



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Response
to
The Scottish Parliament Consultation

Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill

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About Us

The CLD Standards Council Scotland is the professional body for people who work or volunteer in community learning and development (CLD) across Scotland. CLD is a field of professional practice which has three integral domains of practice; adult learning, community development and youth work. As a member-led organisation we have a growing membership of over 3325 members (inclusive of CLD: Youth Work practitioners), an executive committee and three functional committees which are made up of members from across the CLD sector in Scotland. Our approach and work plans to deliver our core responsibilities are defined by our member committees and based on feedback from the wider membership.

Our ministerially set core responsibilities are:

- Deliver a professional approvals structure for qualifications, courses, and development opportunities for everyone involved in CLD
- Maintain a registration system available to practitioners delivering and active in CLD practice
- Develop and establish a model of supported induction, professional learning, and training opportunities
- Improve and develop our organisational capability; and
- Collaborate and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce development information.

Vision

“Our vision is that the communities and people of Scotland are served by CLD practitioners that are recognised as competent, confident and committed to equality, empowerment and life-wide learning for all.”

Mission

“Our mission is to drive high standards of professional practice in the CLD sector by the approval of professional learning, the registration of practitioners and the enabling of professional development, working with our members to be a voice for the profession.”

The CLD Standards Council works with a wide range of organisations across CLD and education sectors, nationally and internationally. We are members of a number of organisations, some we have specific partnership or framework agreements with, and we engage and work with many others.

Organisations we have formal agreements with:

- AIEB (All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training)
- COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)
- Education Scotland
- GTCS (General Teaching Council Scotland)
- JETS (Joint Education and Training Standards – UK & Republic of Ireland)
- SCURL (Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries)
- Volunteer Scotland

Organisations we have membership of:

- BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland)
- CDAS (Community Development Alliance)
- Human Rights Consortium Scotland
- IACD (International Association for Community Development)
- Inclusion Scotland
- PARN (Professional Association of Research Networks)
- SCDI (Scottish Council for Development & Industry)
- SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)
- SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)
- TAG:PALYCW (The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work)

Key Stakeholders and Partner Organisations:

- Alliance of Commonwealth Youth Work Associations (ACWYA)
- All-Ireland Endorsement Board for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB)
- CLD Managers Scotland
- CLD Professional Learning Networks
- College Development Network
- LEAD Scotland (Linking Education and Disability Scotland)
- Learning Link Scotland
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- National Youth Agency (NYA)
- Open University
- SCDC (Scottish Community Development Centre)
- SCDN (Scottish Community Development Network)
- Scotland's Learning Partnership
- The Young Women's Movement
- YMCA Scotland
- Youth Scotland
- YouthLink Scotland
- Youth 1st (Fife)
- Youth Highland
- Young Scot
- Volunteer Scotland

For further information on the CLD Standards Council please visit our [website](#) and view our social media [cldstandards](#) | [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) | [Linktree](#). If you would like to discuss this response further, please email us on contact@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

About Community Learning and Development in Scotland

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) sector, which is a unification of the 3 professional practice disciplines of Adult Learning (Including ESOL), Community Development and Youth Work, is an integral and essential part of Scottish education, as recently reported in [Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development \(CLD\)](#), which was undertaken by Ms Kate Still, as part of Education Reform, and commissioned by Mr Graeme Dey MSP, the Minister for Higher and Further Education, and Veterans.

The CLD sector across Scotland is receiving considerable amount of attention at present, with the aforementioned recent Independent Review of CLD publishing the Still report [Learning: For All. For Life](#), (June 2024) and the HMIE producing the [Evaluation of Community Learning and Development in Scotland](#), alongside the wider piece around [Education Reform](#) in Scotland.

