

SRP 9 Community Wealth Building and active travel

With a focus on North Ayrshire

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To find out more, please contact:

Lisa Gallacher (Lisa.Gallacher@sustrans.org.uk), or

Tim Woodhead (Tim.Woodhead@sustrans.org.uk)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This research was funded by Transport Scotland and delivered by Sustrans as part of the Scottish Research Programme.

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an economic development approach which aims to retain wealth locally and create shared economic prosperity. It is gaining traction across the globe for its potential to offer a more holistic idea of growth and its potential to tackle some of society's most challenging issues such as poverty, inequality, democratic accountability and, significantly, the climate emergency.

This report presents the findings of our research on whether and how active travel aligns with and might contribute to the CWB approach, particularly in the context of North Ayrshire Council's wish to further develop its CWB approach.

The report:

- Considers the key elements of a CWB approach and local authorities' role, with reference to other vanguard local authorities in the UK
- Examines the Scottish policy context to CWB
- Examines the vanguard role on CWB played by North Ayrshire
- Presents a framework for considering the relationship between active travel/sustainable travel and CWB, based on our literature review and experience of developing and delivering sustainable travel projects
- Sets out some key perceptions of the issues in linking CWB and active travel gathered through interviews
- Considers how active travel and sustainable transport be more embedded within North Ayrshire' Council CWB agenda.

Key findings

The key elements of a CWB approach and local authorities' role

CWB can be defined as a system-changing approach to community economic development that works to produce broadly shared economic prosperity, racial equity and ecological sustainability. CWB posits a more holistic idea of growth which redirects flows of wealth so that everyone in the community can benefit from local economic activity.

A key feature of CWB is the role of anchor institutions. Anchor institutions are local public sector organisations and other large commercial, public, and social organisations such as councils, hospitals, universities, colleges, and housing associations. These organisations are also tied to their community by their history, identity, mission and relationships, meaning they have deep roots and an important presence in their local area. CWB calls on anchor institutions to use their underutilised power - the way in which these institutions spend money, employ people, use their land, property and financial assets can be hugely influential to the local area. Local authorities such as North Ayrshire therefore have a critical role in promoting CWB, as they do in promoting sustainable and active travel.

The Scottish policy context

The Scottish Government has been actively developing its CWB initiatives as part of a broader strategy to reshape local economies and support a wellbeing economy. Key developments include:

- **CWB Legislation:** The Scottish Government is planning to introduce a Community Wealth Building Bill, which will be the first of its kind globally. This legislation aims to embed CWB principles into the operations of public bodies, focusing on keeping wealth within local communities and promoting inclusive economic growth. The approach includes prioritising local procurement, fair employment, community ownership of assets, and leveraging public sector resources to support local economies.

- **Consultation and Pilot Projects:** The Scottish Government conducted a public consultation in early 2023 to gather input on the proposed legislation. The consultation highlighted the need for public bodies to integrate CWB into their work, with an emphasis on collaborative and place-based strategies. Pilot projects have been funded to test these approaches in various regions, providing insights into how CWB can be effectively implemented across different contexts, including rural and island communities.
- **Alignment with Broader Policies:** CWB is aligned with other Scottish Government priorities, such as land reform, community empowerment, and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). These initiatives collectively aim to deliver economic justice and address inequalities by ensuring that economic benefits are distributed more equitably across Scotland. The CWB approach is seen as a critical tool in achieving these broader economic and social goals.
- **Support for Rural and Island Communities:** Specific attention is being given to how CWB can be adapted for rural and island communities. This includes recognising the unique roles that small and micro enterprises, as well as community-owned organisations, play in these areas. The Scottish Government is working with various partners, including local authorities and economic development bodies, to tailor CWB strategies that suit these distinct contexts.

Scottish Government documents and policies on CWB currently do not extensively emphasise the role of active and sustainable travel. The recent consultation on CWB legislation primarily focused on economic development, local wealth retention, and community empowerment, without a specific focus on active travel initiatives. Although sustainability is a key component of the CWB framework, active travel is more directly addressed in separate transport and environmental strategies rather than within CWB-specific policies.

The vanguard role of North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire has taken significant steps to develop its CWB approach, making it the first council in Scotland to adopt this strategy. Launched in May 2020, the strategy focuses on creating a fairer local economy by retaining wealth within the community, increasing local employment, and supporting local businesses. Key actions include:

- **Establishing the CWB Commission:** In 2019, North Ayrshire set up the Community Wealth Building Commission, which includes council services, community planning partners, and other regional stakeholders. This commission drives the CWB agenda and ensures that the strategy is integrated across various sectors.
- **Launching the CWB Strategy:** The CWB strategy was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic to address economic challenges with a focus on wellbeing and inclusion. The strategy promotes local spending through initiatives like the "Keep it Local" campaign, encouraging residents and businesses to buy locally and support community-based enterprises.
- **Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter:** To foster collaboration, North Ayrshire introduced the CWB Anchor Charter in October 2020. This charter has 16 pledges across five CWB pillars and an additional pillar focused on climate action. Eleven organisations, including regional councils and public institutions, have signed the charter, committing to using their economic influence to support local communities.
- **Investment and Economic Strategy:** The Ayrshire Growth Deal, signed in November 2020, includes a £3 million Community Wealth Building Fund to support local businesses and community organisations. Additionally, a ten-year Regional Economic Strategy was approved in 2023 to ensure CWB remains central to Ayrshire's economic vision.
- **Key Projects and Developments:** North Ayrshire has embarked on several projects, such as the development of a Community and Visitor Hub at Lochshore, utilising council land to benefit the community economically and

environmentally. This includes creating local jobs and opportunities for community ownership of sites. Other initiatives include securing regeneration funds for projects like the redevelopment of Millport Town Hall and the establishment of green jobs through a £500,000 Green Jobs Fund.

These steps demonstrate North Ayrshire's commitment to building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economy through the principles of CWB.

North Ayrshire's CWB strategy and related policy documents do not prominently feature active and sustainable travel as central elements of their approach. While the strategy includes broad commitments to sustainability and local economic development, specific measures related to active travel, such as cycling and walking infrastructure or integrating sustainable transport into CWB, are not detailed. The focus remains on economic levers like local procurement, fair employment, and community asset use.

The contribution of active and sustainable travel to CWB

We found that active and sustainable travel had **not** been identified prominently as a key potential driver of a CWB approach in any of the existing literature or practice we examined and very few national or local CWB strategies integrated active and sustainable travel as potential tools or mechanisms.

Integrating active travel and sustainable transport into CWB strategies can lead to a healthier, more equitable, and economically resilient community. These approaches not only support local businesses and job creation but also enhance the quality of life, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion.

As part of our research, we developed a framework for integrating active travel and sustainable transport into CWB strategies. The Framework identifies alignment in seven key policy areas which are set down in Table 1, below.

Table 1: A framework for integrating active travel/sustainable transport policies into a community wealth building approach

Policy area	How active travel contributes to community wealth building approach
Local Economic Benefits	<p>Job Creation: Infrastructure projects for active travel (e.g., cycle lanes, pedestrian paths) and sustainable transport (e.g., electric buses, public transit improvements) create local jobs in construction, maintenance, and operations.</p> <p>Local Businesses: Active travel encourages people to shop locally as they are more likely to frequent nearby businesses when walking or cycling, supporting the local economy.</p>
Environmental Sustainability	<p>Reduced Emissions: Sustainable transport options reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and public health, leading to reduced healthcare costs and healthier, more productive communities.</p> <p>Resilience: Enhancing local transport infrastructure reduces dependency on external fuel sources, making the community more resilient to global economic shifts and fuel price volatility.</p>
Health and wellbeing	<p>Active Lifestyles: Active travel promotes physical activity, reducing the incidence of lifestyle-related diseases. Healthier populations can lead to reduced healthcare costs and increased workforce productivity.</p> <p>Mental Health: Improved mental wellbeing from reduced pollution and increased physical activity contributes to a more vibrant community, fostering a positive social environment.</p>

