North Carrick Community Benefit Company

2025 Impact Report

Over the past decade, the North Carrick Community Benefit Company (NCCBC) has played an influential role in transforming the economic conditions underpinning the communities of North Carrick. Established in 2014 to administer funding from ScottishPower Renewables' Dersalloch Windfarm, NCCBC has invested nearly £3 million in grants and strategic initiatives across 9 fragile, rural communities.

This report evaluates the scale and scope of NCCBC's impact—economically, socially, and strategically—drawing on extensive data, stakeholder feedback, and an independent economic impact assessment.

The findings are compelling: NCCBC has delivered a return on investment of around £8 for every £1 spent, catalysed over £43 million in economic growth, and supported hundreds of community-led projects. Its work has not only improved local infrastructure and services but also strengthened community resilience, increased employment, and enhanced wellbeing. The organisation has facilitated changes in North Carrick that out-perform other communities. As the organisation looks to the future, this report outlines key recommendations to consolidate its success and scale its impact for the next decade.

Impact report prepared by: community enterprise, 4 consulting

For: nccbc — Working together to fund the future of North Carrick

Strategic Context and Purpose

Origins and Mission

NCCBC was created to ensure that the Community Benefit Funds provided by local renewable energy projects were invested into the communities of North Carrick. Its remit spans a 54-square mile area, including Maybole, Straiton, Kirkmichael, Kirkoswald, Maidens, Turnberry, Dunure, Minishant, and Crosshill. Despite changes in ward boundaries, NCCBC has maintained a consistent focus on these 9 communities.

“To make North Carrick a better place to live, work, visit, and enjoy leisure”

This broad mission encompasses health, poverty reduction, environmental protection and sustainability, cultural enrichment, and economic development. With approximately £300,000 available annually—more than any other regional funder—NCCBC has become a cornerstone of local development.

Responding to a Changing Landscape

NCCBC operates in the context of significant external pressures: public sector cuts, rising living costs, and escalating demand for services. At the same time, policy shifts towards a wellbeing economy, community wealth building, and net zero present new opportunities. NCCBC’s ability to respond flexibly and strategically to these dynamics has been a key strength.

North Carrick faces significant health challenges, including high rates of anxiety, depression, and chronic conditions. These issues are compounded by economic deprivation and rural isolation, which limits access to services and opportunities for healthier lifestyles. The area has been the focus of recovery and regeneration efforts spearheaded by NCCBC, but there is more work to be done in future investments.

Achievements and Impact

Grant Funding and Leverage

Since 2015, NCCBC has received applications from local groups with a total value of £1.45m. 81% of all applications received were approved, resulting in £912,914 of funding being awarded. This funding has leveraged an impressive £7.9 million in match funding, resulting in a return on investment (ROI) of £8.71 per £1.
The average grant awarded was £12,032, with average match funding of £72,231. A dedicated community-led projects fund, designed to be more accessible and which does not require match funding, invested £184,950 and still attracted £23,530 in match funding. The rest was invested directly or strategically.

Strategic Investments

Beyond grant-making, NCCBC has proactively invested in direct and strategic initiatives that have had a transformative effect including:

- **Foundations for Recovery:** A £565,000 programme (including £50,000 from NCCBC) that commissioned 26 feasibility studies, laying the groundwork for major capital projects. This was funded by UK Government.

- **Tourism Development:** Investments in the Bruce Festival, Northcarrick.com, and Bruce's Web Arts Trail have enhanced the area's tourism offer and cultural identity. Assets which are there for the long term.

- **Community Assets:** NCCBC has supported the renovation and acquisition of key community buildings, including a charity shop and the flat above that now generate income and provide services.

- **Workforce Development:** Initiatives such as subsidised driving lessons and potential sports coaching apprenticeships address employability and social mobility.

- **COVID-19 Recovery:** In 2022, NCCBC swiftly allocated £179,000 to 25 projects which helped address some of the social impacts of COVID -19 on local residents and communities, demonstrating its agility and commitment to community resilience.

Achievements and Impact

Economic Growth

An independent economic impact assessment found that:

• From 2014 to 2022, North Carrick and Maybole's economy grew by 51.6%, compared to 16.4% across the wider South Ayrshire area. This is without adjustments for inflation.

