

North Ayrshire Council

Community Wealth Building Commission

Note of Meeting of Commission held on 11 June via Microsoft Teams

Present

Councillor Joe Cullinane, Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Wealth Building (Chair)

Councillor Marie Burns, Leader of the Opposition, North Ayrshire Council

Councillor Alex Gallagher, Cabinet Member for Post-Covid Renewal, North Ayrshire Council

Councillor Peter Henderson, Council Leader, South Ayrshire Council

Councillor Douglas Reid, Council Leader, East Ayrshire Council

Councillor John McGhee, Leader of the Labour Group, East Ayrshire Council

Councillor Jim Roberts, East Ayrshire Council

Craig Hatton, Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council

Russell McCutcheon, Executive Director (Place), North Ayrshire Council

Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities), North Ayrshire Council

Caroline Cameron, Director, Health & Social Care Partnership, North Ayrshire Council

Lesley Bowie, Board Chair, NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Donald Gillies, Director of Place, South Ayrshire Council

Jim Johnstone, Economy & Regeneration Coordinator, South Ayrshire Council (in attendance)

Zoe Fance, Procurement Service Lead, South Ayrshire Council (Procurement Workstream Lead)

David McDowall, Head of Economic Development, East Ayrshire Council (in attendance)

Kaileigh Brown, Executive Director (Third Sector), The Ayrshire Community Trust

Ian McMeekin, Area Commander, Local Senior Officer for Ayrshire, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Derek Frew, Ayrshire Division Partnership Lead Officer, Police Scotland

Brian Connelly, CWB Specialist, Scottish Enterprise (substitute for Gillian Adam)

Allison Craig, Programme Manager, Ayrshire Growth Deal

Miriam Brett, Director of Research and Advocacy, Common Wealth (Guest)

Sarah McKinley, Director of European Programs and Next System Project European Representative, The Democracy Collaborative (Guest)

Secretariat

Julie McLachlan, Senior Manager – Economic Policy, North Ayrshire Council

Mhairi Paterson, Community Wealth Building Coordinator, North Ayrshire Council

Pamela Gilbert, Secretary, North Ayrshire Council

Apologies

Councillor Robert Foster, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Partnership and lead member for Poverty, North Ayrshire Council

Caitriona McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), North Ayrshire Council (Lead Officer – CWB Commission)

Councillor Elena Whitham, Deputy Leader, East Ayrshire Council

Katie Kelly, Depute Chief Executive, East Ayrshire Council

Michael Breen, Vice Principal, Ayrshire College

Gillian Adam, Interim Head of Partnerships, Scottish Enterprise

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair noted the apologies submitted and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair welcomed guest speakers Miriam Brett from Common Wealth and Sarah McKinley from The Democracy Collaborative who joined the meeting to facilitate a discussion on Ayrshire and the CWB Act.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 March 2021 were approved noting the following comments. Councillor John McGhee raised the matter of the unsuccessful bid to the Health Foundation, Economies for Healthier Lives funding stream and asked who had been successful what we could learn going forward from this. Julie McLachlan advised that Glasgow City Region had progressed into the next round of application however as yet there has been no confirmation on successful bids. As a result of the large number of applicants there has been no feedback received from the Health Foundation. Alternative methods of exploring support for the proposal are being considered and the Commission will be updated on any developments.

3. Chair and Partners Update

On behalf of North Ayrshire Council, it was noted they are preparing the first Annual Report on the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy. To mark the first anniversary of the strategy, a press release was published on 14 May 2021. The Annual Report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet at the end of September and the Commission will be informed of the key highlights and case studies.

South Ayrshire Council advised they have established a member officer working group to take their CWB strategy forward.

Police Scotland noted three officers for the Lead Officer Working Group pillar workstreams have been identified and will be involved in activities going forward. Police Scotland have also expressed an interest in signing the Ayrshire Anchor Charter and have scheduled a meeting with North Ayrshire Council to discuss next steps.

East Ayrshire Council advised a scoping analysis of current work is underway which will be developed into a CWB Action Plan. CWB approaches have already been embedded within Community Plans.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran advised officers have been assigned to each of the three pillar workstreams and are fully committed to supporting the work.

Scottish Enterprise noted an internal audit on current engagement on CWB approaches was currently underway.

Scottish Fire and Rescue have identified and assigned officers for each of the three pillar workstreams. They expressed an interest in looking further at the Anchor Charter and how it links to their activities.

The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) advised they were looking forward to presenting alongside VASA (Voluntary Action South Ayrshire) at the next meeting of the Lead Officers Working Group in August.

4. Ayrshire and CWB Act – Facilitated Discussion

Sarah McKinley (The Democracy Collaborative) and Miriam Brett (Common Wealth) introduced and facilitated a discussion on the needs of Ayrshire from a potential national Community Wealth Building Act and ways to influence the development of the Act.

Ayrshire is well-placed to inform the development of a CWB Act and provides an opportunity to recommend how the Act could be structured to support and empower local 'on the ground' CWB activity. It was noted that the experience of areas who are currently delivering CWB (including Ayrshire) must be valued and changes at national level should be focussed on facilitating local activity.

The scope of a CWB Act is not yet known, however it is likely that if the Act is based on all five CWB principles it will cross multiple ministerial portfolios. It was noted that any Act should remain firmly committed to the principles of CWB and should not be 'watered down'.

Commission members were asked to consider the following seven discussion questions. Points raised in relation to these questions have been listed below.

