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ELECTED MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE

Community Wealth Building Bill

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Elected Members Briefing Series

The Improvement Service (IS) has developed an Elected Members Briefing Series to help elected members keep pace with key issues affecting local government.

Some briefing notes are directly produced by IS staff but we also make available material from a wide range of public bodies, commentators and observers of public services.

We will use the IS website and elected member e-bulletin to publicise and provide access to the briefing notes. [All briefing notes](#) in the series can be accessed on the IS website.

About this briefing note

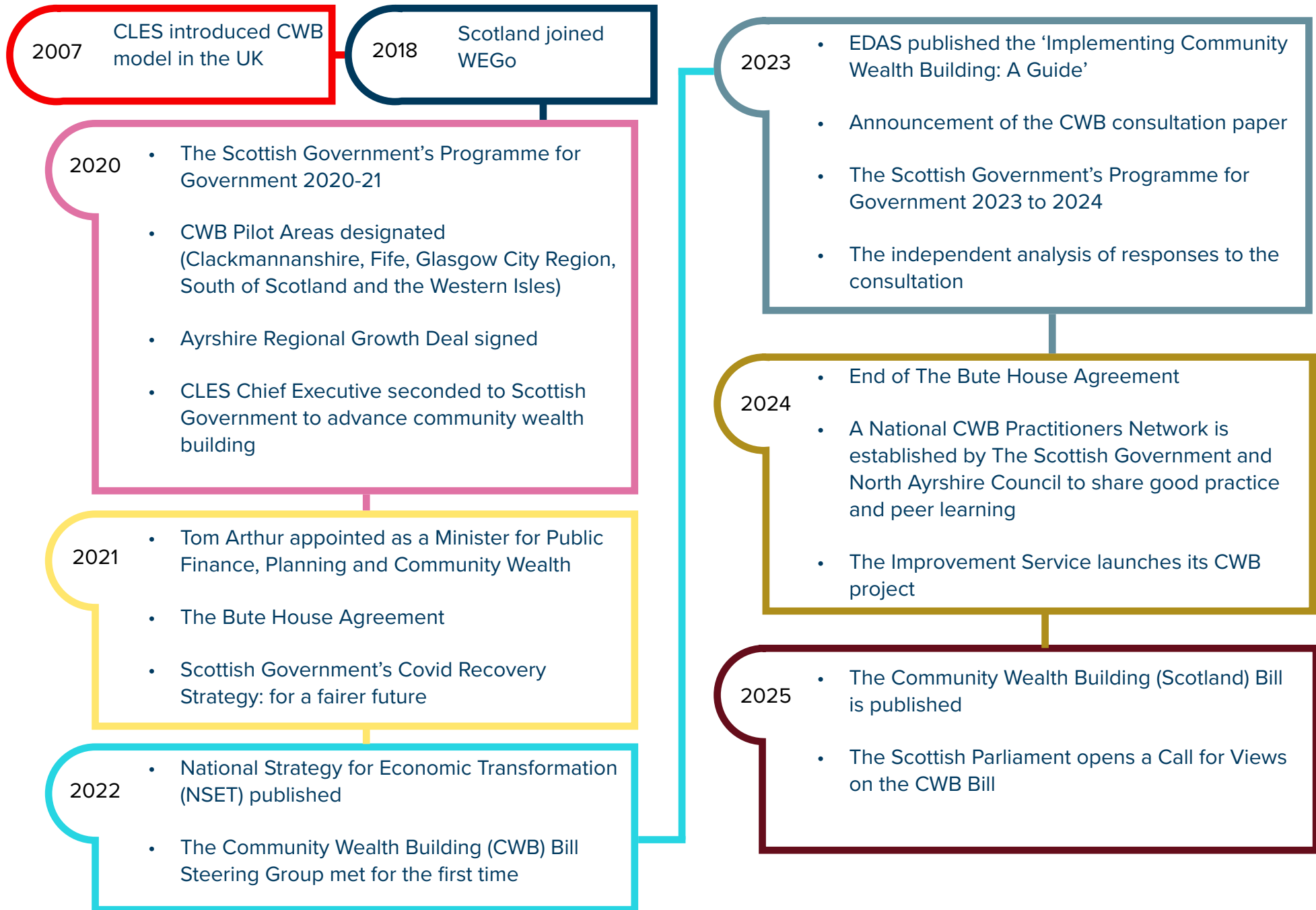
This briefing note will provide information on the key elements of the proposed Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill, and outline what this will mean for elected members. It will also highlight good practice to raise awareness of what is already working well in Scotland.



