

Community Wealth Building in Argyll and Bute

A framework for action



CLES
the national organisation
for local economies

Contents

Executive summary	3
Introduction	3
Economic and social context	4
CWB journey to date	8
A framework for action	16
Appendix 1: List of stakeholders	22
Appendix 2: What does CWB mean to you? (Citizen-led workshop feedback).....	24
Appendix 3: Selecting models of opportunity	25
Appendix 4: Community wealth building	35

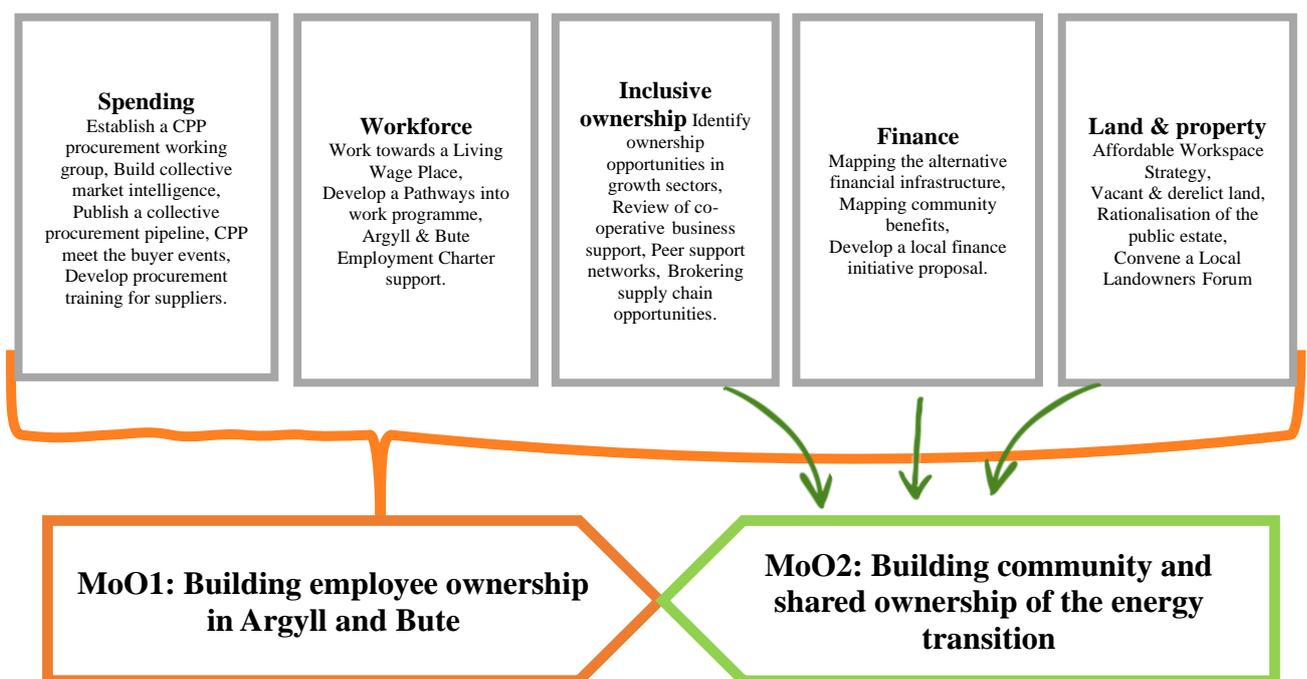
Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)
info@cles.org.uk
www.cles.org.uk
[@CLESthinkdo](https://twitter.com/CLESthinkdo)

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Executive summary

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has been delighted to work with partners across the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership to gain a deeper understanding of the unique opportunities and challenges Argyll and Bute faces in implementing a community wealth building (CWB) approach. Set within the context of the Scottish Government’s commitment to a wellbeing economy and the importance placed on community wealth building being a key practical means of achieving this, this report focuses on the five pillars of CWB and maps out activity that is taking place across Argyll and Bute before providing recommendations to the Community Planning Partnership on how they can develop activity across the five pillars.

We have developed a number of recommendations we believe can help push Argyll and Bute to be a leader in implementing community wealth building but understand the requirements for both legislative and financial support to implement some of the recommendations. We envisage this document to be a launchpad for deeper community wealth building activity across Argyll and Bute and given the extensive nature of our recommendations we do not envisage partners being able to implement them all immediately but can be used as a reference point to refer to when partners are looking to further embed community wealth building. These recommendations should also support the development and implementation of the models of opportunity we have developed in parallel with this work.



Introduction

Argyll and Bute is at a critical juncture. The area is currently facing several fundamental challenges that have, and continue to, significantly alter the economic and social makeup of the region. Argyll and Bute faces a housing emergency, depopulation challenges, and continued issues around land and value extraction. Market forces are negatively shaping the local economy which is in turn, impacting on citizens’ wellbeing and quality of life. To address these deep-rooted challenges, this report argues there needs to be a step change in the area’s approach to local economic development, towards an approach which has community wealth building firmly rooted at its core,

one that celebrates and embraces the unique rural economy of much of the region. Only then will we see the growth of a more sustainable, resilient, and more equitable economy in Argyll and Bute.

As a progressive approach to economic development, community wealth building seeks to change the way that our economies have come to function by aiming to increase the flow of wealth and opportunity for the benefit of people who live and work in the area. This is in contrast to elements of the mainstream economic development model, which tends to prioritise inward investment and speculative property development and where the benefits of economic growth are readily extracted in the interests of distant shareholders/landowners. In this economic model, the goal is economic growth, based on the assumption that the benefits will trickle down.

Community wealth building doesn't elevate growth, as the preeminent goal of economic development, but works to redirect and recirculate existing and new wealth so that the benefits flow more easily into local communities with direct benefits for people, place and planet. It does this through five key mechanisms as summarised on figure 2. One key aspect of community wealth building is the idea of the anchor organisation, defined as having a specific relationship to a place through its history, scale of employment, asset ownership or provision of services. Anchor organisations play a vital role in supporting community wealth building. As a collection of public, private and community organisations, the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has the potential to play a significant role in driving the community wealth building agenda and with it economic change in the region.

In this report, we begin by setting out the economic and social context for community wealth building in Argyll & Bute and provide an audit of existing community wealth building practice, recognizing that this is not always categorised as such.

We then provide insights from quantitative data analysis, interviews with anchor institution partners on the CPP as well as workshops with citizens in each of the four local areas across Argyll and Bute. We have analysed these findings to set out a collective community wealth building agenda for the CPP, including setting out priority thematic and spatially themed activities where action is most urgent.

We conclude with a series of recommendations for action both for the CPP and individual partners, including Argyll and Bute Council, who have a substantive role to play in providing a place shaping role for wealth building in the area and a leadership role in the development and implementation of community wealth building nationally, joining other Councils such as Dundee, North Ayrshire, Fife and Clackmannanshire who are using CWB to rewire and rethink their approach to local economic development.

Economic and social context

Argyll and Bute is a distinct region that faces a number of challenges but it also has strong foundations to develop a more prosperous and sustainable economy that works for all.

The region has one of the lowest population densities in Scotland, with the 86,220 residents spread across the second largest local authority area in Scotland, with only Highland Council covering a larger land area. This results in a population density of just 12 people per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 70 people per square kilometre, with 17% of the population living on islands and 43% of the population living in remote rural areas.

The Argyll and Bute economy is mainly service based, with higher levels of employment in areas such as agriculture, fishing, forestry and tourism than elsewhere in Scotland and due to the seasonal nature of these jobs, levels of unemployment fluctuate throughout the year. One of the region's biggest challenges is the changing demographic. The population of Argyll and Bute has decreased by 2.4% since 2011 and from 2018 to 2028 it is projected it will fall a further 5.9%¹ Over 25% of the population is aged over 65, there is net outmigration alongside

¹ Argyll and Bute Council Area Profile (2022)[Link](#)

a natural decline in the population. It is therefore essential that Argyll and Bute strives to be an area where people can live good lives, with well paid jobs and in affordable homes.

Argyll and Bute council has declared a housing emergency and in late 2023 convened a housing summit, which brought together partners to pledge commitments to increasing housing supply and embrace bold and brave ideas to tackle the emergency as quickly as possible². This emergency is not a challenge that Argyll and Bute is alone in facing, with local authorities and regions across Scotland and the United Kingdom facing similar challenges. In Argyll and Bute the housing emergency is exacerbated by a number of complex factors including low amount of socially rented stock, high numbers of unavailable housing stock for residents due to high levels of second homes, holiday lets and vacant properties, property sales going to people outwith Argyll and Bute and a shortage in new build private housing supply, with little to no speculative private new builds outside Helensburgh and Lomond.. This is leading to an 8% increase on the council's housing waiting list and a 15% increase in the number of households who are classified as homeless³

‘The way that modern economies have been grown has distanced people from their lands, their culture and their identity. Community Wealth Building essentially repatriates communities back to this. CWB gives communities a say again’ – Argyll & Bute citizen.

Despite the challenges facing Argyll and Bute, it is also a region with significant economic potential, with opportunities to build wealth locally and ensure community wealth building is central to economic development in coming years.