1. *What has been effective in advancing our CWB approach locally and how could that be supported more effectively by Scottish Government and be advanced in other places across Scotland?*
 - Introduction of the Ayrshire Anchor Charter was praised for its use in encouraging partners to take ownership of CWB activity.
2. *What national policy or legislative changes are required to support the delivery of CWB at a local and regional level?*
 - Important to ensure local and national governments are using the same language and clear about definitions to ensure everyone is working to the same goals.
 - There may be merit in a CWB Act incorporating taxation and enhanced fiscal powers. New tax raising powers could be explored, such as a Land Value Tax.
3. *What are the capacity requirements to ensure a holistic and transformative place-based CWB approach can be delivered?*
 - In delivering a CWB Act there will be a high level of resource requirement within economic development. However it was noted that economic development is not a statutory requirement and will require additional resource.
4. *What are the barriers preventing more local spend and the development of local supply chains?*
 - It was acknowledged requirements of a CWB Act may impact upon economies of scale and will require engagement and cooperation of national procurement bodies.
 - There may be a lack of understanding of what CWB means in practice. A toolkit for community activists would be helpful to improve knowledge and understanding. Sarah McKinley noted that CLES and the Democracy Collaborative are developing CWB toolkits to support on-the-ground engagement.
 - A reform of national procurement legislation is required to support national organisations to procure more locally.

5. *What is required to ensure the maximisation of land and assets for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of local communities?*

- Greater transparency of the goals within land and assets and how this relates to specific place-based opportunities.
- It will be important to address the issue of land banking multi-national corporations who own high street / town centre land and properties. Increased powers are required for local authorities to acquire land/property if there are no development proposals. An approach to Common Good land would need to be carefully considered.

6. *How can a CWB Act further the development of fair work, inclusive ownership models, and progressive finance initiatives that benefits local communities?*

- There needs to be increased alignment between CWB and the wider landscape and measurement of a wellbeing economy and clarity on what a wellbeing economy aims to achieve.
- The importance of fair employment in economic recovery as well as the positive impacts on health and wellbeing must be acknowledged.
- There needs to be greater acknowledgement of the role of support organisations e.g. Cooperative Development Scotland (CDS) upskilling local authority business advisors on cooperative ownership models.
- The role of national organisations is important and should not be underestimated in their ability to influence fair work principles, plural ownership and progressive procurement.
- Could tax breaks be used as an incentive to encourage plural ownership models?
- Is there a way of progressing the fair work agenda through local supply chains?
- Embedding fair employment must be a priority.
- The role of pension funds must be explored in relation to supporting local projects.
- To ensure full participation in the CWB agenda, the perspective and challenges faced by national organisations must be acknowledged.

7. *How can Ayrshire best influence and shape the development of a CWB Act?*

- There was consensus that the CWB Commission must firmly grasp this opportunity and be ambitious in recommendations for a CWB Act. It is important to recognise the transformational nature of CWB and the power of this should not be underestimated.

In terms of next steps, it was agreed a note of the discussion would be collated and further engagement on the needs from a CWB Act would be undertaken with the Lead Officers Working Group at its subsequent meeting in August.

A letter to Scottish Government with recommendations on a CWB Act will be drafted and shared at the September Commission meeting.

5. Update from Lead Officers Working Group

The second meeting of the Lead Officers Working Group (LOWG) was held on 19 May 2021 chaired by Caitriona McAuley. The agenda included a guest presentation from Conrad Parke, Anchor Network Co-ordinator employed by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and working on behalf of the Birmingham Anchor Network. Other items included an update on the Procurement workstream which is being led by South Ayrshire Council. An introductory outline of the next steps of the Land and Assets workstream was given by Scottish Enterprise. Michael Breen of Ayrshire College introduced himself as lead of the Fair Employment workstream.

A draft template to capture annual progress on the Anchor Charter pledges was shared with the LOWG. The first review of progress will be collated from signatories in the autumn, marking one year since the Charter was launched. A draft of the template was provided to the Commission. Anchor Charter progress will be reported to the Commission at its December meeting.

The next meeting of the LOWG will take place in August 2021. Progress updates from each of the three workstreams will be provided at the meeting. It has been agreed that Kaileigh Brown from The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) (North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) and Norah Williamson from Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) (South Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) will present on the opportunities and challenges for the Third Sector in relation to Community Wealth Building.

The update was accepted by the Commission with no further questions.

6. Update on LOWG procurement pillar workstream from South Ayrshire Council

South Ayrshire Council provided an update on progress of the Procurement workstream. Zoe Fance thanked officers on the workstream for their contributions and engagement, noting that all one-to-one meetings with contributing organisations had taken place. The meetings proved to be informative and valuable with an opportunity to focus on increasing local spend in low value contracts which are not part of a framework and are typically worth under £50,000. The Commission agreed to support the workstream to continue to explore options to increase the local spend within low value contracts, including learning from Councils who have already made adjustments to their Quick Quote processes.

Next steps will be to host a workshop of all procurement workstream representatives to review forthcoming procurement waveplans of each organisation with the aim of identifying potential collaborative opportunities.

Members of the Commission acknowledged the good progress of the workstream and thanked officers for their engagement.

7. Ayrshire Growth Deal, Community Wealth Building Fund Update

Due to the delay in approval of the project by Scottish Government, commencement of the CWB project has taken slightly longer than anticipated, however the recruitment process is now underway. Interviews for the three locality officers based at East Ayrshire Council are currently underway (week beginning 7th June) and interviews for locality officers at South Ayrshire Council are anticipated to be held the week beginning 14th June. It is hoped that locality officers will be in post by the end of summer and Programme Managers by September. It was noted that in addition to the funding for resources, the project also includes a £1m grant and consultancy fund to support local enterprises to deliver CWB activities.

This update was welcomed by the Commission with no further points raised.

8. AOB

There were no further matters arising and the meeting closed at 12.50pm.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on 22nd September 2021.