

## **North Ayrshire Council**

### **Community Wealth Building Commission**

#### **Note of Meeting of Commission held on 17 March 2022 via Microsoft Teams**

##### **Present**

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

Craig Hatton, Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council

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

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

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

Councillor Peter Henderson, Council Leader, South Ayrshire Council

Councillor Douglas Reid, Council Leader, East Ayrshire Council

Councillor Jim McMahon, Deputy Leader of East Ayrshire Council

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

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

Louise Reid, Assistant Director of Place, South Ayrshire Council

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

Kaileigh Brown, Executive Director, 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

Lesley Bowie, Board Chair, NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Michael Breen, Vice Principal, Ayrshire College

Gillian Adam, Interim Head of Partnerships, Scottish Enterprise

David McDowall, Head of Economic Growth, East Ayrshire Council (Observer)

Katie Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive, East Ayrshire Council (Observer)

Mark Greaves, Coordinator – Places, South Ayrshire Council (Observer)

Jude King, Programme Manager (Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund), North Ayrshire Council (Observer)

##### **Secretariat**

Emma McMullen, Senior Manager, Economic Policy, North Ayrshire Council

Mhairi Paterson, Community Wealth Building Coordinator, North Ayrshire Council

Pamela Gilbert, Secretary, North Ayrshire Council

## **Apologies**

Paul Doak, Head of Service, Health and Social Care Partnership, North Ayrshire Council

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

Allison Craig, Programme Manager, Ayrshire Growth Deal

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

## **Guests:**

Tom Arthur, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth in the Scottish Government

David Fitzpatrick, Scottish Government

Tracy Jackson, Scottish Government

Stephen White, Scottish Government

Neil McInroy, Scottish Government

Joe Dickson, Scottish Government

Vikki Kewney, Project Manager, Scottish Enterprise

## **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair noted the apologies submitted and welcomed everyone to the meeting. A special welcome was given to Mr Tom Arthur, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth in the Scottish Government.

The Chair gave a brief introduction to the history of the CWB Commission, membership and the Commission aims and achievements so far. The Lead Officer Working Group (LOWG) was noted as taking forward the Commission workplan with an initial focus on three CWB pillars: Procurement, Land and Assets, and Fair Employment.

## **2. Introduction from Mr Tom Arthur MSP**

Mr Tom Arthur thanked the Chair for the welcome and invitation to attend the Ayrshire CWB Commission. Mr Arthur provided an overview of his portfolio and acknowledged that within his planning remit, a draft of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is currently out for consultation and includes reference to CWB.

Mr Arthur outlined his commitment to supporting Local Authorities who are adopting CWB strategies and is keen to understand lessons and challenges which will inform the development of CWB legislation. The legislation is considered a key vehicle for enabling CWB at a local level and the Scottish Government are open to hearing ideas about how legislation can support CWB activities. The Scottish Government are working to a timeline of presenting a bill to Parliament in November 2023, with a formal policy consultation taking place during summer 2022.

## **3. CWB and Strategic Context in Ayrshire**

### **a. CWB in Ayrshire – Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and Ayrshire Growth Deal**

Caitriona McAuley provided further context on CWB in Ayrshire, including acknowledgement of the Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic which paved the way for CWB as a practical means of achieving an inclusive and wellbeing economy in Ayrshire. The Ayrshire Growth Deal was noted as a significant opportunity to take CWB forward in Ayrshire, and in particular the £3m CWB project which has provided essential resource to directly support local communities and businesses.

The Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership recently agreed to develop a new Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire which will have a strategic focus on creating an inclusive wellbeing economy for Ayrshire. Fundamental to this is ensuring that CWB is firmly embedded within the strategy.

#### **b. CWB and NHS Ayrshire & Arran**

Lesley Bowie, Board Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran, provided context on how CWB is being embedded within the organisation and linked to the Caring for Ayrshire Transformation Programme. It was acknowledged the organisation is committed to reducing inequalities and deprivation and working closely with economic development partners is essential. Strategic links to CWB have been developed within the organisation including identification of an executive lead for CWB and agreement to form an internal CWB working group.

