



Community Wealth Building

Approaches relevant to rural and island communities

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February 2023

Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme 2022-2027

SRUC-E1-1: Novel insights on Scotland's rural and island economies (NISRIE)

Deliverable 2.1: Literature review on Community Wealth Building in rural and island places



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1 Executive Summary

What were we trying to find out? In this review we considered how community wealth building (CWB) can be applied in a rural and island context. The Scottish Government has made a strong commitment to explore the potential for CWB to deliver inclusive growth, including through the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, planning reform and commitments relating to land reform.

What did we do? We reviewed a range of academic and other evidence relating to CWB from Scotland and beyond, with a particular focus on the rural and island implications of taking a CWB approach.

What did we learn? To date CWB research and practice has mainly focused on urban contexts (such as Preston in the UK), and academic work remains at an early stage, particularly in relation to rural and island contexts, where other concepts such as community development and empowerment have tended to be more commonly used. When implemented in rural and island locations, its five core principles (progressive procurement, fair employment and just labour markets, shared ownership of the local economy, socially just use of land and property, and making financial power work for local places) may bring different challenges and opportunities.

What do we recommend? On the basis of our evidence review, we suggest a set of possible learning points in relation to each of the five principles:

- 1. Progressive procurement: Considering the introduction of a geographical element to procurement to ensure processes are applicable to rural and island locations and businesses.
- 2. Fair employment and just labour markets: Ensuring employability support schemes and fair work practices can be delivered in rural/island communities and with rural/island businesses to the same standard as in urban areas, and considering the rural/island potential for employment and enterprise hubs.
- 3. Shared ownership of the local economy: Recognising the large number of social enterprises in rural/island locations and the potential for stronger links with anchor institutions.
- 4. Socially just use of land and property: Reviewing the potential for more partnership working around the management of land and natural capital and better alignment with CWB principles, and considering the role of community land trusts as anchor organisations.
- 5. Making financial power work for local places: Linking community ownership models, community benefit funds, etc. more strongly with the principles for harnessing and recirculating wealth in local communities and providing ongoing support.

2 Introduction

The Scottish Government has made a strong commitment to explore the potential for Community Wealth Building (CWB) as an approach for delivering inclusive growth. It has defined CWB (for example, in the <u>recent Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation</u> <u>consultation paper</u>, [p41]) as:

A people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

Six key projects are in development¹ at local and regional scales, to help embed CWB within economic development work across the country. A CWB Bill is planned within the current Scottish Parliament term (2021-2026) with the <u>Programme for</u> <u>Government in 2022-23</u> (p20) including a commitment to launch a consultation on this legislation. CWB is also a central component of the planned NPF4, and there is a specific commitment in the <u>Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation consultation</u> (June 2022) to consider CWB in relation to land and assets, including in terms of a requirement for large landowners to comply with the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS) and in relation to achieving a better understanding of who owns, controls and benefits from Scotland's land.

There are five core principles to CWB:

- 1. Progressive procurement
- 2. Fair employment and just labour markets
- 3. Shared ownership of the local economy
- 4. Socially just use of land and property
- 5. Making financial power work for local places.

To date, CWB has focussed particularly on urban contexts, with some of the flagship CWB projects around the world taking place in cities like Preston, Rome and 45 towns/cities across the US. In Scotland, there is an aspiration to roll this approach out to rural and island contexts, with some case studies already yielding interesting results.

Academically, CWB is an approach predominantly discussed in relation to urban contexts, focussing on novel ways to implement the five core principles in ways that generate local economic development. Nonetheless, this is a new avenue of research, and the academic discussion remains in a development stage. There is much less academic investigation into CWB as a concept applied in rural and island communities, perhaps because other terms (such as community, bottom-up or endogenous development, community participation and empowerment, rural wealth

¹ These projects are in Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, the Western Isles, the South of Scotland, Glasgow City Region and within the Tay Cities Deal. See <u>https://www.gov.scot/policies/cities-regions/community-wealth-building/</u> for more information.

creation, community resilience, asset-based community development, etc.) are more commonly used to describe and analyse people-centred approaches to local economic development in these places. There are strong similarities between these concepts, but perhaps where CWB differs slightly is in terms of its emphasis on the role of local anchor institutions in local wealth generation and circulation, including through progressive procurement practices and promoting and ensuring fair employment and just labour markets.

This short review will consider how CWB can be applied in a rural and island context. First, it will introduce CWB as a concept to ensure a clear understanding of its five core principles. Each principle will then be considered in turn, to explore the extent to which they are/can be applied in a rural and island context. Where possible, examples of existing best practice in Scotland and elsewhere will be used to illustrate key points. The review concludes with some suggestions for how rural and island communities can be supported to embrace CWB and deliver the principles in practice.