CLD has its origins in the period of change that swept through society in the 18th and 19th centuries. New industries, and changes in science, technology, land use and education dislocated or smashed traditional forms of family and community life, with the history of youth work starting with voluntary action through faith organisations. Over time, we saw the further development of adult and young people's education with development of the [Workers Educational Association](#) and the National Council of Labour Colleges, and then the growth of community development as a response to the "rediscovery of poverty" in the 1960's. The Alexander Report – [Adult Education: the challenge of change](#) (HMSO 1975) was a response to the persistent issues of disadvantage, and advocated that "Adult education should be regarded as an aspect of community education and should with the youth and community service, be incorporated into a community education service". In 1998, Mr Brian Wilson MP established a working group to "*consider a national strategy for community based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development in the light of Government priorities in relation to social inclusion and lifelong learning*" ([Communities: Change Through Learning. P14](#)). In 2004, the Scottish Executive published [Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities](#), stating "*Community learning and development should incorporate the best of practice undertaken in the fields of 'community education' and 'community development'. It should enable individuals and communities to make real changes to their lives through community action and community-based learning. CLD is an approach which enables agencies to work with communities and provide access to their involvement in learning, action, and decision-making.*" These advancements were fundamental in bringing about the birth of CLD in the form it has grown into in the 21st century.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) – A Strategic Professional Discipline

CLD is a vital field of professional practice that plays a leading role in the implementation of policy and legislation requiring community engagement, development, and learning. CLD contributes significantly to the learning, personal growth, and empowerment of individuals and communities, while simultaneously enhancing the effectiveness and reach of wider public services.

CLD supports a broad range of strategic outcomes—from advancing climate action, sustainability, and environmental stewardship, to strengthening neighbourhoods, community empowerment, and local support networks. The field is also instrumental in engaging young people and adults in matters of enablement and active citizenship, and in improving literacy and numeracy across

Scotland's communities—factors which directly influence economic performance, health, and wellbeing.

Across the country, CLD empowers individuals to identify personal and collective goals, take action to achieve them, and drive meaningful change. By employing both formal and informal learning methodologies alongside social development approaches, CLD programmes are co-produced in direct partnership with communities. These initiatives are particularly focused on supporting individuals and groups who are often excluded from decisions that affect their lives, thereby fostering greater democratic participation and civic inclusion.

CLD comprises three interconnected domains of professional practice: Adult Learning, Community Development, and Youth Work. These domains operate collaboratively, underpinning and contributing to the realisation of all of [Scotland's National Outcomes](#).

CLD, as a unified discipline, represents a critical educative intervention across Scotland. We advocate for the reinforcement of this role through more robust and focused legislation that recognises CLD as a coherent and integrated professional field.

The Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) outlines the strategic objectives for all public services. Within this framework, the interdependent nature of the CLD domains is essential. For instance, youth work initiatives focused on employability or equalities are less likely to be sustainable or impactful if the home environments of these young people are not simultaneously supported through adult education and community development initiatives involving parents, grandparents, or siblings. The long-term success of such interventions relies on this interconnected and holistic approach.

In Scotland, CLD is underpinned by legislation through the [Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#), which are derived from Section 2 of the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#). These Regulations mandate that each local authority must publish a [three-year plan](#) detailing CLD delivery within their area, in alignment with the guidance outlined in [Community Learning and Development Plans Guidance 2024–2027](#).

The following diagram was used in the 2012 Strategic Guidance on CLD for Community Planning Partnerships to illustrate the policy context for CLD in Scotland. and continues to provide a useful picture of the pivotal role of CLD and CLD: youth work.



This submission is informed by a consultation survey conducted with members of the CLD Standards Council and incorporates insights drawn from prior consultations on Community Wealth Building.

Assumptions:

It is important to recognise that this CLD Standards Council response provides an insight into the views and experiences based on the those mentioned above. The membership consultation data provided a valuable insight into the experiences based on the views of the member participants.

Response from the CLD Standards Council to Scottish Parliaments consultation on Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government's objective is to ensure consistent implementation of Community Wealth Building across Scotland. Do you think the proposed Bill will achieve this objective?

Whilst this Bill is welcomed, there was broad consensus that, in its current form, the proposed Bill lacks the necessary structure and detail to effectively support the communities and individuals it intends to benefit. As such, it is unlikely to achieve its stated objectives. Respondents emphasised the need for greater clarity regarding the concept of Community Wealth Building (CWB), articulated in terms that are accessible and meaningful to all stakeholders—particularly those in communities directly affected by the Bill.

