Creating the Conditions for the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026

improvement service



Contents

1. Introduction

2. Community Wealth Building Pillars

3. The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026

4. Framework Purpose and Rationale

5. How to use this framework

6. A landscape of support

7. Key Community Wealth Building Concepts

8. Creating the conditions framework

    a) PLACE

    b) INSTITUTIONS & ORGANISATIONS

    c) PEOPLE

9. Next steps





1 Introduction

The Scottish Government is committed to creating a country where economic power and opportunity are distributed fairly across our regions, cities and towns, rural and island communities. This ambition is central to the vision for a Wellbeing Economy, "an economy that celebrates success in terms of economic growth, environmental sustainability, quality of life and equality of opportunity and reward"[1]. Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a practical means of working towards this ambition through a people-centred approach to local economic development that seeks to retain and recirculate wealth within communities.

By acting across five key pillars, public sector organisations (and some private and community businesses) can act as 'anchor organisations'[2] - using their spending power, assets, and influence to support local economies and create fairer, more inclusive outcomes. Across Scotland and beyond, local authorities are adopting tailored CWB approaches that respond to the specific needs and opportunities of their communities.

To embed this model more systematically, the Scottish Government introduced the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026. This legislation underpins Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation and strengthens the country's commitment to a Wellbeing Economy. The Act creates a strategic foundation for Community Wealth Building in Scotland.

This 'Creating Conditions' Framework is intended to help local authorities and their partner public bodies at the earlier stages of their CWB journey to get ready for the forthcoming duty; to identify how they are already delivering on CWB, and how they can intentionally scale what is happening in order to create a fairer local economy.

---

[1] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-wellbeing-economy/pages/2/

[2] https://publichealthscotland.scot/population-health/social-and-economic-impacts-on-health/economy-and-poverty/community-wealth-building-and-anchor-institutions/anchor-institutions/overview/

2 The Community Wealth Building Pillars



Workforce	Inclusive ownership	Finance	Land and property	Spending	Climate
Increasing Fair Work and developing local labour markets that support the prosperity and well-being of communities. Access to local and fair employment opportunities, fairer wages, skills development opportunities and improved wellbeing of employees.	Developing more local and inclusive enterprises which generate community wealth, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms, and cooperatives. More inclusive and democratically owned enterprises and assets which means the wealth created locally and by local people stays in those communities in the form of incomes and profits.	Ensuring that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities, and businesses. Money and investment are retained in a local area and are available to support communities and businesses.	Growing the social, ecological, financial, and economic value that local communities gain from land and property assets. Land and property are used for the common good and benefit communities, SMEs and micro-businesses and the environment.	Maximising community, worker and business benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing impact enterprises, Fair Work, and shorter supply chains. Higher levels of spend with Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), micro-businesses and inclusive business models resulting in business growth and improved, resilient local and regional economies.	Measures to support local climate resilience and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

3 The The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026

The Act makes provisions for CWB in three ways:

1. It creates a duty on the Scottish Ministers to publish a CWB statement which sets out the measures they will take to facilitate Community Wealth Building.

2. 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 1st October 2026.
- 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:
  - Local Authority
  - Regional college
  - Health Board
  - Scottish Enterprise / South of Scotland Enterprise / Highlands and Islands Enterprise
  - Skills Development Scotland
  - Regional Transport Partnership





- 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.

- In creating the plan, people who may be affected by the actions and any other appropriate people need to be consulted.

- The action plan must be implemented and reviewed every 5 years and republished, and must include indicators that are being used to track progress.

3. It requires ‘specified public bodies’ to have due regard to CWB guidance when developing their corporate plans and associated delivery strategies

Read the full briefing, or, read the Act in full.

4 Framework Purpose and Rationale

Under the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026 (hereafter, the Act), local authorities must consult on, prepare, and implement CWB Plans in partnership with named public bodies. This framework supports the early stages of that process by identifying current efforts, gaps, and next steps. It helps local authorities and partnerships apply CWB as a lens to their local landscape and challenges, shaping a vision for what CWB means locally and creating the conditions for successful implementation of CWB. Many local authorities and public bodies are already engaged in CWB-related activities through statutory responsibilities such as Fair Work[3], Sustainable Procurement[4], and Community Empowerment[5]. This framework supports users in identifying existing work and the key organisations, people, and places that can help scale and grow CWB.

The framework is built around the Democracy Collaborative's paper 'Enabling Conditions for Community Wealth Building[6]', applied to a Scottish context. The idea being that by working through and considering each of these enabling conditions, local authorities and partners can identify what is happening already and what needs to change in order to improve approaches to CWB and to meet the requirements of the Act, and moreover, for successfully starting up and growing community wealth building in place. Assessing the presence and sophistication of enabling conditions helps determine a place's readiness for CWB. Completing this framework will highlight what exists locally that can be harnessed, amplified, and strengthened to meet the duties under the Act.

