Regeneration Skills
A Consideration of Current and Future Requirements

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This paper considers how well regeneration is served by traditional skills sets, and to what extent alternative skills requirements are required now and in the future.
Introduction

In July 2012 CREW agreed with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to complete an overall review of the skills needed to support regeneration in Wales. This review was to assemble a range of components that would build a general resource to underpin our collective understanding of existing and emerging skills requirements and areas of current deficit. This would inform a general identification of where training and support mechanisms might be focused to achieve maximum impact. This report uses the term ‘skills’ to convey both the specific occupational skills required of each contributing profession to the wider regeneration agenda as well as the more generic skills shared across professions. We are also concerned with the wider qualities, knowledge and experience of practicing professionals in Wales.

The report is also informed by a definition of regeneration derived from the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places document:

an integrated set of activities that seek to reverse economic, social, environmental and physical decline to achieve lasting improvement, in areas where market forces will not do this alone without some support from government. (WG 2013)

Three key components were identified in the commission from DfES:

- Literature Review, bibliography and highlight report
- Consultation with key stakeholders with highlight report
- Production of series of highlight reports detailing skills needs and issues in specific aspects of regeneration

In practice it has been difficult to separate these activities and provide distinct outputs as the issues identified and explored are common to all activities. Consequently, we have presented the outcomes from the overall exercise in this single report which, whilst achieving the separate objectives identified above, provides a more holistic and comprehensive analysis of the current regeneration related skills issues in Wales.
The wider context for this review has been the very challenging circumstances of recession and failure to achieve growth in the wider UK economy and in Wales. The impact on regeneration has been considerable and the conventional approaches that were developed in the 1990s and early 2000s are effectively denied to practitioners as both public and private sector funding have largely disappeared. The large-scale property or retail led regeneration master plans of this period are no longer an option and regeneration projects have diminished in both frequency and scale. Public and private sector partnerships are also more difficult to broker in the current climate and innovative financial models will be required to develop regeneration opportunities. The recession also drives an imperative to be more efficient in regeneration delivery by better integration across policy themes and by more efficient cross-professional practice.

CREW came into existence at this time of financial difficulty and when increasingly non-interventionist policies were being developed by the UK government. Most significantly this approach included the abolition of Regional Development Agencies in England and the corresponding demise of the regional Centres for Regeneration Excellence. This brought an end to the extensive consideration of the skills base required for area based regeneration delivery in the UK which had characterised the period 2000 to 2008.

For CREW, finding innovative responses to delivering integrated sustainable regeneration has been our key focus. Within that wider concern we have been particularly focused on the changing skills requirements of traditional actors in the regeneration sector, as well as the skills that new potential agencies of change have introduced and also been concerned to develop. Key areas we have worked in include the identification of ‘low carbon’ skills at the professional level, monitoring and evaluation skills, housing-led regeneration skills in RSLs in Wales and an increasingly important requirement to provide communication, consultation and consensus building skills to community organisations and groups who are leading localised regeneration activities.

This changing scenario clearly raises questions about how well regeneration is served by traditional skills sets and to what extent a whole new toolbox of skills might be required now and in the medium-term future. This highlight report draws on our current research with stakeholders and presents key issues identified from an extensive literature review. The bibliography is presented at the end of this report but will also be available as a searchable resource from the CREW website (www.regenwales.org).
A review of the relevant regeneration skills literature over the past ten years.
The interest in social inclusion and area-based regeneration that followed the election of a Labour Government in 1997 crystallised into a policy approach which was characterised by an area-based delivery focused on the most disadvantaged communities. Approaches developed throughout the newly devolved regions of the UK combined physical urban renewal with social and community development approaches. This policy developed as a concern with the delivery of sustainable places. The approach became termed ‘place-making’ and signified an unprecedented investment in communities in an attempt to overcome economic disadvantage and social exclusion. From the beginning of this period of extensive policy development and well-funded delivery there were concerns about the general availability of skilled personnel who could deliver the complex and inter-related programmes of change at community level.

These concerns were first raised in the Urban Taskforce Report (Rogers, 1999) and again in the PAT 16 Report from the Social exclusion Unit (SEU 2000). Similar concerns were identified in the The Learning Curve Report (NRU, 2002). However, any review of regeneration skills produced currently must take as its starting point the Egan Review (2004). Produced at a time when urban place-making was a central objective of local and central government, the Review sought to fully understand how we created sustainable communities. Given background developments such as the New Deal for Communities, the creation of Centres for Regeneration Excellence, a range of URC and UDC delivery vehicles and the creation of key organisations such as the Homes and Communities Agency and its Academy, it was very appropriate for the Egan review to define what was meant by the term sustainable communities and also to identify how they could be created. Central to this was the identification of the skills that would be required to deliver the social and physical regeneration objectives of government.

Egan identified key domains of delivery that contributed to the achievement of sustainable communities:

- Governance
- Transport and Connectivity
- Services
- Environmental
• Economy
• Housing and the Built Environment
• Social And Cultural activities

Presented in the ‘Egan Wheel’ this list has been adapted and developed extensively but remains one of the clearest conceptions of what is required to deliver effective regeneration and place-making activities. It’s key achievement was to identify the wide range of inputs required to create sustainable places and by implication the complex pattern of skills required by ‘place-makers’ who attempted to deliver our visions of sustainable places.

For Egan there were ‘core professions’ which were vital to the place-making agenda and where the possession of key skills was a vital ingredient of success. The core professions are:

• Implementers and decision makers (Including local authorities)
• Built Environment professions
• Environmental professions
• Social occupations
• Economic occupations
• Community occupations
• Cross Cutting occupations (Egan 2004, p53)

Of these, the cross-cutting occupations identified are a key concern as they are engaged in the place-making agencies that are required to pull together all the other contributing professions. At the time he was writing they could be found in key programmes such as New Deal for Communities. To these Egan adds ‘associate occupations’ (p54) in health, policing, education and the local business community. CREW has informed its activities to date by addressing both the core and associate professions who must be engaged with in promoting, integrated sustainable regeneration.

Egan’s critical recognition was that all these professions were required to work in partnership to achieve sustainable communities:

‘We want to see planners interacting with tenant associations, highways engineers teaming up with urban designers, and central government officials who plan hospitals and schools working with those who will be maintaining the surrounding streets and buildings in ten years time.’ (Egan, 2004, p54)

This theme of cross-professional working has been a core consideration in the regeneration process since Egan’s report and CREW has been concerned in its events and resources to encourage promote and develop cross-professional practice.
Egan identified a range of skills required to produce effective professional practice in the varied environment of place-making activities. There was considerable emphasis on softer, human relations type skills including, visioning, leadership, brokerage, partnership, communication and conflict resolution. The need for these relationship management skills has been a constant theme in the wider literature and it is now widely accepted that the ability to manage multiple disciplines and skills within projects is itself a critical skills set. However, Egan also identified more conventional skills of project management, process and change management, financial skills, evaluation and customer management as of equal importance.