Concerns were also raised about the perceived lack of momentum behind the Bill's development. This has contributed to a general sense of disengagement, with limited commitment, understanding, and buy-in from both community-level actors and strategic stakeholders. Without a clearer vision, stronger leadership, and more inclusive engagement, there is a significant risk that the potential impact of the legislation will be undermined.

Members emphasised the need for further development in the area of empowering anchor organisations, with a particular focus on establishing robust quality assurance mechanisms for decision-makers. There was concern that, without appropriate safeguards, well-intentioned individuals and groups working within communities could be exploited, while decision-making power remains concentrated in organisations positioned to profit—often with limited or no tangible benefit to the communities themselves.

It was also noted that consistent and equitable implementation of Community Wealth Building (CWB) is heavily dependent on local authorities possessing the necessary capacity, resources, and commitment. However, this is not the current reality across Scotland. While some areas are making strong progress in CWB initiatives, others face significant challenges due to insufficient staffing, a lack of structural support, or constrained funding. In many cases, local authorities and third sector organisations are being forced to reduce full-time staff hours or eliminate positions altogether in response to budgetary pressures or funding cuts.

While the proposed Bill establishes an important legislative foundation, effective and meaningful implementation will require more than legislation alone. It must be accompanied by sustained investment, targeted workforce development, and clear systems of accountability. Without these essential components, the aims of the Bill risk remaining aspirational rather than achievable.

Members Comments:

"There will always be greedy people taking advantage of those who have good intentions"

"Consistency relies on local authorities having equal capacity, resources and buy-in and that's just not the reality across Scotland"

"The Bill sets the stage but real implementation needs more than legislation"

".. my fear that although this Bill might go through that not much will change because of (lack of) buy in."

"Clarity on what is CWB needs to be clear"

Does the Scottish Government need to change the law to achieve this objective?

There was a degree of uncertainty reflected in the range of responses to this question. However, a common theme among members was the belief that detailed and enforceable legislation is essential to ensure consistent implementation of CWB by local authorities. Without a statutory duty, there is a real risk that public bodies may deprioritise or disregard CWB in favour of competing agendas. Legislative change would make CWB a mandatory responsibility—not a discretionary one—compelling councils and key partners to act, plan, and collaborate meaningfully. It would also provide the Scottish Government with a stronger mandate to set expectations, monitor progress, and drive meaningful change, rather than relying on goodwill and voluntary engagement.

Respondents strongly reiterated the need for clear, shared definitions of what constitutes Community Wealth Building. All stakeholders require a consistent understanding of the concept in order to avoid ongoing ambiguity and debate. Questions persist: Is CWB primarily about supporting local businesses and jobs, or does it also encompass engagement with larger enterprises and national companies that provide employment for local people? Or is it both? Stakeholders need clarity on the purpose, mechanisms, and responsibilities involved in CWB implementation to ensure alignment and accountability across sectors.

Members Comments:

“Without a legal duty, public bodies could ignore or side line Community Wealth Building in favour of other priorities”

“What is CWB - is it about supporting local companies and local jobs or about supporting the bigger stores (for example) which keeps locals in jobs? Maybe its a combination of both?”

“Changing the law makes it mandatory-not optional-for councils and key partners to act, plan and collaborate.”

“For us (CLD) supporting social enterprise meant that the monies we spent stayed in the community, paid for staff and could be further spent on local supply chains.”

Are there other ways in which the Scottish Government could achieve this objective?

Yes.

To effectively address the objectives fundamental to community development, it is essential that CLD is invested in and offered secured adequate funding. While legislation plays an important role in setting expectations and establishing duties, it must be complemented by practical and strategic support mechanisms. The Scottish Government has a range of levers at its disposal to advance CWB and other approaches that support CLD and Community Development, including the use of funding incentives, national awareness campaigns, capacity-building programmes, and targeted support for under-resourced areas.