A growing renewable energy infrastructure and renewable energy potential, highlights the opportunities for Argyll and Bute to be a leader in the transition to net zero. A strong food and drink sector with a world leading whisky industry, tourism, forestry and marine sciences all offer opportunities for a thriving local economy that builds wealth locally. In a report released by Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the economic potential of carbon sequestration in Argyll and Bute was highlighted, with the region's unique landscape offering potentially millions of pounds to the local economy through efforts to tackle carbon emissions. However, previously these industries have often been extractive, providing little tangible benefit for local communities, with holiday lets and Air BnB owners limiting the number of affordable homes, whisky companies often being owned by multi-national drinks companies and multi-millionaires buying up large swathes of land to plant trees and offset carbon emissions elsewhere. As such there has been a growing enthusiasm and appetite for a different approach to economic development. An approach that ensures that more of the wealth generated in Argyll and Bute recirculates in the local economy to generate more direct benefits to local communities, for example, investment in decent jobs, housing, skills and health.

Policy and governance

Across the national, regional and local level there are a number of policy and governance opportunities that can help deliver a community wealth building approach to economic development in Argyll and Bute.

National

In March 2022, the Scottish Government released the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), which outlined their vision to create a wellbeing economy that is thriving socially, economically and environmentally and fundamentally reshapes our economy to deliver a just transition to net-zero and delivers a nature positive economy based on the principles of equality, prosperity and resilience⁴. The Scottish Government has adopted a community wealth building (CWB) approach as a key practical means to achieve wellbeing economy objectives outlined in the NSET. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that CWB does not sit on its own but as part of a web of integrated policies that support the delivery of a wellbeing economy and a just transition.

² Argyll and Bute Council (2023) Partners pledge to tackle housing emergency. [Link](#)

³ Argyll and Bute Council (2023) Declaring an Argyll and Bute Housing [Link](#)

⁴ Scottish Government (2022) Wellbeing Economy Governments. [Link](#)

There has since been significant progress in implementing CWB across Scotland, with much of the work being led by local authorities and community planning partnerships. As the lead organisation for the community wealth building journey in the UK, CLES and partners such as EDAS have supported CWB across Scotland. Starting in North Ayrshire, we have since developed CWB action plans in five pilot areas (Clackmannanshire, Fife, Glasgow City Region, South of Scotland and the Western Isles) and supported numerous other areas looking to adopt their own CWB approach.

In 2023, the Scottish Government undertook a consultation on the introduction of a Community Wealth Building bill and have recently published the consultation analysis. The consultation focused on two key areas, the impact of a statutory requirement for every public body and local authority to embed CWB into their corporate plans and wider strategies and for consultees to identify barriers in non-legislative measures to accelerate the implementation of CWB. Within the responses an approach that combined both a duty that required CWB to be embedded into corporate plans and a duty that required public sector bodies obliged to be involved in community planning to produce a collective CWB place-based strategy that contained specific actions on the five pillars was preferred.⁵

Alongside the development of community wealth building legislation, there are other Scottish Government policies that support community wealth building and the wellbeing economy agenda. These include:

- **Fair Work action plan** – An action plan that sets out how to promote fair and inclusive work places across Scotland
- **New Deal for Business** – Supporting businesses thrive and maximise the opportunity of the green economy with fairness at its heart
- **Land Reform Bill** – Transformative changes proposed in the way Scotland’s land is used and managed to ensure greater benefit to communities and the environment
- **Just Transition Commission** – Supporting a net zero and climate resilient economy that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and justice

Regional

This report comes at an opportune time for Argyll and Bute, with several key documents and policies being developed in the region. As such, there is an opportunity to align them and set out an ambitious vision for a more inclusive economy.

The Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy (2024-2029) is a chance to put the aims of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, and with it, community wealth building, at the centre of economic development. The strategy is an opportunity to align the strategic priorities of anchor organisations such as the NHS, Highlands and Island Enterprise, University of Highlands and Islands and others to create an economy that delivers tangible benefits for the people who live and work in the area.

The regional growth deal, heads of terms signed in February 2021 and full deal to be signed in early 2024, has also provided funding for the region, with over £70 million to be invested in initiatives that will utilise the natural assets and business base to develop a thriving local economy. It focuses on three main themes⁶:

- **critical economic infrastructure:** connecting to national and international markets
- **place and people:** attracting skills, residents, visitors and businesses
- **smart growth:** growing, doing more that works.

⁵ Scottish Government (2023) Building Community Wealth in Scotland: consultation analysis. [Link](#)

⁶ Argyll and Bute Council (2023) Rural Growth Deal. [Link](#).

This funding is to be delivered over the next 10-15 years and it is essential that any future projects are rooted in community wealth building to ensure the benefits are felt by communities across Argyll and Bute.

Local

The Community Planning Partnership's main role is to deliver the outcomes of the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan and to do this it brings together various actors from across Argyll and Bute including the NHS, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Third Sector Interface, Fire and Rescue Service and Skills Development Scotland amongst others.

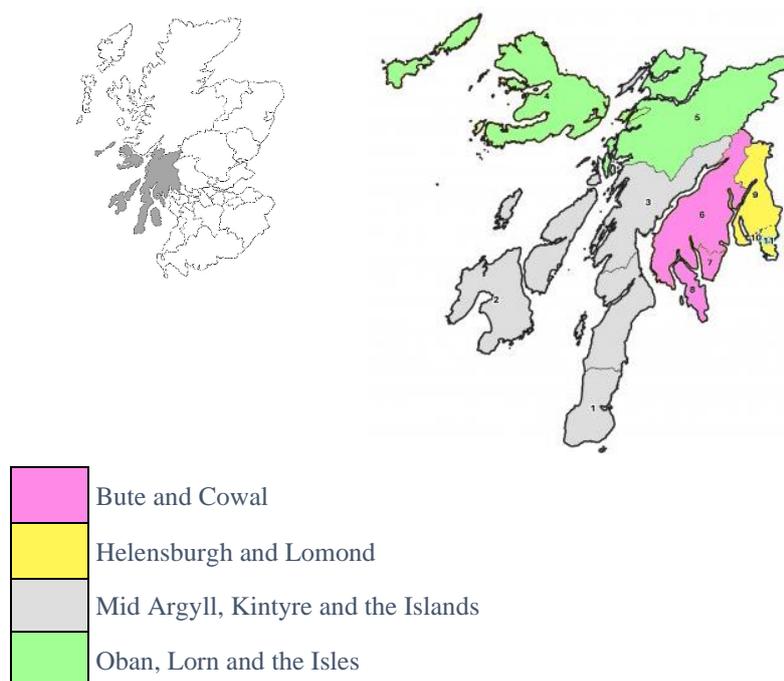
The Argyll & Bute CPP has recently published its Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan (ABOIP) for the next ten years and conducted an extensive community engagement exercise to inform the plan. From their consultation they have highlighted three key priority areas; housing, transport and community wellbeing.

When developing plans on how to tackle these issues, community wealth building must be a central consideration, ensuring that each priority area is not tackled in isolation but with the wider local economic context in mind.

There are two levels to the Argyll and Bute CPP, with a management committee level bringing together representatives from across member organisation and four area community planning groups that bring together members from public sector, third sector, private sector, community organisations and partners that have an interest in the local area. The four areas of the Argyll and Bute CPP are Bute and Cowal, Helensburgh and Lomond, Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and Oban, Lorn and the Isles. Each area has a unique geography with the main urban areas being Helensburgh, Dunoon in Cowal, Oban, Campbeltown in Kintyre and Rothesay on Bute. With the rest of the region being made up of remote and rural towns, villages and islands, each area has a unique economy and with it, different opportunities to implement community wealth building.

CPP members are all established organisations, rooted in local communities who can improve the local economic social wellbeing through their spend, employment practices and use of land and assets. This is aligned with the concept of anchor organisations which focuses on cultivating place-based assets and generating wealth that is retained within local area. Anchor networks are institutions who want to work together to maximise their impact on the local economy. The CPP is a ready-made anchor network and tapping into their experience of collaborative working to tackle challenges in Argyll and Bute and can be a vehicle to drive community wealth building in the region.

Figure 1. Map of Argyll & Bute



Community Wealth Building in Argyll in Bute: The journey so far

Our lines of enquiry were designed to produce a light touch assessment, drawing on our extensive experience of community wealth building to understand what progress has been made to date in terms of embedding a community wealth building approach and then to develop our understanding of how this approach could be amplified further.

We categorised the responses around the five pillars of community wealth building; Spend, Ownership, Employment, Land and Property and Finance. It is important to highlight the importance of synergy between the five pillars with each one influencing and overlapping the other. For community wealth building to rewire the economy to help local economies and communities, there needs to be a recognition of how they interlink.

Figure 2. Five pillars of community wealth building



Spending

Community Wealth building requires that all partners test the possibilities of doing their utmost to change procurement practices, utilising public spending to grow and animate the local market alongside growing inclusive ownership and delivering social, environmental, and local economic benefit. The key to advancing spending and progressive procurement as part of CWB, is an awareness and strategic culture, which places procurement as not merely a functional process, but rather a key and pre-eminently important lever for economic development and growing a wellbeing economy. As such procurement within any area requires a concerted and deep effort across CPP partners to develop a more integrated approach, highlighted in our recommendations. In addition, effective progressive procurement, requires the mobilisation of actual and potential supply. This requires effective economic

development strategy and actions by those tasked with business, social enterprise and inclusive ownership development.