This major contribution by the Egan Review has in many ways set the parameters for any discussion of skills within regeneration delivery. Commentary on Egan was generally highly positive and his report was widely accepted as an accurate identification of the skills needed to promote effective regeneration and place-making throughout the UK. The clear majority of post-Egan Review discussions of skills continue his distinction between the skills associated with professional competences and the more general skills involved in working collaboratively across professions.

In both teaching and urban development, skills are normally subdivided into those which are generic – not claimed by any particular profession and therefore transferable between professional contexts- and those which are specific to one professional context such as Architecture. (Bailey, 2005, p342) (Author’s emphasis)

This distinction will inform the terminology applied throughout the remainder of this report.

**Generic skills:** are those required of professional to work within a multi-discipline and cross-professional working environment which recognises the complexity of regeneration actions and the wide range of partners which must be engaged collaboratively to deliver regeneration success.

**Specific skills:** are the technical skills required to enable competent and efficient professional practice within the specialisms of particular professional roles.

To this distinction Durning and Glasson (2006) add the personal attributes of, in their area of interest, planners. The interaction between skills and personal attributes is rarely explored in the literature and we are unable to comment fully but accept that much of the dynamic of effective regeneration is also dependent on the personal qualities of individuals contributing to the regeneration process. In our engagement with stakeholders there has been debate about whether such attributes can be taught. However, given the absence of research on this issue this review will confine itself to the distinction between **generic** and **specific** skills.
Following publication of the Egan Review, interest in Wales focused on the very different context of regeneration within post-devolution UK. The place-making policy platforms were very different in the four UK administrative regions with considerably more expenditure in England than was evident in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales (Adamson 2010). Key questions about the applicability of the Egan Review findings to Wales were identified by the Regeneration Skills Collective Wales (RSCW) and resulted in the commissioning of a research programme in 2008 from Miller Associates. RSCW is a collective of six professional organizations with direct roles in the achievement of sustainable regeneration. Their concern was to identify what was relevant in the Egan Report for the Welsh context and how to apply the conclusions drawn from the Egan Review to Welsh experience.

The Miller report identified the following factors that influenced regeneration in Wales in ways that were not evident in England.

- Major regeneration initiatives and physical regeneration projects
- Opportunities offered by the E.U. Structural Fund programmes in Wales
- The rapid pace of change arising from implementing the Welsh Housing Quality Standard & the Housing Stock Transfer process
- Ambitious Welsh Assembly Government commitments to zero carbon property and affordable housing
- The implications of delivering the Assembly’s Environment Strategy and the Sustainable Development Action Plan
- Delivery of the Wales Spatial Plan and the Local Development Plan and Regional Transport Plan processes
- Infrastructure renewal – some 50% of major infrastructure in Wales will require renewal over the next 20 years.

(Miller 2008, p7)

Through extensive consultation with practicing professionals in Wales the report arrived at a map of skills needs and deficits that were considered important by participants in the research. Starting with Egan type skills the research identified key priorities in Wales and where there were fundamental gaps in skills development.

In describing the sustainable regeneration workforce Miller identified 11,000 core professional workers including, housing, engineers, architects, landscape architects, planners and surveyors. In addition to these core ‘built environment’ professions, the report also identified a further 24,000 associated professionals in Wales. The Miller report confirmed that the conclusions of the Egan Review were generally applicable to Wales but refined in particular the understanding of the cross-professional skills that were emerging as of increasing importance. Employers surveyed felt that there were major gaps in ‘environmental awareness, followed by brokerage, conflict resolution and customer awareness’ (Miller, 2008, p75). Practitioners also identified the
importance of environmental awareness and leadership skills but saw the core cross-professional skills as:

- Team and partnership working
- Communication
- Analysis and decision-making
- Customer awareness (p75)

However, their key priorities were seen as project management skills and leadership skills.

The establishment of CREW was a key recommendation of the Miller Report and its findings have to date been a key determinant of mission statement and support programmes delivered by CREW. Critically, CREW instigated a follow through piece of research to more fully understand the low-carbon skills agenda in relation to the core professions identified in the Egan and Miller reports. The report investigated practitioners’ views of their specific skills needs in relation to the low carbon agenda, which was defined in the report as:

the skills and knowledge that support the planning, design and construction of new buildings and the refurbishment, re-development, management, use and ultimately disposal of existing buildings, which have the lowest possible carbon dioxide emissions taking account of relevant constraints and regulatory requirements. These include the planning, design and provision of essential building infrastructure to achieve the lowest possible carbon dioxide emissions, taking account of relevant constraints and regulatory requirements. (CREW, 2011, p4)

In a survey of over 400 professional practitioners, the following cross-professional skills were identified by respondents as of key concern in their professional development.

- Design – low carbon design
- Energy – renewable energy technologies
- Client – commercial implications of a low carbon economy
- Leadership and management – project management and awareness raising
- Community – local partnership working (p72)

Most critically, over 50% of respondents felt that ‘provision of low carbon skills training is poor or not fully available’ (p73).

In response to these findings CREW identified a major skills provision gap and developed a training framework to support the skills needs identified in the report. This has led to the successful delivery of the first module of currently three identified modules promoting ‘low- carbon’ leadership skills in Wales. Delivery of this and subsequent modules is subject to a proposal to
the ESF supported Built Environment Sustainability Training (BEST) Project where resources for further roll-out of the training framework throughout Wales are being sought. CREW is grateful for the support of Welsh Government DfES in funding this exercise.

These three major research reports have identified a similar set of issues and described similar skills profiles required by the delivery of sustainable regeneration. Indeed Cross (2009) argues that the Egan report remained at that time an accurate identification of the key skills required by regeneration practitioners and our review suggests that can also be supported in early 2013, the time of the conclusion of our review. However, in addition to the issues identified by both the Egan and Miller reports we would also now identify the increasing need for the skills required to bring the aging Welsh housing stock to a better carbon performance.

Some caution is also required in accepting predictions of skills shortage developed around the time of the Egan report and prior to the financial crisis. For example, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, Mind the Skills Gap Report (ASC, 2007) predicted both regional and sectoral skills shortages. At the time of that report urban regeneration was a key government objective and a wide range of agencies existed to both promote and deliver regeneration. Post 2010 the demise of key programmes such as New Deal for Communities and the closure of organisations such as the Regional Development Agencies and Centres for Regeneration Excellence have reflected the downturn in physical and social regeneration activity and its replacement by a stronger local economic development approach exemplified by Enterprise Zones (EZs) and Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). The House of Commons 2011 Report (HoC, 2011) charts a reduction of expenditure on regeneration by DCLG in England from £11.18 billion in 2009/10 to an estimated £3.87 billion in 2011-12. Consequently, there is clear opinion in England that regeneration related activity is significantly reduced along with workforce demand. A similar caveat has to be made for the calculations of the numbers of regeneration related professionals in Wales identified in the Miller report as some of the contraction in both the private and public sector will have impacted the numbers identified by Miller although there is no data currently available to evidence this likelihood.

