

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council Executive on the emerging Community Wealth Building approach in West Lothian, and to agree the next steps and stakeholder and community engagement.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the update on progress with the Community Wealth Building approach; and
2. Agrees the next steps and stakeholder and community engagement and set out in this report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Community Wealth Building is a Scottish Government initiative.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Approaches to Community Wealth Building have the potential to increase positive outcomes across a range of indicators.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Relevant to all outcomes.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The report itself does not raise any unmanaged resource implications.

- VII Consideration at PDSP** The terms of this report have not been discussed at a PDSP.
- VIII Other consultations** An update was provided to the Community Planning Steering Group on 2 November 2021. A workshop to consult on action points for Community Wealth Building was delivered by CLES to key officers across from across the council on 11 November 2021. A workshop to consult on action points for Community Wealth Building was delivered to the Community Planning Partnership on 7 December 2021.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Community Wealth Building is an approach which aims to tackle the challenges of rising inequality by placing a greater degree of control into the hands of local people, communities, businesses, and organisations. It has been developed as a response to what is seen as a deficit in traditional approaches to economic development. These are based on the need for constant economic growth and an assumption that as the economy grows it will create wealth for all. The evidence of ongoing, and increasing poverty, however, indicates that this wealth is not reaching those most in need.

In addition, the wealth that is generated locally through wages and local business activity, is often channelled away from the locality through spend with nationally and international companies and the profit enjoyed elsewhere. Community Wealth Building promotes working in partnership with communities and businesses to build a strong and resilient local economy which supports fair work, encourages local spend, and uses land and property for the common good. Community Wealth Building seeks to use the economic levers available to local authorities and other 'anchor partners' such as the NHS, further and higher education institutions, and larger private sector and third sector organisations to support their local economies, ensuring that wealth is locally retained and benefits for local people. These locally rooted anchor partners can exert their influence to impact upon economic, social, and environmental priorities, generating community benefits and wealth.

The Community Wealth Building approach offers an opportunity to build resilience and local economic security during the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. It presents an opportunity to contribute to the economic empowerment of communities. It can also be seen as being complementary to the wider approach to Community Empowerment agrees and being developed and implemented by the council, and in line with intentions to pass a Community Wealth Building Bill, outlined in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021/22.

D.2 The West Lothian Approach

The West Lothian approach is in the early stages of development. In late August and early September 2021, West Lothian Council welcomed a Graduate for Community Wealth Building and a Community Wealth Building Officer (respectively), working fixed-term for 1 year to develop the approach and action plan. The team has undertaken research into good practice, and is currently embarking on mapping activities before forming a Working Group with the interested and relevant partners. The team also participates in the City Region Deal Community Wealth Building Steering Group, participating in a community of practice with contacts from Capital City Partnership, WHALE Arts, GoBeyond, City of Edinburgh Council, Fife Council, Midlothian Council and East Lothian Council. Moving forward, the West Lothian team will be working closely with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to devise a comprehensive action plan, with a particular focus on developing a collaborative, place-led approach.

D.3 CLES Consultancy

Community Wealth Building was developed initially by the Democracy Collaborative in the United States, and championed in the UK by the economics think tank, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). CLES have developed five principles for Community Wealth Building;

- **Plural ownership of the economy:** a focus on developing different types of ownership approaches (e.g. co-operatives locally owned or socially minded enterprises)
- **Making financial power work for local places:** increasing flows of investment within local economies, e.g. local authority pension funds are encouraged to redirect investment from global markets to local schemes and community owned banks and credit unions are supported to grow.
- **Fair employment and just labour markets:** working with large anchor institutions to encourage them to pay the living wage, adopt inclusive employment practices, recruit from lower income areas, build secure progression routes for workers and ensure stable employment contracts and reliable hours.
- **Progressive procurement of goods and services:** developing a dense supply chain of local enterprises, SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, co-operatives, and other forms of socially rooted business, which can provide goods and services to the large local anchor institutions.
- **Socially productive use of land and property:** ensuring that equitable forms of ownership, management, and local assets are developed, ensuring that any financial gain is harnessed by local people and communities.