Policy area	How active travel contributes to community wealth building approach
Social inclusion and equity	<p>Accessibility: Sustainable transport systems provide affordable and accessible travel options for all community members, including low-income residents, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities, promoting social equity.</p> <p>Community Cohesion: Public transport and active travel infrastructure can help bridge social divides by improving access to education, employment, and social services.</p>
Urban Planning and Land Use	<p>Compact Development: Sustainable transport encourages denser, mixed-use developments that can revitalise urban areas, making them more attractive for businesses and residents.</p> <p>Public Spaces: Investment in pedestrian-friendly and cycle-friendly environments enhances public spaces, making them more vibrant and appealing, contributing to local pride and community identity.</p>
Economic Resilience	<p>Reduced Costs: Households save money on transportation costs when active travel and public transport options are available, increasing disposable income that can be spent within the local economy.</p> <p>Diverse Economy: Investing in sustainable transport can diversify the local economy by supporting sectors like tourism, retail, and green technology.</p>
Partnerships and Governance	<p>Collaborative Efforts: Community wealth building through sustainable transport requires collaboration between local governments, businesses, and residents. These partnerships can strengthen community bonds and ensure that development efforts align with local needs and priorities.</p> <p>Policy Support: Local policies that support sustainable transport and active travel can lead to long-term economic stability and growth, aligning with broader CWB goals.</p>

We hope this framework will be used by local authorities to help guide their approach to integrating their active travel and sustainable transport policies into a CWB approach.

Key current perceptions on the alignment of active travel and CWB

We interviewed several key players within North Ayrshire and elsewhere to identify some of the key current perceptions about the relationship between active travel and CWB.

The key messages included:

- Key players could see the potential contribution active and sustainable travel can make to CWB and the case for better integration into strategies and approaches
- Sometimes links do already exist, but the links are not specific and integration is therefore less than it could be
- Organisations adopting a CWB approach should clearly define the pillars and how they are to be used.
- Some organisations have chosen to adopt an additional pillar to cover climate change but it is also possible to see the well-recognised existing pillars as tools to meet climate change goals
- Active and sustainable travel are clearly contributory factors in local authority's climate change agenda but the wider role it can play in the CWB policy agenda (as demonstrated by the framework we developed) is not widely recognised.

There was scope to further develop linkages in North Ayrshire by bringing officers who worked on active and sustainable travel with those who worked on CWB in workshops to explore those linkages.

How active travel and sustainable transport could be more embedded within the North Ayrshire Council CWB agenda

- Integrating active and sustainable travel plans more closely into North Ayrshire's CWB approach could help to enhance the Council's demonstration of its plans for local economic resilience, reduction of carbon emissions, and the improvement of community health. We identify some of the greater linkages that could be made below:
- By prioritising active travel in community planning, the council can create environments that encourage walking and cycling, which aligns with the CWB goals of local health improvement and sustainable development.
- North Ayrshire can ensure that all new infrastructure projects, including those under the Ayrshire Growth Deal and local regeneration initiatives, include provisions for active travel. This could involve developing safe and accessible cycling and walking paths, improving street lighting, and ensuring connectivity between residential areas, schools, workplaces, and public transport hubs.
- Working with local schools and businesses to promote cycling to work or school schemes, supported by secure bike storage, showers, and changing facilities, would directly support community wellbeing and reduce traffic congestion, thereby contributing to the CWB's sustainability pillar
- North Ayrshire should acknowledge its existing partnerships with local businesses, community organisations, and public bodies (as outlined in its CWB Anchor Charter) includes active travel initiatives.

Active Travel as a Local Economic Driver:

- By investing in active travel infrastructure, North Ayrshire can boost local businesses, especially those related to tourism, recreation, and retail.

- Establishing greenways and scenic routes that connect key commercial and cultural sites can attract visitors and stimulate local spending, fitting well within the CWB's objective of retaining wealth locally.
- Actions that reduce reliance on cars, lower transport costs for residents, and contribute to a greener economy, aligning with the CWB goals of inclusivity and sustainability.
- Developing integrated sustainable travel plans that combine active travel with public transport options will be crucial. This could include bike-sharing programs at transport hubs, discounts for combined bike and bus or train travel, and initiatives to make public transport more accessible and affordable.

Community Engagement and Education:

- In line with CWB's emphasis on community involvement, North Ayrshire could implement educational campaigns and participatory planning processes that involve local residents in designing and promoting active travel networks.
- Engaging the community in these discussions ensures that the infrastructure meets local needs and encourages greater use.

Funding and Incentives:

- Leveraging the £3 million CWB Fund and other regional or national funding sources to finance active travel projects can make a significant impact.

Climate Action Integration:

- By integrating active and sustainable travel plans into its broader climate action goals within the CWB framework, North Ayrshire can directly address environmental sustainability.
- Promoting low-carbon travel options will help the council meet its climate targets while supporting local economic and health outcomes.
- In these ways North Ayrshire can integrate its active and sustainable travel planning with its CWB policies

designed to enhance local wealth and community resilience but also support broader goals of sustainability and wellbeing, creating a more connected, healthier, and economically vibrant community.

Part 1: Introduction

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an economic development approach which aims to retain wealth locally and create shared economic prosperity. It is gaining traction across the globe for its potential to offer a more holistic idea of growth and its potential to tackle some of society's most challenging issues such as poverty, inequality, democratic accountability and, significantly, the climate emergency.

This report presents the findings of our research on whether and how active travel aligns with and might contribute to the CWB approach, particularly in the context of North Ayrshire Council's wish to develop such an approach.

The report is arranged as follows:

[Part 2](#) Considers the elements of a CWB approach

[Part 3](#) Examines the Scottish policy context to CWB

[Part 4](#) Examines the vanguard role on CWB played by North Ayrshire

[Part 5](#) Considers the relevance of active and sustainable travel to CWB and presents a framework for considering the relationship between active travel/sustainable travel

[Part 6](#) Sets out some key perceptions of the issues in linking CWB and active travel gathered through interviews

[Part 7](#) Considers how active travel and sustainable transport be more embedded within North Ayrshire' Council CWB agenda

Part 2: What is Community Wealth Building?

Community Wealth Building

CWB is an internationally recognised approach to economic development. The Democracy Collaborative, an American non-profit think tank, focussed on creating a democratic society through methods such as CWB, define CWB as:

“A system-changing approach to community economic development that works to produce broadly shared economic prosperity, racial equity and ecological sustainability.” ⁱ

The approach was pioneered in the late 2000's in Cleveland Ohio in association with the Democracy Collaborative. It was then also developed in Preston (UK), alongside the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)ⁱⁱ. The CWB approach is now gaining traction across the globe and by both centralised and local governmentsⁱⁱ. The Scottish Government has adopted the model as an approach to achieving their wellbeing economy objectives which are outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformationⁱⁱⁱ. The vision of a wellbeing economy is to create:

“A society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. We aim to achieve this while respecting environmental limits, embodied by our climate and nature targets.” ^{iv}

Why CWB?

Recent crises such as the global financial crisis, the covid-19 pandemic and the climate emergency have highlighted wider underlying issues such as democratic accountability, poverty and widening inequalities^v. The effects of the covid-19 pandemic have also put pressure on governments and local authorities to ‘build back better’^{vi}. This has driven debates around the nature of economic development approaches and what they aim to achieve.

The increased interest in the CWB model highlights that current economic models are failing to deliver prosperity to all. CLES point out that despite UK economic growth roughly doubling in the last 30 years, this has failed to produce social, economic and climate benefits for most people^{vii}. Crisp et al support this:

“Established paradigms of urban growth have been questioned for their perceived failure to address concerns about persistent or widening inequalities; economic, social and ecological sustainability; and democratic accountability.” ^v

CWB may have potential to tackle these issues faced by local communities^{viii}.

Approaches such as CWB highlight a more holistic idea of growth which redirects flows of wealth so that everyone in the community can benefit from local economic activity^{vii}. Neil McInroy explores the benefits of a ‘local wealth building’ approach. They state the benefits can be:

“Jobs and meaningful work, equity, inclusion, economic stability and environmental stability.” ^{viii}

Anchor institutions and the five pillars

A key feature of CWB is the role of anchor institutions. Anchor institutions are local public sector organisations and other large commercial, public, and social organisations such as councils, hospitals, universities, colleges, and housing associations^{vii}.