The spending pillar is about ensuring there is maximum community benefit from procurement and commissioning, but this should not be the sum of ambition, there also must be a focus on promoting Fair Work and supporting Net Zero ambitions. Furthermore, under the auspices of the CPP, anchor institutions should encourage local suppliers to bid for public sector contracts, therefore creating more local and /or inclusive ownership in supply chains.

In Argyll and Bute, much of the groundwork for progressive approaches to procurement has been laid. We found a perception that prior to COVID, there were a number of progressive approaches across Argyll and Bute, which due to the numerous crises we have faced since then have not returned to pre-covid levels. This previous work includes the council and HIE trying to procure more from local suppliers. However, this work was partly thwarted due to the unique geography of Argyll and Bute. When contracts went to market, the local suppliers did not bid for the work. For example, if a social enterprise based in Oban was looking to win a pan-region contract, it is unlikely to be able to deliver services in Helensburgh or Dunoon.

However, the economic environment has changed and through our discussions with organisations in the VCSE sector, community groups and social enterprises we understand there is now more willingness from local businesses, social enterprises and charities who are looking to access contracts but either don't have the capacity to bid or face other barriers to winning public sector contracts. It is important to understand specifically what these challenges are and how collaborative working across CPP partners could help to overcome them. More creative approaches could be taken in the design of services based on intelligence of potential local suppliers and support as well as advice and guidance for organisations to collaborate as a collective/consortium delivering similar services in different parts of the region.

In Argyll and Bute our consultations highlighted that whilst there were some instances of progressive procurement activity, the main issue is that there is not a comprehensive or consistent position, that is commensurate to best practice elsewhere in Scotland. For example, procurement is not comprehensively perceived as a key economic development lever.

In looking into why there is this less than a full throttle approach, with procurement not perceived as a key economic development lever, public sector organisations across Argyll and Bute like many areas in Scotland are mindful of statutory compliance and staying within procurement law and thus not exposing the organisation to challenge from contractors. Evidence from elsewhere would suggest that more can be done, especially as regards animating supply chains. In Fife, where they have embedded procurement from local suppliers into their economic development approach, they have increased their local spend with Fife suppliers from 26% to 35%, contributing £192m to the local economy.⁷

Workforce

Within our discussion on workforce we focused on the employment practices of CPP partners and other initiatives to support Fair Work and helping local communities into well paid, fair and sustainable jobs. Best practice of the workforce pillar of community wealth building looks to ensure anchors and other organisations are involved in activities such as paying the real living wage, supporting the creation of employment charters, recruiting from groups excluded from the labour market and supporting in-work progression.

There has been some good work on progressive approaches to employment across the region, including commissioning social enterprises to deliver training and skills development. InspirAlba⁸ has been delivering a number of employability support programmes, including 'Spark your Purpose', where they are working with other third sector delivery partners. The Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface has also been running a programme funded

⁷ Fife Council figures

⁸ [InspirAlba \(2023\). Link](#)

by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which aims to understand and remove barriers to employment, volunteering and training through their Positive Destinations programme⁹.

It is also evident that the Employability Partnership, a group of organisations chaired by Argyll and Bute Council working together to deliver the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind Policy has delivered beneficial initiatives through the CPP. The delivery of training through the Clyde Fisherman's Trust to provide local young people with the required training to work on a fishing vessel, is worthy of note. There should be a focus on the wider learning from these approaches, to understand reasons for success in some areas and how this can be scaled up and out and transferred to the other pillars of community wealth building.

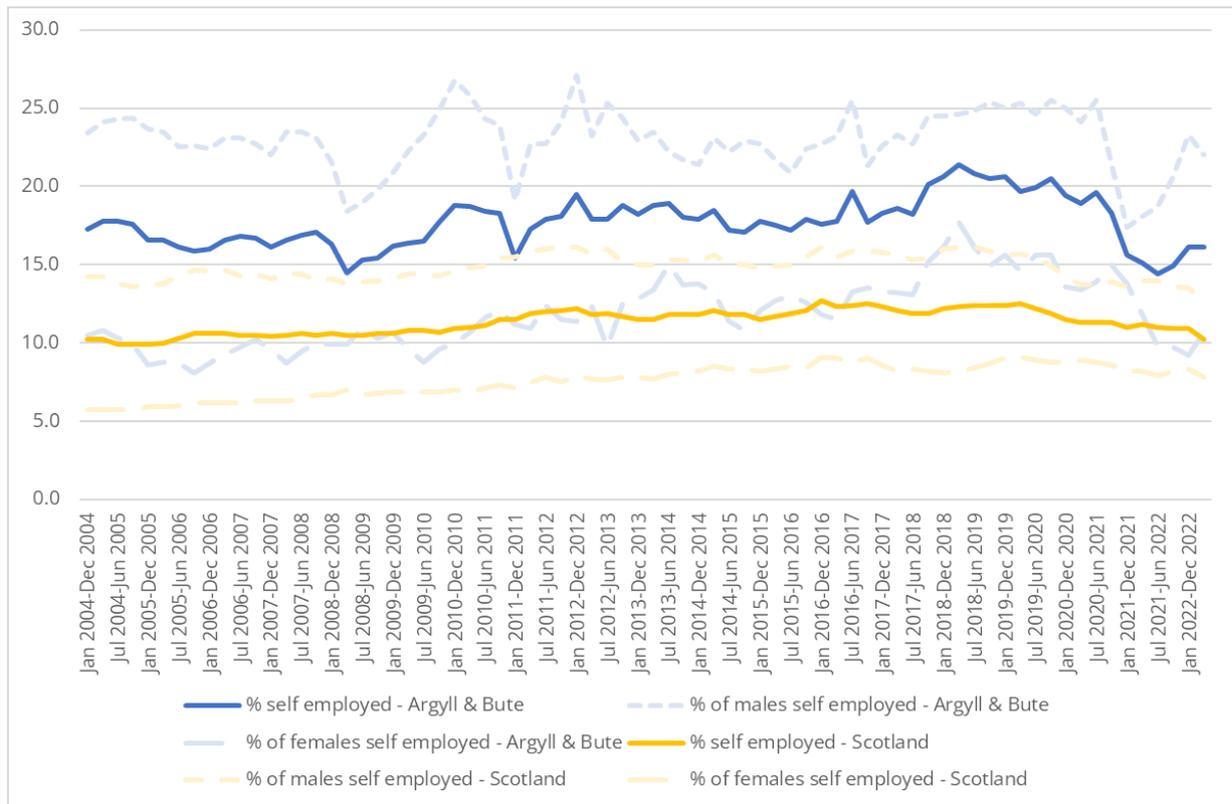
The need to continue developing fair work for all must align with a growth in the population of Argyll and Bute and an increase in the workforce. If the economy is to thrive and deliver tangible local economic benefits there needs to be a productive workforce that helps retain and circulate wealth across Argyll and Bute. This highlights the importance of CWB not just being an approach that sits on its own, but is woven through the economic fabric of Argyll and Bute.

The Argyll and Bute economy has a considerable number of self-employed individuals, as highlighted in Figure 2. Due to the rural nature of the economy, there is not the same economies of scale that exist in more urban areas with the business stock dominated by self-employed individuals, micro enterprises (90% of all businesses) and SME's (99% of business have less than 49 staff). Argyll and Bute lacks the larger corporations of more urban areas. This presents a unique opportunity to develop an economy that supports and promotes those workers who live in the area and create the wealth at the centre. In the recommendations we look at how supportive platforms could be developed to bolster this section of the local economy.

Despite the positive outcomes from these programmes, if Argyll and Bute wants to have a more inclusive economy then there needs to be an ambitious approach to developing and supporting the local workforce at scale and developing a more creative approach that can ensure local people can access the workforce opportunities presented to them.

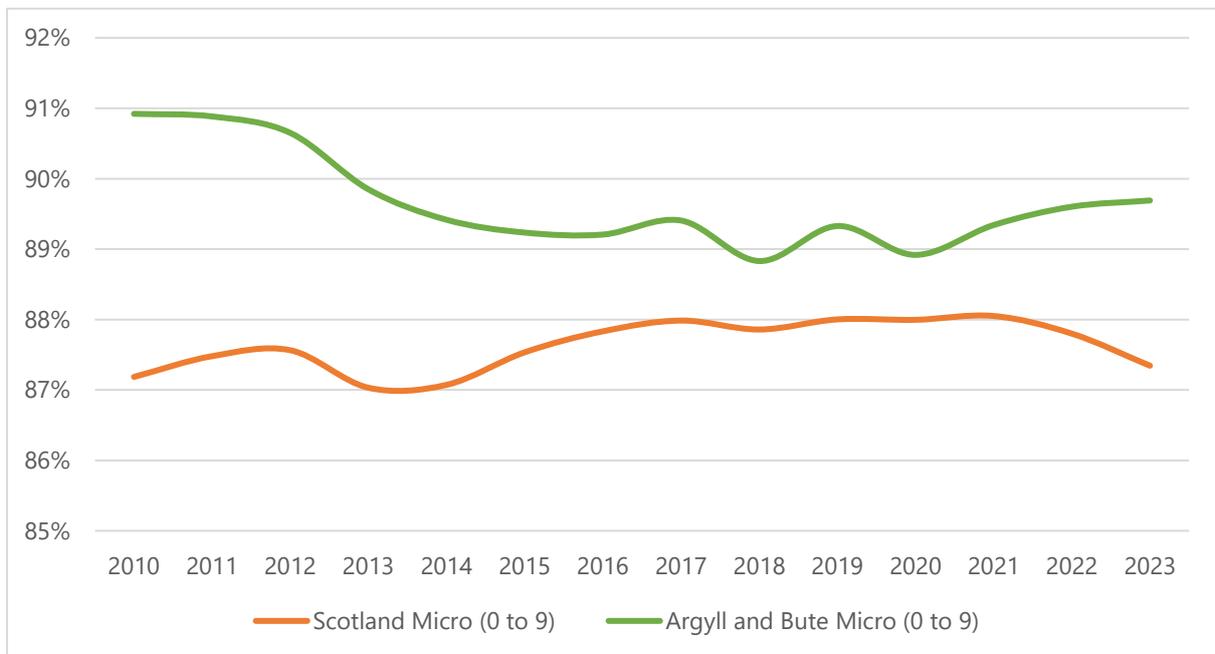
⁹ Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface (2024) *Positive Destinations*. [Link](#)