### **4. Examples of CWB Good Practice across Ayrshire Anchor institutions**

Mhairi Paterson provided a presentation and overview of examples of CWB across Ayrshire and aligned to each of the pillars. These examples illustrated the broad range of activities already underway in Ayrshire and demonstrate partners working together. Some examples included:

- Fresh and Organic Food: A pan-Ayrshire framework led by EAC awarded to various local suppliers
- Fair Work Ayrshire: Creation of a pan-Ayrshire service to support businesses to become Fair Work employers
- North Ayrshire officers exploring the feasibility of Community Banking.
- Land and Assets Regional Workstream - led by Scottish Enterprise, Anchors working collaboratively to ensure the productive use of land and assets for the benefit of communities and enterprises.
- Council owned renewable energy generation – solar panels installed at two former landfill sites in North Ayrshire.

A short discussion followed, with the following further examples of good practice noted:

- It is important that legislation breaks down barriers and silo working by encouraging teams to work closer together towards the same goals – this is already underway within the Ayrshire local authorities.
- The hydroelectric power scheme based on the River Ayr next to Ayrshire College is a good example of Anchors working with a local charity to develop the scheme, which will supply the College with green energy. Any excess energy will be sent to the grid with the proceeds of the sale used to fund projects which reduce fuel poverty in the local area.
- Strong partnerships in Ayrshire are a key enabling feature for taking forward CWB and linking across projects.

The discussion also raised some challenges to expanding CWB:

- In relation to renewable energy generation projects, it was noted by several Commission members that grid connections are a challenge for green agendas and present significant barriers to local authorities and community organisations. Mr Arthur agreed to raise this with Mr Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport.
- Animating local suppliers is a challenge for national bodies and national frameworks.
- On Arran a lack of affordable housing and unreliable ferry service are barriers to CWB. To work effectively, CWB requires good infrastructure to be in place.

## 5. CWB Barriers and Challenges

### a. Summary of challenges for Ayrshire Anchor Institutions

Emma McMullen outlined some of the challenges and barriers faced by Ayrshire Anchor Institutions in implementing CWB actions. Four key challenges which cut across CWB pillars and relate to broader challenges for Anchor Institutions were presented:

1. **Embedding a culture of CWB across an organisation** cannot be underestimated; it requires a step-change, is resource intensive and takes time. Support and resources are required for developing action plans and effecting organisational change. This has been identified as a common challenge by all Anchors and often the work required to support the embedding of CWB principles across an organisation cannot be completed effectively by existing teams due to resource challenges.
2. **In relation to procurement, financial power and plural ownership pillars**, well-resourced economic or business development teams are required to engage directly with local enterprises to support with tender responses, business growth and plural ownership. Some Anchors do not have economic or business development teams and rely on procurement teams who have limited capacity or knowledge of the local enterprise landscape. Funding and resources to help build the capacity of local authority business support teams to support Anchors to grow their local supply base would be welcomed.
3. **National Procurement Frameworks can present barriers to local suppliers.** Many Anchors use procurement frameworks and due to the scale of some tenders, these organisations are encouraged to use national and sectoral frameworks. Whilst these represent value for money, they can act against CWB ambitions to encourage local suppliers to bid, because they are not on the frameworks. Further work is required to understand how to respond to procurement challenges and cooperation and engagement at a national level would assist.
4. **There is a need to better understand the capacity and aspirations of the Third Sector** so that support can be provided to ensure organisations of all sizes can benefit from CWB opportunities. Anchors representing the Third Sector are approaching the CWB pillars from a different perspective than other institutions. It is essential to ensure that Third Sector organisations are fully aware, prepared and supported to benefit from CWB opportunities created by other Anchors.

