration is seen as a hindrance to achieving optimal CWB outcomes for the region.

4. Interplay between Political Changes and Cost of Living: Another comment suggests that political changes, followed closely by the cost-of-living challenges, have created a complex landscape for businesses. These external factors are likely intertwined and can impact business operations and decision-making.

CWB Enterprise Feedback

The programme manager has worked with the CWB leads and delivery team to survey programme support recipients. The summaries below are gathered from surveys completed by 125 enterprises feedback across the three local authorities.

General Feedback:

Overall, the financial assistance and consultancy support provided by the CWB Fund have had a significant positive impact on enterprises. It has facilitated business growth, job creation, streamlined processes, strategic planning, skill development, and sustainability, ultimately leading to increased turnover, improved productivity, and expanded opportunities.

6 key benefits to enterprises receiving financial assistance or consultancy support from the CWB Fund:

1. Increased Business Opportunities:

Financial support enabled enterprises to upgrade their websites, advertise vacancies, and improve online presence. This led to an increase in companies contacting them for services and a higher number of candidates seeking job placements, ultimately boosting business growth and job creation.

2. Expansion and Growth:

Enterprises received grants for equipment purchases, premises relocation, and marketing strategies, enabling them to expand their operations, sustain growth, and hire additional staff. The support facilitated skills development, improved project management, and enhanced the overall offering to clients, contributing to business sustainability and competitiveness.

3. Environmental Sustainability:

Financial assistance helped businesses reduce their carbon footprint and utility usage through energy-efficient upgrades, such as LED lighting, insulated doors, and equipment for recycling and using recycled materials. This aligns with wider sustainability goals and net zero ambitions.

4. Increased Productivity and Efficiency:

Investments in digital workflows, updated laptops, and storage systems allowed for remote work, flexibility, and improved productivity. Streamlined processes, secure file storage, and sharing systems facilitated collaboration and enhanced overall operational efficiency.

5. Enhanced Marketing and Visibility:

Financial support enabled enterprises to revamp their business identities, improve marketing strategies, and enhance online presence through social media and website development. This raised awareness of their products and services, attracted new customers, and contributed to job security.

6. Cost Savings and Financial Stability:

Support for energy efficiency measures, lower utility bills, and reduced operating costs allowed businesses to reinvest the saved funds into company growth, innovation, and development. Financial stability is enhanced, allowing businesses to navigate economic challenges.

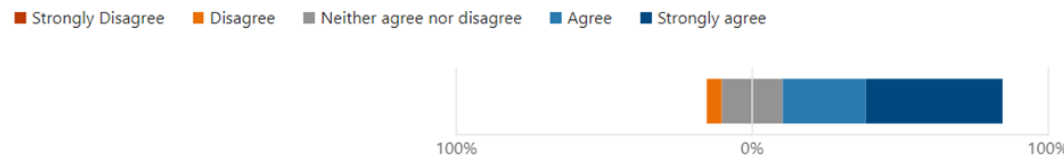
The CWB Pillars

The headline achievements highlight specific support associated with the pillars of CWB. This next section will give examples and insight to progress that has been made through the programme

CWB Pillar Focus

The pillar focus is largely what sets the programme apart from other business support services within local authorities.

Responses to the question: ***'Community Wealth Building has enabled a more focussed and enhanced approach to business/organisational support from my Local Authority'***, can be seen below:



The survey responses above show that the majority agree that CWB has enabled a more focussed and enhanced approach to business support from Local Authorities. Further information provided by enterprises on the above question follow five themes:

1. Knowledge, advice and enthusiasm:

The survey responses above show that the majority agree that CWB has enabled a more focussed and enhanced approach to business support from Local Authorities.

2. Networking & Introductions:

Many respondents mentioned the importance of officers connecting them with relevant individuals, organisations, and teams. Introductions to other businesses, funding organisations, and local authorities were seen as valuable support in establishing partnerships, accessing resources, and expanding their networks.

3. Grant support and equipment upgrade:

The provision of grants for equipment upgrades was appreciated by the respondents. This financial assistance enabled them to improve their operations and efficiency. Several respondents mentioned the support provided by specific officers who have gone above and beyond expectations, in helping them secure funding for their businesses or projects. This support was highly appreciated and considered instrumental in their success.

4. Support for community initiatives:

Officers were commended for their involvement in community initiatives and projects. Their enthusiasm, single-mindedness, and dedication in supporting and promoting local businesses and organisations were highly valued.

5. Practical assistance and problem-solving:

Officers were praised for their hands-on support, such as helping with the application process, providing practical suggestions, and going above and beyond to find local suppliers or alternative solutions to meet specific needs.