3 What is Community Wealth Building?

"Community wealth building reorganises local economies to ensure they are best placed to tackle the inequalities and disadvantages that are now, more than ever, so acutely felt by people across the UK" (Power and Goodwin, 2021).

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a concept that emerged from the USA over the past decade², with the aim of 'resetting' economic development to ensure as much wealth as possible is retained and recirculated in the local economy (McInroy, 2022). CWB focuses strongly on wealth, with five principles relating strongly to harnessing the power and economic influence of **anchor institutions** in each community. These institutions often play a key role in a local economy, for the following reasons (MacFarlane and Brett, 2022):

- They often own land and buildings
- They are often key employers in any area
- They have a lot of spending power
- They are generally connected to the place in terms of their activities and physical location.

Examples of anchor institutions in the Scotland include local authorities, NHS Boards, universities and colleges, enterprise agencies, housing associations, community planning partners, large local businesses, and third sector organisations.

² The concept was developed initially by the <u>Democracy Collaborative</u> in the US and then championed in the UK by the <u>Centre for Local Economic Strategies</u>.

The so-called 'Preston model' provides a well-documented case study in the UK of the CWB approach in an urban context, with improvements in local jobs and the development of co-operatives in the local economy since its inception in 2012 (Guinan and O'Neill, 2019). Preston is now recognised as one of the most improved localities within the UK³ and many others have followed as a result of this success (e.g. City regions of Liverpool and the North of Tyne, and the London Boroughs of Islington, Newham and Lewisham). Key anchor institutions in Preston and the wider Lancashire area include Preston City Council, University of Central Lancashire, Community Gateway Housing Association and Lancashire Constabulary. The success of the Preston model can be tangibly measured in many ways, including the increased proportion of procurement spend retained locally particularly by the anchor institutions, the development of a number of worker-owned cooperatives in the catering, tech and digital sectors leading to a democratisation of the local economy, all Preston City Council staff being paid at or above the Living Wage and the Living Wage being promoted for other local employers, and increased attention paid to local skills and employment requirements including by local education and training institutions.

In Scotland, a CWB approach has been prompted by disparities in wealth and aspirations for an inclusive economy and a fairer and more equal society. Implementation of the 'place principle' and a growing emphasis on place-based policy (Atterton and Glass, 2021) also acknowledge the importance of partnership working between anchor organisations responsible for providing services and looking after assets.

A CWB approach is guided by five core principles (see Table 1). These are already well-known about in many areas of Scotland to varying degrees and not always labelled as CWB. There is a deepening of intent and action to implement the principles, with the commitment to bring a CWB Bill to the Scottish Parliament in its current term (building on the learning from the six projects across rural and urban Scotland), as well as to embed CWB-thinking in forthcoming revisions to land reform legislation. The CWB principle is also central to the <u>National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)</u> where it is described as one example of the Government's approach to local economic development that supports a wellbeing economy (p12). The NSET describes the Government's approach to use public and private investment and other means to create new employment opportunities, help local businesses to expand, and place more assets in the hands of local people and communities (p31).

The following sections consider the application of each principle in rural and island contexts.

³ See for example a recent report by Pricewaterhouse Coopers: <u>Preston revealed as UK's most</u> <u>improved city in PwC survey (buyassociation.co.uk)</u>.

Table 1: The five core principles of CWB (as defined by the ScottishGovernment here)

Principle	Description
Progressive procurement	Developing local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and keep wealth within local communities
Fair employment and just labour markets	Using anchor institutions to improve prospects of local people
Shared ownership of the local economy	Supporting and growing business models that are more financially generative for the local economy
Socially just use of land and property	Developing the function and ownership of local assets held by anchor organisations, so local communities benefit from financial and social gain
Making financial power work for local places	Increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists

4 The principles of Community Wealth Building in relation to rural and island contexts

4.1 Progressive procurement

Community Wealth Building (CWB) promotes the progressive procurement of goods and services because spending power can be a means through which greater economic, social and environmental benefits can be achieved. Anchor institutions can create stronger local supply chains that are more likely to support local employment if they adapt their procurement processes (Jackson, 2010). Strong coordination of wealth building in the value chain has been recognised in academic research as crucial for procurement that addresses poverty in local communities. It has been suggested that this role is best characterised as social entrepreneurship in rural contexts (Lyons and Wyckoff, 2014).