These organisations are also tied to their community by their history, identity, mission and relationships, meaning they have deep roots and an important presence in their local area^{ix}.

CWB calls on anchor institutions to use their underutilised power. For example, CLES highlight that the way in which these institutions spend money, employ people, use their land, property and financial assets can be hugely influential to the local area^{vii}. They can exert this influence by applying the five core strategies of CWB^x.

The five pillars of CWB (as defined by Scottish Government)ⁱⁱⁱ are:

1. Spending – Maximising community benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing good enterprises, fair work, and shorter supply chains.
2. Workforce - Increasing fair work and developing local labour markets that support the wellbeing of communities.
3. Land and Property - Growing social, ecological, financial, and economic value that local communities gain from land and property assets.
4. Finance - Ensuring that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities, and businesses.
5. Inclusive ownership - Developing more local and social enterprises which generate community wealth, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms, and cooperatives.

Best local and transport authority CWB practice in England

Some of the most advanced local authorities in England in establishing CWB strategies include:

Preston City Council: Often cited as a pioneer, Preston has developed a robust CWB model focusing on local

procurement, promoting worker cooperatives, and using anchor institutions like local universities and hospitals to support local businesses. Their approach has led to increased local spending and job creation.

Islington Council: Islington has integrated CWB into its economic and social strategies, prioritising local employment, supporting social enterprises, and implementing inclusive economy principles.

Liverpool City Region: Liverpool has embedded CWB into its broader economic strategy, focusing on inclusive growth, social value in procurement, and supporting local SMEs and community-led enterprises.

These councils have advanced by prioritising local economic resilience, inclusive ownership models, and fair employment practices, making them leaders in the CWB movement in England.

Few regional transport authorities in the UK have explicitly committed to CWB. However, there are examples of transport authorities aligning with CWB principles:

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM): TfGM has incorporated CWB principles by enhancing transport hubs with community-focused amenities, sustainable practices, and public engagement efforts that support local economic and social value creation

West Yorkshire Combined Authority: Though not solely a transport authority, the combined authority, which oversees regional transport among other services, has integrated CWB principles into its broader economic strategy. This includes focusing on local procurement and inclusive growth, which indirectly influences transport projects.

Merseyside and Liverpool City Region: The Liverpool City Region, which includes Merseytravel, has been proactive in embedding CWB principles into its transport and infrastructure projects. This includes prioritising local procurement and creating jobs through transport projects.

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region

Deal: This regional deal includes commitments to CWB, which extends to transport projects. The emphasis is on inclusive growth, supporting local suppliers, and enhancing public transport services that benefit local communities.

While explicit commitments directly from transport authorities are limited, these examples show a trend where transport initiatives align with CWB objectives, such as enhancing local wealth, supporting local businesses, and engaging communities in decision-making processes.

Part 3: Policy context in Scotland

The Scottish Government has been actively developing its CWB initiatives as part of a broader strategy to reshape local economies and support a wellbeing economy. Key developments include:

Community Wealth Building Legislation: The Scottish Government is planning to introduce a Community Wealth Building Bill, which will be the first of its kind globally. This legislation aims to embed CWB principles into the operations of public bodies, focusing on keeping wealth within local communities and promoting inclusive economic growth. The approach includes prioritising local procurement, fair employment, community ownership of assets, and leveraging public sector resources to support local economies.

Consultation and Pilot Projects: The Scottish Government conducted a public consultation in early 2023 to gather input on the proposed legislation. The consultation highlighted the need for public bodies to integrate CWB into their work, with an emphasis on collaborative and place-based strategies. Pilot projects have been funded to test these approaches in various regions, providing insights into how CWB can be effectively implemented across different contexts, including rural and island communities.

Alignment with Broader Policies: CWB is aligned with other Scottish Government priorities, such as land reform, community empowerment, and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). These initiatives collectively aim to deliver economic justice and address inequalities by ensuring that economic benefits are distributed more equitably across Scotland. The CWB

approach is seen as a critical tool in achieving these broader economic and social goals.

Support for Rural and Island Communities: Specific attention is being given to how CWB can be adapted for rural and island communities. This includes recognising the unique roles that small and micro enterprises, as well as community-owned organisations, play in these areas. The Scottish Government is working with various partners, including local authorities and economic development bodies, to tailor CWB strategies that suit these distinct contexts.

Scottish Government documents and policies on CWB currently do not extensively emphasise the role of active and sustainable travel. The recent consultation on CWB legislation primarily focused on economic development, local wealth retention, and community empowerment, without a specific focus on active travel initiatives. Although sustainability is a key component of the CWB framework, active travel is more directly addressed in separate transport and environmental strategies rather than within CWB-specific policies.

CWB is seen as a key delivery mechanism of the national strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). The CWB Bill aims to address blockages to the implementation of CWB, and to facilitate further embedding of the CWB approach. The National Planning Policy Framework includes a section on CWB within the 'Productive places' chapter. Local Development Plans are referenced under this. Local Development Plans are at a local authority level and encompass all the development planning done by the Local Authority.

In April 2021 the Scottish Government provided support to five regions to create and implement CWB action plans. These were Fife, Clackmannanshire, Glasgow City Region, South of Scotland and the Western Isles^{xi}. CWB within these regions is still in development. However, there are still some best practice examples that can be drawn from these regions.

One example that can be looked to is the Living Alloa project, in Alloa, Clackmannanshire. This is an active travel and community hub within a mixed-use development on a derelict site in the town centre. Living Alloa is an example of bringing active travel into the socially productive use of land and property pillar of work.

Further, active travel investment is an essential element of The Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal^{xii}. Active travel is seen as important for providing better access to employment and education as well as increasing tourism opportunities and improving regional connectivity between and within areas^{xiii}.

Orkney Islands Council (OIC) are in process of developing their plan for CWB. There is the intention to include sustainable transport in the land and property pillar of their CWB model. They recognise that without sustainable transport people cannot fully participate in the economy.

Orkney Island Council also recognise that sustainable travel is an element of the wellbeing economy^{xiv}. CWB in Orkney is still at an early stage, but their policy work is an example of how sustainable transport can be applied to achieve CWB aims.

Glasgow City received growth deal funding akin to Ayrshire. In 2021 Glasgow City published the Regional Sustainable procurement Strategy which was aligned with the principles of CWB. This had the aim to maximise the impact of the procurement spend for the region's most deprived communities. As part of this the region will be launching a Regional Social Value Initiative^{xv}. CWB was seen as a key delivery for the Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy^{xvi}.

Part 4: North Ayrshire's approach

How has North Ayrshire developed its approach

NAC committed to being the first CWB council in Scotland in 2019 and pledged to work across all services and with wider local and regional anchor organisations to implement CWB. The decision to adopt the CWB economic model was in response to long term struggle to address the area's deprivation that the traditional economic model had failed to resolve^{xvii}.

Work had been going on before 2019 to lay the foundations for CWB and assess what was needed. CLES ran the CWB diagnostic across North Ayrshire and reported on this in 2019. The diagnostic tool assessed the region against the five pillars considering how advanced North Ayrshire policies were in relation to these and highlighting potential for development^{xviii}.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal

The Ayrshire Growth Deal was the first strategic document to legislate for CWB in North Ayrshire. The Growth Deal was an attempt to revitalise the area's economy with investment from the Scottish and UK Governments.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal was signed by North, South, and East Ayrshire Councils, the Scottish Government and the UK government, and covered projects across the wider Ayrshire region. The heads of terms of the deal were signed in March 2019, with the final deal signed in November 2020^{xix}.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal set the path for CWB stating:

“...subsequent delivery of themes will be framed through a Community Wealth Building approach...”