Figure 3: Self-employment in Argyll & Bute and Scotland 2004-2022 (by gender)



Source: NOMIS

Figure 4: Micro enterprise as a share of total business count



Source: NOMIS

Inclusive Ownership

As mentioned at the outset Inclusive Ownership is central to Scotland delivering on its Wellbeing economy aspirations. Fortunately, Argyll and Bute is well placed and they could indeed lead the way in Scotland. However,

this opportunity is part stymied by trepidation, and a measured appreciation of the risks associated with being overly bold or going too fast. However, we discerned a council leadership and senior officials across Council and wider CPP, who have an appetite for change and being bolder, with further room for development.

There is evidently a strong social and inclusive economy across Argyll and Bute, with a higher density of social enterprises in the region than the rest of Scotland, bar the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland¹⁰. Social enterprises often provide services that would not exist in rural areas and have a significant role in addressing both market failures and delivering economic benefit for local communities¹¹. This prominence of inclusive ownership in rural and island communities provides a strong foundation for the region to become a national leader in ensuring wealth that is generated in communities is retained there through continuing to developing social enterprises, community interest companies, community trusts and other organisations in the VCSE sector. In our consultations we discussed organisations such as the Rural Social Enterprise Hub, who are vital in scaling up the work that is already ongoing, by providing space for collaboration, knowledge exchange and peer to peer learning.

One community company that is building wealth in Argyll and Bute is South West Mull and Iona Development Aird Fada Seaweed Farm, a six hectare seaweed farm that sells in bulk for food stuffs, sustainable packaging solutions, livestock feed ingredient, soil regeneration and cosmetics. This is a growing industry and there is high demand for nutrient-rich seaweed. There are also other benefits including reducing carbon emissions through sequestration, cleaning the water and farming while leaving wild stock alone¹². There are still challenges for primary processing in the seaweed industry and there has been investigation into developing shore side processing facilities. There should be continued support for this industry and an exploration of opportunities for community led organisations within the sector.

The Mull and Iona Community Trust, have developed a number of business units, lock ups and compounds for small businesses on the island. Infrastructure such as this is essential for small local start-ups to be able to survive, especially in a rural context. Community-led business units are also under development in Colonsay, Tiree and have recently been completed in Jura, partners across Argyll and Bute should be encouraging these types of development but should also be aware of the organisations who are residing in these premises as part of building local market intelligence for potential procurement opportunities. There should also be a focus on ensuring social enterprises, community interest companies, cooperatives and other inclusive businesses have access to these facilities, as these types of business model ensure more wealth is kept in the community.¹³

‘Peripherality as a strength, you have to do stuff for yourself’ – Argyll and Bute Citizen

As highlighted there is good work happening on the ground in Argyll and Bute. The region should embrace its rural economic position and the prominence of its small businesses and social enterprises and think more boldly about how it can work to support a thriving SME sector, providing the required infrastructure for local people and local communities to set up and grow enterprises locally.

Land and Property

Argyll and Bute is the second largest council area in Scotland with extensive coastline and 25 inhabited islands. Agriculture, nature tourism, renewables and marine are all important sectors in the region’s economy. How land and property is used is fundamental to how the economy of the region functions. To ensure local communities get the most value from land and property and as Argyll and Bute grows its wellbeing economy, efforts must be made to tackle vacant and derelict land and buildings to help enable regeneration, stop extractive land management by distant owners and support community led ownership of assets and property.

Throughout our consultation the issue of who owns land and property in Argyll and Bute and how they contribute to the economic wellbeing of local communities was brought up on a regular basis. There is an unease amongst

¹⁰ Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2021) Social Enterprise Census. [Link](#)

¹¹ Rural Social Enterprise Hub (2023). [Link](#)

¹² South West Mull and Iona Development (2022) Aies Fada Seaweed Farm [Link](#).

¹³ Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2023) Funding Boost for Mull Community Project. [Link](#).

communities about the extractive landowners or ‘green lairds’ who are buying up land with little regard for local communities, often under the pretence of environmentalism.¹⁴ There was a want for public sector organisations to put greater pressures on these owners and challenge them to engage in more progressive land uses. In Bute it was highlighted that a community run organisation could not build a wind turbine due to being unable to agree terms with the landowner. In order to support communities and ensure public value from land, the Land Reform Bill should give communities and public sector organisations more power to challenge extractive landowners, this also highlights that community wealth building is part of a wider agenda to achieve a wellbeing economy in Scotland and should not be seen in isolation.

We also know that there have been perceived barriers with formal community asset transfers, with the process often taking much longer and being more bureaucratic than people initially thought. Furthermore, the state of disrepair and lack of budgets lead to issues in taking forward any transfer. Communities should be supported to enable assets transfers that would provide economic and social benefit in the simplest way possible. However, it is important that communities are not landed with land or assets that turn into liabilities for communities to manage. Community Asset Transfers are not a way for public bodies to off load surplus assets while claiming community benefit.

Another key area highlighted in the LOIP consultation is housing. The council has declared a housing emergency¹⁵ and people across Argyll and Bute have a deep understanding of the housing challenges across the region. In the Scottish Government’s Housing Action Plan, they highlight the potential that the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and the Rural and Islands Housing Fund has for community wealth building. Community led housing can play an important role in delivering affordable homes in remote, rural and island communities, but they can also enhance local living and economic development and encompass both commercial and community uses¹⁶. Delivering more homes in rural and islands areas can have a profound economic impact beyond just providing homes for people to live in. They can provide jobs through construction and maintenance, offering employment to the local community, the development of small and medium enterprises and helping to retain wealth in communities. Despite the positive impact that community led housing can play it is important that communities are not overburdened with developments that they do not have the capacity to deliver.

The Rural and Islands Housing Fund has supported a number of projects across Scotland including;

- **Supporting Development Trusts on Orkney’s smaller isles** refurbish existing homes or helping building new homes on North Ronaldsay, Papa Westray, Shapinsay, Westray, Sanday and Stronsay. These homes have helped sustain or increase the islands’ populations.
- **Development of Stracathro Estates Inchbare, Angus** – Development of 6 homes for affordable rent, with a focus on letting to families with children of pre-school or school age in an attempt to keep the local primary school open. There was significant interest with over 420 applicants for the properties, highlighting the demand for affordable properties in rural areas. Over £530k of the £1.15 million project came from the Rural and Islands Housing Fund.
- **Intergenerational housing on the Isle of Gigha** – since the community land buy out in 2002, Gigha’s population has grown from 100 residents to 170, leading to a need for more affordable homes to rent. Five new affordable homes have been designed with the intention of encouraging young people to stay on the island. The project has secured funding from the Rural and Island Housing Fund, Argyll and Bute Council and Social Investment Scotland.

The CPP should continue to strengthen its links with the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forum and support tackling the housing emergency but also look to ensure community wealth is embedded through future plans. It is also important to recognise that the Affordable Homes budget has faced considerable cuts in the most recent Scottish budget and will strain an already difficult situation for organisations and citizens across Argyll and Bute.

Central to community wealth building is the role of anchor institutions. However, in rural areas public sector organisations such as the NHS or Universities do not have the same the footprint as they do in urban areas due to

¹⁴ Reuters (2022) Who Owns Scotland? The Rise of the Green Laird. [Link](#)

¹⁵ Argyll and Bute Council (2022) Council declares housing emergency in Argyll and Bute [Link](#)

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2023) Rural and Islands Housing: Action Plan. [Link](#)

their more dispersed nature. It is therefore important to consider the definition of an anchor institution in a rural community context. Organisations such as Forestry and Land Scotland have considerable impact on local communities but the community are not currently feeling the benefit of their presence. There is also a demand for other organisations who hold significant land and property such as harbour authorities to take a more proactive role in the local economy, something we investigate further in our recommendations.

Finance

Our discussions on the finance pillar were focused on understanding the financial architecture that exists in Argyll and Bute. The finance pillar of CWB focuses on increasing flows of investment within local economies by harnessing wealth that already exists in the area and directing wealth to tackle inequalities through promotion of progressive financing such as Community Development Finance Institutions, Credit Unions and Community Bonds, ensuring small business have access to finance and encouraging social and value-led investment.

