

Appendix 2

Briefing for Conwy and Denbighshire

23/03/21

Community Wealth Building and Progressive Procurement

Purpose

This briefing note provides a summary of the Welsh Government funded Community Wealth Building / Progressive Procurement work being delivered by CLES (The Centre for Local Economic Strategies) – to inform discussions on the potential for Conwy and Denbighshire PSB to act as the North Wales cluster for the project.

Background

CLES has been appointed as Community Wealth Building partner to Welsh Government and commissioned to support anchor institutions in selected PSB areas across Wales to explore community wealth building approaches, with a focus on **progressive procurement**.

This project, which is being delivered by CLES and The Wales Cooperative Centre, began in March 2019 and will run until December 2021.

Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

This aligns with the broader Foundational Economy agenda and the policy frame of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Delivery of the programme has intentionally been tailored to be appropriate to the local and national policy context and to dovetail effectively with existing initiatives in this space – for example, Foundational Economy Challenge Fund projects which have a procurement dimension.

The intent of the programme is to support the anchor organisations within participating PSBs to pursue progressive procurement approaches — maximising the impact of anchor spending for local businesses, jobs and wellbeing and increasing local economic multipliers. In the current context, this includes how procurement spending can support vulnerable or at-risk businesses and enhance economic recovery and reform efforts. The approach intends to align with and enhance your existing priorities rather than being another additional or stand-alone initiative – using procurement to support your ambitions for economic, environmental, social, and cultural wellbeing – with support and expertise from CLES, the Wales Cooperative Centre and Welsh Government.

Project Aims

The aims of the project are:

*To effect **systemic change in local economies** across Wales by working with **anchor institutions** in selected Welsh **Public Service Board areas** to introduce and embed the **community wealth building** concept in these areas and disseminate policy and practice lessons across Wales, with a specific focus on **progressive procurement approaches**.*

Participating PSBs

Five PSBs or clusters of PSBs were selected to participate.

- North: **tbd**

- Mid: **Ceredigion** and Powys
- Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG)
 - Blaenau Gwent
 - Torfaen**
 - Caerphilly
 - Newport
 - Monmouthshire
- **Cwm Taf** and Bridgend
- Swansea Bay City Deal Region
 - Neath Port Talbot
 - Swansea
 - Pembrokeshire
 - Carmarthenshire**

Conwy and Denbighshire PSB was initially put forward as the North Wales cluster and preparations were in hand for CLES to deliver a presentation and facilitate a workshop at the PSB meeting in March/April 2019. However, the arrival of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown saw this session cancelled and in response to the circumstances, the project was reprofiled, with early efforts being put into analysis of procurement data and local economic vulnerabilities, followed by workshop activity later in the process.

In the meantime, discussions have been taking place as to the most suitable geography in North Wales for this initiative, including consideration of working with a wider geographical footprint across the North Wales Economic Ambition Area. However, our experience of the work to date in Wales, is that benefits can be most easily realised in a short time-frame, in a more targeted geography where there are existing and established relationships between anchor institutions – indeed, this was the rationale for PSBs being involved.

General approach

Participating PSBs have followed the general approach outlined below:

Spend analysis – CLES produce an analysis of the major anchor organisations spend: where spend is going geographically and in sector terms, the profile of suppliers (e.g. by business size and type) and an assessment of the vulnerability of different business sectors in the context of Covid.

Commencement workshop – with procurement and economic development leads from each of the anchors on the PSB.

The workshop introduces the theory and practice of Community Wealth Building and progressive procurement and provides an opportunity to share and discuss the spend analysis. Using this information and the specific local context and priorities of the anchors, CLES facilitate a discussion to identify one or more priority themes or areas of focus where progressive procurement approaches could be explored.

Working Groups – for each identified theme, or area of focus, CLES facilitate further workshops with procurement and economic development leads from participating anchors, to develop practical implementation plans.

Anchors work together on implementing the plans, with ongoing support from CLES, the Wales Cooperative Centre and Welsh Government.

The broad timeline for the other clusters has been:

Milestone	Date
Initial engagement work and desktop analysis – spend data and sector vulnerability	July 2020 – August 2020
Action planning workshops – agreeing areas of focus	Sept 2020 – Jan 2021
Developing implementation plans (working group of PSB procurement and economic development leads)	Sept 2020 – Feb 2021
Implementing the workplans	Feb 2021 onwards

In addition to the above, CLES is on hand to attend and present to formal meetings of the PSB, or individual anchor institutions Cabinet, Board, or senior leadership team meetings.

It is recognised that for the North Wales cluster, the timeline is now condensed. However, much can be achieved in a 6-month period and this work can positively contribute to the immediate need for recovery and reform, as well as help develop thinking more broadly on the Foundational Economy agenda in anticipation of any new national funding or support activities aligned to this agenda post elections.

Areas of focus in other PSB clusters

Below are the headline areas of focus agreed by the other PSB clusters participating in this programme:

Swansea Bay Cluster

- Maximising social value in construction procurement including opportunities associated with the zero carbon emissions / retrofit agenda.
- Food procurement
- Enhancing opportunities for local SMEs
- Enhancing procurement opportunities in health and social care for local, socially generative businesses

Mid Wales Cluster

- Enhancing the local supplier base
- Increasing local opportunities in the construction sector
- Enabling cooperative and third sector suppliers to compete on a level playing field
- Business start-ups
- Food procurement

Gwent Cluster

- New build construction and green retrofit

- Simplifying and sharing best practice in terms of procurement policy / contract procedure rules
- Food procurement and strengthening local supply chains
- Manufacturing deep dive – to explore potential to re-localise spend currently outside of Wales

Cwm Taf and Bridgend

- Enhancing the local supplier base
- Reviewing procurement processes and approaches with respect to lower-value contracts
- Develop practice in relation to support for generative businesses, including joint bidding

Considerations for Conwy and Denbighshire

The 'offer' for Conwy and Denbighshire as participants in this programme is access to the expertise and support from CLES, the Wales Cooperative Centre and Welsh Government – including data analysis, facilitation, support with implementation planning etc. for the period from now until December 2021.

The 'asks' are - a commitment to working collaboratively across the PSB anchors, with time and capacity from anchor procurement and economic development leads, and willingness to both develop thinking on progressive procurement and to action/delivery in terms of implementing policy and practice changes in relation to the chosen theme(s)/area(s) of focus.

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