Earlier we identified the distinction between specific skills associated with particular professions and the more generic skills associated with cross-professional working. CREW has been very aware of this distinction in its relationship with the professional sector and recognises that its central focus is on the generic cross-professional skills. Our site-seminar series has addressed this area of skills acquisition by exposing a wide range of practitioners to specific projects and programmes where there is exemplification of specific cross-professional practices. Similarly our web-based resources and specific skills training (e.g.
our Health Impact Assessment programme with WIASU) have encouraged the development of cross-professional skills. The Academy for Sustainable Communities (ACS) Report (2007) identified these modes of skills delivery as particularly favoured by practicing professionals:

In response to the research’s findings we recommend that: ....Short courses and dissemination of best practice are clearly recognised as preferred approaches for busy practitioners; (ASC 2007, p14)

In general, the literature reviewed suggests that specific technical skills associated with each separate profession are well catered for and that practitioners believe themselves to be adequately skilled. Exceptions include those skills identified by the Egan Review including project management and ‘green skills’. Much of the literature has focused on the ‘softer’ skills of relationship management particularly in the partnership-based delivery model which has dominated regeneration practice in all devolved regions. Partnership skills are essential to both individuals and organisations in the context of the multiple-agencies required to deliver effective sustainable regeneration.

Hemphill et al (2006) see partnerships as a new model of governance that is more localised and involves a range of local actors. They see this as a gradual transfer away from central state institutions ‘towards local empowerment and decentralised decision-making’ (p59). Central to this development has been the emergence of new skills requirements for those participating in this delivery model, not least a requirement for new skills in community leadership. This echoes both the Egan Review and the Miller report and reinforces the view that there is a general cross-sectoral requirement for improved partnership working and leadership skills. For Hemphill et al the leadership role is required within local authorities that are often the leading agency and grant recipient body in regeneration programmes. However, in a changing regeneration environment we would also see better partnerships skills being required within Housing Associations leading regeneration and in community organisations, which can be increasingly seen to take a lead role.

Current policy developments in Wales suggest that the skills deficits in local authorities may become a more urgent issue as regeneration strategy moves back towards delivery by local authorities working in partnership with community and civic organisations. The phasing out of specialist Regeneration Area teams by Welsh Government within the new Vibrant and Viable Place Framework (WG, 2013) places the future delivery of Welsh Government funded regeneration activity firmly in the hands of local government, working potentially with ‘town teams’ comprising of local social and business communities. The emphasis on town centres and seaside towns will require new skills. Furthermore Communities First areas are a key priority for the framework and the newly revised Communities First approach also places more emphasis on local authority deliv-
The ‘cluster’ approach will bring into existence new partnerships and local authority leadership and partnership working will become a major determinant of the programme’s success.

These patterns of partnership working and local authority leadership suggest a range of skills have to be implemented including:

- Visioning skills
- Enabling skills
- Consensus building skills
- Brokerage skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Resource allocation and management skills
- Project management skills
- Monitoring and evaluation skills

In balance to these partnership working and leadership skills on the part of local authorities and other public agencies, there has been a parallel debate in the literature about the ability of communities to respond to the expectations placed on them within the ‘new urban governance approach’. Usually framed within a discussion of ‘capacity development’ there has been considerable interest in the skills, values and attitudes required to become an ‘active citizen’ who takes part in urban governance structures such as regeneration partnerships. Although often seen as condescending in its assumptions that community members may not have sufficient skills to contribute to the regeneration process (Peel, 2005), the literature has generally recognised that some support is often required to assist residents to participate. This debate is only now emerging within the context of the localism agenda in England but is a well established concern for regeneration practitioners in Wales especially where there has been direct involvement of Communities First partnerships.

These skills are often those associated with a community development practice of engagement and empowerment in which the citizen or resident of a regeneration area brings their specific local knowledge to the partnership table to inform the practice and delivery of key public and third sector agencies. The ability to do so is usually associated with the acquisition of confidence to engage in the formality of the partnership board context and match the professionalism of agency board members. Adamson (2008, 2010, 2013) has identified some of the key issues in the development of community-based skills. Critically, residents are generally capable of immediate participation in regeneration partnerships but usually require support to facilitate and develop their capacity to engage with professional practitioners, for example in housing or planning related issues. The role of community development teams is critical in achieving competent participation. When given such support residents quickly
acquire the confidence and motivation to engage directly with paid professionals in the context of partnership boards. However, maintenance of their motivation is conditional on them feeling that their engagement is purposeful and achieving actual gain for the community.

In the first four years of the Communities First programme in Wales there was considerable emphasis on ‘capacity building’ with all partnerships required to produce a Capacity Development Plan. One of the consequences of this is that in the majority of Communities First areas there is a pool of active residents who are able and willing to engage in regeneration activities and are able to do so from an informed and skilled base.

Peel (2005) sees this process of capacity building as ‘linked to the notion of strengthening social capital and social cohesion’ (p446) and providing long-term sustainability for the community. Clearly, this has been one of the central tenets of regeneration policy over the previous decade and is now a core value within the ‘localism’ agenda being actively pursued in England. We also suggest in this review that, in the absence of large-scale private or public sector regeneration initiatives, community-led projects are likely to become one key area of regeneration activity. Evidence is emerging of locally driven regeneration, notably in relationships to heritage assets, local food production and renewable energy.

It is also important to recognise that the term ‘capacity development’ has also been applied to the ability of key state institutions to accept and instigate the models of partnership and governance required to deliver multi-agency sponsored regeneration. Numerous commentaries and many of our interviewees have identified the need for more ‘joined-up’ delivery by Welsh Government and within local authorities. Traditional divisions between economic development and regeneration can sometimes sacrifice integration and miss opportunities for synergies to emerge between departments. The Vibrant and Viable Places Guidance stresses the ‘whole government’ approach and this will be an essential element of realising the health, learning and economic benefits sought from the programme. Similar issues are identified in the Guilford Review for the forthcoming Structural Fund programme, (Guilford, 2013). Guilford identifies the continuing need for strategic level projects that combine sponsoring departments to meet Welsh Government economic objectives. Working across government departments will pose challenges but is essential for the delivery of integrated and sustainable regeneration. This stresses the need for partnership skills within government as well as with external agencies.

Summary

The literature review has identified a clear consistency of discussion of the regeneration skills agenda over the last ten years.
Notably, the distinction between generic and specific/technical skills has dominated the literature and remains the primary categorisation that informs current debate. The majority of the literature reviewed regards the acquisition of specific and technical skills as largely adequately covered by appropriate educational, training and professional development provision, much of it either provided or endorsed by appropriate professional bodies. The exception to this is the more recent emergence of ‘low carbon skills’ that have yet to be adequately catered for in contemporary provision. This is in part explained by the time lag between the need for these skills being promoted by legislation and policy and the latency built into course planning and approval procedures, especially where professional regulation of HE provision is required.