Overall, the respondents valued the tangible and intangible support provided by the officers, including funding assistance, knowledge sharing, networking opportunities, and practical problem-solving.

"Had heard of NAC CWB programme generally but this enables me to see the practical benefits as relevant to my business. As a result of this I have been highlighted by the "Made in Scotland" programme and at the last Trade Fair secured an export contract and expanded my stockists across Scotland. The grant programme has been crucial to these developments."

RCO Furniture

Procurement

The procurement pillar of Community Wealth Building centers on intentionally directing institutional and governmental purchasing power toward supporting local economies, small businesses, and sustainable practices to foster community development and economic equity.

There are three key output areas for the programme that relate directly to procurement:

233

Enterprises registered on Public Contract Scotland

387

Enterprises attending CWB pillar specific workshops

262

Enterprises receiving 121 procurement or consultancy support

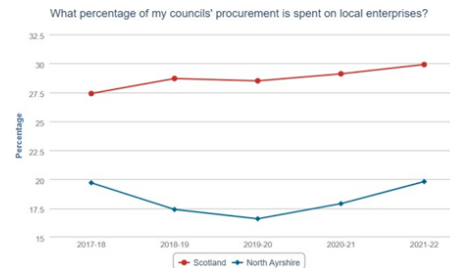
The programme has found that procurement is a catalyst for other CWB pillar delivery. Key outputs shared above, focus support on raising organisations chances of success with public contract tenders. This could be delivered through workshops, sometimes delivered through partner organisations such as the Supplier Development Programme, or 121 or consultancy support.

Survey feedback highlights difficulties local enterprises face within procurement. For those seeking to win contracts with anchor institutions such as local authorities, the NHS, Police Scotland and higher educational institutions, tender experience stands as the biggest barrier, followed by time, capacity and confidence. The programme is focussed on supporting local organisations in tackling this barriers.

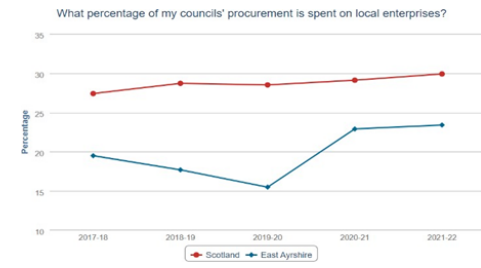
For organisations looking to source and procure locally, cost, options and availability are suggested to be the most significant prohibitors. Additionally, there is a need for better information access and comparisons, as well as more consideration for other criteria that can improve the changes of sustainable local procurement in funding applications.

The programme addresses these issues through events that engage these enterprises with wider strategies and initiatives, as well as alignment with the work of the Ayrshire CWB Commission, the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and wider Ayrshire Growth Deal programmes which have more strategic influence on positive progress in these areas. This partnership working underpins the promising insights that see an increase in local spend in each of the three Ayrshire local authorities:

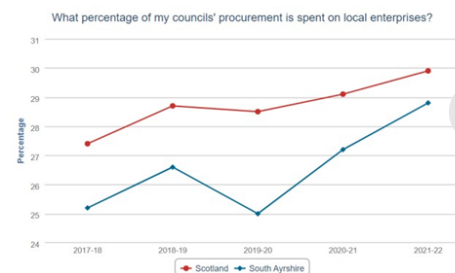
North Ayrshire



East Ayrshire



South Ayrshire



SAC lead on the pan-Ayrshire procurement workstream as part of the CWB Commission, supporting delivery through innovative mapping tools showcased in [this presentation](#) by David Alexander of SAC.

Land and Assets



No key outputs were assigned in programme when terms were agreed but progress has been achieved.

The land and asset pillar of Community Wealth Building involves leveraging publicly owned land and assets to generate local benefits. A large proportion of focus within the land and assets pillar has been directed towards net zero ambitions that public, private and third sectors are required to play a role in. By guiding businesses to embrace this pillar, the programme has been able to support stakeholders to reclaim control over their built environment.

Encouraging enterprises to invest in locally owned land and assets has helped cultivate a sense of ownership, stability, and interconnectedness. Businesses have found that this pillar not only prevents capital leakage but also ensures that resources circulate within the community, amplifying the positive impacts.

When businesses were asked what one thing they would change about their business was, the answer was largely focussed on Land and Assets, emphasising the need for continued support around this pillar:



The programme has no direct outputs aligned to the pillar but has successfully been able to help organisations relocate, expand and and improve their premises.