In addition, the Scottish Government can strengthen existing networks, facilitate the sharing of best practice, and embed the principles of CWB across other policy areas such as procurement, planning, and education. This is not a matter of choosing between legislative or non-legislative approaches; rather, it is about recognising that while laws establish the rules, real change is driven by culture, investment, and leadership. A holistic and sustained approach will be required to ensure CWB is meaningful, equitable, and impactful across all of Scotland’s communities.

Members Comments:

“Fund Community Learning and Development to tackle these objectives, which are fundamental to community development processes.”

“While legislation helps, the Scottish Gov could also use funding incentives, national campaigns, capacity-building programmes and targeted support for under-resourced areas.”

“It's not either/or-laws set the rules but culture, support and leadership (that) drive change.”

The Bill would place extra duties on some public sector organisations. Do you think these organisations have the capacity and resources to meet the duties placed on them?

Members expressed significant concern about the current fiscal climate and its impact on the capacity of stakeholders and organisations to meet the additional responsibilities that would be introduced by the proposed Bill. Many felt that the infrastructure, resources, and stability required to implement these duties are currently lacking, with considerable concern around the depleted CLD workforce for both paid and volunteer practitioners.

[Scottish Household Survey 2023](#) highlights a troubling trend: volunteer participation has declined by eight percentage points between 2018 and 2023. This drop reflects the growing challenges faced by volunteers, who are essential contributors to community wellbeing and resilience. Despite their vital contributions, volunteers are frequently undervalued and insufficiently recognised for the impact they have on society.

The [Volunteer Charter](#), which sets out ten principles for the sustainable and ethical involvement of volunteers, clearly states that volunteers should not undertake roles previously held by paid staff, nor be used to mask the effects of staffing shortages or service reductions. It is therefore of particular importance that volunteer roles remain distinct and valued in their own right, rather than being seen as substitutes for adequately resourced public services. [Volunteer Scotland](#) has confirmed that the Scottish Government is a Charter Champion, having pledged to uphold and promote the principles outlined in the Charter. As such, there is a clear expectation that volunteer engagement will be managed responsibly, with respect for the rights of volunteers and the integrity of the services they support.

A recurring issue raised was the perceived imbalance in how funding is allocated—often disproportionately directed toward expanding management structures, resulting in top-heavy organisations where frontline delivery staff remain under-resourced. There was a strong call for increased and targeted funding for CLD to enable the profession to play a meaningful role in supporting and delivering the aims of the Bill. At present, many CLD services are operating with resources that are already stretched beyond capacity.

This concern is echoed in [Learning for All. For Life.](#), a report authored by Kate Still on the Independent Review of CLD, which highlights the disproportionate underinvestment in CLD. Of the more than £10 billion of public funding allocated to education and skills in Scotland for 2024/25, CLD accounts for just 1% of that expenditure. Still calls for “*an urgent and overdue reassessment of the current balance of spending across all dimensions of learning in Scotland*,” recognising the substantial return on investment CLD consistently delivers.

Despite these financial constraints, CLD practitioners continue to build strong relationships with learners and communities, tailoring high-quality, needs-led learning opportunities. However, their capacity to scale up efforts in support of CWB is severely limited without additional investment.

Moreover, many public sector organisations are already under considerable strain. A growing number have reduced the full-time working week to 35 hours as a cost-saving measure, raising doubts about their ability to assume new duties related to the design, promotion, and implementation of detailed CWB strategies. Even with the best intentions, underfunded and overburdened teams cannot deliver transformational change while engaged in reactive, crisis-mode operations. Partner agencies, likewise, are struggling to maintain core services and lack the bandwidth to take on additional responsibilities—particularly those that demand strategic planning, cross-sector collaboration, and economic development leadership.

If the ambition is to implement Community Wealth Building in a way that genuinely benefits communities and creates sustainable local economic growth, then adequate investment, staffing, and support infrastructure are not optional—they are essential.

Members Comments:

“No, as the money being allocated only seems to grow the management teams and not the staff that have delivery duties”

“No. Many public sector organisations like my own are already stretched thin.”

“If they're cutting full-time staff hours to save money, it's unlikely they have the capacity or resources to take on extra duties like developing, pushing and implementing a detailed CWB plan without additional support.”

