



CABINET: 27 JUNE 2023

COUNCIL: 19th JULY 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy

Contact for further information: Chris Twomey (Chris.twomey@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING STRATEGY

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To approve the Council's first Community Wealth Building Strategy

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1 That Cabinet approve the Community Wealth Building Strategy contained at Appendix A.

2.2 That the Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources be given delegated authority to make any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Strategy as deemed appropriate.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

3.1 That Council approve the Community Wealth Building Strategy contained at Appendix A.

3.2 That the Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources be given delegated authority to make any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Strategy as deemed appropriate.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Community wealth building is an approach to economic development that changes the way that our economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. This is in contrast to the predominant economic model, whereby wealth is created by property ownership, regeneration

is based on speculative property development and large companies extract wealth for the benefit of distant shareholders.

- 4.2 CWB achieves its aims by harnessing the economic and social power of locally rooted institutions. These are commonly referred to as anchor institutions. Typically, this means local councils, health boards, universities, colleges and housing associations, and potentially, the private sector too. The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector also plays a fundamental role, by using its local intelligence and influence as a conduit for change and as an important part of the generative local economy.
- 4.3 CWB is an emerging agenda which is gathering momentum across the UK. It is seen as an opportunity to utilise the same resources differently to positively influence the growth and resilience of the local economy, create more opportunities and jobs, improve health & wellbeing outcomes and support the green agenda; it is therefore well aligned to the Council's current key priorities.
- 4.4 The Community Wealth Building Cabinet Working Group was established to undertake several key actions with a view to developing a CWB Strategy for the Council.
- 4.5 Research was undertaken to understand how other Council's had developed a CWB Strategy. In line with many other Council's, it was recognised that CWB is an emerging agenda and specialist knowledge would be required to support the development of a comprehensive strategy.
- 4.6 A decision was made by Cabinet in June 2021 to undertake a procurement exercise to identify the specialist support required to develop the strategy. In January 2022 the Centre for Local Economic Strategy (CLES) were appointed to support the Council. CLES are the UK's leading organisation around community wealth building and have designed numerous similar strategies.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Following a detailed desktop review of key Council strategies & policies, CLES have worked collaboratively with councillors, officers and key stakeholders in the development of the strategy presented in Appendix A.
- 5.2 Working through the Cabinet Working Group, CLES have developed a detailed understanding of the West Lancashire context and used their experience to develop a strategy. CLES have shared their knowledge of what works in different places and timeframes which are relevant to enable an iterative approach to implementation. The intention is also to create the behavioural change required to embed community wealth building as part of West Lancashire's wider transformation.
- 5.3 Having developed a baseline position it was agreed that the initial community wealth building strategy for West Lancashire should be a 5 year strategy, framed by the three core pillars of progressive procurement of goods and services, socially productive use of land and property, and plural ownership of the

economy. In this, three core aims and a series of 12 activities were identified as the focus for the strategy.

- 5.4 The strategy is complemented by an action plan for delivering the overarching aims. In this, activities have been prioritised, lead officers identified, and timeframes proposed. The action plan will be reviewed annually.
- 5.5 The draft strategy was shared with all Members in autumn 2022, feedback was reviewed by the Cabinet Working Group and a further draft strategy was developed. This was presented to the Cabinet Working Group on 29th March 2023. The Cabinet Working Group recommended the Community Wealth Building Strategy be presented to Cabinet and Council for approval.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Through the implementation of community wealth building, it is envisaged that a more sustainable economy will be created through the retention of the spend within West Lancashire and further investment in workforce development.
- 6.2 CWB can help to create a fairer economy and create new opportunities for local businesses and communities.
- 6.3 The identification of anchor institutions to be involved in the project will help to maximise the opportunities to re-circulate the West Lancashire pound (£) further.
- 6.4 As a focus of CWB is about accessing goods, services and employment at a local level, this provides a positive impact on associated carbon emissions created through a reduction in travel and logistics.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The strategy and action plan recognise the financial pressures of the Council. Rather than seeking to identify additional resources the proposed approach recognises that CWB is fundamentally about adopting a different approach and working smarter. The action plan has been developed in line with current resources.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 A greater focus on local procurement will be predicated on the alignment of existing and future skills to the requirements of the Council and other anchor institutions service requirements.
- 8.2 The wider success of CWB will be reliant on the engagement of anchor institutions and other key partners.
- 8.3 The strategy is developed within existing resources and will require some key officers to upskill some areas. CLES have offered ongoing support to help achieve this as part of their commission.

8.4 Some areas of the strategy such as the development of community energy infrastructure require a drive from within the community. Without community ownership it is unlikely these areas will progress. CLES have provided case studies of where this has been successful.

9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The strategy will help enhance economic activity within the borough. Potentially creating more training, apprenticeship and job opportunities. Greater financial independence is closely linked to higher levels of individual and collective health and wellbeing.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is attached as Appendix B

Appendices

Appendix A – Community Wealth Building Strategy

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix C – Minute of Cabinet 27 June 2023