As such the actions laid out in the Growth Deal were set against the five pillars of CWB.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal provided a £250 million investment fund for the Ayrshire region covering a range of investment themes of Aerospace and space, communities, economic infrastructure, energy, circular economy and environment, and tourism.) The majority of the funding was allocated to infrastructure projects but did include a £3 million investment in a CWB project. This funding allocation came from the Scottish government and was intended to embed the CWB approach across the Ayrshire region.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal CWB programme was defined to set the policy approach for CWB across the whole of the Ayrshire region. It had three strands of work:

1. Create CWB Business Locality Officers – working with local organisations to facilitate CWB activities across the region
2. Provide the CWB Fund – a fund for CWB Activity
3. Establish Fair Work Ayrshire - a service to help employers to implement fair work principlesxx

Within the Ayrshire Growth Deal there was a section focussing on transport. This section deferred to national policy and had a key focus on developing strategic road projects. However, there was no mention of active travel or sustainable transport within the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

Community Wealth Building Strategy, May 2020

The Community Wealth Building Strategy set out the basis for how NAC would work with local communities, businesses and wider regional anchor institutions to embed CWB. The Strategy set out direction and targets based on the five pillars of CWB (discussed in the Anchor institutions and the five pillars

). The Community Wealth Building Strategy had 55 actions in total. Actions sat under one of the five pillars.

Within these actions there are several that are directly focussed on active travel or sustainable transport. These sat mostly within the spending pillar and are:

- Reducing the length of supply chains procuring locally,
- Using local business base for procurement,
- And, considering negative externalities of procurement (for example the impact on the environment).

Additionally, under the inclusive ownership pillar there was an action to explore the feasibility of a community owned bus network.

The Community Wealth Building Commission

The Community Wealth Building Commission was formed in 2019 to promote a collaborative approach to and implement CWB in North Ayrshire.

There are nine anchor institutions within the Community Wealth Building Commission. These are:

- the three councils within the Ayrshire region,
- Ayrshire and Arran NHS,
- Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise,
- Police Scotland,
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service,
- Ayrshire Community Trust.

The Community Wealth Building Commission meets quarterly to share practice and knowledge.

The Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach for North Ayrshire, Sept 2020

The Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach for North Ayrshire (known as The Local Green New Deal) set out to help the economy recover from the economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to try and address the inequalities brought to light by the pandemic.

The Local Green New Deal used CWB objectives as a basis to achieve its aim. It set out Economic Recovery and Renewal

Actions, focused on the pillars of community wealth^{xxi}. It committed to:

“Work with the Community Wealth Building Commission to launch an Anchor Charter agreement to embed Community Wealth Building principles across Anchor Institutions in the region to support economic recovery, including a sixth pillar of ‘Environment’ to ensure commitment and action to achieving net zero across the region.” ^{xxii}

The Local Green New Deal had a section dedicated to transport and travel. Within the Local Green New Deal was a commitment made to supporting local, shorter supply chains to help achieve greater environmental sustainability.^{xxii} Zero carbon active travel delivery services could feed into this commitment as discussed in healthcare in Oxford in the literature review. Within the plural ownership of the local economy section of the Local Green New Deal, there was a commitment to explore the feasibility of a community owned bus network.

The Anchor Charter agreement

Anchor institutions in the Community Wealth Building Commission sign up to the Anchor Charter, which contains pledges under the theme of each CWB pillar. The pledges are designed to help embed CWB principles within the Anchor Institutions and ensure all Anchor Institutions are moving in the same direction.

The Anchor Charter included a section of pledges under the pillar climate action. This is the sixth pillar, referred to as ‘Environment’ in the Local Green New Deal and an addition to the recognised model of five pillars (discussed in the Anchor institutions and the five pillars section.) The climate action has been incorporated into the Anchor Charter taking the opportunity to encourage institutions to take action to reduce their environmental impact. It is not an additional pillar within the wider model of CWB for North Ayrshire, and in the newly updated CWB Strategy for 2024, climate action is seen as a

cross-cutting theme across all five pillars^{xxiii}. In the Anchor Charter the pledges under the climate action pillar include:

“Consider strategies to embed environmental benefits through, for example, capital investment projects, active travel and sustainable energy generation.” ^{xxiv}

Transport references

The Local Green New Deal committed to producing the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) 2021-2023; setting out North Ayrshire’s direction to net zero in 2030. The ESCCS was launched in August 2021. Under the workstream of Transport and Travel within the ESCCS, priority actions related to sustainable transport were:

- To review transition of services where possible to lower carbon emissions
- To deliver the Trinity Active travel hub and the travel smart campaign
- To identify ways to utilise assets to support active and low carbon travel networks^{xxv}.

The Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27 plan superseded the ESCCS 2021-23, updating and continuing the work of the ESCCS^{xxvi}. One commitment within the transport section of this was to progress community pathfinder proposals. This is a scheme which looks to assess the demand in communities for a community transport scheme^{xxvii}. This was suggested to be run operated by Coalfield Community Transport-a transport charity in North Ayrshire^{xxviii}. This kind of scheme is very much in line with CWB principles, although there is no clear link or mention made of this within the documentation.

Other policies

The updated Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy was launched on 19 June 2023. The three Ayrshire councils and partners agreed that CWB was the central tenet of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and this objective was supported

by the Scottish and UK governments. The document lists enablers as:

- Ayrshire Growth Deal
- UK and Scottish Government funding
- CWB Commission
- Anchor Charter and Anchor Network
- Recovery and Renewal workstreams
- Regional Economic Partnership Board.^{xxix}

Within the North Ayrshire capital investment programme for the ten years until 2030/2031 there is limited allocation for active travel and sustainable travel transport investment. This allocation is pooled with funding for making streets safer.

Transport policy

North Ayrshire Council draft 'Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy' was consulted on February-May 2023. This strategy replaces the 2015-2020 local transport strategy. Importantly, the draft strategy contains a chapter on active travel. There is recognition within the strategy that active travel will contribute to the new zero ambitions, help address the climate emergency, and support peoples' health^{xxx}. However, there is no explicit linking to CWB and the potential for sustainable transport or active travel to feed into the community wealth-building agenda.

Part 5: What is the relationship between active and sustainable travel and CWB

How can sustainable transport and active travel tackle the climate emergency?

The Scottish Government have recognised the significant role that transport plays in rising emission levels, stating that it is Scotland's 'biggest contributor to climate change' ^{xxx}. In Scotland, transport is responsible for over a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions. Cars account for over a third of these transport emissions^{xxx}.

Bennet & Garg, who have produced guidance for how local authorities can reduce the impact of transport, support the need for the change in this area:

"The surface transport sector is the UK's highest emitter of carbon emissions and the only sector where emissions are still rising. Meeting the pledge for the UK to become overall net-zero directly implies the need for fundamental change to this sector, at all levels of government." ^{xxxii}

Transport Scotland, the national transport agency of Scotland, have produced a Sustainable Transport hierarchy showing the most sustainable methods of transport). The hierarchy favours walking and wheeling, followed by cycling and then public transport. Private car travel is at the bottom of the hierarchy, showing it is the less desired and least sustainable mode of transport^{xxxiii}.

As part of this shift to sustainable and active transport, Transport Scotland have pledged to reduce car kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030^{xxxiv}. Switching to active travel can be an effective way to reduce carbon emissions from car journeys.

Research by Sustrans found that if active travel were used for every journey under 5km this would save 23-28% of carbon emissions from car journeys. If a combination of public transport and active travel were used for 10% of car trips over 5km, this would rise to 30-35%^{xxxv}.

What is the role of sustainable transport in contributing to CWB?

CWB and a ‘just transition’

A CWB approach may help tackle societal issues, including the climate emergency. CWB principles align well with calls for ‘just energy transitions’ⁱⁱ. A just transition means reducing emissions and responding to climate change in a way which is fair and creates a better future for everyone^{xxxvi}. As well as tackling climate change, a just transition will tackle inequality and injustice^{xxxvii}. Lacey-Barnacle et al state that combining CWB with a just energy transition can help to meet various social, environment and economic objectives at a local levelⁱⁱ. CLES also acknowledge the opportunities to link CWB with a just energy transition. CLES have produced a toolkit outlining why CWB is needed for a just transition and what this approach could look like. The toolkit emphasises the importance of measuring the resulting carbon emissions reduction of any proposal, policy, or project^{vi}. It also identifies five roles that a local authority can have in embedding a CWB model and enabling a just transition. They state that the role of the local authority is to:

- function as a convenor
- create demand
- encourage early adoption of zero carbon energy technology
- directly deliver transition projects
- fund the energy transition.

