

# Community Wealth Building and Climate Action

Policy Links, Practice, and Opportunities



**This research examines how Community Wealth Building (CWB) and climate action are being aligned across three Scottish local authorities, through policy documents, strategic plans, and practitioner insights.**

The Scottish Government's goal of net zero by 2045 places climate action at the centre of its 2025–2026 Programme for Government. As Community Wealth Building (CWB) develops, and with forthcoming legislation and associated local plans, there is a key opportunity to embed climate action within this agenda and support a fair, just transition.

Because CWB and climate priorities are closely linked, many local CWB strategies already reflect climate considerations. Understanding where these links appear and how they are being delivered in practice is essential to shaping and strengthening the future direction of CWB across Scotland.

The study had three aims:



**1. Identify where policy documents link climate action and CWB**



**2. Assess whether these policy connections are being implemented in practice.**



**3. Identify themes, overlaps, and opportunities to strengthen the integration of both agendas.**

The research consisted of a document review of six strategic policies and interviews with officers across the three case-study councils. Across all sources, a strong and consistent pattern of alignment emerged.



## Key findings

### Shared overarching aims

All reviewed documents articulate broad ambitions for a wellbeing economy, economic resilience, sustainability, and a Just Transition. These shared visions provide a natural foundation for integrating CWB and climate activity.



### Procurement

Sustainable procurement is a consistently strong point of connection. Councils are increasingly leveraging procurement to reduce emissions through shorter, more efficient supply chains while supporting local businesses, SMEs, and social enterprises. This retains wealth locally and reducing carbon impact.



### Circular Economy

Circular economy principles feature prominently in both climate and CWB strategies. Reuse, repair, and waste reduction initiatives support climate goals while also generating local jobs, community ownership opportunities, and reduced economic leakage.



### LHEES

LHEES provides a direct overlap between climate targets and CWB by creating place-based opportunities for local supply chains, fair work, and potentially community- or publicly owned clean heat infrastructure.



### Green Jobs and Skills

All councils recognise that meeting net zero targets requires workforce development and local business support. Investment in skills, retraining, and green job pathways directly supports CWB goals around fair work, inclusive growth, and reducing inequalities.





## Active Travel

Active travel is widely recognised as low-carbon transport that also enhances economic participation, access to opportunity, and town-centre vitality.

## Green Spaces and Food Growing

Climate strategies tend to emphasise nature-based solutions, habitat restoration, and food growing more than CWB strategies. This represents a major opportunity to broaden CWB's land and assets work to include green infrastructure, community food initiatives, and nature recovery.



## Energy Security

All three councils identified renewable energy ownership, particularly wind and heat networks, as a major opportunity to combine emissions reduction with local wealth generation. Community and municipal ownership models have significant potential to reinvest profits locally.

## Governance and Culture

Across all three councils, strong governance arrangements and organisational culture play a central role in aligning CWB with climate action. Where integration is most effective, councils have established cross-service groups, shared strategies, and joint reporting structures that connect these agendas.



## Conclusion

The research demonstrates that CWB and climate action share extensive thematic overlaps and interdependencies. Both require whole-council approaches, strong governance, and collaboration across teams and sectors. By recognising and intentionally strengthening these connections, local authorities can deliver climate action that is fair, inclusive, and economically transformative.

The insights from both document review and practitioner interviews provide a practical framework for councils designing new CWB plans, updating climate strategies, or building cross-service governance structures to accelerate a just and community-centred transition to net zero.



This diagram illustrates key areas of overlap between climate change and community wealth building agendas identified in this report.