Finally, there is a consistent concern within the literature with the more generic skills associated with relationship and people management. From leadership to partnership skills there is a continuum of activity that requires skilled communication, negotiation and conflict resolution expertise on the part of a wide range of practitioners.
The Current Context

A consideration of the economic and political context within which regeneration is currently undertaken.
The Current Context

Since the completion of these major reports and subsequent discussions of their key findings the changes in government, the wider policy context and the long duration of the economic crisis have all had some impact on the skills requirements in Wales. We would identify the following range of factors as of crucial significance in determining the mix of skills required for delivering sustainable integrated regeneration.

- Continued low or no growth in economic activity
- The UK national policy context of public expenditure cuts
- UK level welfare reform and its impact in Wales
- High levels of general unemployment
- High levels of youth unemployment and NEETS experience
- The higher profile of low carbon built environment objectives
- The actual and emerging impact of key WG policies including Enterprise Zones (EZs), Local Growth Zones (LGZs), Wales Infrastructural Investment Plan (WIIP), City Regions, Vibrant and Viable Places, Sustainability Bill, Active Travel Bill and the Housing Bill.
- Communities First Review

All these factors introduce complex levels of change that may influence the pattern of skills required to deliver Welsh Government objectives. The scope of this exercise is to review current published evidence to inform how we might identify the skills requirements of this emerging context. Clearly, in relation to many of these changes there is no evidence available given either their very recent or only imminent introduction. In our consultation with key stakeholders leading from this report we have asked key questions in relation to this uncertain future and the intelligence gathered from this exercise is reported on separately. In the remainder of this highlight report we are concerned to identify the emerging trends and clarify where some of the skills priorities will lie if these trends consolidate and mature into the new context of regeneration in Wales.

From our literature review, our general on-going contacts with the regeneration sector and our schedule of interviews we have identified the following development and trends in delivering sustainable integrated regeneration in Wales.
3.1 Potential Demise of Large Scale Property and Retail-Led Regeneration

In general there is a recognition that the conventional large-scale regeneration projects of the past are less likely to be major contributors to regeneration in the near or medium term future. Private financial institutions are currently reluctant to invest in either residential property developments or retail developments of scale. This reluctance is in part fuelled by the poor housing market in the first instance in which receipts from sales and realisation of land values is at best uncertain and in many parts of Wales not achievable. Similarly, retail investment has conventionally been led by returns on investment from rental income that requires strong occupancy rates. In the majority of Welsh towns occupancy rates are low and rental levels have been falling. For some towns in Wales there is a town centre crisis of considerable proportions as some of our more peripheral towns face potentially terminal challenges. Similarly, public sector investment potential is low with major capital grant reductions experienced by Welsh Government and local authorities currently reluctant to undertake prudential borrowing to step into the role of the private sector.

Despite this prevailing difficult financial climate there is considerable interest in the development of innovative finance models and public private partnerships. From Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) to Local Asset Based Vehicles experimentation in assembling funding packages is likely to develop as conventional approaches remain difficult to assemble. This in itself raises new skills requirements that regeneration professionals will need to acquire.

In Wales, the Regeneration Investment Fund Wales (RIFW) does present an opportunity to cushion some of the impacts of both private and public sector withdrawal from large scale investment and the only approved scheme to date is the town centre renewal of Neath. Similar schemes are in the process of application for funding to RIFW but have yet to be developed to inception stage.

The likely skills impact is a reduction in demand for conventional built environment skills including the majority of the core professions identified by Egan. In their place there will be requirements for effective town centre management skills particularly within local authorities and these will be further discussed in the later section on town centres.

3.2 Closure of Welsh Government Regeneration Areas

Regeneration policy over the most recent spending rounds has been delivered through the vehicle of specified regeneration areas. The first of these was the Heads of the Valleys Region, which saw significant investment in a very holistic and inte-
grated approach to regeneration. Tackling both physical and social regeneration, this and the later Regeneration Areas in Barry, Aberystwyth, Rhyl/Colwyn Bay, Mon a Menai, Swansea and the Western Valleys have delivered extensive programmes of renewal in partnership with a range of public, private and third sector actors.

Whilst there is a commitment to a legacy programme of actions, following the publication of the new Regeneration Framework, Vibrant and Viable Places there will be a new emphasis on coastal and seaside towns and Communities First Clusters. Whilst a welcome development of regeneration policy in Wales it is important to retain the legacy commitments to ensure effective completion of current projects and to avoid the discontinuity that can result when major policy changes are implemented. One consequence can be the loss of skilled teams and individuals as current structures are dissolved.

In the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme, three National Outcomes are shared with Communities First and target Prosperous, Learning and Healthy Communities. This will also extend coverage to the whole of Wales and all local authorities have been invited to submit a major regeneration project proposal. In some cases, this will introduce local authorities and their staff to the regeneration process where no prior activity has taken place and where there has not been sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary specific and general skills.

This may identify skills deficits in local authority teams where they have not previously been engaged with a specified Regeneration Area. This lack of skills may be exaggerated by the different practice in local authorities in designating separately economic development and regeneration teams. Additionally, in some local authorities these previously separate teams have been merged with some numerical decline in staffing levels and corresponding decrease in skills and capacity. This suggests an emerging skills deficit for some local authorities and will amplify the desire to receive shared best practice from those who have been effective leaders in this field. CREW has identified this as a key area of activity for both development of web resources and our events programme. This approach designated in Vibrant and Viable Communities will also place more emphasis on community development skills or working with community-led agencies and actors particularly in the context of Communities First. There has historically been deficits in local authority personnel skills in community consultation, engagement and empowerment. Skills deficits we anticipate include:

- Generic regeneration skills
- Project management skills
- Community engagement skills
- Partnership working skills
3.3 Emerging Policy Change

In recent months there have been a number of policy developments which impinge directly on regeneration activity in Wales and which will influence the skills needs of regeneration professionals. These include:

- Wales Infrastructure Investment Fund
- Rail Electrification
- South Wales Metro discussion
- Enterprise Zones
- City Regions
- Local Growth Zones
- Vibrant and Viable Places
- Sustainability Act
- Housing Act
- Planning Reform
- Proposals for an Economic Prioritisation Framework (Guildford 2013)

Many of these interventions also reinforce the need for partnership working skills and potentially introduce new levels of governance raising requirements for additional, planning project management and leadership skilled personnel in key public agencies including Welsh Government.

These will impose in particular need for co-ordination of multiple spatial levels of intervention, which in the absence of an active spatial/regional planning process in Wales poses serious risks for overlap, duplication and even working at cross-purposes.
Consultation With Key Stakeholders

A review of the current attitudes and opinions key regeneration stakeholders.
The second major element of this report is the findings from our interview-based survey of regeneration practitioners. This has been conducted through January and February 2013 to ensure that the opinions we have gathered fully reflect current opinion and the conditions that now prevail in the regeneration sector in Wales and the wider UK. We have targeted key personnel in the public, private and third sectors and applied a uniform research instrument in the form of a semi-structured interview to ensure comparability of response. The majority of interviews have been conducted face to face. A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with two additional collective written responses from the Regeneration Skills Collective Wales and the Landscape Institute Wales. The interviews were undertaken with a representative sample of elite-level actors from across the regeneration policy and practice field in Wales. Although the evidence collected is not directly attributed to particular interviewees, the interviewees are listed and identified in Appendix A.