CLES recognise the importance of an ensuring that the energy transition movement focuses on tackling underlying inequalities:

“Community wealth building seeks to restructure the composition of the economy so that wealth is broadly held, shared, and democratised. This is particularly important if we are going to achieve an energy transition which address the inequalities inherent in our current energy and economic systems, currently resulting in unacceptable levels of fuel poverty across the UK.” ^{vi}

CWB may therefore offer a solution to tackling climate change whilst building community wealth and reducing inequalities^{vi}.

Transport poverty

The Social Market Foundation, a British political and public policy think tank, estimate that the cost of transport keeps over five million people in poverty. This is known as ‘transport poverty’^{xxxviii}. Transport poverty also describes when people do not have access to essential services or work because of lack of affordable or available transport options^{xxxix}.

The European Parliament describe five elements that can lead to transport poverty^{xxx}. These are:

- no transport availability,
- no accessibility to transport,
- low transport affordability,
- too much time spent travelling
- and inadequate transport conditions.

Transport poverty can have a range of negative effects on individuals and communities:

“Transport poverty can limit access to employment, education, school, healthcare and leisure, force reliance on unaffordable cars, decrease well-being and increase exposure to negative externalities such as transport pollution.” ^{xl}

The acknowledgement of transport poverty and its effects, calls on an approach which recognises the need for justice and equity in transport when tackling the climate emergency.

CWB and sustainable and active travel.

Lacey-Barnacle et al recognise the impact that current economic models have had on the transport sector. They highlight transport as an example of a public service area which has, in many cases, been privatised and contracted to multinational private companiesⁱⁱ. This consequently removes the wealth generated from the local economy. However, CWB moves away from multinational ownership of public services and aims to create local economic empowerment and democratise ownershipⁱⁱ.

Bennet and Garg call for local governments to think about exploring local assets to encourage and enable sustainable transport options. They encourage local authorities to think about:

“Individual goals, skills and under-utilised resources within their communities can be tapped to encourage sharing trips, use sustainable transport modes, and consume more locally.” ^{xxxii}

They argue that such an approach would not only enhance community but would reduce emissions and cut down unnecessary vehicle trips^{xxxii}.

Savacool et al found that expert stakeholders involved in their research were clear that underlying inequalities and inclusivity need to be considered to ensure that low carbon innovations and measures are accessible to lower-income households. For example, they found that changes to sustainable transport

policies, such as cheaper or free bus and train fares as well as expanding the availability of these services would gain support and alleviate transport poverty. They also concluded that focussing only on electric vehicle adoption diverts money away from public transportation systems and towards those driving private vehicles, highlighting the need for alternative investment^{xi}.

Local investment in sustainable and active transport may increase community wealth and enhance an accessible and climate friendly method of transport. Anchor institutions can support sustainable transport initiatives. Some recent movements in health care are an example of this. For example, Oxford University Hospital Trust replaced diesel transport for the delivery of chemotherapy treatments with e-cargo bikes. They found the use of an e-cargo bike increased both reliability and efficiency and reduced the effect of rush hour traffic^{xli}. This also gives employees an opportunity to embed physical activity within their workplace practice which may have positive impacts on physical and mental health.

This type of intervention therefore highlights an example of how anchor institutions can use the workforce pillar of CWB - which aims to create employment policies which support wellbeing - with active and sustainable transport movements. This is also an example how the spending pillar of CWB can be utilised by anchor institutions to support and invest in sustainable transport movements.

While the link between CWB and the energy transition has been explored to some extent, it can be argued that there is space to explore opportunities to link the two furtherⁱⁱ. Such exploration may look further into opportunities to link a CWB approach with sustainable and active travel. Further exploration of this may be beneficial to local governments who are exploring the benefits of a CWB model whilst also having goals and ambitions to reduce their carbon emissions.

We believe that a case can be made for a much wider contribution that active travel can make to CWB across a range of local government policy areas. As an output of our research,

we developed a framework for integrating active travel and sustainable transport into CWB strategies. The Framework identifies alignment in seven key areas which are set down in Table 2 on page 36.

Table 2: A framework for integrating active travel/sustainable transport policies into a community wealth building approach

Policy area	How active travel contributes to community wealth building approach
Local Economic Benefits	<p>Job Creation: Infrastructure projects for active travel (e.g., cycle lanes, pedestrian paths) and sustainable transport (e.g., electric buses, public transit improvements) create local jobs in construction, maintenance, and operations.</p> <p>Local Businesses: Active travel encourages people to shop locally as they are more likely to frequent nearby businesses when walking or cycling, supporting the local economy.</p>
Environmental Sustainability	<p>Reduced Emissions: Sustainable transport options reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and public health, leading to reduced healthcare costs and healthier, more productive communities.</p> <p>Resilience: Enhancing local transport infrastructure reduces dependency on external fuel sources, making the community more resilient to global economic shifts and fuel price volatility.</p>
Health and wellbeing	<p>Active Lifestyles: Active travel promotes physical activity, reducing the incidence of lifestyle-related diseases. Healthier populations can lead to reduced healthcare costs and increased workforce productivity.</p> <p>Mental Health: Improved mental wellbeing from reduced pollution and increased physical activity contributes to a more vibrant community, fostering a positive social environment.</p>

Policy area	How active travel contributes to community wealth building approach
Social inclusion and equity	<p>Accessibility: Sustainable transport systems provide affordable and accessible travel options for all community members, including low-income residents, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities, promoting social equity.</p> <p>Community Cohesion: Public transport and active travel infrastructure can help bridge social divides by improving access to education, employment, and social services.</p>
Urban Planning and Land Use	<p>Compact Development: Sustainable transport encourages denser, mixed-use developments that can revitalise urban areas, making them more attractive for businesses and residents.</p> <p>Public Spaces: Investment in pedestrian-friendly and cycle-friendly environments enhances public spaces, making them more vibrant and appealing, contributing to local pride and community identity.</p>
Economic Resilience	<p>Reduced Costs: Households save money on transportation costs when active travel and public transport options are available, increasing disposable income that can be spent within the local economy.</p> <p>Diverse Economy: Investing in sustainable transport can diversify the local economy by supporting sectors like tourism, retail, and green technology.</p>
Partnerships and Governance	<p>Collaborative Efforts: Community wealth building through sustainable transport requires collaboration between local governments, businesses, and residents. These partnerships can strengthen community bonds and ensure that development efforts align with local needs and priorities.</p> <p>Policy Support: Local policies that support sustainable transport and active travel can lead to long-term economic stability and growth, aligning with broader CWB goals.</p>

Part 6: Perceptions of CWB and active travel

This section discusses the findings from qualitative interviews with seven participants, representing diverse organisations with experience in Community Wealth Building and active travel.

Participants included:

- **Two officers** from North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
- **Two officers** from Orkney Islands Council (OIC)
- **One officer** from NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- **A representative** from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), focusing on CWB
- **A representative** from the Inclusive Growth Network (IGN), supporting inclusive growth in local economies

The interviewees were selected to give a range of views and experience. This covered:

- CWB theory and approach (CLES and the IGN), implementation in North Ayrshire (representatives from the transport team and the CWB commission),
- Anchor institution perspective (NHS Ayrshire and Arran),
- implementation within a different local authority (OIC).

Interview responses revealed two primary themes:

1. Current understanding of CWB and active, sustainable transport
2. Opportunities for embedding active and sustainable travel within CWB efforts

Findings include both Ayrshire-specific insights and more general perspectives.

Definitions and Perceptions on CWB

The interviews explored current perceptions of the characteristics and objectives of CWB. The concept was defined in a variety of different ways by the research participants.

CLES have done extensive work enabling and supporting organisations in developing CWB approaches, and offered the following definition of CWB:

“An institutional approach to economics which uses the levers available at a local level, through anchor institutions, to shape the local economy.” - CLES

CLES went on to say that CWB was a progressive economic theory, similar to doughnut economics, foundational economics and circular economics. In a similar way the chair of the IGN talked of CWB as a language of inclusive growth, wellbeing economy, or inclusive economy and highlighted that it was easy for local authorities to adopt and understand.