Community Asset Transfers have also formed a theme within programme support, specifically in South Ayrshire where the programme has supported the likes of Dundonald Castle, and other fantastic organisations to own land and assets through a transfer from the local authority. [The video](#) below gives an example of this support with the feature of Dr Kirsteen Croll of Dundonald Castle:



“We want to bring people together to give them a sense of ownership, of their castle and a pride in their heritage and we couldn't have done it without the support of the Community Wealth Building team at South Ayrshire Council.”

Dr Kirsteen Croll, Dundonald Castle

Plural Ownership

The plural ownership pillar of Community Wealth Building focuses on expanding community ownership models, such as cooperatives and employee-owned businesses, to democratise wealth, empower local communities, and create more equitable economic structures.

There are three key output areas for the programme that relate directly to plural ownership:

22

Entities supported in the creation or transition to employee ownership or Co-Operative

136

New enterprises supported (<12 months old)

387

Enterprises attending CWB pillar specific workshops and 38 enterprises accessing 121 plural ownership support

The programme has supported a number of organisations to explore and transition to employee ownership models, social enterprise and co-operative models. Though targets are being met, the plural ownership pillar has been most challenging to deliver on thus far. It is thought that this is due to a lack of understanding and contextual relevance of plural ownership to local organisations, as well as the culture, willingness, motivation and circumstantial alignment needed to enable the sometimes radical transitions. The programme has addressed these challenges through awareness raising at events, case study examples, online content development, 121 and consultancy support.

It is common for these interventions to come about in tandem with owners succession planning, and many instances of support have included partnership working with organisations such as Co-operative Development Scotland or Scottish Enterprise.

Some plural ownership examples are still in development, for example within the North Ayrshire CWB team is supporting a business that has seen rapid growth trajectory and recently purchased a competitor. One of the main directors has a partner who is ill and they are looking to make sure business is able to continue if director needs to stand back. This is where the programme gave them ideas around plural ownership and they are developing themselves as an Employee Ownership Trust.

The programme has been able to support the creation of a consortium cooperative built of business leaders occupying New Market Street in Ayr. This consortium cooperative is called New Market Street Traders. This is a result of CWB awareness and support of the programme, paired with their vision is to regenerate the town centre, have a collective approach to procurement for shared benefits and more.

The programme's CWB team in South Ayrshire is working specifically with Vanessa, the director of The Good Travel Company who is supporting the coordination with businesses that occupy New Market Street. The programme has so far supported with consultancy support and the cooperative is in early stages of being operational. Vanessa gave inspiring insight into NMST at The Ayrshire Gathering, held in Troon in Sept '23.

The programme is also focussed on supporting organisations who have already made the shift to plural ownership, for example, supporting Shuttle Busses in North Ayrshire with Fair Work, and Microtech in East Ayrshire with decarbonisation efforts, offering financial assistance with the upgrading of all lighting systems to LED.

Fair Work

The Fair Work pillar of Community Wealth Building in Scotland prioritises the implementation of equitable labour standards, encompassing fair wages, inclusive employment practices, and workplace democracy, to foster thriving and sustainable local economies.

222

Businesses supported
by Fair Work Ayrshire
with Fair Work Action
Plans

1,035

local people
attending
Fair Work Job Fairs
hosted by FWA

1,027

Jobs safeguarded
through CWB
interventions and
support

In addition to the key outputs shared above, the dedicated Fair Work Ayrshire Team have achieved the following since being fully operation from April 2022:

- Engaged with 236 businesses.
- Conducted 174 initial meetings and developed 174 action plans.
- Completed Fair Work Ayrshire action plans 119.
- 44 Ayrshire businesses have been referred to secure real living wage for accreditation.
- 54 Ayrshire businesses have been referred to secure disability confident accreditation.
- 43 referrals to Working for a Healthy Economy (AGD) SALUS
- 13 referrals for Carer Positive scheme Scotland (following engagement with MSPs in Jan 23)
- 13 Ayrshire businesses have been signposted to create a Modern Apprenticeship opportunities.
- 22 Ayrshire business have been signposted to learning & development opportunities.

Key Highlights from Fair Work Ayrshire from April 2022 – March 2023 are:

- Working strategically with CWB Fair Employment workstream and supporting development of subgroup action plans.
- Presented Fair Work and Fair Employment plans to Tom Arthur MSP at Ministerial Visit on 31/08/22.
- Presented to MSPs conducting Parliamentary Inquiry into Parental Employment on 13/01/23.
- Hosted visits for NAC Council Leader Marie Burns to Fair Work employers in NAC on 27/1/23.
- Attended Ayrshire College Equalities steering group with key stakeholders across Ayrshire to address gender balance on particular courses and sectors.
- Delivered in partnership with Business Gateway a Fair Work Workshop for employers.
- Completed research and reviewed job vacancies and online platforms to evaluate scope of current fair work job opportunities.
- Working in partnership with NAC HSCP to deliver Fair Work Academy to care sector providers delivering 7 workshops to enable them to embed fair work practices in their workplaces (Jan 23 -May 23) 18 providers attending.
- First NAC Fair Work Job Fair 21/03/23 in partnership with DWP attended by 26 businesses and organisations and 425 job seekers.
- Working with Digital Renewal Manager shaping Digital Economy Skills Group to identify gaps for employers and in learning and the community.