Because CWB is inherently place-based, there is no one-size-fits-all model. This framework is designed to be flexible, offering a structure to identify relevant elements and build the foundations of a local CWB approach. The framework is structured into three sections: Place, Institutions and Organisations, and People. These sections prompt public bodies to consider different enabling factors and key challenges which CWB could be applied to. Sections include examples and prompts for reflection. Not all sections will necessarily apply to every place. Moving through the framework, identify which factors under each section are relevant and then work through the prompts. These may include some actions which should be collated at the end of the framework when outlining the next steps.



[3] *https://fairworkconvention.scot/*

[4] *https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/sustainable-procurement-duty/*

[5] *https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/*

[6] *https://www.democracycollaborative.org/whatwethink/enabling-conditions*



5 How to use this framework

As an individual local authority

Who should be involved?

In order to effectively go through the framework a working group of officers across the council services that play a role in implementing Community Wealth Building should be established. These may include:

- Economic Development
- Procurement
- Planning
- HR
- Housing
- Education
- Communities
- Finance
- Land and Estates
- Climate and Sustainability

How could the framework be used?

As a group, review the sections and decide where to focus.

Example: A working group may decide that mapping stakeholders for formulating a partnership is the key priority. The group could then each individually fill in the 'Institutions and Organisations' sections, then convene a meeting and review the results and collaboratively identify key People based on this.

As a partnership

Who should be involved?

Each organisation should nominate a representative to take part in a working group who will complete the framework. This representative should have broad enough knowledge of different functions of the organisation and be able to speak on its behalf.

Partnerships may also wish to involve organisations beyond those named in the Act, such as housing associations, the third sector interface, universities, or other significant local anchors. Section 7 (Institutions and Organisations) will help identify who these are.

One organisation should convene the process and hold the outputs. This will usually be the local authority, but it does not have to be.

How could the framework be used?

The partners should familiarise themselves with the framework prior to meeting and consider which questions they can answer in preparation.

In an initial meeting, partners should agree on which sections to focus on, and how the information will be collated. A lead or chair for the work should be identified.

'Place' is common ground - all partners are working in the same area. It could therefore be efficient for one organisation to lead on that section rather than each repeating it. Institutions and People benefit from each partner contributing its own perspective.



Case Study: Shetland Islands Community Planning Partnership

Shetland Islands Council led the process of using the framework. In a preliminary meeting with the Improvement Service, the framework was reviewed and it was decided the Community Planning Partnership contained the right stakeholders for initially using the framework.

A copy of the framework, alongside guidance for the facilitated support, and a high-level briefing on Community Wealth Building was shared with the Community Planning Partners. A one-day in-person facilitated workshop was organised in which different activities were designed to work through the framework sections and identify practice and areas of focus. This was accompanied by an awareness raising session with elected members.

The output of the workshop was written up into a full report which identified priority areas, key practice and case-studies from other parts of Scotland that could support the development of practices locally. A set of steps was agreed which map out where the partnership is and what needs to happen to fulfil the duties in the Act.

Shetland Islands Council Lead said:

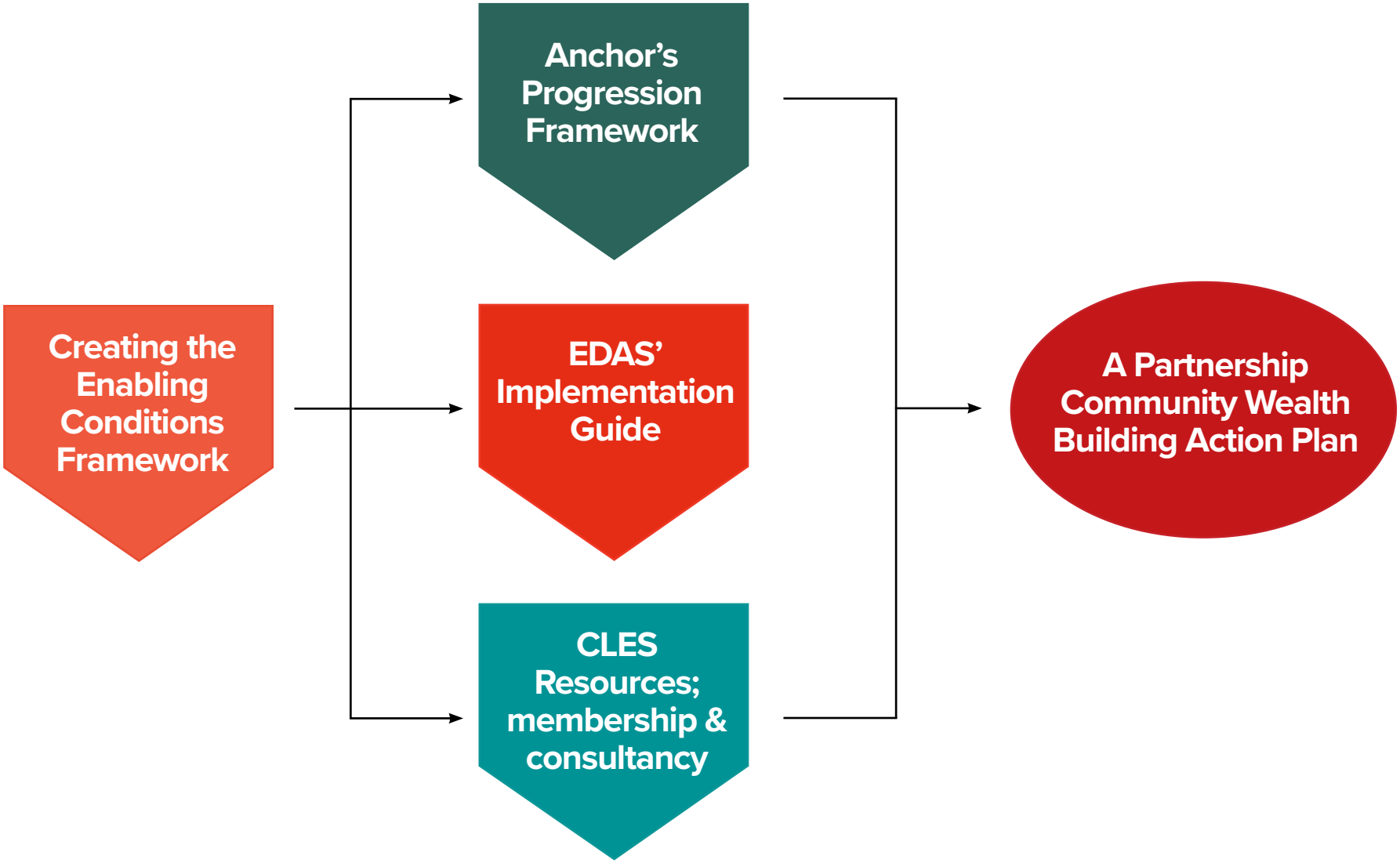
"I found the session really useful and the feedback I had from others was that they found it useful as well. I thought it was well structured and it flowed well...I think the session puts us in a strong position to be developing an action plan."