There is currently limited understanding and implementation of this across Argyll and Bute and as such there is an interest and a demand for a new local financial architecture, one which creates a richer financial ecosystem and supports local projects and local enterprise.

As highlighted, Argyll and Bute has considerable natural assets when it comes to renewable energy and should position itself to maximise the benefits of the just transition. However, there is disillusionment with the current community benefits model that exists with most of the windfarms in the region. Many communities say that benefits are tokenistic, outdated and don't tackle the issues communities are facing and that the only way for them to truly benefit from renewable energy developments is through ownership. Although ownership of assets is preferential, ensuring community benefits are modernised and meet the needs of the community is also vitally important, in our consultations there were discussions about the potential of pooling together community benefits to create a wider 'wind bounty' which allowed for larger investment projects.

'We need to be joined up with the wind bounty' – Argyll and Bute Citizen

In Glenbarr, Fyne Energy, a subsidiary of Fyne Homes, the second largest housing association in Argyll and Bute, have built and operate three wind turbines which has been able to support tenants during the cost of living through profits generated by the turbines. Profits from the turbine are split into three community initiatives; social housing charitable objectives, supporting employability and environmental priorities and investment in local priorities of local communities. The funding from this project came from a combination of Scottish Enterprise funding and Triodos, the UK's leading sustainable bank, highlighting that high street and large banks are not the only way to access funding for projects that have substantial impact on local communities.

In Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire, the local community has purchased Scotland's first 100 per cent commercially operated but community owned onshore wind turbine, with a local community interest company securing more than £5.6 million investment for the project. The blended finance package secured is an example of looking at alternative models of finance, with £4 million of the investment coming from Thrive Renewables and £1.6 million coming from responsible finance provider Social Investment Scotland and support from Local Energy Scotland and the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme. As it is owned solely by the community the profits from electrical sales will be reinvested back into the community and will secure more in community benefits for local people than all the commercially owned turbines in the local area combined.

Social Investment Scotland is a social enterprise and is a great example of an alternative finance provider that ensures money invested in communities stays in communities, with their mission being connecting capital and communities to make real, measurable, and sustainable impacts upon people's lives¹⁷. Organisations such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council and Business Gateway could look to support

¹⁷ Social Investment Scotland is a social enterprise and charity offering loan funding and business support for social enterprises, charities and community groups. <https://www.socialinvestmentscotland.com/about/>

communities, businesses and charities in accessing fair and sustainable finance by helping to broaden knowledge and understanding of how to access.

A framework for action

In the following section we set out a range of recommendations for the CPP to action collectively, reshaping the CPP and giving it a drive and intent to deliver on the CWB agenda and build wealth in local communities. We also set out a range of recommendations for CPP members, seeking collaboration between institutions to advance the 5 pillars of community wealth building with a specific focus on supporting the delivery of x2 programmes of collective action.¹⁸

These recommendations should underpin the development of the models of opportunity and do not all need to be tackled at once, they should be seen as a series of interventions that will help Argyll and Bute transition to a wellbeing economy and should be viewed within the wider policy context that exists in Scotland, with support for implementing these recommendation coming from the introduction of the Community Wealth Building Bill, the Land Reform Bill and other legislation that supports the NSET and the wellbeing economy agenda.

CPP recommendations

CWB intrinsic to economic strategy

This report comes at a critical time for Argyll and Bute, with the region facing a number of challenges. It also comes at an important time for strategy and policy in the region as both the Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy and the LOIP have been under development. There is, therefore, an opportunity to ensure that community wealth building is central to local economic development in Argyll and Bute and ensure that the step change that is required to tackle the region's key issues has policy and strategic backing. To ensure this, community wealth building should be intrinsic to the economic strategy of Argyll and Bute, CWB cannot be considered as an add-on within strategy and cannot be considered as a specific thematic area. Instead, CWB principles should be embedded in a refreshed approach to economic development with a recognition of a shift from previous models of economic development. CPP partners engaged in writing the strategy should review drafts of the economic strategy through this lens and through the recognition that existing approaches are insufficient to address the scale of the challenge facing people and places across Argyll and Bute.

Decide on correct avenues to deliver CWB across Argyll and Bute

Throughout our consultation there was a recognition that community wealth building in Argyll and Bute should not fall solely on the shoulders of the Community Planning Partnership. However, the CPP partners can play a leading role in pursuing CWB and highlighting other partnerships and working groups that could also drive the agenda. This could include the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance and the Strategic Housing Forum among others.

Consideration should also be given to the development of a Community Wealth Building Steering Group who can provide the strategic guidance and coordination to ensure community wealth building in Argyll and Bute builds on the momentum that has been gathering in recent years.

Development of CWB time limited group(s)

In order to drive community wealth building we would propose setting up x2 time limited groups to take forward action focused work which builds on this report to deliver community wealth in Argyll and Bute. These time limited groups can take a more outward facing role, connect with the community energy on the ground and genuinely co-produce an alternative approach to local economic development. Both models of opportunity will support the work of the economic strategy.

- **Model of Opportunity 1: Supporting employee ownership in Argyll and Bute** – this model of opportunity explores how a more supportive framework can be developed for employee ownership across Argyll and Bute which dominate the rural economy of Argyll and Bute. This is focused on bringing together existing sector representation, specialist business support and institutional power to ensure local and social ownership in these sectors.
- **Model of Opportunity 2: Building community and shared ownership of the energy transition** – this model of opportunity explores how to move from the community being in receipt of Community Benefit payments from private renewable energy operators to owning and operating renewable energy infrastructure. Beyond windfarms, how can the community own and drive the transition to a low carbon future?

Capacity to lead and deliver these time limited groups will present the most significant challenge and this cannot fall solely on Argyll and Bute Council. Nominated leads should work with the Area Community Planning Groups (ACPGs), wider stakeholders and local community groups to engage a broad set of actors who can collectively play a role in delivery and share the capacity requirements.

CPP member recommendations

A series of broad recommendations under each of the pillars of CWB follow, with these each setting the ground for the effective delivery of the identified models of opportunity and supporting the delivery of the time limited groups.

Spending

Establish a CPP procurement working group - We would recommend bringing together dedicated lead procurement officers from the relevant CPP members to reflect on progress to date and share understanding of the challenges they face in delivering a more progressive approach to stimulate the development of the unique rural economic geography of Argyll & Bute, providing an opportunity to respond to the new Procurement Bill¹⁹ which has just received Royal Assent and work towards the Sustainable Procurement Duty.²⁰ This group should also include representatives from the VCSE sector to highlight challenges they have in accessing contracts from CPP members, and ensure future procurement plans are created in conjunction with them.

Build collective market intelligence - CPP members should work together to build intelligence of the supply capacity of the local SME business base and the social economy.²¹ A detailed understanding of the supplier base should then be fed into the early stages of the procurement lifecycle within each CPP member so that procurement and service design are both conducted with the local economy in mind. Part of this market intelligence gathering could include trying to understand the need for sustainable business opportunities in terms of a minimum of three year rolling contracts instead of one.

Publish a collective procurement pipeline - CPP members should commit to publishing their procurement pipelines in the same format in a collective space which can be communicated to the local market, with inbuilt mechanisms for feedback which can then influence procurement and commissioning design moving forwards, making public sector procurement opportunities more accessible for local SMEs. This sharing and feedback mechanism could then grow and evolve over time into a portal for bringing together local suppliers into bidding consortia.

CPP meet the buyer events - The CPP members should work together to collectively engage the local supplier base through collective meet the buyer events, demystify public sector procurement, hearing feedback on the barriers to engagement and inform procurement and commissioning design as part of a learning loop. These should be informed by the above recommendations, so focused on the types of opportunities that the local market can supply.

¹⁹ Small businesses to benefit from one of the largest shake ups to procurement regulations in UK history <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-businesses-to-benefit-from-one-of-the-largest-shake-ups-to-procurement-regulations-in-uk-history> - The new regime is expected to come into force October 2024 delivering lasting change for generations to come.

²⁰ Scottish Government (2023) Sustainable Procurement Duty. [Link](#)

²¹ Building on the Social Enterprise Census commissioned by TSI.

Develop procurement training for suppliers – Local SMEs struggle to engage with the bureaucratic nature of public sector procurement, and while feedback mechanisms should be developed to address barriers and simplify processes (as above), suppliers also need support and training in how to bid for public sector contracts. We would recommend convening the existing business support organisations to pool existing resources and explore good practice from elsewhere such as the Federation of Small Business’ ‘Get Ready to Bid’ seminar series.

Workforce

Real Living Wage Place - Argyll and Bute has a low wage economy with a declining population. Anchor institutions, as a major employers, should commit to paying the Real Living wage or working towards accreditation²².

Pathways into work – Building on the work of the Employment Partnership, as major employers, CPP members can explore how the adoption of a values-based recruitment approach within their own organisations, can support local people, specifically local young people, into meaningful employment in organisations that offer career progression routes. CPP members can begin by mapping their job families and comparing, simplifying and standardising recruitment approaches so that applicants can be forwarded within a pool for alternative job opportunities.