A well-documented urban example is in Manchester, where the City Council has adopted a progressive procurement practice since 2010. Key successes include political leadership and buy-in to the process, cross-departmental working between commissioners, procurers and economic development teams, and evidence-based understanding of where procurement spend goes and what impact it has (CLES, 2017). Practical procurement strategy and tender process approaches in Manchester include:

- A link between procurement strategy and wider corporate and place priorities
- A tender process which enables a diversity of organisations to bid for opportunities

- Scope for potential suppliers to demonstrate their social value credentials.

This type of approach would also be highly beneficial in rural and island contexts. Academic research has shown how targeted business investments within a rural supply chain can build multiple forms of wealth locally. A helpful example is the 'WealthWorks' approach, which has been used as one of several Rural Economic Development Innovation (RDI) cooperation agreements by the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Agency (see Box 1).

In Scotland, the benefits of progressive procurement have been scrutinised within the Scottish Government's <u>Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme</u> (PCIP) and the sustainable procurement duty. There is an increased focus on facilitating access to procurement by SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), the third sector and supported businesses, to deliver wider social and economic benefits. The <u>Sustainable Procurement Tools platform</u> has been designed to help public sector organisations to implement the sustainable procurement duty, providing a nice case study of how CWB can be embedded into the procurement process.

Box 1: Learning from the WealthWorks approach to CWB in rural Oregon (summarised from the findings of Rahe and Hause, 2020)

The **WealthWorks** approach⁴ uses a co-ordinated approach to develop a network of locally-rooted organisations and businesses that carry out activities involved with bringing a product or service to market. It is locally led and combines economic and social development, with three main goals:

- Creating wealth
- Ensuring wealth is rooted through local ownership and control
- Improving livelihoods for people and firms struggling economically

Progress towards these goals is made by finding opportunities to develop a region's assets to meet market demand through a wealth-building value chain.

In practice, this involves anchor institutions proactively seeking to include people who are struggling to engage in the economy as owners and decision-makers during the process. A community or regional group identifies market opportunities by strengthening the partnerships of businesses and other stakeholders in a *value chain* to bring a good or service to market in a way that produces a broad set of benefits.

Across rural Oregon, several regions were identified as requiring further support. Funding was provided to each place, with a community-identified value chain coordinator in place to lead each team. The co-ordinator engaged stakeholders in the value chain to keep shared focus on CWB goals. Business investment grants were made available from the Rural Economic Development Innovation cooperative agreements and those awarded the grants were expected to generate impacts through a regional wealth-building value chain. More information is available about work to develop the small-scale seafood value chain in north-west Oregon. Investments in businesses well-placed to develop a value chain appears to have led to incremental income increases for many local businesses.

In a rural Scottish context, Borders Council provides an example of proactively facilitating SMEs, third sector and supported businesses into the procurement process, to develop the local rural market. Their approach includes consideration of lotting⁵ and a range of hands-on assistance to the local supply chain to help reduce any barriers to involvement in procurement opportunities (for more information, see the Council's <u>Sustainable Procurement Charter</u>, published in November 2021).

⁴ For more information about the WealthWorks approach, see: <u>https://www.wealthworks.org/</u>

⁵ Lotting is where the contract is sub-divided into smaller 'lots'. This brings advantages, for example, in terms of making it more accessible for SMEs to bid for contracts, thereby increasing the importance placed on social value considerations in procurement decisions. It can also help to spread risk across supply chains and build resilience into procurement systems, and increase competition and diversity in the marketplace potentially encouraging greater innovation. At the same time there may be disadvantages, including increasing the cost of procurement and contract management.

4.2 Fair employment and just labour markets

Anchor institutions also have a defining effect on the prospects of local people, particularly in relation to recruitment from lower income areas, paying the Living Wage and building career progression routes. Public sector employment can be used to achieve wider social and environmental outcomes (Bramah et al., 2007) and joined-up approaches across the public, commercial and social sectors can contribute to skills development (CLES, 2016).

A case study that has attracted a lot of attention in Scotland is North Ayrshire, where the local authority has committed to working with communities, businesses and regional anchor institutions to create a fairer local economy, and describes itself as <u>'the first Community Wealth Building Council in Scotland'</u>. Initiatives in North Ayrshire include:

- the North Ayrshire Anchor Charter which organisations have signed up to encourage local spend and invest in local companies wherever possible
- supporting businesses to access new opportunities including through developing their procurement and tendering skills
- the 'Equal Supported Employment Service', which supports people with disabilities or long-term health conditions into employment (and supporting them while they are employed) as well as a focus on apprenticeships and getting graduates into work
- the 'We Work for Families' programme (run by social enterprise The Lennox Partnership), which helps parents into employment⁶
- 'Keep it Local' which focuses on encouraging local spend, investment and employment in North Ayrshire
- and a greater consideration of community and plural ownership of assets.