Local authorities

The Improvement Service can support you to use this framework in a way that suits your organisation in your approach to Community Wealth Building. Please get in touch with us to discuss the support you need. We can also signpost you to other organisations who have resources, skills and knowledge to support your work.
Contact: mia.duncan@improvementservice.org.uk

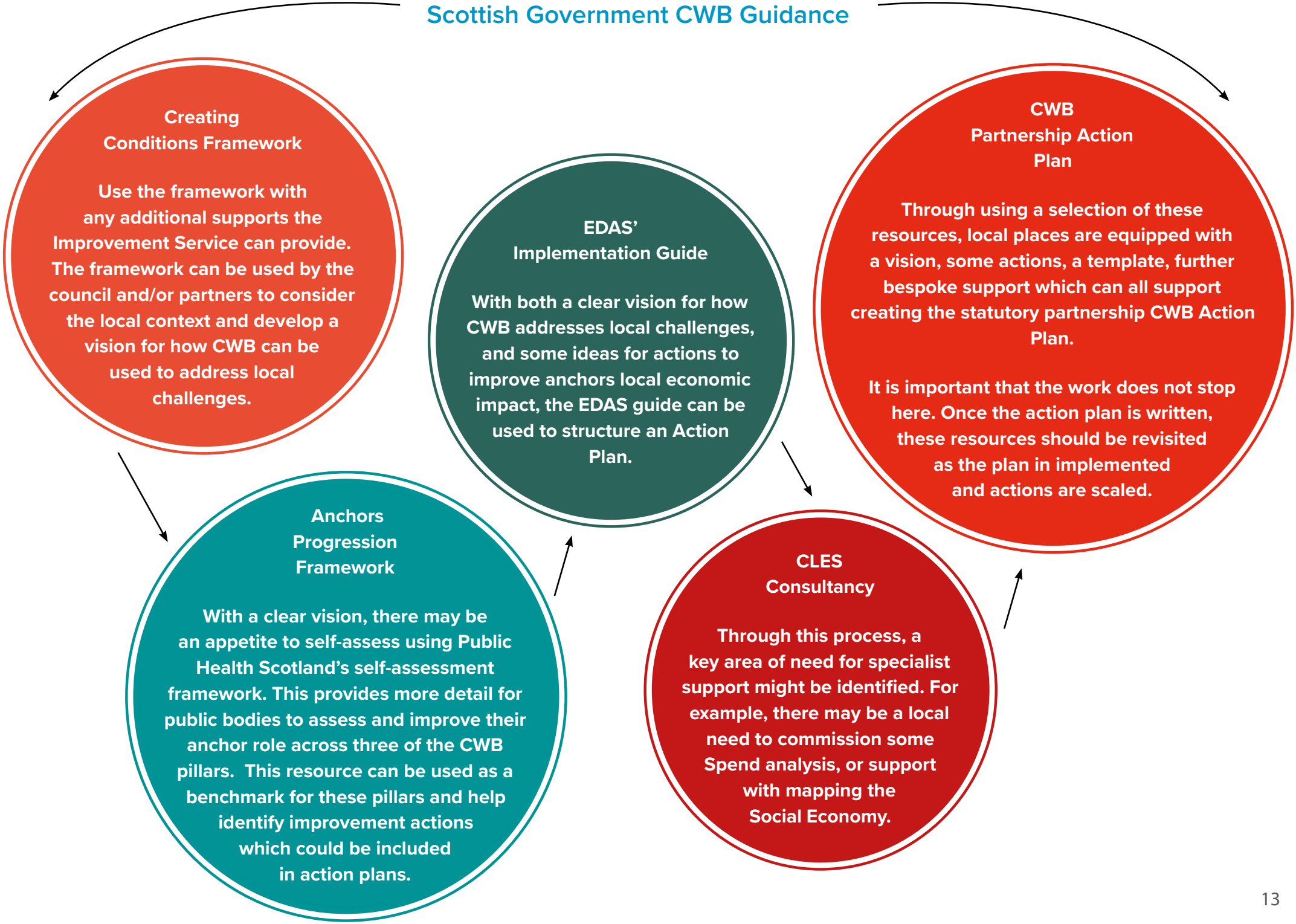
6 The Landscape of Support

This framework sits within a wider environment of support for Community Wealth Building and is intended for those who are at the start or early stages of their CWB journey. How these resources can be used depends on the stage of development and implementation your place is at, and the information below should help you decide what resource to use and when.



Getting Ready	Scoping and Mapping	Action Planning	Various
The Creating the Conditions Framework The Creating the Conditions Framework aims to support local authorities (and their local anchor partners) to identify what enabling conditions exist in their local area to help CWB grow and thrive and what action they might need to take to ensure the conditions are improved.	The Anchors Progression Framework The Anchors Progression Framework breaks down anchor activity into five dimensions: Employer, Procurement, Environment and Assets, Service Design and Delivery, and Exemplar Anchor Institution. These dimensions map directly onto three of the CWB pillars (e.g. Spend, Workforce, Land and Property) and can be used to deepen the self-assessment within each pillar. We suggest using the anchors progression framework to deepen the scoping work to assess where your organisation is currently and what can be scaled.	EDAS' Implementation Guide The EDAS Guide to Implementing Community Wealth Building in Scotland is best used during the action planning and delivery phase of the CWB journey. The Implementation guide includes information on what CWB is, what the benefits of it are, first steps for getting started and action planning. It includes a template, prompts, and case-study examples under each pillar. There is a template that can be used to create an action plan.	Centre for Local Economic Strategies CLES is a national leader in community wealth building, helping places redesign their economies so they are fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable. They provide a range of expert support from early stage thinking, to deeper stage implementation of CWB, including but not limited to: • Spend analyses to keep procurement spend local. • Develop CWB Action Plans. • Social economy mapping to strengthen social enterprises and co-ops. • Community-led research to connect public bodies with lived experience. • Convening anchor networks to drive local change. • Impact assessments to measure and track progress

Scottish Government CWB Guidance



7 Key Community Wealth Building Concepts

1. Wealth extraction

