

**CARDIFF**  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
**CAERDYDD**

Centre for Innovation  
Policy Research

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Canolfan Arloesi  
Ymchwil Polisi

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# Foundational experiments in Wales

Kevin Morgan

# Overview

Enabling conditions

Foundational  
experiments

- - FE challenge fund
- - Local FE projects

Lessons from Wales

# Enabling conditions

Limits of conventional regional policy

New, more receptive politicians

Well-being of Future Generations Act

- created new metrics of development
- new conversations among policymakers

# FE Challenge Fund

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£4.5m FE challenge fund invited proposals for novel projects

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Over 200 proposals submitted

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52 projects funded

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The approved projects fell under the following FE themes

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14 in public procurement

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12 in social care

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10 in social housing

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7 in construction

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4 in food

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# Lessons

- **The positive lessons include the following –**
  - first non-prescriptive WG local regeneration scheme (WG said it did not have the answers)
  - localities were encouraged to select projects they had reason to value
  - a theory of change that is transferable (top down state resources + bottom up energy and local knowledge)



# Lessons

- **Other lessons –**
  - Local projects can generate good practice, but good practice is a bad traveller
  - How do we spread and scale progressive localism?
  - Public procurement has become fashionable, but it is stymied by a combination of professional skills shortages and the lack of political leadership in public bodies

# Limits of devolution

- The “devolution era” may be drawing to an end because of the New Centralism
  - Boris Johnson’s government is undermining the devolution settlements of the past 20 years
  - Central govt engaging in aggressive unilateralism
  - First Minister of Wales – who is committed to the territorial integrity of a reformed UK – now says “the Union is over”
  - The future is poised between radical federalism or the dissolution of the UK
  - Local experiments need an enabling national context to disseminate and embed progressive localism

**“Union  
is over”**

- “For the first time since devolution, we are dealing with a UK Government which is aggressively unilateral ... and that there is outright hostility to the fact of devolution at the heart of the Government ... and a belief that the best way to deal with [devolution] is to bypass it, to marginalise it, to act as if devolution didn’t exist.”  
(Mark Drakeford, First Minister)