The respondents were asked to provide qualitative answers to five questions designed to identify professional attitudes toward the current and future skills requirements of regeneration practitioners in Wales. The questions were:

- What are the key drivers for regeneration?
- Who are the key actors involved in the delivery of regeneration?
- What skills sets are currently required for regeneration practitioners?
- What is the current direction regeneration is taking and what sectors are likely to lead?
- How might skills change and what new skills will be required?

Opportunity was also provided to identify additional issues of interest to the interviewee. The data is presented here following an exercise to group and classify responses.
Question One: What are the key drivers for regeneration?

This question is designed to identify the perceived contextual issues determining the current and future direction of regeneration policy and practice. The respondents suggested a mixture of economic, social, and environmental determinants. Underlying many of the responses was the recognition that political and ideological factors were likely to have the most significant impacts on regeneration as they tended to condition policy at both Welsh and UK levels.

The most common factors put forward by the respondents were those relating to what might broadly be described as economic conditions and opportunities. The current structural economic problems in the UK, and the global economic recession, were the biggest factor identified as influencing the general context of regeneration in Wales. The overarching economic conditions were seen both as a major constraint on the ability to deliver regeneration programmes for the foreseeable future, but also seen as creating the growing need for regeneration interventions. Unemployment was seen as a structural problem and the lack of growth as a severe restraint on the availability of both public and private financing for regeneration activities. The overarching economic conditions were also seen as a limiting factor on development opportunities central to physical regeneration. These were thought to have a retarding effect on fulfilling regional and local economic development needs and opportunities. Such needs and opportunities also included failing town centres, and developments to take advantage of the local economic benefits of tourism. Although there was an understanding of the limits of public funding, there was nevertheless a strong emphasis that public resources needed to be brought forward to stimulate private sector commitments. Some considered these public resources to be financial, whilst others emphasised the bringing forward of public land, or the facilitating role of the public sector.

Social factors were also considered to have a significant determining effect on regeneration policy and practice. Local and regional levels of deprivation were considered by respondents to be the basis of need, to which regeneration interventions should be focused on addressing. Social inclusion problems, which were seen partly as a result of the wider economic downturn, were thought to be exacerbated in areas that have traditionally lower opportunities for employment and skills development.

The current UK Government welfare reform agenda was seen by many as likely to have a further negative effect on already disadvantaged areas. Other societal issues were also considered important, such as changing age demographics and the growing housing needs. Housing was also seen as a major opportunity, particularly with regard to meeting WHQS, which was a notable means of injecting money into local economies, pro-
viding skills training and employment opportunities, as well as undertaking essential physical regeneration of communities. Indeed, one of the much emphasised themes to emerge was that the need to build successful and sustainable communities was the most important driver for regeneration. A reoccurring theme in the responses, and particularly in relation to social factors, was the balance required between need and opportunity.

Connected to the sustainable communities imperative, a further key theme to emerge is the role of environmental sustainability in regeneration. Whereas some saw this as impacting on the way regeneration was undertaken, others emphasised the opportunities arising from projects seeking to improve the environmental impacts of buildings and developments, as a result of the low carbon agenda. Respondents also emphasised that sustainability also meant preserving local and built heritage and preserving or improving sense of place in regeneration activities. Sense of place, and sustainable local communities, were important considerations for engendering local entrepreneurialism, which not only assisted with ensuring the preservation and creation of vibrant and viable places, but also encourages active communities and local people with ideas to come forward and make positive contributions to the regeneration of their communities.

Underpinning each of the economic, social and environmental factors determining regeneration policy and practice, were seen to be the political or ideological responses of the UK and Welsh Governments. Whereas the paradigm shift that took place as a result of the last general election was seen to almost overnight remove the word “regeneration” from the lexicon of public life in England, the continuing commitment of the Welsh Government to regenerating Wales’ poorest communities was seen to mark a radical ideological divergence in responses to the economic, social and environmental problems and opportunities.

Question Two: Who are the key actors involved in the delivery of regeneration?

This question was designed to survey opinions as to who currently undertakes regeneration. Responses emphasised the continuing role of the Welsh Government and local government, the private sector, community groups, RSLs and other professional groups, although there was an underlying assumption that which sector takes the lead varies from circumstance to circumstance. There were also suggestions that the role of public officials in regeneration should be cemented by having it explicitly stated in more job descriptions and not limited to those with a specific regeneration role. In this sense regeneration was seen as a more generic activity and set of responsibilities for all those who expend public money.
The central role of the Welsh Government was strongly emphasised, with all but one interviewee arguing for Welsh Government to play a more strategic role in setting priorities. It was recognised, however, that the Welsh Government sometimes suffered with conflicting priorities with regards to pursuing regeneration, and in particular allocating expenditure. Within the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales, Ministers and politicians as individuals were singled out as having a leadership role with regards to regeneration, which the interviewees suggested should be strengthened. The key role of local government was also strongly supported, although it was suggested that both the level of activity and the approach and effectiveness of local governments varies considerably. There was a need for a more integrated approach by local authorities to regeneration activities, and for authorities to be more open to learn from best practice beyond their own boundaries.

The role of community and town councils in supporting regeneration work was also seen as important, both in terms of place planning and delivery. There was a clear appetite on the part of this level of governance for greater responsibility and more resources to enable an effective contribution to the achievement of regeneration at the local level.

The private sector was widely recognised to have a continued importance in regeneration. Although interviewees clearly recognised the effects of the wider economic problems and lack of growth as determining the extent of private sector activity currently, investment markets were still seen as central to successful delivery of large-scale projects.

The role of the private sector in smaller scale regeneration projects was also recognised, and whereas the need to make a profit for shareholders and pension funds conditions the private sector’s interests in large scale projects, at a local level the role of small business was seen as community wealth creators. This was particularly emphasised in relation to social enterprises. Local business communities were also seen by some as having an important function in providing community leadership. Some pointed to the potential of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS), but also to the largely untapped power of Chambers of Commerce. Interviewees also stressed that regeneration governance structures needed to be designed for this community leadership role to be encouraged, as well as for the leadership role of other community groups, such as those around faith-based groups and local charities.

The functions of the registered social landlords, the LSVTs and the traditional housing associations, were also widely recognised. The RSLs were seen to have wide functions that support both physical and community regeneration, including investment via their obligations to achieve WHQS; tenant engagement, participation and support functions; as well as more overt physical interventions such as projects to restore key landmark
buildings and public spaces in their communities. The RSLs were seen by many to have a key role in achieving sustainable communities. Although not to the same extent as the RSLs, the roles of other local service providers were also emphasised. The functions of the police, health and educational institutions were singled out as being important to aid the regeneration process. It was stressed that health services should be more explicitly committed to maximising the regeneration impacts of the sector’s work and local expenditure. The roles of schools, colleges and universities were also seen as imperative, but yet to be fully realised. It was argued that the work of these institutions should be more locally anchored.