Economic Development officers from West Lothian Council met with CLES in September 2021, to discuss visions and goals for the Community Wealth Building approach and to seek guidance on the development of the action plan. Having served as consultants for many other Community Wealth Building approaches – North Ayrshire, Preston, and Manchester – CLES submitted a proposal (Appendix 1) to work with West Lothian Council to assist in the development of an action plan for rolling out the approach.

This 14-week 4-step process began on 21 October 2021 and will follow the process outlined below:

- **Discovery:** a high-level exploration of the barriers and enablers to community wealth building in West Lothian, Assessing the extent to which tranches of work in the council area (i.e. policies, strategies, and actions) are reflective/supportive of the emerging priorities for community wealth building. Reviewing key documents and data sets (e.g. economic strategy, anti-poverty strategy)
- **Vision:** an articulation of what community wealth building could look like. Holding three exploratory workshops (one with key officers, one with members, and the other with representatives from the Community Planning Partnership).
- **Design:** designing a tailored approach and key interventions that will deliver on West Lothian's vision. Developing a list of key stakeholders who will be best placed to deliver these interventions. Hosting a further five workshops focused on implementation – testing the feasibility of the interventions, with challenges and solutions involved. Articulating the next steps required to implement these interventions.
- **Destination:** agreement on an action plan. Drawing on analysis of findings from the engagement activities to draft an initial action plan. Bringing all stakeholders together for a workshop to refine and finalise the action plan.

The CLES Consultancy will be valuable and offer insight to the actions West Lothian should pursue in order to thrive. In addition, CLES will be in contact with the team 6 months after the action plan has been finalised, to check progress and provide further guidance and adjustments.

D.4 Next Stages and Engagement

A workshop to consult on action points for Community Wealth Building was delivered by CLES to key officers from across the council on 11 November 2021. The 90-minute TEAMS call provided CLES with an insight into areas of strength and potential points for development, which will influence the action plan for further implementation of Community Wealth Building in West Lothian.

A workshop to consult on action points for Community Wealth Building was delivered by CLES to the Community Planning Partnership on 7 December 2021. This 90-minute TEAMS call sought to consult partners on current areas of strength, potential points for development, and their overall vision for Community Wealth Building in West Lothian. Findings from this workshop will also influence the action plan for further implementation of Community Wealth Building in West Lothian.

CLES are seeking to hold two further, similar consultation workshops; with West Lothian's stakeholders and local community, including West Lothian Council's elected members.

The Community Wealth Building team will continue to raise awareness of the economic approach through presentations and engagement with communities, partners, and council officers. Such engagement will continue over the coming months as an action plan takes shape, ensuring that the action plan will benefit everyone involved.

E. CONCLUSION

Community Wealth Building within West Lothian is currently in the planning process. An action plan will be drafted and taken to relevant partners and groups for influence, scrutiny, and approval. In the meantime the Community Wealth Building team will continue mapping of existing activity, and will seek to inform and raise awareness of Community Wealth Building within the Council. Members are asked to note these updates and agree their involvement in future action plan consultations with CLES and the Community Wealth Building team.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

'Place Based Investment Programme and Community Wealth Building', Council Executive, 22 June 2021

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewSelectedDocument.asp?e%97%9Di%8Frz%8B>

'Community Wealth Building', Partnership and Resources PDSP, 4 December 2020

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=%97%9Dh%96n%7B%89>

'Scottish Government Programme for Government 2021-22', Council Executive, 5 October 2021

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=e%97%25Di%91I%7B%8F>

Contact Person:

Alice Mitchell, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

alice.mitchell@westlothian.gov.uk

Sophie Brodie, Graduate Community Engagement & Wealth Building

sophie.brodie@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston

Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration

21 December 2021