Argyll & Bute Employment Charter – CPP members, local business representatives and local organisations such as BID4Oban²³, Isle of Bute BID and Dunoon Presents can collectively develop an employment charter, adopting the Fair Work Framework and its 5 dimensions which can set the expectation for local businesses to be working towards a minimum set of employment standards across Argyll and Bute.

Employment Charter support – In acknowledgement that many SMEs and social economy organisations want to improve their employment practices, working with existing business support organisations such as Business Gateway and business representatives, we would propose a pooling of knowledge and resources for local businesses that want to improve their employment practices and employ local people.

Inclusive ownership

Identify ownership opportunities in growth sectors – The Argyll and Bute refreshed economic strategy, along with relevant renewable energy, food and tourism strategies all need to prioritise ownership as a key element of growing these sectors. All have been identified as potential growth sectors in which new local SMEs and social economy organisations can be developed, however there is scope to scale up the focus on building local and community ownership within these sectors. Employee and shared ownership models could be key in managing the challenges of succession planning in rural businesses, as investigated in models of opportunity one.

Review of co-operative business support - The business support landscape for the social economy needs to be clearly signposted for those developing new businesses, highlighting the benefits of starting a social enterprise, a community interest companies or a cooperative. By signposting these services, it helps build on existing skills, capacity and resources available and how these match Argyll and Bute’s ambition to build community wealth. An ecosystem of support for new-start social economy enterprises is needed, filling potential gaps in support for co-operative development and employee ownership. Organisations such as Co-operatives UK and the Employee Ownership Association can support with the potential to explore an Ownership Hub in Argyll and Bute.

Peer support networks – Argyll and Bute has a flourishing social economy and a wide range of well-established community owned organisations in the renewable energy, food and tourism sectors. The connections between these in-place experts, an ecosystem of support for new-start social economy enterprises and the support of institutional partners can provide an invaluable resource for growing community ownership in these identified sectors.

Brokering supply chain opportunities – Connecting with the recommendation on spending and engagement across the business support landscape we would propose that existing business advisors become aware of a

²² Living Wage Places <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/living-wage-places#form>

²³ Oban Business Improvement District, <https://www.bid4oban.co.uk/>

collective procurement pipeline. They could then support local businesses and could start to actively broker connections between local businesses/social economy organisations and public sector procurement but with improved local market intelligence. The learning from this could support the development of a portal for bringing together local suppliers and shortening supply chains. The #ABplace2b²⁴ website collates local employment opportunities, and a similar concept could be applied to procurement and commissioning contracts.

Finance

Mapping the alternative financial infrastructure – CPP partners should look to bring together an understanding of the range of alternative financial mechanisms that already exist and can be accessed by organisations in Argyll and Bute, organisations such as Community Finance Development Institutions, Credit Unions and Community Shares while starting to develop an understanding of the challenges faced in financing new activity in SMEs and the social economy.

Mapping, pooling and strategic planning of community benefits – Developing a comprehensive understanding of the secured community benefits across Argyll and Bute, and the extent to which this secured income could be utilised to leverage finance for the community to take ownership. There is an opportunity to explore whether there is appetite for community benefits to be pooled together across communities in Argyll and Bute to support larger infrastructure projects that would look to tackle the LOIP priorities of housing, transport and community wellbeing and joining up Place Planning initiatives.

Develop a local finance initiative proposal – Building on the above, develop an outline business case for a local community owned finance institution. Filling gaps in provision, pooling community benefits and attracting deposits and savings – a local financial mechanism could connect with government funding streams²⁵ to fund community wealth building initiatives across Argyll and Bute.

Land & property

Affordable Workspace Strategy – To grow local and community ownership there will be a requirement to develop an understanding of the current and future demand for land and property. An Affordable Workspace Strategy would examine the available business premises across Argyll and Bute for businesses in various sectors and at various stages of development and make recommendations on the anticipated future demand. Argyll and Bute has some good examples of community ownership with the MACC Business Park for example, but this capacity would need to be replicated across the area.

Vacant & derelict land – The vacant and derelict land register has 32 sites in Argyll and Bute, and informed by the above Affordable Workspace Strategy, these should be examined for conversion into affordable workspaces. In consultation, local residents expressed dismay at vacant property given the housing emergency and a lack of affordable workspaces. An Affordable Workspace Strategy and review of vacant and derelict land and property ahead of implementation (2024/2025) of the recent changes to the Empty Property Relief (EPR)²⁶ could support bringing back properties into use for the benefit of the community.

Rationalisation of the public estate – CPP partners can bring together their emerging understanding of their workspace requirements, with opportunities for the co-location of office-based staff and service delivery, which could free up parts of the public estate for use by local and social enterprise. Argyll & Bute Council's recent 'Our Modern Workspace' programme is an example of future space requirement thinking that could result in land and property being made available in support of an Affordable Workspace Strategy. Some of this work is already underway in Rothesay, Dunoon and Lochgilphead and should continue to be built on.

²⁴ Argyll and Bute – A place to be <https://abplace2b.scot/>

²⁵ Third Sector Growth Fund, <https://www.gov.scot/news/third-sector-growth-fund/>

²⁶ Empty business premises could boost local economy, <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2023/oct/empty-business-premises-could-boost-local-economy>

Convene a Local Landowners Forum - Engage with the largest landowners to ensure that future land uses can help address the poly-crisis²⁷ we face as a society. From the housing emergency to the climate emergency, the way we utilise land will shape the collective future of residents of Argyll and Bute. From private estates (e.g., Duke of Argyll) to public bodies (e.g., Forest and Land Scotland, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, Crown Estate), all need to ensure land is used in a socially productive way wherever possible. As a pioneering approach, partners working together should develop a set of guidance for landowners in building community wealth. This should be supported by future Scottish Government legislation and the introduction of the Land Reform Bill

²⁷ Navigating polycrisis: long-run socio-cultural factors shape response to changing climate
<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstb.2022.0402>

Appendix 1: List of stakeholders

Takki Sulaiman – Chief Executive Officer, Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface
Rona Gold – Community Planning Manager, Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership
Lucy Dunbar, Community Planning Officer, Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership
Pippa Milne – Chief Executive Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Morag Goodfellow – Area Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Claire McMurchy – Head of Strengthening Communities, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Anthony Standing – Head of Region North, Skills Development Scotland
Ishabel Bremner – Economic Growth Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Fergus Murray – Head of Development and Economic Growth, Argyll and Bute Council
James Paterson – Senior Economic Growth Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Mali Gravell – Project lead for Food Policy and Delivery, Argyll and Bute Council
Reeni Kennedy-Boyle – General Manager, Fyne Futures Ltd
Christina Hyndes – Shared Ownership Specialist, Local Energy Scotland
Alison McGrory – Associate Public Health Director, NHS Highland
Rory Munro – Health Improvement, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership
Jen Broadhurst – Citizens Advice Bureau
Susan MacRae – Area Manager, Skills Development Scotland

Appendix 2: Methodology

To gain a deeper understanding of community wealth building activity across Argyll and Bute, CLES and partners undertook a number of different consultations including insight gathering interviews and workshops.

Beginning in June 2023, we first conducted insight gathering interviews with key members of the CPP. Our lines of enquiry were shaped around understanding community wealth building activity that is already taking place, where there have been barriers to progressing community wealth building and where activity could be scaled up. The stakeholders we interviewed were from:

- NHS and Health and Social Care Partnership,
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise,
- Skills Development Scotland,
- Argyll and Bute Council,
- Third Sector Interface,
- Fyne Energy,
- Citizens Advice Bureau,
- Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

After this we presented and discussed the work we are doing with members of the four CPP area community planning groups in Oban and Lorn, Bute and Cowal, Mid Argyll and Helensburgh and Lomond. Our consultation questions were shaped around the insights from the initial interviews and looked to dig deeper into community wealth building at a local level.

Having developed our initial understanding, The Resource Collective²⁸ then led four in-person citizen-led workshops in the four geographical areas of Oban and Lorn, Bute and Cowal, Mid Argyll and Helensburgh throughout September. Insights from these workshops can be found in appendix 2 and how they informed the selections of Models of Opportunity can be found in appendix 3.

Following the citizen-led workshops, which informed the development of our two models of opportunity, supporting greater employee ownership and supporting shared and community ownership of the energy transition, we consulted with experts from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council and Local Energy Scotland.