“Even with the best intentions, underfunded teams can't deliver transformational work if they're already firefighting.”

Alongside local authorities, 'relevant public bodies' would be required to publish and implement a CWB action plan. Do you agree with the list of “relevant” specified public bodies proposed in the Bill?

There was overall consensus among respondents that the list of relevant public bodies included in the Bill was broadly appropriate. However, it was strongly felt that the scope should be expanded to include additional stakeholders—particularly large commercial organisations and businesses that exert significant influence on local economies and communities. Their inclusion is essential if the goal is to create a truly inclusive and effective CWB framework.

While the existing list represents a solid foundation, it omits key actors such as housing associations, third sector interfaces, larger voluntary organisations, and community anchor institutions. These groups are often deeply embedded within communities, connecting with volunteers and community groups, holding extensive local knowledge, trust, and networks that are not always accessible to statutory public bodies. Their unique positioning enables them to respond to local needs with agility and authenticity, making them vital partners in any effort to foster sustainable, community-led economic development.

If CWB is genuinely about building wealth from the ground up, then the planning, implementation, and accountability structures must reflect this by incorporating a wider range of grassroots voices—not just top-down institutions. An inclusive, community-informed approach is essential to ensure the long-term success and credibility of CWB initiatives across Scotland.

Members Comments:

“...more should be included - large commercial organisations and businesses have a huge impact.”

“It's a strong list-but leaves out some key players.”

“If CWB is really about building local wealth from the ground up, then the plan needs more grassroots voices, not just top-down institutions.”

"Specified public bodies" must have due regard to CWB guidance from the Scottish Government when developing their corporate plans and associated delivery strategies. Do you agree with the list of "Specified public bodies"?

While the inclusion of major national public bodies in the list is welcomed, it was strongly felt that the absence of key local and community-level organisations significantly undermines the potential effectiveness of the Bill. Respondents noted that groups such as housing associations, community anchor organisations, third sector interfaces, credit unions, and local development trusts are not currently included, despite their central role in delivering services, creating employment, and building local capacity—particularly in communities facing poverty, social exclusion, or economic transition.

These organisations maintain deep, trusted relationships within their communities and are often best placed to implement and support CWB initiatives on the ground. Their exclusion risks overlooking the very actors who are already facilitating community-led change and contributing to local resilience and sustainability.

In addition, there was notable concern that local authorities appear to be missing from the list. This omission is particularly problematic, given the central role that local authorities play in shaping local economic policy, commissioning services, and convening partnerships. Their formal inclusion as relevant public bodies are essential to ensure consistency, accountability, and effective coordination in the implementation of CWB strategies.

If the Bill is to achieve a meaningful and lasting impact beyond policy rhetoric, it must reflect the reality of who is delivering change at the local level. The inclusion of grassroots and place-based organisations—alongside local authorities and national bodies—is critical to creating an inclusive and effective CWB framework across Scotland.

Members Comments:

“Local authorities should be included”

“...it misses out on local and community-level organisations that are essential to making CWB actually work..... these organisations are often the ones with direct relationships in communities, especially in areas experiencing poverty, exclusion or transition”.

“ involvement (of Local Authority and community led organisations) is crucial if we want the Bill to have a lasting impact in real places, not just in policy papers”.

Are there any ways the law in devolved areas could be changed to facilitate Community Wealth Building that are currently not proposed in the Bill?

There was a degree of uncertainty among respondents regarding additional legislative changes within devolved areas that could facilitate CWB. However, several members identified areas where they felt the

Bill could go further to support the realisation of the CWB objectives through strengthened legal provisions.

Suggestions included:

Procurement: Introducing more robust legal requirements for public bodies to prioritise local suppliers, social enterprises, and community-owned businesses—not solely on the basis of cost-effectiveness, but also with regard to social and economic value to communities.

Land Reform: Accelerating and simplifying the processes through which communities can take ownership of land and vacant or underused buildings. This would help unlock community assets and support local regeneration efforts.