What is the issue and why does it matter?

The current economic system is failing to deliver for both people and the planet, with growing inequalities and environmental degradation highlighting the urgent need for change ([The World Social Report 2025](#)). A wellbeing economy offers a transformative alternative—one that prioritises human and ecological wellbeing over narrow measures of growth (see [Wellbeing Economy](#) briefing). Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a practical approach to local economic development that aligns with this vision—reorganising the economy to serve people, place, and planet. It focuses on minimising economic ‘leakage’ and ensuring that wealth is retained and recirculated within local communities (see [CWB briefing](#)).

Timeline of development of CWB in Scotland





What CWB activity has been undertaken in local government?

Two-thirds of local authorities in Scotland have either developed or are actively working on a dedicated CWB action plan. Over half of Scotland's councils have chosen to incorporate CWB into existing or emerging strategies rather than waiting for forthcoming legislation to dictate the form of their approach. Four councils have already published standalone CWB strategies, while two more have drafts in development.

If activity is already underway, why is CWB legislation being introduced?



Community Wealth Building Bill

The Community Wealth Building (CWB) Bill has been introduced by the Scottish Government to support the delivery of Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation and its broader vision for a Wellbeing Economy. At its core, the Bill aims to tackle economic and wealth inequality by enabling communities to generate, retain, and circulate wealth locally. To achieve this, it establishes a consistent national framework for CWB that ensures a shared commitment to this model of local economic development, while still allowing flexibility to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities within individual places across Scotland.

Key aspects of the bill

1. For Ministers

Community Wealth Building Statement

- Scottish ministers must prepare a statement which outlines measures being made to a) reduce economic and wealth inequality, and b) support economic growth
- Measures may include supporting actions from across the pillars
- **A draft statement** must be published, this must have been consulted on with persons considered appropriate and a copy must be laid before the Scottish Parliament
- **Publish a Community Wealth Building Statement** and lay a copy before the parliament, this must be done within 18 months of the Bill coming into force
- **Consultation Report** After the publication of the statement, a report must be published which outlines the consultation process and how the views expressed in consultation have been taken account of. A copy of this report must be laid before the Scottish parliament.
- **Revisions** The Scottish Ministers must keep the statement under review and may revise it when they consider appropriate. It must be revised every five years. All specifications of publishing the first statement, apply for revisions too.
- **Reporting** for each period of 5 years, steps they have taken in the reporting period in respect of each measure included in the community wealth building statement and the steps taken to keep the statement under review. This report must be published and laid before parliament.

Community Wealth Building Guidance

- Ministers must, within 18 months of the bill coming into force, produce guidance for (a) community wealth building action plans, (b) facilitating and supporting the generation, circulation and retention of wealth in local and regional economies. This must be published.

2. For Public Bodies (including local authorities)

- Local authorities and relevant public bodies to **prepare, publish and implement a community wealth building plan:**
- Each local authority and the relevant public bodies relating to it must prepare and publish a community wealth building action plan for the area of the local authority in question within the period of 3 years beginning with the day on which this section comes into force.
- A community wealth building action plan must set out the measures the community wealth building partnership is taking, or intends to take, to facilitate and support the generation, circulation and retention of wealth in the local economy.
- The Community Wealth Building partnership includes:
 - o Local Authority(/ies)
 - o Regional college
 - o Health Board
 - o Scottish Enterprise
 - o South of Scotland Enterprise
 - o Highlands and Islands Enterprise
 - o Skill Development Scotland
 - o Regional Transport Partnership
- **Option for Joint/Regional Partnerships** Two or more local authorities may act jointly, with the relevant public bodies relating to them, to prepare and publish a community wealth building action plan for the areas of the local authorities in question.
- **Consultation:** In creating the plan, people who may be affected by the actions and any other appropriate people will need to be consulted.
- **Review Cycle:** The action plan must be implemented and revised every 5 years and republished.

3. Require certain [public bodies](#) to have 'due regard' for Community Wealth Building Guidance

- This refers to the creation of the public bodies corporate plan and in the delivery strategies in relation to that plan.