CLES suggested that CWB offers a degree of local power over what happens in the local economy, which may in part differ from the national approach. CLES summarised these ideas as “economic democracy”, focusing on beneficiaries of the economy.

A key aim of CWB was felt to be retaining money and recycling it within the local economy through the use of local businesses rather than large companies based outside the area.

“It’s about recycling wealth within a local economy and retaining it. Often wealth leaves an area, because the supply chains are on a national scale, or companies are headquartered somewhere else.” - Inclusive Growth Network

This was a common understanding across interviewees, with the emphasis on using small local businesses. On the theme of

the local economy, another stated aim was to attract investment into the area.

Those in fields of experience

NAC viewed CWB as a mechanism to a resilient and sustainable economy. OIC had a slightly different definition. They described CWB as a means to a wellbeing economy, although within the interview there was some uncertainty about what a wellbeing economy really was.

They suggested a wellbeing economy as:

“It’s a higher-level standard of living, materially, in that broader sense of not just income but that social wealth that surround us in a safer environment, and that it is more equitably distributed.” - Orkney Islands Council

The pillars that sit within the CWB model (Spending, Workforce, Land and Property, Finance, and Inclusive Ownership) were perceived as levers to attain the aims of CWB in a specific location by OIC, rather than the aims themselves.

NAC gave assessing and addressing the disparities of wealth was provided as a key aim of CWB. High areas of deprivation are being targeted with to increase the economic value of those areas. OIC joined NAC in mentioning equitable wealth as an element of a wellbeing economy and therefore an aim of CWB. OIC said their understanding of the aims of CWB went beyond the financial, to improved social wealth.

Several interviewees mentioned employment as a key aim of CWB.

“One of the main aims is to look at employment and trying to get people back into employment through employability programmes, through organisations, like public sector anchors, supporting local spend, hopefully generating more business to local companies, allowing them to employ more people”. - NHS

NAC supported this, saying they wanted to make sure that opportunities in the area are the best that they can be.

These aims all sit within the realm of an economic approach, which fit well into the understanding of CWB as an alternative economic approach.

CWB in North Ayrshire

In general

The interviews with representatives from NAC expounded the CWB approach in North Ayrshire. This included schemes that have been implemented to date as well as incorporation within policy. Reflecting the reasoning in policy documents, NAC reported turning to CWB to develop a more inclusive economy.

“Community wealth building is a long-term commitment, it’s seeking to really fundamentally rebalance the local economy.”- North Ayrshire Council

The council has encouraged collaboration between the procurement and business support team, to improve the opportunities for local businesses. This has resulted in local businesses being notified of upcoming tenders for work. Additionally, NAC ringfence tendering to four framework businesses from the locality where possible.

The land and property pillar was identified as one of the three main pillars that the Ayrshire region focuses on. There is also a working group(s) focussing on this area. Under this pillar, NAC state in their strategy: “We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all of our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit.” ^{xxiii}

As one CWB action NAC created the Repurposing Property Grant Fund Initiative. This provided funding to repurpose small areas land or property so that they may be optimised. The grant encourages communities to think differently about the

use of space and how it can better meet the needs of the community and ultimately be more productive.

The land and property pillar has already been used to give a sustainability perspective to the use of land. In the interviews, NAC stated that this was about using land and property to the most benefit of the community and acknowledged that active travel routes may fit under this. NHS Ayrshire & Arran are also making this connection.

Inclusive ownership pillar in North Ayrshire

NAC realised the potential that the inclusive ownership pillar of CWB has for active and sustainable transport and the benefits of this approach.

“I think in terms of making transport accessible, supporting communities, the ownership of the enterprises that contribute to that I think is a key part, and it relates to community wealth building.” - North Ayrshire Council

They highlighted that local authorities now have the ability to create municipal bus companies, recognising that this is an opportunity for CWB. They also shared an example of a local shuttle bus company recently becoming employee owned. However, it was mentioned that this was not currently part of their strategy. This suggests there is room to act on this further and to encourage local ownership of services and provisions which facilitate and encourage active and sustainable transport within the CWB approach.

The additional pillar of climate action in the Anchor Charter and climate change in NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s CWB strategy directly highlights the need to act on sustainability. NHS Ayrshire & Arran described how they had been using this additional pillar. "

NHS Ayrshire & Arran acknowledged that as the largest employer in the region they will be a significant producer of greenhouse gases, particularly through staff travel and deliveries. They discussed how they had used the climate change pillar to focus on reducing greenhouse gases. An

example of this was encouraging workforce active travel through their public health work. Further developments may concentrate on reducing the impact of travel during the working day and in their delivery chains. The example of Oxford University Trust Hospital using e-cargo bikes to deliver treatments, may provide some inspiration for this.

Another workstream focussed on improving local place. Community Benefits Wish Lists were created so council suppliers could see and deliver benefits to communities as part of providing services.

Integration of CWB in Regional and Transport Policy

Regional Economic Strategy

The 2023 Regional Economic Strategy, based on CWB principles, includes actions supporting active travel:

- **Land and Property Use for Green Transition:**
Expanding active travel routes and renewable energy schemes to facilitate sustainable transport options.

Transport Policy Integration

While active travel isn't a distinct focus in NAC's current transport plans, efforts to integrate sustainable transport within CWB are underway. NAC aims to align the Local Transport Plan with CWB goals, recognising transport's critical role in economic growth and community development.

"The teams have not formally discussed the links between community wealth building and active travel, but our joint service structure has fostered some integration in practice." – North Ayrshire Council

Challenges and Barriers

Key barriers to integrating active travel with CWB include:

- **Public Opinion and Cultural Shifts:** Active travel is often seen as optional, limiting its prioritisation.
- **Funding Constraints:** Limited to single-year capital funding, hindering long-term planning.
- **Siloed Local Authority Work:** Departmental separation can obstruct collaborative efforts.

“There is potential for CWB to involve not just public sector institutions but also private businesses, enhancing social impact through placemaking.” – IGN

Anchor institutions and the CWB commission

The CWB commission has working groups for procurement, land and property, and workforce, in addition to the lead officer working group. Although not asked directly in the interviews, there don't seem to be working groups for the other CWB pillars. The pillars associated with these working groups are reflective of the perceived aims of CWB which were stated in the interviews.

The NAC leader sits as chair of the CWB commission. This should ensure there is direct accountability for the work of the anchor institutions. This chairing should also ensure the work done by CWB anchor institutions aligns with the direction the council would like it to take.

“We drive the work of the lead officers to look at community wealth building in collaboration opportunities and how they can embed it in their organisations as well.”
- North Ayrshire Council

There is a national request for all Scottish health boards to develop an Anchor Strategy similar to NHS Ayrshire & Arran's. This kind of work will be rolled out across Scotland. The work

of Ayrshire & Arran health board is a good example of how an anchor institution can take the CWB strategy forward and incorporate active travel.

CWB sustainable transport examples and opportunities

There was just one example of sustainable transport initiatives through CWB mentioned in the interviews. This was in North Ayrshire where the Shuttle Buses bus company was taken under employee ownership. Inclusive ownership is one of the pillars of CWB and is hoped to become more commonplace within North Ayrshire.

There was an absence of active travel examples mentioned by interviewees. CLES reflected this:

“I don’t think that [active travel] ’s been thought through as a distinct kind of area of community wealth building before.” - CLES

This absence supports the finding of the literature search that in general, sustainable transport and active travel has not been considered in CWB work. This doesn’t mean there isn’t potential for CWB schemes to consider active travel and transport more broadly.

There are some examples of schemes which have been implemented in a CWB type approach outside of areas where the economic policy is widely adopted. For example, CLES (which works purely to the gain of local economies) reported that they advised TfGM on the Bee Network- the cycling network for Greater Manchester. In another project - Oldham energy futures - CLES worked with two low-income communities focussing on energy transition within these communities. One of the themes examined in the Oldham projects was transport, which supports the concept that transport has a place in community focussed work such as CWB.