4.3 Shared ownership of the local economy

The principles of a participatory economy have been adopted in a range of international contexts as an approach for transforming places and addressing place-specific challenges. A well-documented approach in academic literature is the worker co-operative (a business which is owned and self-managed by its workers), with many practical examples of this model showing strong links between co-operatives and place-based initiatives. Most importantly, place-based (or place-making) initiatives that involve co-operatives have been found to have the same driving force potential in terms of local regeneration and CWB in both Western and less-developed contexts (Webster et al., 2020).

In rural and island Scotland, CWB is a strong driver for social enterprise (one third of all of Scotland's 6,000+ social enterprises are based in rural and island

⁶ For information about all actions related to Fair Employment in North Ayrshire, see the 2021 CWB annual report: <u>https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/cwb-annual-report-appendices-2021.pdf</u>

communities⁷). Indeed, Scottish Rural Action (SRA) note that Uist in the Outer Hebrides has the highest concentration of social enterprises in Scotland and they reiterate the importance of the social enterprise model in 'epitomising' CWB: they are community-based, not-for-profit organisations which are usually set up to address social, communal or environmental issues with any profits being fed back into the community. They also often help to develop people's skills, create local job opportunities and increase the connectedness within the community as people work towards a common goal.

A social enterprise model can overcome challenges faced by rural and island communities, such as logistics, market size, demographic change. They can also take advantage of opportunities such as natural resources and effective local networks (Clark, 2020). Many of these types of businesses are driven by collective action and lead to collective benefit, and there is an opportunity within CWB to learn approaches taken by rural social enterprises to deliver CWB. Key themes include that they are (Clark, 2020):

- small, locally based/supported/connected/proud
- often responding to market failure
- acquiring and managing assets for community benefit
- often not considered as 'successful' in terms of traditional measures, such as turnover, growth, scale
- financially lean yet impact rich, and
- financially fragile, yet resilient, well established and innovative.

More information about the role of social enterprises in supporting a CWB approach is available on the <u>Scottish Rural Action (SRA) website</u>. Further information about the history and strength of social and community enterprises in Uist in the Outer Hebrides is <u>available online here</u>, through work by CoDeL (Community Development Lens) and Social Enterprise Scotland. They emphasise the importance of social and community enterprises in building community wealth and resilience in rural, and particularly island, contexts alongside shared activities such as crofting. They argue that these locations provide a significant source of learning for the rest of Scotland and indeed elsewhere.

CWB is also an increasingly common term in the food and farming sector, with increased understanding of how a food system that supports farmer-focussed supply chains can lead to increased 'good' employment and more food enterprises and markets (Piercey and Spelling, 2022). Community supported agricultural schemes, food cooperatives and community owned businesses are all good examples of approaches that focus on fair employment, sustainable land use and access to food. In Scotland, the (18) regional food groups bring together producers, businesses and others keen on growing the local food economy. The work of the different Groups

⁷ Data from the <u>Social Enterprise Census</u> (2019).

varies but includes encouraging the purchasing of local produce, encouraging collaboration and problem-solving on local issues from distribution to upskilling.

4.4 Socially just use of land and property

Different landowner business models have been at the heart of land reform discussions in Scotland for many decades. As the Scottish Government seeks to implement a third Land Reform (Scotland) Act with explicit reference to CWB, the extent to which different models of land and asset ownership align with CWB is likely to receive ongoing attention. Community land ownership has been found to deliver the strongest alignment with CWB, not least because it (MacFarlane and Brett, 2022):

- Is rooted in place
- Encourages local, broad-based ownership
- Has the potential to generate large local multipliers and minimise economic leakage
- Embeds collaborative approaches to decision-making, and
- Delivers inclusive, well-paid jobs.

The Scottish Land Commission has set out guidance on CWB⁸, with practical actions that public bodies can take to use and manage land productively and in the public interest. Good practice relates to:

- Supporting net-zero ambitions and sustainable development
- Positive management of land and assets
- Productive re-use of land and buildings
- Collaboration and partnership
- Supporting economic growth and community aspirations
- Sharing information.

There are strong calls for an increase in the scope for community trusts to form a central part of CWB, in their capacity as local anchor organisations that own land and other assets (e.g. MacLeod, 2021).

