

North Ayrshire Council

Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission – Lead Officer Working Group

**Note of Lead Officer Working Group Meeting held on
19 May 2021, 2pm – 4pm via Microsoft Teams**

1. Present

Caitriona McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Development and Regeneration), North Ayrshire Council (Chair)
Kaileigh Brown, Co-Leader - Third Sector, The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT)
Michael Breen, Vice Principle, Ayrshire College
James Thomson, Director of Finance, Student Funding and Estates, Ayrshire College
Jim Johnstone, Economy & Regeneration Coordinator, South Ayrshire Council
Zoe Fance, Procurement Service Lead, South Ayrshire Council
David McDowall, Interim Head of Planning and Economic Development, East Ayrshire Council
Donna Neilson, Workforce Planning Manager, East Ayrshire Council
Paul Blackwood, Workforce Planning Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Sarah Leslie, HR Director, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Derek Frew, Ayrshire Divisions Partnership Lead Officer, Police Scotland
Brian Connolly, CWB Specialist, Scottish Enterprise
Vikki Kewney, Project Manager, Scottish Enterprise
Craig Watt, Team Leader, Scottish Enterprise
Paul Zealey, Skills Planning Lead, Skills Development Scotland
Allison Craig, Strategic Manager, Ayrshire Growth Deal

2. Guests

Conrad Parke, Birmingham Anchor Network Coordinator, CLES

3. Secretariat

Julie McLachlan, Senior Manager – Economic Policy, North Ayrshire Council
Mhairi Paterson, Community Wealth Building Coordinator, North Ayrshire Council

4. Apologies

Gavin Cockburn, Procurement Coordinator, South Ayrshire Council

5. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the second Lead Officer Working Group (LOWG) for the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission and noted apologies submitted.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 25 February were agreed with no issues raised.

7. Presentation by Conrad Parke, Birmingham Anchor Network

The Chair introduced guest speaker, Conrad Parke, Anchor Network Co-ordinator employed by CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) and working on behalf of the Birmingham Anchor Network.

Launched in September 2019, the Birmingham Anchor Network includes seven Anchor Institutions with a combined budget of approximately £5 billion. Conrad shared experience of supporting the Birmingham Anchor Network and gave an overview of plans for an Anchor Network Supply Chain Hub in Birmingham. The presentation was very well received by the LOWG and stimulated discussion on the benefits and key opportunities of Anchor collaboration.

Key points included:

- There is no standard template for an Anchor Network and models must be tailored to specific areas.
- The value of having smaller organisations within the Network means they can respond to situations quicker than larger organisations. A mix of organisation sizes is most effective for a Network. Birmingham have taken an inclusive rather than exclusion approach and developed a network focusing on the willing.
- Culture change is not delivered through policy or strategy, but best enacted through specific action and sharing good practice across Anchors. It is important to focus on how Anchors can work together to understand and solve problems.
- Some examples of this problem solving approach include a hospitality to health recruitment programme and a focus on increasing diversity in police recruitment.
- Some of the challenges include differing resource capacities across organisations and recognising that civic behaviour is different from Anchor Institution behaviour and requires a focussed commitment to long-term change.
- Forward planning across Anchors is required to build employment pathways and develop workforce planning. Increasing workforce diversity requires application processes to be simplified, scrutinised and checked for barriers e.g. language. Anchors can work together to promote and advocate employment opportunities, particularly among underrepresented groups.
- The Birmingham Anchor Network are focussing on spend under £25k given there is more flexibility at this level however there are issues with a lack of forward planning for smaller contracts.

8. Ayrshire College Fair Employment workstream lead

Michael Breen from Ayrshire College introduced himself to the LOWG as the lead of the Fair Employment workstream and noted he would contact workstream representatives to arrange introductory meetings and start building an agreed workplan of activity.

9. Scottish Enterprise Land & Assets workstream lead

A presentation on the intended approach of the Land and Assets workstream was given by Vikki Kewney from Scottish Enterprise. A plan for engagement with Anchor representatives will include initial one to one meetings in June, followed by a full workstream meeting later in the summer. Vikki asked Anchor representatives to provide a list of surplus assets with relevant details of the property including current use, condition and tenancy status. Representatives were also asked to provide feedback and suggestions on potential opportunities, including Caring for Ayrshire. The data will be incorporated in a Geographic Information System (GIS) to map sites and facilitate the identification of collaborative opportunities for further exploration. Feedback included:

- It was noted by the Chair that the activity of the Land & Assets workstream must provide additionality to current local activity including regeneration activities led by East, North and South Ayrshire Councils. There should be a clear focus on the purpose of the workstream, rather than an extensive data gathering exercise.
- There was keen interest in identifying potential opportunities for development of assets. This may be via the Caring for Ayrshire transformation strategy; however it was acknowledged changes in the footprint of NHS assets are subject to Full Business Case and parliamentary approval.
- It was suggested Integrated Joint Boards may have a role within the workstream.
- It was suggested that any constraints and legislative barriers should be identified for feedback to the Scottish Government which could help inform the development of a Community Wealth Building Act.

10. South Ayrshire Council Procurement workstream lead update

Zoe Fance from South Ayrshire Council provided an update on the progress of the Procurement workstream, including a summary of themes emerging from one-to-one meetings with procurement Anchor representatives. A key theme emerging from discussions is the potential to investigate policies for contracts under £50k to mandate the invitation of local suppliers to provide quotes. Next steps will be to host a workshop of all Procurement workstream representatives to review forthcoming procurement waveplans of each organisation which outline planned future tenders with the aim of identifying potential collaborative opportunities. Discussion has taken place with the regional Ayrshire Economic Partnership food and drink workstream who are developing knowledge and a database of local food and drink suppliers that can be shared with Anchors.

11. Anchor Charter evidence template

A draft template for capturing evidence of progress against the Ayrshire Anchor Charter pledges has been developed and shared with the LOWG for feedback. When the Ayrshire Anchor Charter was launched in October 2020 it was agreed progress on all pledges would be measured annually for organisations who have signed the Charter. The first round of reporting is due in October 2021 and will be reported to the Commission in December. Attendees were asked to send any feedback on the evidence template to Mhairi Paterson.

12. Next Steps and future agenda items

An update on the planned approach of the Fair Employment workstream was requested at the next meeting. Updates on the Procurement and Land & Assets workstreams would also be provided.

The Community Wealth Building Act should also be discussed.

Attendees were asked to consider guest speakers to contribute to future meetings.

The next meeting of the LOWG will take place on Wednesday 25th August 2021, 2pm – 4pm.

13. AOB

No other business arising.