The chair of the IGN remarked there was good crossover between transport and inclusive growth in general council work.

“So that lack of connection is often a barrier to inclusive growth, as much as not having the right skills or living in poor health might be.” - Inclusive Growth Network

Work in the North of Tyne provided CLES with similar views to the IGN. Here an event about transport had the result of highlighting how poor public transport has a considerable impact on CWB agendas.

There were several examples in the interviews of transport schemes mentioned that align with CWB principles. Derwent Valley Car Club was put forward as an example of a CWB type scheme in action within the realm of transport. It is owned by a community organisation so fits under the pillar of inclusive ownership.

“And that’s community wealth building in action, but it’s been driven out of need, not by the local authority.” - CLES

The car club has had such success that it’s being scaled up to other parts of the country with similar transport challenges.

The interviewees from OIC also talked about inclusive ownership of transport providers when asked about CWB sustainable transport examples. They pointed to a community owned bus, OCTO bus, which is a Community Interest Company. The profits from the company are donated to a local charity addressing disability, thereby retaining money within the local economy.

Both Derwent Car club and OCTO bus have come about separate to any policy or local authority intervention or from specific policy

“But where those things exist, they’re not explicitly linked to community wealth building, they’ve been borne out of need” - Orkney Islands Council

This shows that there is clear demand for this kind of enterprise.

The hydrogen buses of Aberdeen were also suggested as a CWB aligned action that have happened outside of CWB economies. These are an example of less environmentally unsustainable public transport, and their implementation was council led. However, it was implemented by an international company so is unclear how it fits within the CWB pillars. This is possibly an example of where the understanding of CWB may be lacking.

Although transport examples under CWB are few, the cases above provide evidence that sustainable transport does fit within the type of thinking and action of a CWB economy.

Benefits

Several benefits to incorporating sustainable transport within CWB work were discussed in the interviews. Interviewees talked of active travel increasing the physical and mental health of the workforce, and making the workforce more resilient.

This is a widely recognised benefit of active travel. It is refreshing to see it being considered at a local community level and its impact on the wider economy. Better health outcomes will also have a subsequent effect on wellbeing.

Economic benefits resulting from sustainable transport were put forward in the interviews. Sustainable transport was seen to increase access to work opportunities. One example of this was acting as a second form of transport in one car households. Active travel was also suggested to save money at an individual level as a cheaper form of transport than driving or public transport.

The economic benefits of active travel were not only discussed for individuals but also for local businesses and the local economy.

“[Active travel routes] encourage people to linger in the area. So if you have more people coming into your town and hanging about, they use more facilities, they use shops, cafes, etc. and that, therefore, helps to boost the local economy...” - NHS

This is a clear example of where active and sustainable travel can support CWB, providing benefit for local businesses and the local economy.

Active travel routes were also suggested to possibly improve people’s commute journeys, and therefore make an employment location a more attractive choice for jobseekers. This may have the effect of increasing the area from which people might travel to a location, increasing the potential talent pool.

In terms of the wider economy, active travel was mentioned as bringing a secondary benefit through links to tourism. Cycling in Cumbria was given as an example of this. Active transport in this case is suggested as an economic attractor bringing people - and their money - into the local economy.

Barriers, limitations and challenges

Barriers, limitations and challenges to the implementation or success of sustainable transport within CWB were explored through the interviews. As discussed previously there doesn’t seem to have been real or direct consideration of sustainable transport in CWB. This goes beyond just NAC. The chair of the IGN talked about a lack of transport consideration around inclusive or wellbeing economic thinking within network members.

“so far, speaking to members of the Network, I haven’t come across thinking about transport, whether that’s public transport or active travel, in relation to inclusive growth, or community wealth building.” - Inclusive Growth Network

It was acknowledged that transport is always a large consideration with the council’s work and it was suggested there was space for this kind of thinking.

Another challenge raised to embedding active travel within CWB was public opinion. It was felt opinion was against investment in active travel. It should be recognised that not everyone is going to like everything, especially if that is deviation from the status quo. Solutions in one location are not going to be applicable everywhere, for example in Ayrshire centres of population are dispersed, and this was something that was reflected by OIC.

It was mentioned that in some local government areas, active travel is still seen as a ‘nice to have’ rather than fitting into the wider picture of transport. This will limit how much that this element of sustainable travel will be considered within the work in that area.

Several interviewees felt CWB would work better if it involved organisations beyond local authorities and anchor institutions.

“I tend to find that it’s [CWB’s] quite public sector focussed. If we think about working with the private sector and social impact, there is real potential for businesses to be involved in placemaking.” - Inclusive Growth Network

One interviewee discussed the need to focus on what was wanted to be achieved in places.

“I think the risk is we don’t spend enough time trying to look at our own communities and see what it is we want to change through community wealth building” - Orkney Islands Council

Funding was also mentioned by NAC as a barrier, in that capital funding is only on a single year basis. This means that for financial reasons it isn’t possible to have a 5-year plan and presents issues trying to apply CWB to policy.

Funding is a big limitation, for any kind of policy implementation. Creating the policy itself has little financial demand. It therefore doesn’t reflect the variance of costs for creating things on the ground, or the how the economy or local situation may be when it comes around to trying to imbed the policy.

Siloing within council work was cited a number of times as a barrier obstructing the meshing of sustainable transport into CWB. Supporting this view, it was suggested that generally in local authority work, teams don’t consider other teams policies directly in their work and there is a feeling that certain work is in the remit of someone else or another team. Within NAC, active transport was reported pervasive in all work and therefore considered implicit in the CWB work, even though there is no direct mention of it. Likewise, CWB is assumed to be integral within the transport strategy, as the transport strategy works to the council plan which is built around CWB.

The lack of direct consideration of the CWB on the Transport strategy means that there may not be any contribution to CWB aims.

Where it fits

Several interviewees recognised that sustainable transport is aligned with CWB. In one example of this from NAC the interviewee said

“I can see how it’s related, and it’s kind of filtered through some of the things that we’ve done...” - North Ayrshire Council

However, interviewees were not all certain where sustainable travel should fit within the model in a logical way. The pillar where sustainable transport was suggested to feed into was land and property, or more pointedly in NAC, within the additional 6th pillar of Environment. However, OIC felt there was no pillar that sustainable transport easily fits under.

Another suggestion to embedding sustainable transport within the pillars was that sustainable transport is in itself an outcome of a successful CWB community. It is also possible that both views are applicable-sustainable transport can both be a mechanism with some of the pillars and also be an outcome of a stronger local economy.

Opportunities for embedding active travel and sustainable transport within CWB

Leveraging the CWB pillars

In terms of embedding active travel and sustainable transport further within CWB, there are opportunities to use the pillars of CWB when approaching active travel and sustainable transport developments.

Throughout the interviews, a number of participants expressed that active travel and sustainable transport did not fit directly into one CWB pillar. However, interviewees discussed how a number of pillars could be used as ‘levers’ or ‘tools’ to achieve active travel and sustainable transport from a CWB approach.

OIC felt that the existing five pillars were clearly defined and could be used as tools to meet climate change objectives

(including improvements to transport) if this was clearly defined as an objective.

“So obviously spending is a pillar, ownership is a pillar, procurement is a pillar, and they all have really big impacts on transport, so they’re really useful tools to deliver it.” - Orkney Island Council

They felt that an additional pillar of climate change could cause confusion on how to use the pillars and whether the pillars should be treated as objectives in themselves or as tools to reach objectives and that the climate change pillar was more nebulous than the others.

Local authorities and organisations looking to use the model, should therefore aim to clearly define the pillars and how they are to be used. If utilising the pillars as objectives, the additional pillar of climate change may help to create a clear remit for action in this area. However, if the pillars are treated as tools, the traditional pillars have the potential to be used to meet objectives including furthering active travel and sustainable transport without the need for an additional pillar.

Land and property

The ‘land and property’ pillar of CWB offers an opportunity to embed active travel and sustainable transport further within CWB.

Several participants recognised the potential for this and felt opportunities may currently be underutilised.