Wealth extraction refers to the process whereby wealth (assets, resources or money) is taken out of a community, region or local economy and transferred elsewhere. For example, a French energy company owns and operates a wind farm in northern Scotland. While the renewable energy is generated using Scottish natural resources, the profits and financial returns flow to the company's headquarters and shareholders in France, extracting wealth from local communities.

2. Money flows and Economic Leakage

Money flows refer to how income and spending circulate within a local economy. When money is spent on local businesses, services, and employment, it tends to stay in the community. Recirculating it multiplies its impact, which strengthens local economic resilience. However, when profits or payments are directed to shareholders or suppliers outside the area, that money exits the local economy. This is known as economic leakage. For example, when a national supermarket chain replaces a locally owned shop in a town, the profits from sales don't stay in the town, they go to corporate headquarters and shareholders. Money flows out of the local area, leaking out of the local economy.

3. Pre-distribution

Pre-distribution refers to policies and strategies aimed at shaping the economy so that wealth and income are distributed more fairly to begin with rather than afterwards. For example, by expanding opportunities for people to have a meaningful ownership stake in businesses, land, or other productive assets. Pre-distribution is focused on embedding human rights and equality into economic structures, so positive impacts are more fairly distributed, and benefits are experienced across society[7].

[7] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-wellbeing-economy/pages/5/

4. Wealth as Asset Ownership

Ownership of assets like land, property, businesses, or infrastructure, gives communities greater control over how wealth is generated and retained locally, helping to build collective prosperity and reduce dependency on external actors.

5. Democratisation of the Economy

Economic democracy is about shifting ownership and decision-making powers to a broader set of stakeholders that includes workers, consumers, suppliers, communities and the broader public sector.

6. Place-based Approach

A Place-based approach requires joint, collaborative work that takes account of the unique blend of characteristics that exist in every place. By doing so it will identify and maximise the positive impact and reduce any unintended consequences of actions. This approach enables better informed decisions leading to the delivery of more effective services and more resilient communities[8].

7. Inclusive and Democratic Business Models (IDBMs)

An Inclusive and Democratic Business Model (IDBM) is a business model which refers to business structures giving employees and communities a genuine stake in decision-making processes and profits, fostering a shared sense of responsibility and investment in long-term success. Inclusive and democratic business models focus on economic democracy, inclusivity and sustainability[9].