**Question Three: What skills sets are currently required for regeneration practitioners?**

In keeping with the distinction between specific and general skills identified in Section One of this report, responses to this question are grouped into the technical and professional skills, and the softer generic skills requirements of regeneration practitioners. The technical and professional skills can be broadly grouped into funding and governance skills, urban development and physical regeneration skills, and community focused skills. The softer generic skills can be broadly grouped into people, intellectual, and intuitive and personal skills.

**Specific/technical skills**

In the context of the current difficult economic circumstances, nearly all the interviewees emphasised how important it was that regeneration practitioners were able to identify and secure sources of funding for regeneration projects. It was considered critical that professionals needed to not only understand local economic circumstances, but also the wider economic context, and be able to make contextual predictions about future patterns of available funding. During a period where funding was less available, such as the current circumstances, regeneration practitioners should also be able to be innovative in identifying alternative means of funding projects. Professionals also need, it was argued, to be able to harness political support for projects, particularly when regeneration expenditure is competing against other core service expenditure. These political brokerage skills were also seen by some as being closely allied to an understanding of the importance of marketing and the careful use of statistics to support projects. Organisational change management was also seen as an important governance skill, particularly for professionals working in environments that have typically not played an overt role in regeneration.

The well-established core urban development and physical regeneration professional skills continue to be seen as central to the successful delivery of projects. These skills are centred on the core professions of surveying, engineering, planning, and
architecture. In addition to these professions, property management skills were also seen as having increasing importance, particularly during current circumstances when the need to find and support meanwhile uses of property are more important and require advanced property management skills. Procurement skills were also seen as of particular significance when the availability of funding for projects is severely limited. As well as the need to maximise available funding to deliver projects, it was also seen as important to encourage the wider effects of procurement on targeted recruitment and training clauses, which themselves multiply the regeneration effects of the public spend.

Also of growing significance was the increasing professionalisation of community-centred skills, which were regarded until recently as being a separate professional sector to those engaged in the larger urban development and physical regeneration projects. The housing sector, with its emphasis on tenant engagement, was seen by many to be at the forefront of these community skills, and the other regeneration professions only relatively recently catching up. Communication skills were seen by the interviewees as being of critical importance at broadening these community engagement skills. Closely allied to these skills, and of growing importance, is the ability of regeneration professionals to support local enterprise, which as established above can aid the development of local economies and facilitate community anchored wealth creation.

**Generic Skills**

The most emphasised generic skills amongst the respondents were those relating to people management. Of these people skills, leadership was almost universally accepted as most important. Leadership skills were seen as critical in providing regeneration professionals with the necessary drive to effectively deliver projects. Vision was seen as being of real significance, but the drive to turn vision into reality and if necessary overcoming barriers, was seen as most important. The ability to build partnerships, including the ability to secure finance, was considered by the interviewees to be a key element in project delivery. This partnership building process revolved around the ability of regeneration actors to understand behaviour, and the ability to relate to people from a broad range of backgrounds is closely linked to the community engagement skills identified above.

Intellectual skills were also considered important, the interviewees stressed that regeneration professionals needed a firm grasp on intellectual connection making processes – they needed to be intelligent actors in the regeneration process. The ability to strategically vision, as well as being able to re-evaluate, is critical for all those involved in the delivery of projects, but those in local authorities were particularly identified as needing to understand their whole authority. The responses suggested that understanding the context of projects, or “seeing the wood for the trees”, was important to maximise the chances
of successful project delivery and the wider benefits. In this re-
spect, flexibility was also identified as an important skill, so that
when the context for the project changes the project can adapt
to overcome unanticipated difficulties and maximise unantici-
pated opportunities. One such opportunity singled out was to
need to be responsive to new economies, born as it is from eco-
nomic crisis.

A range of intuitive and personal skills were identified, including
listening abilities. As considered above, partnership building
and community engagement are now more critical than ever to
successful regeneration, and these processes are dependent
on the ability to effectively listen. Innovation was also seen as
central to finding solutions and maximising opportunities. Inno-
vation clearly requires creativity, and this was also strongly em-
phasised. The respondents were in agreement that process
driven bureaucracies had a major retarding effect on creative
regeneration activity. The ability to overcome, or the courage to
ignore the demands of process driven, risk adverse actors was
seen as necessary, but also requiring careful judgement to suc-
cessfully traverse. The ability to be entrepreneurial, and move
out of professional silos also requires courage, but were seen
by the interviewees as being essential for creativity. Optimism,
only in the face of overbearing pessimism, was also a key per-
sonal attribute of successful regeneration professionals, as in-
deed was a sense of humour.

Question four: What is the current direction regeneration is
taking, and what sectors are likely to lead?

This question asks the respondents to look forward and predict
what type of regeneration is likely to be undertaken in the fu-
ture, and what sectors are likely to be significant in its delivery.
Clearly the respondents used their informed understanding of
current trends to predict future trajectories.

Amongst the interviewees there was a general consensus that
regeneration approaches were likely to change. There was
less consensus over exactly how this change would be mani-
fested. Some chose to emphasise the need to overcome struc-
tural decline and boost growth through large scale infrastructure
projects, such as major road improvements and rail electrifica-
tion, and these respondents hinted that the current Wales Infra-
structure Investment Plan was clearly the beginning of this proc-
ess. They also pointed to the city region approach as being
the catalyst for growth. Others chose to stress that regenera-
tion was likely to be increasingly undertaken at the micro level
though an increasing emphasis on localism. This localism is
characterised by support for particular high streets and small
town centres, and an emphasis on digital and local knowledge-
based enterprise support. Others suggested this localism
would see a key role for local food and sport focused local re-

generation initiatives.
The housing sector was widely seen as having an increasingly significant regeneration function, particularly as identified above in terms of sustainable community development. There was, however, broad general agreement that regeneration, if it was likely to be effective in the future, needed to be mainstreamed. Regeneration objectives, from this perspective, should be seen as part of a whole governance approach, and regeneration outcomes should be written increasingly into the remit of all public bodies.

On the question of who should lead, clearly this depended on what emphasis the interviewees chose to put on the future likely direction of regeneration. For those who put primacy on large-scale infrastructure projects, the Welsh Government was seen as having the key leadership role. As previously outlined, it was also felt that Welsh Government had the main role in setting the strategic objectives and priorities. The Welsh Government, and other public bodies, were also seen as having an important role in bringing forward public land for regeneration and development projects. Clearly the Welsh Government, local governments and other public sector bodies also had the key role in mainstreaming regeneration.

Given the predicted increasing function of the social housing sector, RSLs were seen to have a key on-going leadership role. The RSLs were also seen to be a strong basis from which to increasingly engage the resources of local communities in micro-

regeneration activities. Other future leadership functions were predicted for the third sector, creative industries and the education and skills development bodies. The private sector was identified as having a role, but it was generally felt that it required leadership from the public sector.