²⁸ The Resource Collective, <https://www.theresourcecollective.co.uk/>

Appendix 2: What does CWB mean to you? feedback)

(Citizen-led workshop)

Argyll & Bute (online)	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Our economy working for the people, the place and the planet in which we live.</i> • The work that we do contributing to the benefit of ourselves and the community we work in and not destroying the planet. • Building something – action & actually doing something. • <i>CWB believes in economic democracy – allowing all sectors of society to have a say.</i> • Looking at ways to secure and retain economic prosperity within the community, for the benefit of the community • Working with what we've got, not just what you can import. • <i>It's a framework to recognise what we've got, what we do and what are the gaps?</i> – what are we exporting / what do we want to keep? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethinking an assumption that things can't be done locally - they can. This includes resource generation vs outsourcing. • <i>Community having a say, having a voice and having control over many facets of wealth.</i> • All requiring an internal rethinking/different approach. • Skills and resources already present locally – often a case of making a local demographic aware of its own ability. • People sharing and being forthcoming with their skills. Again, a lack of awareness as to what is available locally. • Larger orgs to lead and engender encouragement. • Environmental resources. Watch how we can protect our natural planetary boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working – sustainable economic future. • What assets do we already have? – how do we best use these / use them better? • Sustainable and circular economy • Strong and resilient community. • Other assets that we don't account for – volunteering etc., Covid was good for goodwill, how do we get back there? • Sustaining the environment - community woodland etc. Notice that this kind of work has to be done by the community/volunteers etc. • <i>People – CWB is a people-based thing.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social capital • Wellbeing, inclusivity • Not all about money • <i>Giving people the tools and opportunities to build their own wealth and wellbeing</i> • Empowering the community to use their assets to sustain what matters to them • Retain/reinvest wealth assets to improve health • Economic capital – stop extraction of wealth • <i>The opposite of private wealth extraction</i> • A way of starting to unpack capitalism • Providing worthwhile employment • Maintain health provision • System change • Local Economic Dev. (stop leaky bucket) • Focus on assets • People enabled to take action • Improve amenities and community wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop resilience through use of asset transfer, social enterprise opportunities etc. • Circular economies - being able to identify who the partners are, what kind of wealth they have - time, finance, skills. • <i>Prosperity, wellbeing, quality of life, education opportunities and action.</i> • How rich in skill are we as a community? - not just money. How do we thrive? • Potential to help with ethical procurement - better to serve a company that employs mentally health concerned folks etc.

Appendix 3: Selecting Models of Opportunities

Spending

	Argyll & Bute (online)	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
Socio-economic context	Higher share of economy made up by SMEs, micro enterprise and self-employed?				
Policy priorities	Where does procurement feature in current policy? A&B have a Procurement Strategy, but do other CPP members? Can we make any links to energy purchasing? Decarbonisation strategies of CPP members?				
Workshop feedback	General feedback on progress being made in progressive procurement – slow?				
Community feedback	Anchor institutions to develop local capacity.	Training for anchors. Unbundling contracts to make easier for small/local companies. Training for suppliers. Support for local/smaller companies around the bidding process		Training for suppliers. Simplification of processes. Support for local/smaller companies re policies.	Make the CPP aware that it's important to give large organisations permission to serve local interests > training
Argyll & Bute best practice					The Resource Collective are offering locally to come in and train a board or exco etc.
Business case proposal		Provide training on progressive procurement to anchors		Training for suppliers	

Learning from elsewhere		Supply Change ²⁹		FSB Business Bootcamps ³⁰	
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²⁹ <https://www.supplychange.co.uk/>

³⁰ <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/help-for-worcestershire-smes-to-bid-for-public-sector-contracts.html>

Workforce

	Argyll & Bute (online)	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
Socio-economic context	Workforce stats – Self-employed? Average wages?				
Policy priorities	Where is the crossover in the LOIP, economic strategy etc... anything in the policy framework which is about supporting local employers?				
Workshop feedback	????				
Community feedback	Huge amount of wealth extraction from our rural communities – be that forestry, wind, fisheries etc.	Traditionally 25% lower earning in Dunoon: ferry fare a barrier? Lack of knowledge on what constitutes fair work and fair employment. Childcare: communities supporting fair work. Leadership and investment required.		More supported working/employment opportunities are required - gaps for adults with additional supports needs. Family friendly hours are required. Imbalance between private and public sector salaries. Shortage of key workers, doctors, dentists, teachers due to lack of housing.	Graduate apprenticeships to address brain drain. Equalities, living wage, zero hour contracts.
Argyll & Bute best practice	Tarbert harbour is owned by Tarbert Harbour Association been going for 120 years, all their income that they generate is recirculated into the public economy.	Future proofing: garage at Sandbank - sent his apprentices over the water to get training on EV. Citizen Advice Bureau study.		Kintyre Recycling provide employment for young people with autism etc – recently lost council contract. South Kintyre Development Trust employs people furthest away from the labour market.	MacLeods - pan Argyll and reinvestment in workforce with apprenticeships.
Business case proposal		Collectively owned employment agencies. Offer support to small communities to become good employers.			An employment charter for Oban - o Start with BID4Oban

					o Elements of the Volunteer Charter would come into it
Learning from elsewhere		The Ethical Recruitment Agency, Grimsby ³¹			Fair Work Convention ³²

³¹ <https://eraemployment.agency>

³² <https://www.fairworkconvention.scot>

Inclusive ownership

	Argyll & Bute	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
Socio-economic context					
Policy priorities	Is ownership a priority?				
Workshop feedback					
Community feedback	<p>Many of our remote and rural communities face a problem with centrally HQ'd organisations (only with local presence).</p> <p>Community ownership of the means of production – wind tower manufacturer used to be based in Campbeltown</p> <p>A number of companies have come and taken advantage of the incentives (grants etc) whilst the actual IP and ability is being created by the community, the wealth is whipped away overseas</p>		<p>Community hydro scheme – village wanted to buy into the hydro scheme but they couldn't/were not allowed.</p> <p>Area has seen a 50% increase in tourists in recent years > benefit isn't being felt locally.</p> <p>Sustainable food and food security - Lomond should be leading the way.</p>	<p>Wind turbines need to be owned, not just a share of a community benefit.</p>	<p>If we had a Bank of Oban then we could address housing.</p>
Argyll & Bute best practice	<p>Islay and Gigha Housing Trust seen as the main anchor organisation as actually of the community, based there and not a feeling of distance from</p>	<p>Local radio station owns a shop that operates as studio and shop.</p> <p>Templar Hall, the venue for the meeting, is community-</p>		<p>Tarbert Enterprise Company – runs good festivals and events.</p>	<p>Local Energy Scotland have an advisor > untapped</p> <p>TSL - we have a local supplier, can we tackle them as part of their CSR?</p>

	having an HQ out of community.	run and has a small café and bookshop.		<p>Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust owned turbine.</p> <p>ShopperAide was held up as a great organisations providing cleaning & laundry services.</p> <p>Gigha Trust, Machrihanish Airbase Community Company (MACC), South Kintyre Development Trust (SKDT), Glenbarr Development Trust, Kilmartin Museum, Keeping it Local, MAC (Mid-Argyll Community) Pool, Beinn An Tuirc</p>	
Business case proposal		Build Community owned tourism into tourism strategy.	<p>Local food growing could be a helpful vehicle for pulling the community together.</p> <p>Cruise ships - an opportunity we're not making use of. Orkney doing it better.</p>	Wool Cooperative	<p>Community-Owned Renewable Energy - shared ownership with developers - could be a middle ground</p> <p>Taste of Argyll vs supermarket</p>
Learning from elsewhere					Tiree Community Development Trust ³³

³³ <https://www.tireetrust.org.uk/tilley/>

Finance

	Argyll & Bute	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
Socio-economic context					
Policy priorities					
Workshop feedback					
Community interest					
Community feedback	<p>Being able to lever the capital to undertake large scale projects is important.</p> <p>Knowing how to access community funds is important</p> <p>Community bonds as a means to lever capital.</p>	<p>Credit union agreed as needed and a good idea.</p> <p>Community banking as a possible idea.</p> <p>HSCP is heavily staffed – the group considered where do their pensions go? Why not localise these. Existing questions about pension investments.</p>		<p>Community shares work well > ownership.</p> <p>Aquaculture industry has a number of community benefit funds.</p> <p>Community Energy Scotland are exploring the possibility/feasibility of a local grid.</p>	<p>Community Council - lack the resource, knowledge and wherewithal to engage with corporates</p> <p>How to tap into/disperse community benefit.</p> <p>Can we have a localised bank? - lots of personal wealth here that could serve as deposits etc.</p> <p>Feedback saying that access to funding is hard - Oban Common Good Fund difficult.</p>
Argyll & Bute best practice	<p>Fyne Futures: doing a large project in the future but there will be a gap even with central funding. They are fortunate to have income from the wind farm they jointly own with Fyne Homes at Glenbarr.</p>			<p>Islay Energy Trust</p> <p>Gigha & Glenbarr (part community owned). Community benefit funds from hydro schemes at Dalavich and Dervaig.</p> <p>Ardrishaig Wind Turbines</p> <p>Wind Turbines: Glenbarr Community Development</p>	<p>Kilchrenan receiving huge CBS monies but don't know what to do it.</p> <p>Tesco - not effective from a community point of view. They have a community fund but could do more.</p>

				Association is supported by 3 turbines. Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust have two community benefit funds, Freasdail and Cour/Fern.	
Business case proposal		Credit Union/community bank			We need to be joined up with the wind bounty. Local Finance Initiative - Lots of reserves sitting in current accounts of third sector, invest that capital in local projects > move from community benefit to ownership of turbines.
Learning from elsewhere		Scottish League of Credit Unions ³⁴ Clean Energy Credit Union ³⁵			Community Benefits Protocol ³⁶

³⁴ <https://scottishcu.org/>

³⁵ <https://www.cleanenergycu.org/>

³⁶ <https://www.renewableuk.com/page/CBP>

Land & property

	Argyll & Bute	Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh & Lomond	Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands	Oban, Lorn & the Isles
Socio-economic context	Land ownership in the hands of a few, poor housing affordability, derelict land and property				
Policy priorities					
Workshop feedback					
Community feedback	Campbeltown – very relevant for ownership of land.	<p>Community owned tourism – what possibilities are there? E.g., Dunoon Project.</p> <p>Empty properties and churches and council buildings.</p> <p>Community buyout comes with a pressure put on community groups.</p> <p>Dunoon has a BID but feedback of apathy and poor training.</p> <p>In Dunoon there is not a mature understanding as regards the wherewithal of how these wealth generating assets can contribute to the local community. Probably time for a commercial economy CWB workshop.</p>	<p>Local food growing could be a helpful vehicle for pulling the community together.</p> <p>Sustainable food and food security - Lomond should be leading the way.</p> <p>Feedback was reported of a tension in the local area between an old land and an old people.</p>	<p>Lots of village halls in the area but not always well used > often challenging to run/promote, with a lack of local capacity.</p> <p>Skills and expertise are needed to manage land/buildings and budgets.</p> <p>The importance of good volunteers for social support was highlighted > risk of burnout.</p> <p>Lack of affordable housing for key workers and young people. Numerous properties are sitting empty locally. Meanwhile, high rents keep people out. The group voiced whether legislation could be used to ensure this can't happen?</p>	Is there a good understanding of the available and derelict land in Oban? E.g., for Community owned energy generation.