[8] *https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/planning-and-place-based-approaches/planning-for-place-programme/place-based-approaches*

[9] *https://ruralsehub.net/inclusive-democratic-business-models/*

8. Anchor Organisations

Sometimes abbreviated to 'anchors[10]' in the health space, the term 'anchor organisations' is used to refer to organisations which:

- Have an important presence in a place, usually through a combination of: being largescale employers; the largest purchasers of goods and services in the locality; controlling large areas of land and/or having relatively fixed assets.
- Are tied to a particular place by their mission, histories, physical assets and local relationships. Examples include local authorities, NHS boards, universities, trade unions, large local businesses, the combined activities of the community and voluntary sector and housing associations.

9. Economic Levers

Economic levers refer to the practical tools or mechanisms that local authorities, public bodies, and anchor institutions can use to influence the local economy in a way that benefits communities rather than extracting wealth. For example, a college can use its purchasing power as a lever to support local Small or Medium sized Enterprises' and IDBMs, or its role as an employer to create accessible apprenticeship routes into employment for those with barriers to employment.

[10] *https://publichealthscotland.scot/population-health/social-and-economic-impacts-on-health/economy-and-poverty/community-wealth-building-and-anchor-institutions/anchor-institutions/overview/*

8 Creating the conditions framework

Place

Community Wealth Building is a place-based approach. While placemaking traditionally focuses on creating vibrant spaces that foster community connection and creativity for the common good, CWB builds on this principle by ensuring economic activity is rooted in and responsive to local needs. Actions across the five pillars should be shaped by the unique challenges and opportunities of the local area.

This section encourages users to consider different dimensions of place and how CWB can emerge from or align with these. Not all aspects will apply to every local authority or public body but reviewing them will help identify the key elements of place that can be strengthened to support community wealth building.

Pre-existing policy and action

Most places are already aware of and/or advancing elements within the Six Pillars of CWB. Naming and connecting pre-existing policies and practices across the Pillars accelerates the take up and growth of CWB and helps to tie together the range of policies and duties that drive service development and delivery.

Key considerations

- What economic strategies are in use or in development in the council and region?
- When is the economic strategy due for review?
- How is the council/partners delivering on their sustainable procurement duty?
- Does the council/region deliver on fair work practices?
- Does the council/partner have an up-to-date asset register?
- Is there a functioning community asset transfer process?
- What employability functions and support exist within the council and partnerships?
- What practice across the pillars are you aware of that is ongoing in the council/local area?
- Are there any other policies/strategies that help deliver CWB?

What relevant policy and action exists?
How could these existing policy and practices accelerate the take up or growth of CWB? **Consider:** **1. Spending** **2. Land and Property** **3. Workforce** **4. Inclusive Ownership** **5. Finance**

The Local Economy

Understanding the local economy is essential for identifying which sectors are most suited to a CWB approach. Different parts of the economy present unique opportunities.

Certain economic sectors may have a tradition of broad-based ownership models (e.g. agriculture[11]), while other, emerging sectors are primed for democratic ownership models (e.g. energy[12]). Other sectors have traditions of collective decision making or have strong trades union representation and collective employee voice. Strong worker mobilisation around a specific cause or injustice can enable CWB. All of these offer the opportunity to demonstrate and scale CWB activity.

For example, the privatisation of the care sector has resulted in large extractions of wealth[13]. In response to this, innovative models of care provision such as the Wigan Ethical Care Framework, or Equal Care Co-op have been developed to support people and places.

Questions to help consider the local context

- What are the key sectors in your local area?
- What are sectors developing in your local area?
- Do any sectors have strong collective employee identity?
- Are there any parts of the economy which are dominated by large international corporations?
- Are there historic examples of worker mobilisation? (e.g. The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Work-In)
- Is there a strong worker voice in local business?

[11] *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02692171.2025.2498351*

[12] *https://communityenergy.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Scottish-Community-Coalition-on-Energy-Community-Shared-Ownership-Paper-FINAL-1.pdf*

[13] *https://cles.org.uk/ending-extraction-in-the-uk-care-system/*

What are the key components of the local economy?
What needs to happen to grow CWB within specific parts of the local economy?

Motivational Local Issue

Adverse or calamitous events such as floods, industry closure and mass job-loss or lack of affordable housing, expose structural injustices. These can trigger wider calls for economic justice and community control, positioning CWB as a productive antidote.

For example, In Preston, a Community Wealth Building strategy was deployed after a revitalisation plan with an international development firm failed in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Read more.

Key considerations

- Have there been any local incidents that have exposed vulnerabilities or structural injustice? (e.g. flooding, industry closure and job-loss, public service closures, housing crisis)
- Is there a community that is most affected by these events?
- What do these events reveal about the distribution of power, resources, and decision-making in your area?

Detail of a local issue

How could CWB be positioned as a productive antidote?

Worked Example: Glasgow Rent Strikes

Detail an event: Glasgow's industrial workforce was central to the war effort. Demand for labour soared, but housing supply remained stagnant. Private landlords took advantage of the situation by raising rents, knowing workers had little choice but to stay near shipyards and munitions factories. The Glasgow Women's Housing Association (led by Mary Barbour and others) organised thousands of tenants across neighbourhoods such as Govan and Partick. This was a radical assertion of democratic power: tenants collectively challenged the legal and economic authority of private landlords, resulting in the Rent Restriction Act 1915[14].