Fair Work and Fairer Funding: Requiring all public sector contracts to meet enhanced Fair Work criteria—such as payment of the real Living Wage, provision of secure employment contracts, and adherence to fair employment practices—is a crucial step in ensuring that public expenditure actively contributes to reducing in-work poverty and improving job quality across Scotland. However, it is equally important that this commitment extends beyond statutory public bodies to include fair and sustainable funding for the third sector. Many third sector organisations are key strategic partners in delivering essential services and driving community wealth building but continue to face chronic underfunding and financial instability.

We therefore urge the Scottish Government to honour its commitment to implement [Fairer Funding by 2026](#). This must include multi-year funding settlements, inflation-linked budgets, and timely payments, which are essential to allow third sector organisations—and public bodies reliant on external funding—to plan, retain staff, and deliver high-quality services aligned with the principles of Fair Work and Community Wealth Building.

Additionally, some respondents noted the potential benefit of stronger alignment between CWB legislation and Local Outcome Improvement Plans, CLD Plans and Community Planning processes, to ensure coherence and integration across local governance structures. While not all respondents felt equipped to comment definitively, there was broad agreement that the Bill should be ambitious in using the full scope of devolved powers to embed CWB principles into public policy and economic practice across Scotland.

Are there any potential unintended consequences to the proposed Bill?

While the overarching aims of the Community Wealth Building Bill are widely supported, respondents highlighted a number of potential unintended consequences that should be carefully considered during implementation.

Tokenism and Superficial Compliance: There is a risk that some organisations may engage with CWB in a performative manner, fulfilling basic requirements without committing to genuine, transformative change. This could result in the appearance of progress without meaningful impact, particularly if compliance becomes overly focused on monitoring or attainment metrics rather than the long-term values and aims of CWB.

Inequality Between Areas: Without adequate and equitable resourcing, there is concern that the Bill may inadvertently widen the gap between well-resourced local authorities and those facing financial or staffing challenges. Areas already doing strong CWB work may be able to capitalise on new opportunities, while under-resourced areas may struggle to implement the Bill effectively, leading to uneven outcomes across Scotland.

Strain on Workforce and Delivery Partners: With many public bodies and third sector organisations already operating under significant pressure, there is a concern that additional responsibilities introduced by the Bill could exacerbate workforce stress and capacity issues. Without appropriate investment and support, the additional workload could lead to burnout or a decline in service quality.

Overlooking Grassroots Voices: There is a risk that the planning and implementation of CWB could become overly institutionalised, excluding smaller community groups and grassroots organisations. These actors often have deep local knowledge and trust, and their exclusion could undermine efforts to build genuine local wealth and resilience.

Market Displacement and Unintended Economic Pressure: While support for local businesses is a core principle of CWB, there is a concern that this could inadvertently disadvantage medium-sized businesses or create tension within local economies. Clarity is needed on how CWB defines "local" and how it balances support for different types and sizes of enterprises.

Respondents agreed that these challenges are not insurmountable but must be proactively addressed through robust planning, inclusive engagement, fair funding, and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation.

Members Comments:

"Avoid a performativity and attainment focus and fund first steps."

"The intentions are positive but it could create some unintended consequences such as: Tokenism, inequality between areas, strain on staff; overlooking grassroots voices."

"By supporting local business's, we may invertedly be putting stress on medium business. Again, who decides on where CWB can be effective and how this impacts."

To what extent will small businesses benefit from this Bill?

Members expressed mixed views on the extent to which small businesses will benefit from the CWB Bill, as it is proposed. While the Bill has the potential to create significant opportunities for small enterprises, this outcome is not guaranteed and will depend heavily on how the legislation is implemented.

There is cautious optimism that small businesses could benefit through:

- **Localised Procurement:** A shift in public sector procurement practices toward prioritising local suppliers could provide small businesses with greater access to public contracts and long-term opportunities for growth.
- **Inclusive Ownership and Economic Fairness:** By supporting inclusive economic models such as cooperatives, employee-owned businesses, and social enterprises, the Bill could help foster a more resilient and equitable local economy in which small businesses play a central role.
- **Increased Recognition:** The Bill may bring much-needed recognition to the contributions small businesses already make in local communities, particularly in terms of job creation, local reinvestment, and community wellbeing.