				Growing issues around 'Green Lairds'.	
Argyll & Bute best practice		<p>Community owned shop with a flat above that is being rented out for community revenue.</p> <p>Scoto promoting community owned businesses.</p> <p>CARS (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme) - 82% occupancy rate for vacant shops.</p>	ACT is working with partners to submit a proposal to the Scottish Government to host a new Argyll Climate Action Hub	<p>Kilmory Business Park</p> <p>Machrihanish Airbase Community Company was hailed as a great example. The initiative hosts businesses including those from the public sector.</p> <p>Community ownership of land in the area is good and they are punching above their weight in relation to carbon sequestration.</p>	<p>Expansion of Atlantis - it's already there and is achievable.</p> <p>Greenshoots (community-owned garden and mental health and social enabler charity)- how to do more and expand.</p>
Business case proposal		Build Community owned tourism into tourism strategy.		<p>Affordable small units in derelict properties > two large local hotels that are currently lying empty.</p> <p>Could there be a 'Best Practice for Landowners'?</p>	
Learning from elsewhere		Fairbnb a good example of rethinking the Airbnb problem ³⁷ .			

³⁷ <https://fairbnb.coop/>

Appendix 4: Community Wealth Building

More than words

Recent research by CLES has revealed that many areas are now recognising that traditional approaches to economic development, with narrow growth-led definitions of success, are no longer fit purpose.³⁸ Moreover, there is widespread acknowledgment that changes to practice are required to provide a more comprehensive response to the challenges areas are facing around poverty, inequality and the environmental crisis. As such, the strategic focus is more upon the qualitative nature of the economic activity, as opposed growth for growth's sake. Some have rebranded their economic development departments as directorates of inclusive economy and are adopting a broader set of metrics for success – going beyond GDP growth and looking at unemployment levels, groups of unemployed, the types of jobs people have, as well as life expectancy and hospital admissions.

In the main, however, this renewed strategic purpose has led to areas trying to squeeze more benefits for local people and places out of inward investment opportunities as well as the continued reliance on property development-led regeneration.

It remains to be seen, therefore, as to whether this will be enough to turn the dial here and have a positive impact on poverty, deprivation and inequality. Again however, recent analysis by CLES shows that while foreign direct investment (FDI) has increased in almost all English city regions,³⁹ this has not correlated with a positive impact on deprivation.⁴⁰

To date, growth-led approaches have been unable to resolve the intractable fact that low-paid, insecure jobs are a dominant feature of the UK's mainstream economic model, with detrimental consequences for worker health and wellbeing.⁴¹

This is not to say, of course, that local economic development practitioners should not be trying to squeeze as much as they can out of inward investment. But in addition, they should also be looking to diversify their approach to produce wider social, economic and environmental benefits at scale.

Leading lights

To this end, some areas are starting to tread a different path.⁴² Here community wealth building has become a much more embedded approach, with local place-based assets becoming the focus of local economic development practice. This has resulted in the adoption of the following interventions and tactics with a greater focus on the grass roots economy.

Vision and metrics

Minimising the extraction of wealth and building prosperity for all should be the intention of local economic strategy. Local economies everywhere should now be rejecting the idea that the sole measure of economic success is growth and should be including additional metrics for wellbeing, happiness, the reduction of poverty and carbon emissions. While economic strategy and planning falls under the jurisdiction of local governments, they should unite and inspire here, encouraging and enabling other anchor institutions, communities and the VCSE sector to

³⁸ TL Goodwin et al (2022). A light in the dark: progressive frontiers in local economies. CLES. Forthcoming.

³⁹ Office for National Statistics (2021). Foreign direct investment involving UK companies by UK country and region, (directional): inward. [Link](#).

⁴⁰ Office for National Statistics (2019). English Indices of deprivation 2019. [Link](#).

⁴¹ E Yates I Clark and W Rossiter (2021). Local economic governance strategies in the UK's post-industrial cities and the challenges of improving local work and employment conditions. *Local Economy*, 36(2). [Read](#).

⁴² TL Goodwin et al (2022). A light in the dark: progressive frontiers in local economies. CLES. Forthcoming.

play a key role in establishing an inclusive local economy vision. CLES's recent work with the Ayrshire region, to produce a new inclusive economic strategy is a key example of this approach.⁴³

Developing and growing local enterprise

Looking for opportunities to support and influence the behaviour of local SMEs is emerging as a key local economic development tactic to promote a more inclusive local economy. In councils such as Fife, Luton and Carmarthenshire, they are using their own procurement expenditure as a mechanism to grow and diversify their local SME base. Here, economic development officers are engaging with local SMEs to make them aware of their goods and services pipeline, with a view to more of their supply chains being delivered by these local businesses. Through this engagement these local authorities are using this as an opportunity to address the environmental crisis – supporting local SMEs with retrofit and access to environmental grants. They are also encouraging the adoption of the living wage, as well as initiating discussions around succession planning, to potentially transition to worker ownership. This enables these local businesses to grow and develop with greater social and environmental purpose.

Diversifying ownership

The development of inclusive local economies also means growing other forms of more socially generative enterprise. Recent research by CLES has highlighted that employee-owned businesses, for example, tend to be more resilient, less indebted, pay higher wages and more productive.⁴⁴ Here, councils such as Islington have diversified their business support by commissioning a social enterprise hub and a co-operative development agency.⁴⁵ With support from Power to Change, Liverpool City Region has invested £6.5m to support the development local socially trading organisations. With this funding they have established Kindred - a new investment and development vehicle, owned and run by the sector, that is now providing business support and funding to local community businesses.⁴⁶ In Greater Manchester, the combined authority is looking to establish a community wealth hub to support and grow co-operative, mutual, social and community enterprises in key sectors of the everyday economy such as childcare.⁴⁷ In North of the Tyne, the combined authority has been working with a group of supply teachers and local trade unions to create a supply teacher co-operative. Owned and controlled by the teachers themselves, the co-operative will replace the prioritisation of profit with an imperative to pay fairly and provide good terms and conditions for teachers.⁴⁸

Building inclusive skills and employment pathways

Local anchor institutions often have significant numbers of jobs with good terms and conditions that can be targeted towards people and communities who need them the most.

In the West Midlands, for example, the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) is leading a programme across all of its employing providers. The programme will deliver a minimum of 100 entry level job opportunities each year for three years for unemployed and young people, targeting economically disadvantaged areas across the sub-region. It includes the provision of tailor-made “get into work” development and support programmes, with careers, interview, application support and a programme of post-employment mentorship. The programme commenced during November 2021 and is now seeing its first successful applicants employed.

Anchor collaboration

Networks of anchor institutions exist across the UK in light of the numerous partnership arrangements that are particular to local places – such as community planning partnerships in Scotland. Harnessing the impact of place-based assets can be magnified by collaboration across anchors.⁴⁹ The ICAN example above from Birmingham & Solihull ICS is a powerful illustration of the potential impact that can be achieved by anchor institutions working together in concert here. In a similar vein, local economies can also use these spaces to collaborate around harnessing the power of collective procurement budgets – as is being explored in Carmarthenshire in Wales –⁵⁰ as well as the usage, disposal and stewardship of public land.⁵¹

⁴³ CLES (2022). An inclusive economic strategy for Ayrshire: Building community wealth across the Ayrshire region. Forthcoming.

⁴⁴ S Benstead and J Heneghan (2022). Owing the workplace, securing the future. CLES. [Link](#).

⁴⁵ CLES (2022). Community wealth building in Islington (2018-ongoing). [Link](#).

⁴⁶ Kindred (2021). What we do. [Link](#).

⁴⁷ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2022). Launch of the report from the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission. [Link](#).

⁴⁸ F Jones (2022). Unions tackling wealth extraction on the front line. CLES. [Link](#).

⁴⁹ CLES (2020). Growing anchor networks in place: a how to guide. [Link](#).

⁵⁰ CLES (2021). Carmarthenshire anchors: food procurement. [Link](#).

⁵¹ CLES (2021). Our Land: Final report of the Liverpool City Region Land Commission. [Link](#).