Framing the problem using CWB concepts: The housing crisis can be understood as a case of wealth extraction and lack of democratic control. Housing was controlled by private landlords who extracted wealth from tenants without reinvesting locally. Tenants had no stake or voice in housing decisions, and wartime inflation and low wages left communities vulnerable to rent hikes. Decision-making was concentrated among property owners, not residents.

Applying CWB to frame a solution: Through strategic collaboration, anchor organisations could work together to progress actions across the pillars which could tackle the economic hardship families experienced.

- **Community Land Trusts secure land in community hands to prevent speculative rent increases, while housing co-operatives enable tenants to collectively own and manage homes, ensuring long-term affordability and stability.**
- **Local authorities and public bodies can procure housing services locally and invest in community-led projects, with pension funds redirected into social housing development rather than external markets.**
- **Housing providers could become anchors and be encouraged to invest locally and procure their services locally and from inclusive and democratic businesses.**

[14] *https://socialistalternative.info/2022/11/29/glasgow-rent-strike-1915-when-workers-fought-back-against-landlord-exploitation/*

Cultural History and Traditions of Place

Some communities have a deep culture of cohesion and bonding, often as the result of historical disinvestment and exclusion. They meet economic needs through informal cooperation, which can be strengthened to support and grow CWB locally.

For example, in Badenoch and Strathspey in the Scottish Highlands, Community Connections is a not-for-profit organisation which provides a range of accessible transport services for people living in Badenoch and Strathspey who do not have transport of their own or who are unable to access public transport. Communities step in to fill the gaps.

A history of a place where there has been significant and overt politicisation and mobilisation of people creates a collective cultural identity, community memory and lineage to which CWB can tap into, connect and give power.

For example, Colorado has a long, rich history of cooperative worker ownership, much of which informs its affinity for Community Wealth Building approaches today. (See the Democracy Collaborative's full case-study).

Questions to help consider the local context

- What are the cultural traditions of your place?
- Is there deep cultural cohesion in this local context? If yes, how did this cultural cohesion/bonding develop?
- Are there informal cooperative practices?
- How would you characterise the cultural history of your place?

Identify key elements of cultural history and/or traditions that have shaped your place
Do any of these align with CWB? How could these be linked to make CWB relevant and easy to understand in the local context?

Money Flows

Community Wealth Building activity needs to be financed. It doesn't need to be new money; it can be making existing money go further. Through aligning public and private investment with community needs, this money can go further, catalysing and sustaining CWB action. The existence of mission-aligned public and private investment flows make it possible to both catalyse and sustain CWB action.

Private investment flows

For example, Social Investment Scotland, or Triodos Bank represent mission-aligned private investment flows. While Triodos operates as a bank, its activities (providing loans, equity investments, and impact funds) channel private capital into mission-driven projects. At a local scale, credit unions or community banks could be considered mission-aligned private investment flows.

Public investment flows

For example, Scottish National Investment Bank is a mission-aligned public investment flow which could make it possible to catalyse or sustain CWB action. At the local scale, Local Authority capital budgets, and community benefits clauses are examples of public money flows which could be 'mission-aligned'.

Key considerations

- What are the core economic, social, and environmental outcomes your council is trying to achieve?
- To what extent are capital budgets currently aligned with these outcomes?
- Are there expectations or incentives for contractors to contribute to community benefit, fair work, or local reinvestment?
- What policies and procedures are in place to maximise public good from local spending?
- Which credit unions exist locally, and how could their work be supported?

What funding streams coming into local authorities and partners could be better aligned with CWB work? Some examples could include: No One Left Behind, Place-Based Investment, Depopulation, Pride in Place, Local Growth Fund, Community Led Local Development Fund (CLLD), National Lottery.
Are there opportunities to harness other investment flows?

Institutions and organisations

A strong network of active organisations can provide the foundation for delivering CWB. Prominence and permanence of institutions and organisations within a geography can add credibility to the CWB approach.

A mixture of governmental and non-governmental organisational actors acts as the infrastructure through which to deliver CWB. Work through the sections below to identify which organisations are important for delivering CWB locally.

Local Government

The support and commitment of local government to creating policies, provide resources, and convene key players is ultimately critical for the long-term success of CWB (i.e. producing CWB action plans as a core part of their economic strategy).

Key considerations

- How engaged is the local authority with CWB?
- Are all service areas engaged with CWB?
- Are there particular service areas that could be more engaged in the agenda?
- Are all services who can most drive CWB approaches engaged?
- Is there buy-in among senior leadership for this economic approach?
- How well briefed are local elected members?

How embedded is CWB into the council's operation currently?
What needs to happen to further embed CWB as a way of working?

Anchors

Large public and nonprofit organisations are rooted in place and have a mission to serve. With awareness of their role as shapers of the local and/or regional economy, they can coordinate actions to address economic inequality.

