

THE CAN DO TOOLKITS

Let's change the way we deliver public investment, forever!

The time is right

The *Can Do* Toolkits revolutionised the way the housing sector used investment to deliver jobs, training and other benefits for local communities. Ten years on the time is right to adopt this approach across Welsh Government

Wales faces many economic challenges made worse by the uncertainty around Brexit and the lingering effects of austerity. How should we respond?

According to Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for the Economy, one thing we need to do is look much closer to home than in the past. One of the priorities of the government's new economic strategy is to nurture and grow the *foundational economy* - the industries and firms that are present in every community. When you add it all up this accounts for 40% of Welsh jobs and £1 in every three spent. What's more, as the minister points out *'in some parts of Wales this basic foundational economy is the economy'*.

Housing anticipated this new agenda a decade ago through the i2i *Can Do* Toolkits. The toolkits revolutionised the way we did procurement by delivering local jobs and training. This meant challenging the conservative procurement orthodoxy at the time that said you couldn't do this without falling foul of European and UK regulations. They were wrong.

Ten years on and government itself is embracing this bolder, more radical approach using all the levers available locally to address chronic problems. The potential is huge. Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe points out that over the next decade, Welsh public services will spend over £60bn in procuring goods, services and works. In her words:

'If this money was being spent to buy things and improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of people and communities in Wales – imagine what would that mean? Wales has a great opportunity now to think about how and where to spend that money in the interests of future generations'

Little surprise therefore that the Commissioner and the Minister are strong supporters of the *Can Do* Toolkits and see the potential to embed this approach far wider than housing. As Lee Waters said recently, the foundational economy:

*Builds on work pioneered in Wales a decade ago. The *Can Do* Toolkit was an early initiative in this area to help public sector officers build community benefits into procurement'*

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Momentum around this agenda continues to build including:

- The National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee inquiry into public procurement in the foundational economy announced in July 2019.
- The Future Generations Commissioner announcement of its first section 20 review into sustainable public procurement and how contracts and frameworks are applying the 5 Ways of working and considering the well-being goals announced in June 2019.

The time is right to set the *Can Do* approach in a modern context to address the economic challenges and opportunities we face now and will face in an uncertain future.

A Can Do Declaration

This declaration has been drawn up by leaders and practitioners across Wales. We will engage widely across sectors to make sure we maximise the opportunities investment brings for sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits to communities across Wales. To do this we will:

1. Win hearts and minds at the highest level

We will build on the support we already have and get high level buy-in for a pan-Wales *Can Do* approach across the Health, Education, Care, Local Government and Housing sectors.

To do this we will:

- Work with Welsh Government and the '3 Cs' - clients, contractors and communities - to agree a definition of social value that can be easily understood and widely adopted.
- Target high level influencers including Public Service Boards (PSBs) and Regional Partnership Boards (RSBs).
- Lobby to make a *Can Do* approach mandatory in all public funding and grant programmes over £1 million in value.
- Seek to make it mandatory to identify 'pipeline' opportunities in the public sector at an early stage so that the *Can Do* approach can be hardwired in from the outset.
- Develop support and resources for senior influencers based on the i2i model.

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- Secure high-level support for building *Can Do* learning networks across Wales.
- Develop a *Can Do* mentoring programme.

2. Embrace radical thinking and actions

The original *Can Do* Toolkits challenged conservative approaches and revolutionised the way we delivered housing investment. We want to explore radical new ideas including:

- The 'procurement flip' – taking a long-term view of value and challenging the lowest price default position.
- Co-designing procurement involving the '3 Cs' - clients, contractors and communities – to set objectives, define value, specify community benefits and make processes easy and accessible.
- Moving from competitive procurement to a longer-term relationship-based approach.
- Embracing decarbonisation opportunity.
- Broadening the *Can Do* reach beyond housing and construction.
- Identifying and supporting networks of '3C' peer champions.
- Developing case studies and 'real stories' that highlight the impact of a *Can Do* approach on individuals and families
- Embedding a *Can Do* approach into Wellbeing plans and Public Service Boards.
- Working with Academi Wales to embed *Can Do* approach into public sector leadership programmes such as Summer Schools.
- Making the scoring of a *Can Do* approach a 'business as normal' practice in public procurement.
- Introducing a consistent framework of incentives and penalties relating to delivering *Can Do* contracts.
- Developing a monitoring framework across Wales so that Welsh Government can record and monitor progress in delivering a *Can Do* approach?

3. Develop new tools and resources

We will develop a new series of *Can Do* Toolkits:

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Toolkit 1: Supporting the public sector to Develop and adopt *Can Do* strategies that delivers social / economic / environmental value and secures whole organisation buy-in including:

- Making a sustainable business case.
- Co-designing a strategy with the '3Cs' – clients, contractors and communities.
- Identifying desired outcomes and milestones.
- Aligning the strategy with lean thinking and asset based community development (ABCD).
- Upskilling professionals involved in commissioning, procurement, finance and internal audit on a *Can Do* approach.
- Building *Can Do* teams.
- Designing sector specific *Can Do* strategies for public spending departments.
- Supporting contractors to embrace and deliver a *Can Do* approach.

Toolkit 2: Embedding targeted recruitment and training (TR&T) into commissioning, procurement and delivery including:

- Developing a new range of *Can Do* model clauses and resources adaptable across all public spending departments.
- Setting TR&T objectives, measurement and evaluation.
- Identifying people who could benefit for TR&T and raising awareness of opportunities.
- Building confidence and supporting those returning to work or entering employment for the first time.
- Providing on-going support to people taking part in TR&T activities.
- Adapting collaborative approaches eg through a shared apprenticeships.

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Toolkit 3: Building the foundational economy by working with SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops by:

- Co-designing commissioning and procurement policies and practices with the '3 Cs' - clients, contractors and communities to ensure they are SME, social business, mutual and co-op friendly.
- Setting SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops participation in supply chain objectives, measurement and evaluation.
- Identifying and planning the opportunities / pipeline for SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops.
- Identifying and engaging with SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops before specifications have been finalised.
- Exploring client and collaborative opportunities to support / set up social businesses to become part of supply chains.
- Disaggregating specifications to enable SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops to compete for work.
- Providing on-going support to SMEs, social businesses, mutuals and co-ops.