**Question five: How might skills change and what new skills will be required?**

This question also asked the interviewees to make predictions based on their informed knowledge of current trends with regard to future skills requirements for regeneration activities. The answers clearly followed from the predictions about the future trajectory of regeneration, but there was an assumption that currently important skills would remain important. Although we have again divided the responses between specific professional skills, and softer generic skills, it should be noted that some of what were previously considered softer skills will, some argued, become core professional skills.

**Specific/Technical**

Although an understanding of economics is currently seen as important for regeneration practitioners, this tends to be seen as only important in understanding the context within which regeneration activities take place. In the future, some predict, a
detailed understanding of new economic models will be a requirement of those involved in regeneration activities. This should not only be seen in tandem with the sustainability and low carbon agenda, but also as a more fundamental consideration of how civic society is organised and structured. Creative and innovative financing approaches should also become a more central professional skill. Planners, it was argued, will need to have a firmer grip on the importance of spatial and not simply local planning. The role of communication, digital platforms and marketing were also all seen as becoming ever more important in promoting place distinctiveness within the regeneration agenda, as well as assisting with the creation of sustainable communities.

**Softer Generic Personal Aptitude Skills**

Although there were no significant new generic skills identified, some chose to emphasise that existing skills were likely to grow in importance. The role of leadership in an ever increasingly complex set of social circumstances would become more important, as would facilitation and intellectual connection making skills. One of the most significant underlying themes to emerge from the interviews was that in order to overcome the limitations of the intrinsically conservative nature of process driven bureaucracies, visioning and innovative entrepreneurialism and creativity had to be more significantly promoted as key personal qualities amongst regeneration professionals.

**Summary**

The presentation of results from our consultation with practising professional in Wales and the wider UK demonstrates a close symmetry with the discussion arising from the bibliographical research and literature review. The skills identified in both exercises are broadly similar and reflect a shared analysis of key issues and concerns at a UK and Wales level. The distinction between specific and generic skills is confirmed, again with increasing emphasis on the latter. Our interviewees also see a changing balance between the agencies that deliver regeneration with, on the one hand, central government leadership of major infrastructural investment and on the other, community leaderships of local micro-regeneration initiatives. In the housing sector the emergence of RSLs as potential major regeneration agents raises issues of future emerging skills for the sector as the regeneration role of housing providers gradually expands to meet tenant expectations.

In the next section we will collate this evidence to arrive at a focused discussion of current and emerging skills needs to support integrated, sustainable regeneration in Wales.
In light of the demise of large-scale traditional regeneration schemes, new skills requirements are becoming increasingly important.
In the discussion following from the literature review and in analysis of our interview data it is apparent that whilst conventional approaches to regeneration have to a large extent been ruled out for the foreseeable future, emerging areas of activity are presenting opportunity to achieve regeneration outcomes despite the wider economic context. We identified that practitioners currently appear to favour one of two broad approaches.

- Large-scale infrastructural led regeneration
- Small-scale community level regeneration

CREW recognises the need for both approaches but also critically, the need to develop synergies between them. For example, large-scale investment in infrastructure can drive local supply chain development, targeted recruitment and training and local skills development. Conversely, local investment in training and education can ensure active labour market participation by local people in infrastructure projects. Developing these synergies will themselves have skills implications. For the remainder of this section we will be concerned to develop some brief ‘insight’ discussion into the skills implications for specific aspects of regeneration activity.

1.1 Housing-Led Regeneration

In recent years an increased regeneration role for Housing Associations and particularly stock transfer housing associations has emerged. The process of Housing Stock Transfer from direct Local Authority ownership and control to organizations based on the ‘Mutual’ model over the past decade (Valleys 2 Coast being the first in 2003), has opened up new opportunities for using the asset value of property owned to extend into new areas of activity, which broadly relate to community and locally based regeneration activities. Traditional tenant participation approaches and community development activities have been superseded by attempts to more fundamentally tackle the social and economic deprivation experienced by tenants. For new housing agencies receiving stock from local authorities the ‘offer ‘letter to tenants often made substantial promises to tackle employability, health, learning and quality of life issues in social housing communities. This has led to a wide range of regeneration activities emerging.
Central to these has been the work promoted by i2i on social procurement and the development of targeted recruitment and training opportunities. These have been associated with the procurement of buildings services for large scale programmes such as ARBED and delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). There have also been energy saving, counselling, training, health and employability related provision offered by an increasingly large number of Housing Associations. This has resulted in an expansion in the numbers of housing personnel requiring regeneration related training and skills.

Housing Associations are also extending the range of their activities to provide care and social facilities for vulnerable populations and increasingly intervening in developing the employability of their residents through training and learning provision. From developing social centres to providing tele-health care support to tenants, new additions to the basic housing function are emerging. Predictions of the trajectory of this trend suggest an increasing role for RSLs to provide a range of, currently public services both to their tenants and the wider population. In England RSLs such as Places for People have built schools, developed retail centres and collaboratively developed health facilities (http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk). The Loudon Square regeneration programme in Cardiff shares some of these features and raises the key issue of the skills required within housing associations to meet this wider agenda.

1.2 Heritage led

Interest in heritage led regeneration is quite recent in Wales compared to the majority of European countries where approaches such as the ‘eco-museum’ movement have a longstanding presence leading to the development of skills and methodologies for realising the regeneration potential of heritage assets. Much of the activity in this sector is community-led, often by newly emerging ‘civic’ organisations with a preservation or visitor economy approach. Good examples include the Copper Kingdom development at Amlwch and the widely publicised Mill at Talgarth.

Whilst the Arts Council and CADW have emerging approaches to key issues such as historical characterisation and sense of place studies, the skills and approaches have not been widely disseminated and there are skills shortages associated with these activities. Community organisations can benefit considerably by skills provision in this context rather than the constant localised discovery of the route to project success by trial and error.

The consequence of the absence of such skills is often the failure to fully exploit the potential economic and regeneration contribution of heritage assets. There is also a general failure to recognise the natural landscape and natural heritage assets in favour of built assets and particularly industrial heritage. Landscape heritage is a powerful resource in Wales to promote local
economic activity from both the day and longer stay visitor economy.

1.3 Alternative Economic Activities

There is emerging European evidence that economic austerity is promoting alternative economic activity, in part outside the mainstream economy within emerging local patterns of financial circulation (Castells, 2012). Small-scale design, creative industries, innovative retail and energy-led initiatives are emerging in Wales without the benefit of previous practice to inform strategy and delivery. There is an immediate need to learn from these development as they happen to enable an identification of the skills and attributes of those leaders in this field. This can inform emerging practitioners. CREW has to some extent promoted this through its focus on meanwhile uses in town centres which emphasises the regenerative capacity of innovative, temporary economic activity in areas where normal market activities have failed or withdrawn. The emphasis should be on making such achievements permanent but it is the ‘hothouse’ of experimentation and failure that produces the strong outcomes that we have evidenced in some of our case studies.