These achievements are supporting the ambition to make Ayrshire the first Fair Work region in Scotland.

Forward Planning

The purpose of the review to: (1) enhance project outcomes; (2) maximise resource utilisation; (3) adapt to changing circumstances; (4) enhance stakeholder satisfaction; (5) explore additionality. To activate the learnings from the review, an options appraisal was carried out with the programme steering group. This final section will give an overview of this.

Options Appraisal

To activate the learnings from the review, an options appraisal was carried out with the programme steering group. It took into consideration the findings of research shared in this report, and sought to find the best way forward of maximising the underspend and continuing the positive work of the programme across Ayrshire. The options considered were as follows:

- **Option 1:** Extend the programme based on original FBC approved budget profiles
- **Option 2:** Extend programme by 6 months - Align all officer dates to the end of September 2024
- **Option 3:** Extend programme by 1 year - Align all officer dates to the end of March 2025
- **Option 4:** Extend the programme by 1 year and continue specific/partial aspects of the funding beyond March 2024, based on need and consideration of review
- **Option 5:** Each Local Authority takes responsibility for the continuation or discontinuation of CWB programme

Through careful consideration, Option 4 has been decided as the preferred option. Budget and programme review considerations underpinned this decision. The benefits of this option outlined below:

- The programme continues momentum into an additional year to build on the delivery of outcomes and success.
- This option gives the best opportunity to tailor underspend of the programme for best value for money, allowing to capitalise on areas of success such as procurement support and fund distribution, with further additionality potential, for example linkage to CWB themes within the wider Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy
- Option 4 enables further time to overcome challenges described by internal stakeholders in SWOT and PESTEL analyses
- Possibility of additionality in roles to support CWB to be further embedded into AGD capital projects

Therefore, the Programme Steering Group proposes that the programme be extended by one year, utilising the underspend accumulated through a delayed start as well as additional funding allocated through Shared Prosperity and other reserve funding to enable a full years extension.

The programme's underspend will be able to cover the majority of the cost for an additional year of operation:

Budget Heading	AGD Underspend	Shared Prosperity Fund	Other Council funding	Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund
AGD CWB Programme Manager	✓			
Training & Marketing	✓			
Operational Costs	✓			
NAC CWB Officers x 2			✓	
NAC CWB Support Fund	✓			
EAC CWB Officers x 3	✓	✓		
EAC CWB Support Fund	✓	✓		
SAC CWB Officers x 3	✓	✓		
SAC CWB Support Fund	✓			
FWA Programme Manager	✓			✓
FWA Delivery Officer x 1	✓			

Options Appraisal Action:

Through consideration of the review, the Programme Steering Group has agreed that Option 4 is the preferred way forward for the AGD CWB Programme. The Programme Lead and Manager are working with the PMO to progress through change management and other necessary protocols to support the implementation of this option.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the AGD CWB Programme Review Report provides a comprehensive analysis of the current status of the programme and associated benefits for stakeholders.

The review highlights the economic challenges faced by the Ayrshire region and ongoing challenges that have impacted the programme. It is clear that the programme has made progress towards its milestones, but there are still challenges which aim to be addressed through further collaboration, and the progression of Option 4 (extending the programme by 1 year) in the options appraisal forming part of the review. Overall, the AGD CWB Programme Review Report provides valuable insights into the programme's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement for key stakeholders to consider and progress.

Thank you

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Scottish Government for their pivotal role as funders of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Programme. The guidance and oversight from the Ayrshire Growth Deal PMO have been greatly appreciated, offering support and direction especially as the programme looks forward to extension and mainstreaming possibilities.

Thank you to the dedication of Elected Members and key officers in each Ayrshire local authority, whose diligent efforts and commitment have been integral to the effective implementation and delivery of this programme to date.

Most importantly, thanks to the enterprise leaders and residents of Ayrshire whose active engagement have supported the advancement of Community Wealth Building across our region.

As we reflect on the achievements thus far, we recognise the significant potential for so much more to be achieved through Community Wealth Building and we hope that this review can support a continuation of this ambition.