Some examples of anchor partnerships:

- **Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission**
- **Clackmannanshire Community Anchor Partner Organisations**
- **Leeds Anchors**
- **East Lothian Anchors and supportive partners**
- **South Lanarkshire Community Wealth Building Commission**
- **Private businesses can also act as anchors and create anchor partnerships, such the Leeds Business Anchors Network**

Key considerations

- Who are the key anchor organisations in the local area?
- How aware are the anchor organisations in the local area of their role as economic actors?
- Are there local organisations in addition to the Relevant Public Bodies that could contribute productively to a CWB partnership?
- What hook might help engage anchors in a partnership?

What awareness of CWB is there among anchor organisations? Among Relevant Public Bodies:
Among other important local anchors:
What steps could be taken to raise awareness or build a partnership?

Inclusive & Democratic Business Models (IDBMs)

Identifying local examples of different types of business models can raise their profile. Businesses like social enterprises, employee-owned businesses, cooperatives and development trusts have a huge range of benefits they bring to local places[15]. These examples can inspire and bring people together to support CWB.

For example, North Ayrshire Council has played a key role in supporting Booth Welsh, an engineering firm based in Irvine, as it transitioned to an Employee Ownership Trust. This move secures the company's long-term future, safeguards over 300 jobs, and ensures wealth remains within the local economy.

Note: IDBMs refers to social enterprises, employee-owned businesses, worker co-operatives, co-operatives, Development Trusts and other forms of democratic ownership models. Discover more information on IDBMs.

To find out about social enterprises in your area, read the Social Enterprise Census.

Key considerations

- Which inclusive and democratic businesses are there operating in the local area?
- Are any of these particularly emblematic or illustrative of CWB and democratic ownership? Some organisations can become useful examples through which to explain what CWB is to others.
- What support is provided locally (e.g. through Business Support) for new or established businesses considering a democratic ownership model?

[15] *https://ruralsehub.net/inclusive-democratic-business-models/*

What is the local IDBM landscape like?
How could one of the above organisations be made into a point of reference and act as a rallying coalition for CWB?

Third and Community Sector or 'backbone' organisations

Community-based organisations are often the key drivers of CWB action. From building and iterating the various elements of CWB (e.g. land trusts, cooperatives) to building coalitions among community stakeholders, "backbone" organisations amplify action across the Five Pillars.

Importantly, some of these organisations are positioned to act as intermediary bodies, providing the infrastructure to hold complex relationships (often with politicians and political administrations) and the resources to help build capacity and advance development.

For example, The Coalfields Regeneration Trust is a community wealth building charity operating in Britain's coalfield areas. They create jobs and economic growth by building industrial units for SMEs and using all taxable profits to generate social value through working with partners to enable communities to reach their full potential.

Key considerations

- Who are the existing community-based organisations actively involved in CWB-related work (e.g. housing, food systems, employment, enterprise support)?
- Which of these amplify action across the five pillars?
- What is the current relationship between the council and these organisations?
- Do these organisations have the capacity (staff, funding, networks) to take on a backbone or intermediary role?

How can one of these organisations become the main go-to group that leads and brings others together to make community wealth building happen?
Which relationships and groups could be harnessed to further CWB development, and how?

Philanthropy

Funding from charities or other non-government sources can help kick-start Community Wealth Building. It does this by showing that ideas work in practice or by providing the extra support and expertise needed to make those ideas happen. This can be referred to as 'Catalytic capital' early-stage funding (from foundations, charities, or other non-state actors) that is used to initiate or accelerate CWB.

For example, Pathways to Progress is a three-year project funded by the Robertson Trust, focused on improving jobs in Scotland's social care sector. The project is delivered by Living Wage Scotland at the Poverty Alliance. The project's main aim is to enhance fair work in social care, with better pay, more job security and improved working conditions. They want to help reduce in-work poverty and support employers to meet Fair Work standards, including exploring what it takes to offer Living Hours - not just better pay, but more predictable and secure working hours.

Key considerations

- Which key philanthropic organisations are funding innovative local projects which could become proof of concepts for further CWB work?
- Does your organisation play a philanthropic role locally in relation to Common Good?
- Are there opportunities to connect funding from philanthropy to priority areas for your local area?

What are the key philanthropic organisations working in your area?

Does your organisation fulfil a philanthropic role? How could this be scaled?

Support Providers

Capacity building is essential for sustaining and growing CWB activities. Communities need targeted help and expert support to strengthen local CWB organisations and rebuild skills that have been lost due to years of underinvestment and fragmentation. There are a range of support providers in the broader CWB ecosystem.

Some National examples include:

- Cooperative Development Scotland (CDS) – CDS can help businesses considering succession plans, employee ownership, or a co-operative business model.
- Social Investment Scotland - A social enterprise and charity offering loan funding and business support for social enterprises, charities and community groups.
- Co-operate – advice and support for co-operative or community business.
- Social Enterprise Scotland (SES) – the representative body for social enterprise in Scotland.
- Economic Development Association Scotland (EDAS) – CWB Centre for Excellence.
- Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) – the curators of the community wealth building movement in the UK.
- Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) – member-led organisation that promotes, supports and represents development trusts across Scotland.
- Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network - a collaboration between local authorities in the UK who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.
- Improvement Service – provide secretariat to a peer-learning CWB network and offer bespoke support to Scottish local authorities, training materials available for elected members and officers.
- Living Wage Scotland - aims to increase the number of employees in Scotland who receive the real Living Wage.
- Supplier Development Scotland - helps Scottish SMEs find and bid for public and private sector contracts, through its free training, networking events and website.

