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# CAPTURING LESSONS 2022

**ewmpas**

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## Introduction

This report summarises the themes and lessons that arose from the second Welsh Government funded **Can Do Approach** project completed in March 2022 with a focus on sustainable local economic development. The project built on the original **Can Do Toolkits** and the updated **Can Do Approach**.

### The Can Do Approach

Committing to co-production with the '3Cs' (clients, contractors and communities) to jointly:

- Agree the economic, social and environmental outcomes for all community investment.
- Adopt the principles of fair work.
- Identify a pipeline of all investment opportunities.
- Simplify the measurement of outcomes using the seven wellbeing goals in the Future Generations Act.
- Capture lessons – positive and negative – and share learning rapidly and widely.
- Refresh existing tools and resources and make them freely available

The report reflects on the impressive range of initiatives that the housing sector and others are undertaking to deliver social value and support the foundational economy.

Our 2021 report opened by re-emphasising that housing was the **Can Do Sector** with 'an unchallengeable track record of working in partnership with government and others to create jobs, support local businesses and improve the environment in addition to providing homes for hundreds of thousands of people and families'.

As part of this project we engaged a range of organisations committed to maximising social value. As well as the housing sector we also engaged with Health, Social Care and Education.

Beyond doubt, the scale and pace of challenges has significantly increased over the past twelve months. There were a number of broad conclusions that we can draw from this work:

1. The **Can Do** thread continues to run through what the housing sector does.

2. There is a recognition that because of heightened challenges, we will need to move as an urgent priority particularly to help address the cost-of-living crisis
3. For the first time the **Can Do Approach** has gained traction beyond the Housing Sector including Health, Social Care and Education.
4. Innovation is everywhere – we have identified and collated a number of case studies and resources - and the ambition to share and scale up practice is increasing.

Finally, a word of caution: there is a chance the scale of current challenges will blow our **Can Do** ambitions off course. But we think it even more important that we strain every sinew to get the maximum added value for those at the sharp end. This was the prime motivation for the original **Can Do Toolkits** and if anything, the circumstances people and communities face across Wales are even more dire. The **Can Do Approach** is more relevant than ever.

## Key Findings

1. There is a chance the scale of current challenges will blow our ambitions off course - but **the Can Do Approach is more relevant than ever.**
2. **The Can Do thread** continues to run through what the housing sector does.
3. **Shifting the Focus: The Cost-of-living Crisis.** Given the very challenging circumstances we currently face – economic, social and environmental – we need to inject some urgency into maximising the added value that programmes and services deliver for people and communities, particularly those in most need.
4. We also need to **keep our eyes on the long-term prize** and any ‘refocus’ must be aligned with sustainability goals.
5. For the first time the **Can Do Approach** has gained traction beyond the Housing Sector including **Health, Social Care** and **Education.**
6. **Innovation is everywhere** and the ambition to share and scale up practice is increasing. (We have identified and are collating a number of case studies and resources)
7. The approach continues to be a **good fit with Welsh Government’s agenda.** For example, with the proposed Social Partnership and Public Procurement and the emerging foundational economy priorities (Food, Health and Social Care and Decarbonisation).
8. **A Common Understanding of Social Value** - a common definition that could sit within the Wellbeing Goals and Ways of Working laid out in the Future Generations Act would be welcome to policy makers and practitioners across the public sector based on the **Social value review** Cwmpas undertook for Welsh Government.

9. **We have A Framework: The Wellbeing Goals and Ways of Working.** Long-term impact is increasingly seen as being as important as the short-term objectives of services and programmes. They should not be pitched against each other but seen as entirely complimentary.
10. **The Implementation Gap** - the key is to understand *why* we are not always able to translate ambitions into outcomes and to focus efforts on the 'Implementation Gap'. The **Can Do Toolkits** were developed by *i2i inform to involve* project set up to work in the space between high level ambitions - to improve the standard of social housing across Wales - and the delivering real benefits at a community level - working at both ends at the same time.
11. **Deciding What to Measure** - The **Can Do Approach** is not an alternative means of setting social value targets and measuring outcomes. We have three key messages:
- Whilst it is essential to define the social value we want to achieve, the means of measuring outcomes (of which there are many examples - TOMS, HACT, Value Wales etc) are secondary and can be chosen to 'fit' our agreed objectives.
  - Start with expressing what you want to achieve within the seven wellbeing goals and 5 ways of working - whatever you generate will be consistent with any 'requirements' of funders and regulators.
  - Data and quantitative measures are important, but we need to know what harder to measure outcomes have been achieved, perhaps through case studies and personal stories.
12. **The 3Cs: Clients** the main challenge is keeping a focus on long-term objectives whilst refocussing on immediate challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis.