There are also concerns about the need to ensure the generation of inclusive prosperity for rural and island communities in the context of changes in the land market. In particular, this relates to increased financial rewards flowing from carbon sequestration and natural capital potential in the coming decades. Recent work for the Scottish Land Commission included recommendations that government policy should align the governance of land and natural capital markets with CWB principles, and establish new forms of finance that support land-based activities that contribute to CWB (Macfarlane and Brett, 2022).

⁸ See <u>https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/our-work/good-practice/community-wealth-building</u> (where there are also several case studies relating to the good practice points).

4.5 Making financial power work for local places

CWB seeks to increase flows of investment *within* local economies by harnessing the wealth that exists locally. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (<u>CLES⁹</u>) <u>discusses community banks on its website</u>. These have a specific focus on their locality and offer an alternative to traditional, commercial banks. They can address the financial needs of local households, community groups and businesses. Community banks also have a remit to invest more ethically than commercial banks, being regional anchor institutions held in trust for the benefit of their members.

It is also worth thinking about community-owned energy projects as a source of wealth for localities. The <u>hydroelectric scheme on the Knoydart Peninsula</u> provides energy for local households and businesses, including the Knoydart Brewery; without it locals living there currently argue that the population of the area would be considerably lower. The renewable project is run by a community trust, <u>Knoydart Renewables</u>, which has also obtained Scottish Government grant money and funding from Scottish and Southern Energy. Alongside this, community benefit funding from onshore wind farm projects also provides a source of, often substantial amounts of, 'new wealth' for rural and island communities.

5 Conclusions and implications

From this brief review of the key principles of Community Wealth Building (CWB), a set of possible learning points/recommendations can be distilled in relation to each principle:

- 1. Progressive procurement it would be worth considering the addition of a rural/island dimension into procurement policies for anchor institutions. Local authorities include an Equality Impact Assessment in their procurement process and this includes a commitment to supporting local suppliers and SMEs and third sector etc. There is, however, no geographical element to the process (i.e. a deliberate commitment to ensuring suppliers from across the local authority area are used). Instead, the focus is on equality characteristics like age, disability, gender, race, religion, etc. (for example, see the Borders Council form here). The 'island proofing' process which was introduced through the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduces a requirement for public bodies to explore how a new policy or service may impact differently on island communities and a similar consideration of procurement practices and their applicability to rural and island located businesses would be helpful.
- 2. Fair employment and just labour markets there is a need to ensure that employability support schemes (e.g. Parental Employability Support Fund, PESF) can be delivered in rural/island communities to the same standard as in urban

⁹ CLES describes itself on <u>its website</u> as the 'national organisation for local economies'. It is based in Manchester in the north west of England and was established in 1986 as a charity working towards a future where local economies benefit people, place and the planet.

areas. More broadly, work is needed to ensure that policy drivers such as Fair Work are as applicable and indeed as deliverable in rural and island areas as they are in urban areas. <u>Recent research by SRUC</u> on child poverty in rural and island locations noted some challenges with the delivery of PESF in these communities, for example. Coupled with this is the need for a better understanding within anchor institutions of where there are pockets of deprivation/unemployment in rural and island communities so that support can be targeted effectively. It is worth noting that there is ongoing work on this by the Improvement Service as a result of SRUC's work on child poverty. Exploring the further <u>potential of employment and</u> <u>enterprise hubs</u> in rural and island communities in delivering opportunities for entrepreneurship and new business and job creation would also be useful (these are also discussed in the <u>Rural Lives report</u>, see p13).

- 3. Shared ownership of the local economy greater recognition of the large number of social enterprises in rural and island contexts and the potential to strengthen the links between these and anchor institutions (e.g. through procurement, networking, etc.) would be beneficial. Also, there is the potential to consider creative ways in which social enterprises can help to tackle broader issues faced by anchor institutions e.g. delivery of social care (again see the <u>Rural Lives report p18</u>). This would enhance partnership working between smaller social enterprises/micro-businesses and larger anchor institutions.
- 4. Socially just use of land and property it would be worth considering more partnership working around the management of land and natural capital, with new finance support mechanisms to align land and natural capital governance with CWB principles (this is discussed in more detail in the recommendations put forward in Macfarlane and Brett's (2022) report for Community Land Scotland). It is also important to consider how to increase the role of community land trusts as anchor organisations (and how to partner more effectively with existing anchor organisations). For example, in earlier work by SRUC researchers on the responses of rural communities to Covid-19, there were some challenges with joined up working (for more information, see <u>Understanding the response to Covid-19</u> sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3).
- 5. **Making financial power work for local places** the principles of harnessing and recirculating wealth in local communities has strong links to community ownership models and community benefit funds, community-led local development, etc. It is vital that these 'models' of operation are provided with ongoing support.

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