Key considerations

- What types of support for CWB activity exist regionally or locally?
- How might you make use of the existing support providers?

What support providers exist locally?

How might you make use of the existing support providers?

People

People are at the heart of driving change. People lead to change by inspiring action and sharing knowledge. In this section users should consider the different people and how they can use their influence and position to tap into power at both the local and institutional levels.

Position	Role in progressing CWB
Elected Members	Elected Members can be powerful champions of CWB. From mobilising people and directing resources, to policy making and legislation, all of which are important aspects of creating structural change.
Activists and Organisers	Activists rally communities against injustice. Their organising energy can help position, mobilise and maintain CWB action. They will also have local insight into the challenges felt locally and the key issues around which the community is mobilising.
Non-governmental CWB advocates	Non-political actors working in anchor organisations (e.g. Colleges, Universities) who are passionate about change, serve as drivers of CWB practices within their respective institutions.
Engaged Community Members and/or Community Councils	Residents who have time, energy and resource to commit to agitate for change and CWB action are important in organising and holding to account implementation.
Engaged Civil Servants	Government employees from a wide range of departments who can influence policy and practice shifts within the government are important for creating lasting structural change.
Researchers and Storytellers	Being able to paint the picture of CWB solutions in a way that is accessible, while resonating with communities is significant. The use of data and media tools which reach people where they are, and building out participatory research, is essential for progressing CWB.
Generative professionals	Generative professionals are professionals who are tied to their place and can lend their skills and expertise to communities in ways that build capacity and knowledge: like lawyers, accountants, business-people, architects and planners. These people can be important for advancing CWB beyond piloting and embedding efforts into mainstream practice.

Internal people

Key considerations

- Which service areas are engaged in CWB?
  - Procurement
  - Economic Development
  - Human Resources
  - Planning
  - Communities
  - Finance
  - Transport
  - Housing
  - Education
  - Early years and childcare
  - Social Care
- Which services not listed could contribute to progressing CWB within your organisation?

Within your organisations, who is currently engaged in CWB?

Within your organisation, who needs to be brought in?

External people

Key considerations

- Are there working connections between your organisation and the other relevant partners?
  - Local Authority
  - Regional Transport Partnership
  - NHS Health Board
  - Regional College
  - Skills Development Scotland
  - Enterprise Agency
- Based on the earlier sections of this framework which other organisations will you partner with in creating a CWB plan?

External to your organisation who is currently engaged in CWB?

External to your organisation, who needs to brought in for the next stages of your CWB journey?

9 Next steps

Through completing the relevant sections of this framework, users will have identified areas of activity from which to grow a local CWB approach. Users will have identified key stakeholders to contact and areas of activity to focus on.

Collate actions from the framework sections here:

This will help you build a vision for what CWB will look like locally for your area. Below are some key actions that can be taken to progress from this point, to creating an action plan fulfilling your statutory CWB duty and ultimately implementing CWB locally.



These actions can be supported by using the following resources to drill deeper down into local CWB activity already taking place and identifying what else needs to happen.

The Anchors Progression Framework	EDAS' Implementation Guide	Centre for Local Economic Strategies
The Anchors Progression Framework breaks down anchor activity into five dimensions: Employer, Procurement, Environment and Assets, Service Design and Delivery, and Exemplar Anchor Institution. These dimensions map directly onto three of the CWB pillars (e.g. Spend, Workforce, Land and Property), and can be used to deepen the self-assessment within each pillar. We suggest using the anchors progression framework to deepen the scoping work to assess where your organisation is currently and what can be scaled.	The EDAS Guide to Implementing Community Wealth Building in Scotland is best used during the action planning and delivery phase of the CWB journey. The Implementation guide includes information on what CWB is, what the benefits of it are, first steps for getting started and action planning. It includes a template, prompts, and case-study examples under each pillar. There is a template which can be used to create an action plan.	CLES is a national leader in community wealth building, helping places redesign their economies so they are fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable. They provide a range of expert support from early stage thinking, to deeper stage implementation of CWB, including but not limited to: ● Spend analyses to keep procurement spend local. ● Develop CWB Action Plans. ● Social economy mapping to strengthen social enterprises and co-ops. ● Community-led research to connect public bodies with lived experience. ● Convening anchor networks to drive local change. ● Impact assessments to measure and track progress

Local authorities

The Improvement Service can support you to use this framework in a way that suits your organisation in your approach to Community Wealth Building.

Please get in touch with us to discuss the support you need. We can also signpost you to other organisations who have resources, skills and knowledge to support your work.

Contact: mia.duncan@improvementservice.org.uk



November 2026

www.improvementservice.org.uk | info@improvementservice.org.uk | @improvserv

improvement service