

Public Service Boards and Foundational Economy Event

13 June 2019, 13:30-16:30

The Angel Hotel, Cardiff

Speakers

Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, Lee Waters AM (Chair)
Maureen Howell, Equality and Prosperity Deputy Director, Welsh Government
Neil McInroy, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

Welsh Government

Nigel Elias, Programme Manager for the Better Jobs Closer to Home Programme
Sarah King, Valleys Taskforce Project Lead
Iwan Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst
Huw Bowen, Governance and Engagement Manager
Rebecca Janczewski, Valleys Taskforce Engagement Manager
Abigail Wilson-Date, Prosperity For All Support Officer

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions.

1. Maureen Howell opened the event and introductions were made.

Item 2: Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) Neil McInroy

Summary

- FE (Foundational Economy) provides basic economic plumbing
- Aim is to achieve social justice, good local economies and effective public services for everyone
- FE flows between people, places and communities
- Distribution of wealth - where is the wealth going
- How to ensure better ownership of the local economy through land and property assets
- 5 pillars of community wealth building
- Overview of the Preston model and examples in Manchester City Council, Islington, NHS Institutions and North Ayrshire
- Infrastructural agendas and legislative framework provides Wales with a substantial head start
- Methodology follows in an innovation spiral
- Results in 4-9 months

Item 3: Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, Lee Waters AM

1. Deputy Minister outlined his ambition for the Foundational Economy in Wales, and the importance in the role of PSB's in achieving this.

Item 4: Breakout Sessions

Q1. What would help PSB's to spread and scale action of procurement?

Key Points:

1. There is a risk averse culture of LA's (Local Authorities), stating that due to legal

barriers and hurdles; delegates felt there would be difficulty in persuading PSB's to try models and increase the scale of action. It was suggested PSB's may feel more inclined to partake in a piloted scheme

2. Capacity of procurement officers is scarce across the whole of the Public Sector
3. Sometimes WG (Welsh Government) frameworks are a hindrance to effective procurement – and they can sometimes stifle and prohibit small suppliers from submitting tenders for contracts
4. Large companies and organisations have large framework contracts which do not give them the option to purchase their products from local suppliers. Could this be trialled for a period of 5-10 years with government support to encourage larger companies to break down these contracts to provide supply opportunities for local companies?
5. PSB's already feel that they have a lot to do and are frequently being asked to take on more and more
6. Make WG data more accessible for the PSB's – when will it be published and how do they access the data? Need to link the data back to economic development plans
7. This could be sustainable but there is a need to spread good practise

Q2. How do we locally coordinate collaborative action on procurement across local anchor institutions?

Key Points:

1. Clear message from WG – should we look at a common drivers/support that we could provide
2. Include the health service in the agenda – how is the health service an economic driver?
3. No single minister responsible for procurement: PSB's felt like it was everyone and no ones responsibility
4. Future Generations Commissioners Office have produced some resources such as 'top 10' or '80 things' of best practise. Would this help PSB's
5. Sharing best practise ideas – community of practise
6. Focus on PSB's who are willing to start trying frameworks now, rather than waiting to get 'ducks in a row'
7. Inspire PSB's and show a clear link between how the FE addresses PSB priorities
8. Concept of county based PSB's to collaborate on a regional basis
9. How can we use the 'soft power' of government to accelerate progressive procurement through PSB's and further afield?

Q3. What sort of activity could the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund help with?

Key Points

1. Potential projects into the Fund around digital connectivity; energy; business units; social care
2. Food poverty scheme to sell excess food produced from schools to local people at a discounted price as seen in Finland over the last 3 years
3. Holiday hunger scheme – Housing associations, schools and the agricultural sector to cater for children during the school holidays
4. Concept for farmers to sell direct to schools, missing out the supermarkets as the 'middle man'. Schools and farmers could have their own contracts. Consideration would be needed due to number of hurdles; however the capacity would be there under a cooperative approach.
5. There is a need for an increased focus on the small, rural businesses and not

larger companies/corporations

6. Shared apprenticeships scheme, Torfaen example. How can we train young people so that they have a desire to stay in their local area and ensure a prosperous future for younger people who take on family businesses
7. Flintshire LA have just launched a Social Value Strategy – difficulty now is in the practical implementation of that – they are looking to get some sort of measurement system/portal in place which not only tracks spend but also captures social value of contracts
8. Caerphilly PSB's 12 hour 'hackathon' with businesses and LA's

Other:

- League table idea: could this be developed to help highlight good practise and inspire others?
- FE seen as the secondary economy – second in its contributions and priorities
- Focus is on the city deal and not how Cardiff Wealth can benefit the valleys
- The footprint of all PSB's is different – how can this be navigated?
- Timescales – what time frames are PSB's working to?

Item 5: Summary and themes

Key Themes:

1. WG need to simplify its guidance/processes
2. WG's role to provide help and assistance so PSB's feel confident at trying something unfamiliar
3. WG needs to provide a single voice with one message – clarity on its policy objectives and procurement expectations to ensure a consistent approach
4. PSB's welcomed the approach set out by CLES and want more information surrounding a procurement pilot process and support
5. Sharing of best practise ideas – share published data and make this more easily accessible as well as concept of community of practise