### b. Challenges within Land and Assets Pillar

Vikki Kewney from Scottish Enterprise provided a brief overview of her role in leading the regional Land and Assets workstream and the activities undertaken so far. Vikki noted that the complexity of the land and assets policy landscape is a key challenge within the work so far. The workstream is keen to understand existing processes and support the

development of improved process in relation to three key areas: **Supply** of under-utilised assets from public bodies; the **demand** for assets from the community, businesses and Third Sector; and **funding** required to meet aspirations. Navigating the current policy landscape within these three areas is challenging and could be stream-lined within a CWB context.

In response Mr Arthur noted that the 2021/22 Programme for Government committed to the development of a new Land Reform Bill which will include measures to address the concentration of land ownership in Scotland.

Mr Tom Arthur and Scottish Government officers departed the meeting at 10am. The Chair thanked Mr Arthur for his attendance and participation in the meeting.

## **6. Minutes from Previous Meeting 11 January**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 January 2022 were approved with no further matters arising.

## **7. Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund – Project Update**

Jude King, Programme Manager for the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) CWB Project, provided a brief introduction to the project and an update on current activities. The project is a three year programme and over its lifespan will develop an Ayrshire approach to CWB that will enhance wealth, ensure fair and meaningful work and create successful places. The programme has 3 key dimensions to enable successful delivery:

- CWB Locality Officers – 3 Locality Officers per local authority.
- Fair Work Ayrshire (FWA) – Programme Manager and 2 Fair Work Officers. engaging local employers to improve recruitment processes and provide fair work
- Business Support Fund - £1m split between the 3 local authorities to support the work of the locality officers and the principles of the CWB Pillars.

All 3 Ayrshire local authorities have engaged local businesses through the programme providing one to one support, holding CWB pillar focussed workshops and providing financial assistance through the CWB Business Support Fund. So far over £100,000 has been given to support 30 businesses, in the form of small grants to support eligible CWB activity, with a view to helping approximately 265 local businesses in this way.

The Fair Work Ayrshire Programme Manager has opened the programme for business referrals and the number of referrals is expected to rise as the recruitment of additional Fair Work Officers take up post.

Next steps include the development of a formal programme launch due to take place in June 2022 and planning for a CWB Conference later in the year.

The Commission agreed this was a good and informative update of the project. The following points were noted:

- Commission members were supportive and welcoming of a CWB Conference which illustrates good examples of CWB in practice and what it means to local businesses and residents
- The potential opportunities for the Third Sector were noted with acknowledgement of the need to collaborate across the wider Ayrshire Third Sector.

## **8. Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy**

Emma McMullen provided context on the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy, which the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership had previously agreed to develop. A tender process is currently underway to identify suitable consultant(s) to produce a strategy focussed on creating an inclusive wellbeing economy for the region and accompanying two-year action plan. A separate commission has been advertised for a suitably experienced consultant to embed CWB principles into the RES by working closely with the consultants appointed. It is hoped a draft of the strategy will be produced by the end of September 2022.

## **9. Lead Officers Working Group (LOWG) Update**

Caitriona McAuley provided an update on the Lead Officers Working Group (LOWG) which has been created to take forward the CWB Commission workplan. It is expected that over the next quarter new projects and ways of working will start to develop. The LOWG has representation across all the Anchor partners who are committed to driving CWB forward. At the next meeting a workshop will be held to support Anchors to embed CWB within their organisations.

The following points were raised by the Commission:

- A question was raised as to why only three workstreams were being focussed upon out of the five CWB pillars. It was noted that when agreeing the Commission workplan there was a need to focus on priority pillar areas due to capacity, with aspirations to address further pillars at a later date. The three pillars chosen were those which Commission members noted to be a key priority for taking CWB forward.
- It was noted that awareness and education of CWB was important and this should be considered within the induction for new Elected Members following the May local election.
- Progress within the Land and Assets workstream was praised and case study examples of positive outcomes for local communities were welcomed when available.

## **10. AOB**

The following point was raised in within AOB:

- Cllr Peter Henderson noted it is important to build consideration of CWB into the consultation responses for National Planning Framework 4. It was also proposed to look at legislation for empty homes.

There were no further matters arising and the meeting closed at 10.40am.