While the Bill marks an important step forward for Community Wealth Building (CWB), some advocates have raised concerns that its provisions may not go far enough on their own to drive meaningful change. These perspectives highlight the vital role of local leadership in turning the ambition of the legislation into tangible outcomes. Ultimately, the success of the Act will rest not just on its statutory duties, but on the commitment, innovation, and collaboration shown by those leading CWB efforts at the local level.



Overview of the operational, policy and resource implications

Operationally

- Integration of CWB into internal strategies
- Increased partnership working with the establishment of a CWB Partnership
- Upskilling of staff – would any new training or skills be needed across council departments to deliver CWB?

Resource Implications

- Estimated £4.4 million annually for councils.
- Suggested model: 1 full-time lead officer + support from 5 part-time officers per council.
- Additional costs for consultation (~£5K per council) and publication (~£3K) every 5 years.
- Potential savings if working jointly with other councils.

Broader policy alignment and delivery of further duties

- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Public Sector Equality Duty,
- Human Rights,
- Fairer Scotland Duty,
- Tackling child poverty and inequality
- Procurement Reform Act, Sustainable Procurement
- Fair Work
- Community Empowerment and Asset Transfer
- Climate emergency response

How can elected members enable the implementation of CWB?

In recent research by the [Democracy Collaborative](#) and [Scotland's Rural College](#), key enabling factors were identified which support the successful implementation of CWB.

Common ingredients that support CWB implementation	Role of elected member
1. An appetite for CWB within leadership – senior level leadership support can be instrumental	Champion CWB at council level, promote its importance, and build political and public support.
2. A culture of CWB – cross organisational understanding of CWB as a way to build local economies	Encourage cross-organisational understanding, promote CWB values within the council, and align political discourse with its principles. Support capacity building—both inside the council and in local communities—to sustain long-term CWB work.
3. Employing practical and collaborative approaches – building on existing priorities and collaborations	Support partnerships, back local initiatives, and ensure alignment of CWB with existing priorities and collaborations. Strengthen partnerships with anchor institutions, unions, and community groups.
4. Policy integration – inclusion across plans and policies generally, from strategic to local levels	Scrutinise and approve policies to ensure CWB is embedded in strategic plans and operational policies across all levels. Push for alignment of budgets, procurement, and land strategies with CWB aims.

Common ingredients that support CWB implementation	Role of elected member
5. Explicit funding for CWB – inclusion of CWB approaches in funding opportunities, such as Growth Deals	<p>Influence funding priorities, approve budgets that support CWB initiatives, and advocate for CWB inclusion in external funding bids (e.g., Growth Deals, UK Shared Prosperity Fund).</p> <p>Identify and leverage local funding streams or external investment.</p>
6. Resource – dedicated staff to champion and implement	Approve resources and staffing structures for CWB delivery; support creation of dedicated CWB roles.
7. Ensuring Accountability - Accountability for delivery through governance structures, including ongoing reviews.	Provide governance and oversight, monitor delivery, request regular updates, and hold officers accountable for CWB outcomes.



Key issues/questions for elected members to consider?

- How will my council be able to respond to the requirements of the Bill?
- Would taking a regional approach be beneficial for my region? Who would be the key stakeholders to engage with to decide on this?
- Would any further partners be included above those identified in the bill?
- What governance structure might support the creation of a CWB action plan?
- What existing work is underway that supports community wealth building in my local authority?



Examples of good practice

- Clackmannanshire Community Wealth Building [Action Plan](#) and two [progress reports](#)
- North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building [Strategy](#)
- South Lanarkshire Community Wealth Building [Strategy](#)
- Moray Council Community Wealth Building [Strategy](#)
- Fife Council Community Wealth Building [Report](#)
- Highland Council Community Wealth Building [Strategy](#)
- Renfrewshire Council 'Introduction to Community Wealth Building' [Resource](#)



Further and support and contacts

- [Improvement Service CWB Project](#) and Practitioners Network
- [EDAS Community Wealth Building Centre for Excellence](#), includes a directory of resources under each of the CWB pillars
- [CLES Centre for Excellence](#) case studies, research and resources
- Public Health Scotland's [Community Wealth Building and Anchor Institution](#) Case Studies and Research
- The Democracy Collaborative [Guides and Resources](#)

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
EH54 6FF

Tel: 01506 282012
Email: info@improvementservice.org.uk
www.improvementservice.org.uk

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