“So, land and assets is obviously a pillar of community wealth building, but there’s very rarely discussion about how those developments, or changes in the economy, are impacted or impact transport in whatever way. ”
- CLES

The land and property pillar may offer an opportunity to redesign our spaces in a way which encourages and enables active travel and facilitates behaviour change. For example,

anchor institutions should consider how their land and property can be used to encourage their workforce and the local community to travel actively. This may include smaller changes such as having the correct facilities, such as bike sheds, available at these locations to facilitate cycling, and larger changes like ensuring that spaces are connected by active travel routes.

Ownership

Throughout the interviews, the potential to utilise the pillar of 'inclusive ownership' was clear.

Shifting ownership of local services and assets away from large companies to either community or public ownership can help to both retain wealth and make services better meet the needs of the local community. It was said that Community and public ownership makes communities more resilient.

The potential to apply this to transport was clear. Benefits of doing so include being able to provide cheaper transport, make services more flexible, fill gaps and retain the wealth generated locally, as well as having the potential to safeguard jobs.

In terms of active and sustainable transport, this may look like ensuring that public transport is taken out of the hands of large corporations and shifting to locally owned businesses. It may also involve setting up community owned transport. Locally owned transport will allow local communities to respond the needs of their community.

"I think, active travel, where you have models of, say, public transport or cooperative car hubs, or whatever, that are either publicly or community owned, is what I'd say a community wealth building approach would look like." - CLES

What this looks like will therefore differ between areas, particularly between urban areas and rural areas. Participants discussed examples of this approach in practice and while these examples were not necessarily born from CWB, many of the examples shared embodied the approach. For example, OIC discussed that they already had community owned

transport, and this had been developed to meet the needs in the local area.

The participant from CLES, discussed developments in Barcelona which included putting community owned solar panels on bus stations. Active travel examples may include community owned bikes, e-bikes or e-cargo bikes.

The link between active travel and placemaking

The interviews highlighted a link between active travel and sustainable transport and placemaking decisions. Placemaking can also be considered an integral part of CWB.

There is therefore an opportunity to link active travel and sustainable transport with placemaking when envisioning and making decisions about how an area should look and feel.

“But I think there’s something about a bigger vision for a place, and what’s actually needed to create an economy that works for people, and transport is obviously a massive part of that.” - CLES

The importance of transport in placemaking

Transport is an important part of how people interact with their local environment. Transport poverty and a lack of adequate transport can have a number of negative effects on individuals and their ability to interact with their local community.

Investment in active travel and sustainable transport can help to overcome transport poverty and as a result enhance social connectivity, reduce isolation, enhance employment and create a community where people spend time and invest in their local area. One participant discussed how active travel can benefit communities by increasing local spending since active travel increases the likelihood of people spending time in an area. As a result, they are more likely to spend money in local shops and amenities.

OIC talked of placemaking in the Orkneys integrating transport in delivery and providing opportunities to reduce barriers to employment.

Increasing local spending and increasing employment are key aims of CWB and investment in active travel and sustainable transport may help to achieve this.

20-minute neighbourhoods

‘20-minute neighbourhoods’ is a placemaking method which is gaining more attention nationally. The method offers an example of how active travel and sustainable transport links with placemaking decisions and can be beneficial for CWB.

20-minute neighbourhoods are based on the idea that everyone should be able to meet most of their everyday needs in a 20-minute round trip on foot. The concept aims to align urban planning and placemaking decisions with transport infrastructure to make it easier for people to walk, cycle and use public transport^{xlii}. The idea is thought to have a number of benefits for health, the environment and local economies^{xliii}.

The interviewee from NHS Arran & Ayrshire felt that the link between active travel and sustainable transport, and CWB, would become more evident and develop further as 20-minute neighbourhood methods gain more attention.

Meeting local needs

Several participants highlighted that it is crucial that the specific needs of the local community are considered when assessing how active travel and sustainable transport can be applied to CWB, recognising these needs are likely to differ between communities.

It is essential that communities are consulted on placemaking decisions to ensure that they meet their needs and to consider how active travel and sustainable transport may support local communities. OIC discussed how local subsidised transport,

which could be considered a CWB approach, is helping to enable the 20-minute-neighbourhood approach within a rural landscape.

Although active travel may not always be applicable in some rural areas, there may be opportunities to enhance sustainable transport through a CWB approach to better meet local needs.

It is important that the link between active travel and sustainable transport and placemaking is communicated with teams working in this area. This will help to ensure that active and sustainable transport is considered when creating policies and proposals of how spaces should look and feel, and is a natural link to CWB.

North Ayrshire

Participants from Ayrshire recognised that placemaking offered an opportunity to embed active travel and sustainable transport with CWB. They recognised that although a direct link had not been made between CWB and active travel and sustainable transport, the two may be crossing over with approaches such as 20-minute neighbourhoods.

This participant saw that as 20-minute neighbourhoods were a key policy consideration which will likely feature in future policies, such as the Local Development Plan, this could enable an opportunity to see how active travel and sustainable transport could be further embedded in CWB.

The participant from NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognised that more could be done to embed active travel and sustainable transport with placemaking decisions. The participant discussed the importance of cycle routes for connecting spaces. They voiced a concern that despite active travel routes helping to join up towns, they had not always continued within towns to help enable this behaviour. Similarly, they felt a lack of off-road, segregated paths meant that active travel by bike was predominantly taken up by experienced cyclists.

Part 7:

Recommendations for further integration of sustainable and active travel policy and development into North Ayrshire's CWB approach

Integrating active and sustainable travel plans more closely into North Ayrshire's CWB approach could help to enhance the Council's demonstration of its plans for local economic resilience, reduction of carbon emissions, and the improvement of community health. We identify some of the greater linkages that could be made below:

- By prioritising active travel in community planning, the council can create environments that encourage walking and cycling, which aligns with the CWB goals of local health improvement and sustainable development.
- North Ayrshire Council can ensure that all new infrastructure projects, including those under the Ayrshire Growth Deal and local regeneration initiatives, include provision for active travel. This could involve developing safe and accessible cycling and walking paths, improving street lighting, and ensuring connectivity between

residential areas, schools, workplaces, and public transport hubs.

- Working with local schools and businesses to promote cycling to work or school schemes, supported by secure bike storage, showers, and changing facilities, would directly support community wellbeing and reduce traffic congestion, thereby contributing to the CWB's sustainability pillar
- North Ayrshire Council should acknowledge its existing partnerships with local businesses, community organisations, and public bodies (as outlined in its CWB Anchor Charter) includes active travel initiatives.
- Active Travel as a local economic driver: by investing in active travel infrastructure, North Ayrshire can boost local businesses, especially those related to tourism, recreation, and retail.
- Establishing greenways and scenic routes that connect key commercial and cultural sites can attract visitors and stimulate local spending, fitting well within the CWB's objective of retaining wealth locally.
- Actions that reduce reliance on cars, lower transport costs for residents, and contribute to a greener economy, aligning with the CWB goals of inclusivity and sustainability.
- Developing integrated sustainable travel plans that combine active travel with public transport options will be crucial. This could include bike-sharing programs at transport hubs, discounts for combined bike and bus or train travel, and initiatives to make public transport more accessible and affordable.
- Community Engagement and Education: In line with CWB's emphasis on community involvement, North Ayrshire could implement educational campaigns and participatory planning processes that involve residents in designing and promoting active travel networks.
- Engaging the community in these discussions ensures that the infrastructure meets local needs and encourages greater use.

- Funding and Incentives: Leveraging the £3 million Community Wealth Building Fund and other regional or national funding sources to finance active travel projects can make a significant impact.
- Climate Action Integration: By integrating active and sustainable travel plans into its broader climate action goals within the CWB framework, North Ayrshire can directly address environmental sustainability.
- Promoting low-carbon travel options will help the council meet its climate targets while supporting local economic and health outcomes.

In these ways North Ayrshire can integrate its active and sustainable travel planning with its CWB policies designed to enhance local wealth and community resilience but also support broader goals of sustainability and wellbeing, creating a more connected, healthier, and economically vibrant community.

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