Clients also need to work more closely with Contractors and building relationship was a recurring theme, given the shortage of skills and capacity to address current and emerging business priorities. Key questions for Clients include:

- How can we identify potential supply chain partner?
- How can we create sourcing plan / supply chain map?

- What support is needed to help build capacity and who can help us?
- Are social value expectations proportionate and deliverable?
- How do we identify and recognise what Contractors are already doing to deliver social value?
- Can we get voluntary buy-in from existing Contractors?
- How do we build a sense of common purpose on particular challenges e.g. the cost- of-living crisis, the climate emergency, skills and training?

13. **The 3Cs: Contractors.** There are increasing concerns about the capacity, particularity of SMEs and Social businesses to step up. Skills building, more collaborative and longer-term procurement plus longer timescales for frameworks all need to be urgently addressed.

14. **The 3Cs: Community** – a common challenge was how to meaningfully involve the ‘third C’ – Community. With that in mind we are developing a comprehensive guide including links to resources and approaches that could be applied locally.

15. **The ‘4<sup>th</sup> C’: Consortia** - initiatives such as SERO, the Blaenau Gwent foundational economy pilot, Cardiff Capital Region Housing Viability Gap Fund and Welsh Government’s Net Zero project provide evidence that collaboration is continuing and spreading.

16. **Beyond Housing: Health** - The potential to do more to deliver greater social value through health spending is increasingly acknowledged within the sector itself. The scale of the opportunities are staggering in an organisation that directly employs one hundred thousand people and spends £1 million per hour. streams that could deliver more social value:

- Commissioning goods and services including Food
- Workforce development and recruitment to proactively address future skills shortages
- Partnerships with other sectors e.g. housing for key workers

17. **Barriers to progress** still exist including



- *The difficult box* – the constant demand on NHS resources and the complexity and scale of health boards meant that a consistent and effective approach to social value was difficult to achieve.
- *Finding the time* – the day job for health professionals was demanding and unrelenting. Standing back and reviewing strategy required planning.
- *Burnt fingers* – previous initiatives that hadn't worked had been frustrating for everyone involved, with current policy restricting the scope for imaginative solutions.
- *We get it but other departments don't* – innovators can be stifled by the more conservative culture of for example, finance and procurement.

18. **Beyond Housing: Social care** – the search for innovation in the Social Care sector feels sometimes like an existential one. A dearth of local providers, the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff and dealing with seismic impact of the pandemic are common features.

An innovative approach identified includes:

- A corporate risk appetite to find new legal and legitimate ways to organise the delivery of services.
- A commitment to working with partners in the long term through a nine year initial contract.
- A long lead in time to the contract itself to learn lessons at each point and co-produce a sustainable model.
- Committing time and resources to the implementation gap e.g., investing in brokering skills to establish and nurture client / contractor relationships.
- Acknowledging that commissioning is a far wider process than procurement that requires cross department buy in.



## **Next Steps**

An appetite already exists to do more work to embed the **Can Do Approach** within Housing.

The scale of current and emerging challenges make it even more important that all public investment delivers the maximum social, economic and environmental outcomes for people and communities across Wales.

We will continue to engage with partners and explore opportunities to take the **Can Do Approach** into other organisations and sectors.

## Project Participants

We are grateful for the engagement and co-operation of the following:

<b>Housing</b>
Coastal Housing
Clwyd Alyn
RHA
Tai Tarian
Communities Creating Homes
Creating Enterprise (Cartrefi Conwy)
Trivallis
Adra
Linc Cymru
Grwp Cynefin
Barcud Shared Services
Merthyr Valleys Homes
Welsh Government Net Zero
Community Housing Cymru
Housing Quality Network

<b>Local Government</b>
Cardiff Capital Region
Denbighshire County Council
Caerphilly Local Supply Chain Initiative

<b>Health &amp; Social Care</b>
NHS Shared Services
Digital Health and Care Wales
Hywel Dda Health University Health Board
Gwynedd County Council
Social Value in Social Care

<b>Education &amp; Skills</b>
Wrexham Glyndwr University
Cyfle Shared Apprenticeships
SERO

<b>Community Sector</b>
Kindred (Social Trading Organisation)
Bronllys Wellbeing Park

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