However, members also highlighted key concerns and offered some conditions for success:

- **Implementation is Critical:** These benefits will only be realised if small businesses are explicitly included in CWB action plans and if public bodies receive support to change procurement culture

and practice. The CLD sector is critical in supporting grassroots enterprise, and the empowerment of community voices to realise the potential of this Bill.

- **Support to Access Opportunities:** Small businesses often lack the resources to navigate complex bidding processes. Targeted support, simplified procurement systems, and contract structuring that allows for partial or shared delivery will be essential to make these opportunities accessible.
- **Cultural Change and the Role of CLD:** A genuine cultural shift within public bodies is essential to ensure that small, local enterprises are recognised not merely as service providers, but as valued partners in economic development and community wealth building. However, achieving this shift in mindset and practice requires more than legislative change—it demands a strong, embedded culture of learning, empowerment, and community engagement.

It was strongly felt that a strengthened Community Learning and Development (CLD) workforce—both paid and voluntary—is essential to support this cultural transformation. CLD practitioners possess the skills, experience, and trusted relationships within communities necessary to co-ordinate local activities, provide high-quality learning opportunities, and model best practices in participatory development and governance.

Community development practitioners are already at the forefront of responding to emerging local needs by:

- Supporting the formation and capacity-building of community groups and organisations.
- Delivering high-quality, accessible learning and skills development for individuals and groups.
- Strengthening the governance, accountability, and sustainability of local initiatives.
- Enabling communities to take an active role in shaping and delivering services.
- Empowering citizens to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.

This work is not only vital for realising the ambitions of the CWB Bill but also contributes significantly to Scotland’s broader goal of developing a wellbeing economy—one that places people and communities at the heart of economic and social progress. Therefore, a properly resourced and recognised CLD sector must be seen as an integral part of the CWB infrastructure required to embed cultural change, build local capacity, and enable communities to take full advantage of the opportunities the Bill seeks to create.

Without these enabling conditions, respondents noted that small businesses may only benefit to a limited or moderate extent, or risk being overlooked altogether in favour of larger, more established contractors to get recognition in the work that they do.

To what extent will local community organisations benefit from this Bill?

There was broad consensus among respondents that local community organisations stand to benefit significantly from the CWB Bill— but only if they are genuinely and consistently included in both the planning and implementation processes. Community organisations are central to the success of CWB, given their rootedness in place, trust within communities, and deep understanding of local needs and assets. If implemented effectively while recognising and investing in the skill set of the CLD sector, it was felt that the Bill could enable community organisations to:

- **Form Equal Partnerships:** With the support and learning from CLD, work alongside public bodies as equal partners, rather than being treated as secondary stakeholders or delivery agents.
- **Access Greater Opportunities:** Benefit from increased funding, tailored support, and procurement policies that prioritise local, community-led organisations.

- **Influence Decision-Making:** Gain a stronger and more formalised voice in local planning, strategic development, and service delivery—ensuring community needs and perspectives shape local economies.
- **Support Community Ownership and Enterprise:** Community organisations could assume greater roles in asset ownership, social enterprise, and the delivery of local services—embedding wealth, opportunity, and decision-making power within the communities they serve. However, it was recognised that achieving this outcome would require significant learning, guidance, and sustained support from qualified CLD practitioners, particularly those with expertise in community development and empowerment. CLD professionals are well-placed to build the capacity, confidence, and governance structures necessary to ensure that community ownership is not only possible but sustainable and impactful.
- **Reinvest in Community Outcomes:** Organisations that generate income through CWB-related opportunities are likely to reinvest these resources into broader community development objectives, further strengthening local impact.

However, the extent of these benefits is contingent upon genuine inclusion, adequate support, significant recognition and investment into services such as CLD, and cultural change within public bodies. Without this, there is concern that the Bill could default to a top-down approach, marginalising the very organisations it seeks to empower.