• Adjusted for inflation, real growth was 18%, with 9.1% growth in employment and 8% increase in productivity.

• The annual output of the economy (in terms of Gross Value Added) is now £88 million per year higher, since NCCBC was established, with £43.4 million of that growth directly attributable to NCCBC's activities.

• The Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) is 14.5 based on NCCBC's direct investment, and 3.8 when including leveraged funding.
These figures underscore NCCBC's role in reversing economic decline and driving inclusive, sustainable growth.

Community Outcomes and Feedback

Survey Results

A survey of 29 organisations (representing roughly one-third of applicants) revealed:

- 77/100 average impact rating.
- 28% increased turnover, with 54% maintaining surpluses.
- 31% increased volunteers, 27% increased board members, and 19% increased part-time staff.
- 66% improved citizenship and volunteering, 50% enhanced youth life chances, and 53% contributed to regeneration.
- 46% reduced disadvantage and poverty, and 46% improved learning and education.

These outcomes reflect NCCBC's broad and meaningful impact across sectors.

Case Study Highlights

Six detailed case studies provided qualitative insights and illustrate the catalytic effect of NCCBC's investments:

A local arts project created four jobs and increased community cohesion.

A youth mental health initiative (Place2Be) leveraged NCCBC funding to secure over £200,000 in additional support and shifted its delivery model to be more community-based.

A small grant to a sports club prevented closure and revitalised local engagement.

"We increased our trustees and volunteers... the project's success inspired community involvement."

"The grant saw us through the most difficult stage of the club's existence... without it, we would have faced closure."

Organisational Strengths and Challenges

Responsiveness and Flexibility

NCCBC's ability to respond quickly to emerging needs—such as the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis—has been widely praised. Stakeholders value its nimbleness and willingness to adapt.

"NCCBC is an asset to North Carrick... they've moved beyond the bedding-in phase and achieved a lot."

Strategic Relationships

NCCBC has built strong relationships with South Ayrshire Council, ScottishPower Renewables, and other stakeholders. These relationships have been instrumental in securing match funding and delivering large-scale projects. The organisation is seen as a robust strategic partner for larger applications and a sound delivery partner for local projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation

While 52% of applicants found the process easy, 19% said they found it difficult. However NCCBC have funded a Development Manager to assist groups with the application process. Monitoring was seen as helpful by 45%, but 18% found it challenging. There is room to improve data collection, particularly around beneficiary numbers and qualitative impact.

"Simplify the forms, reduce levels of match funding and only ask for quotes when essential."

Key Findings

High ROI: NCCBC's funding has consistently attracted significant match funding and delivered strong economic returns.

Strategic Investment Works: Programmes like Foundations for Recovery and Place2Be have had long-term, systemic impact.

Community-Led Projects Matter: Small grants have enabled grassroots innovation and resilience.

Capacity Building is Crucial: The Development Manager role has been instrumental in supporting applicants and strengthening the sector.

Monitoring Needs Improvement: Better systems are needed to capture impact data without overburdening applicants.

Match Funding can be a Barrier: While effective, it can exclude smaller organisations and should be applied flexibly.

Recommendations

Dual Funding Streams

• Community-Led Projects Fund: Small grants with simplified processes and optional match funding.
• Main Strategic Fund: Larger grants with clear outputs and required match funding.

Establish a Development Trust

Create a separately constituted Development Trust to lead regeneration projects, attract external investment, and deliver initiatives like Foundations for Recovery.

Invest in Capacity Building

Continue funding strategic staff roles to support applicants, stimulate innovation, and build resilience in the sector.

Focus on Key Themes

Align all investments with fewer, clearer themes—regeneration, youth, learning, and reducing disadvantage—reviewed every three years.

Improve Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduce standardised, light-touch monitoring capturing both quantitative and qualitative data. Commission external impact assessments every three years.

Refine Processes

Simplify application and evidence requirements, especially for small projects. Maintain match funding but introduce tiered expectations.

Enhance Communication and Storytelling

Improve marketing to showcase impact and build community engagement