

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING PRACTICE

# North Ayrshire Council: Community Wealth Building (CWB) Participatory Budgeting Fund



## Context

North Ayrshire Council pioneers CWB policy and launched Scotland's first CWB strategy in 2020, remaining committed to this approach. The council has seen a significant increase in spending with local businesses and has developed initiatives that directly benefit communities.

Their CWB Commission is made up of the key anchor organisations in Ayrshire including the three councils, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, Ayrshire College and the Ayrshire Community Trust and works to a workplan to drive forward progress across the region.

The three Ayrshire councils earmarked £3 million of Ayrshire Growth Deal funding from the Scottish and UK Governments towards a CWB programme. The programme launched in 2021 and focused on working with businesses to create more local, good quality



employment and creating a larger and more diverse business base, working across the three Ayrshire local authorities (North, East and South Ayrshire). It included a dedicated Community Wealth Building Programme Manager, nine business support officers (three based within each local authority), and a Fair Work team comprising a Fair Work Ayrshire Programme Manager and two Fair Work officers.

The 2024-2027 CWB strategy builds on previous work and recognises the challenges posed by the current economic context. They are delivering on this, as well as supporting the delivery of the first regional economic strategy for Ayrshire, which also has community wealth building as a key theme and commitment.

## Background on the CWB fund

For the 2025-26 round of participatory budgeting (PB), £30,000 of CWB funding was introduced to encourage applications from organisations who were looking for specific support not usually available in the core PB process.

The council's CWB pillars (land and assets, financial power, diverse ownership, progressive procurement and fair employment) were taken as the starting point for the fund's themes, which were translated into themes that would be more relevant for community organisations and help them see how the fund could support their projects:

- Community ownership
- Enterprising communities
- Local innovation

While the locality and youth PB processes (running in parallel with CWB PB) allowed applications up to £1,000, the CWB PB enabled organisations to apply for up to £2,000, making it an attractive option for a wide range of local initiatives.

In depth information on the criteria for the fund is available at the bottom of this page: [Can I apply for funding?](#)

To support applications across all three PB funds, a series of launch events were held across North Ayrshire where staff were available to direct applications to the appropriate place. Incoming applications were also closely monitored and re-directed where needed to ensure that the projects were in the funds that fitted their aims best, which also gave applicants the opportunity to learn more about the CWB PB's focus.

## Response to the opportunity

The CWB PB proved to be a competitive fund, with 33 applications received for £30,000 of funding capped at £2,000 per application.

Organisations applying ranged from food larders and sports clubs to young carers' groups



and larger local social enterprises, showing a real range of interest and that the community and voluntary sector locally could see their projects reflected in the adapted themes for the fund.

Following the public vote on the applications, 17 groups were successful in securing funding for their projects, and projects from across North Ayrshire are represented.

For example, one group—currently progressing a community asset transfer of public toilets and a community asset lease of the surrounding parkland—is using funding to purchase a locally produced storage container. This container will be placed onsite at their public park and used as an office and storage space from which they can operate and distribute sports equipment. The additional outdoor activities they will be able to offer using this container will create a new revenue stream, helping to sustain the upkeep of the space. While the container site will initially be run by volunteers, the group ultimately aims to create paid employment. By purchasing the container from a local business, the funding will also support the wider local economy, amplifying its impact.

Another project has used CWB funding to pilot a new after-school tutor-led learning club for primary and secondary pupils (aged 8-16). The project aims to provide free, accessible support in core subjects such as literacy, numeracy, and study skills to help raise attainment, boost confidence, and reduce stress for families who cannot afford private tutoring. The club will run weekly sessions in a local community venue for 10 weeks, with small-group tuition led by qualified tutors. Places will be open to all pupils, but we will prioritise children from families living in SIMD 1 and 2 areas who are most affected by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

You can see a full list of the winning projects and read their applications here: [2025 CWB Results](#).



Read [North Ayrshire Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027](#).