In summary, members concluded that local community organisations could benefit to a high extent—but success depends on meaningful partnership working, clarity of roles, fair funding, investment into the CLD workforce and recognition of both CLD and communities existing contributions to Scotland’s wellbeing economy.

How can the CLD profession support the development and implementation of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill?

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) profession is uniquely positioned to play a vital role in the development and successful implementation of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill. CLD practitioners—through their work in adult learning, community development, and youth work—have deep, trusted relationships within communities, and possess the skills necessary to engage, educate and empower individuals and groups to take active roles in local economic development.

Key contributions the CLD profession can make include:

- **Amplifying Community Voices:** CLD practitioners are skilled facilitators of community engagement and consultation. They can ensure that diverse voices—particularly those who are often marginalised or excluded—are heard and influence local wealth-building strategies.
- **Building Capacity and Confidence:** Through tailored learning programmes, CLD professionals can support individuals, groups, and organisations to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate in and benefit from Community Wealth Building initiatives, such as local enterprise development, community ownership, and participatory budgeting.
- **Facilitating Collaboration and Partnership:** CLD acts as a bridge between sectors—connecting community members with public bodies, anchor organisations, and local businesses. This intermediary role is essential to ensuring meaningful, equal partnerships.

- **Promoting Local Enterprise and Social Economy Models:** By supporting the development of social enterprises and encouraging the use of local supply chains, CLD professionals can influence procurement practices and help embed wealth locally.
- **Challenging Inequality and Promoting Inclusion:** CLD is rooted in principles of social justice and equity. Practitioners can help ensure that Community Wealth Building addresses systemic barriers and promotes inclusive economic participation.
- **Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation:** CLD professionals bring a reflective and learning-led approach to practice, and can support ongoing assessment of CWB implementation—ensuring lessons are captured and shared to improve delivery over time.

However, it is important to note that the CLD sector requires adequate funding and strategic investment to fulfil this potential. In many areas, CLD capacity has been significantly reduced due to funding cuts, with adult learning and community development provision particularly affected ([Budget Allocation, Still Report, P28](#)). To truly harness the power of the CLD workforce in delivering the Bill's aims, dedicated resources, recognition of the profession's role, and workforce development will be essential.

Conclusion

Fundamental to the practice of CLD across all settings are these values which have been identified by the CLD Standards Council:

- **Self-determination** – respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.
- **Inclusion** – valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome and challenging discriminatory practice.
- **Empowerment** – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/ or collective action.
- **Working collaboratively** – maximising collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners and communities.
- **Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity** – ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.

As evidenced throughout our response, Community Development, as a key domain of Community Learning and Development (CLD), is a recognised approach to achieving meaningful social change. It involves supporting community activists and groups to organise effectively while building learning, confidence, and collective power within communities. This enables communities to actively promote democracy, sustainable development, equality, and social justice.

Community Development builds capacity and influence by equipping individuals and groups with the confidence, understanding, and skills required to shape decision-making processes and influence the design and delivery of public services. This aligns directly with the value-based practice central to CLD and endorsed by the CLD Standards Council. These values, along with the [CLD Competences](#) and [CLD Code of Ethics](#), provide a robust framework that informs both the rationale and methodology of our professional practice.

We welcome the alignment of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill with the values and aspirations of CLD. However, we believe the Bill currently lacks sufficient detail regarding the full range of physical, financial, and psychological resources required to realise its ambitions. It must go further in articulating the practical and structural enablers needed to empower Scotland's communities to take the lead in improving their own futures.

Specifically, we urge the inclusion of:

- Clearer recognition of community voice and participation as central to all phases of implementation.
- Explicit reference to the role of CLD practitioners in enabling this participation through their unique skills and community relationships.
- A realistic assessment of the funding, infrastructure, and workforce support necessary to sustain long-term, community-led change.

We strongly advocate for the CLD profession to be formally recognised as a key stakeholder in the continued development and implementation of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill. With adequate investment and strategic inclusion, the CLD sector stands ready to play a leading role in delivering the Bill's objectives—ensuring they are not only ambitious in principle but achievable in practice.