Whilst it is vitally important to recognise the support needs to be provided to conventional forms of economic development in Wales, it is also vital that we recognise and support practice that is both innovative and more focused on localities. Responses to the decline of the ‘High Street’; the creative industries sector; future food security and the development of local food chains; and future energy security and the supply of ‘green’ energy, are all examples of where alternative economic models can be successful. All these areas will require combinations of conventional and emerging skills and aptitudes on the part of those professional supporting these informal economic developments.

1.4 Town Centre and Seaside Town Regeneration

Town centre renewal is a major theme within the Vibrant and Viable Places programme of the Welsh Government. Here we identify quite major skills deficits. Current skills sets are largely focused on Town Centre management and local economic development. However, emerging practice following key reports from Mary Portas and the Welsh Assembly Government, Business and Enterprise Committee has identified a process of town centre diversification as necessary to secure town centre renewal. This ‘extended menu’ for town centres has identified a range of activities which calls for skills in:

- Retail management
- Physical renewal
- Meanwhile uses
- BIDS
- Local partnership management
• Funding acquisitions
• Housing development
• Events management

Portas identified these activities as best managed by a ‘town team’, which will generally take the form of a multi-agency partnership developed to promote the town centre and develop it economically. This again emphasises the need for both partnership and leadership skills to achieve the optimum outcomes from such activities. We would identify significant skills gaps in current town centre teams both in the private and public sector and there is likely to be active skills development needs in the immediate future.

Some towns in Wales have demonstrated effective leadership in this field through either local authority teams, third sector organisations or Chambers of Commerce/Trade. Developing ‘best practice’ outputs from this experience will be of particular value to the wider sector. CREW has commenced development of activities to meet these emerging challenges largely through the formation in November 20011 of the CREW Small Towns: Policy and Delivery Network. We have also to date held a series of events and produced web resources on meanwhile uses which are seen as an important strategy for maintaining town centre viability. We are also currently exploring support for BIDS related training with Welsh government.

1.5 Community-Led Regeneration

Much of the literature and many of the respondents in our interviews stress the developing role of community members and organisations in the last 15 years of regeneration policy and delivery activity in the UK. This has raised the issue of skills development for ‘active citizens’. There are two senses in which community involvement is expanding:

Firstly, in a wide range of programmes delivering government policy, community engagement has become the preferred model of delivery. This occurs in housing, health, learning, employability and enterprise development and participative models of service delivery have become the norm and now extend to debates about ‘co-production’ of public services. This imposes a need for skills development to enable local people to engage fully with these various delivery models.

Secondly, as conventional public and private sector regeneration agencies are withdrawing from activity, community organisations are often becoming the local catalyst for change and under-taking regeneration activities directly. In some instances, local groups are under-taking property development, property management and asset transfer as well as local economic development and community development activities. Some Communities First areas have developed these functions but in areas not designated for Communities First support these functions are often performed by constituted community groups,
some evolving into formal Development Trust with quite complex portfolios of both activities and properties.

Whilst it is easy to under-estimate the skills that exist within communities it is also important that we recognise the support that might be required to develop competent and effective delivery by community agencies. The consequence of failure is often more concerning in this sector than in conventional private or public sector led activities. Encouraging community confidence to tackle big issues is difficult and high profile failures can be very damaging to the progress of this approach. Supporting skills acquisition by community activists in the earliest stages of such projects is essential.
Conclusions
Conclusions

This study has provided insights into current UK and Welsh thinking about regeneration skills derived from three key sources:

• The literature Review
• Stakeholder engagement
• Sectoral highlight reports

Our literature review identified a long-term concern about the adequacy of regeneration related skills in the UK within differently labeled sectors but sharing similar concerns about improving physical and social spaces. Whether in urban renewal, place making, regeneration or most recently localism, skills deficits have been recognised as a major risk factor in achieving successful delivery.

There has also been considerable consistency about the skills that are needed and where the skills gaps are generally perceived to be, although it is recognised that a broader analysis than can be achieved in this report is needed to fully quantify perceived skills gaps and shortages and test the views provided by interviewees. Most of the literature was less concerned about specific technical skills of each profession and more focused on cross-professional generic skills required to make complex regeneration programmes work in practice. In interventions that inevitably target both people and places, it is these skills that are often the most important. Egan identified visioning, leadership, brokerage, partnership, communication and conflict resolution as the core requirements of professionals trying to create sustainable places.

We would summarise these as effectively the skills required for integrated sustainable regeneration and part of the core skills set that practitioners in all conceivable sectors are likely to require. In this report we term these:

Connective skills: The practices, attitudes, values and relationships that enable practitioners to work collaboratively, to merge organizational objectives and to recognise the shared responsibility for successful delivery. In this connective set of skills we identify:
These areas of activity are often seen as personal attributes and whilst it is true that these person-orientated skills come easier to some people than others we also believe that people can be trained to be competent in these areas of increasingly important professional activities.

Alongside these connective skills we also identify from this research a critical set of delivery skills.

Delivery skills: The skills required to translate vision to successful completion of projects by combining and unifying the contributions of a wide range of agencies and actors. In this set of delivery skills we identify:

- Project design
- Funding and financing
- Analysis and decision-making
- Project management
- Procurement
- Supply chain development
- Local employability development
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Reportage and dissemination of good practice

Critically, we believe that the exercise of these two categories of skills must recognise the imperative of developing socially, economically and environmentally sustainable solutions.

Finally, as an increasingly important observation, we believe that skills acquisition is ultimately derived from the experience of practice. In a challenging economic environment where regeneration activities are minimal it is increasingly difficult for potential and existing practitioners to develop experience and to improve professional development. CREW attempted to address this by its instigation of a student placement scheme in
2011 but this was unsuccessful in the context of changing social attitudes to internship and unpaid placements.

Our site seminar programme targets this concern but is insufficient to provide the range and depth of experience required to become professionally competent is a specific activity. Longer-term experiences are required and we believe that a programme of active secondments, placements and career exchanges is required to foster a sharing of experience for the collective benefit of the regeneration community.
Bibliography


Appendix A : List of Interviewees

Tim Blanch, Coastal Housing
James Brown, Powell Dobson Urbanists
Martin Buckle, SEWTA
Lyn Cadwallader, One Voice Wales
Barbara Castle, Bron Afon Housing Association
Steve Cranston, United Welsh Housing Association
Nigel Draper, Valleys to Coast
Ruth Essex
Dewi Llwyd Evans, Tai Eryri
David Fitzpatrick, Sustain Wales
Antonia Forte, CTC Housing Group
Dave Gilbert, Carmarthenshire CBC
John Harper
Robert Huxford, UDG
Noel Isherwood, Princes Foundation for Building Community
Andrew Lycett, RCT Homes
Colin Munsie, UDG
Geoff Ogden, ICE Wales and Atkins Global
Tim Peppin, WLGA
Rhys Jones, Cartrefi Gwynedd
David Swallow, Eversheds
Ann-Marie Smale, Powell Dobson Architects
Keith Thomas, perConsulting
Chris Wade, AMT
Roisin Willmott, RTPI Cymru
Martin White, Pembrokeshire CBC
Shaun Whittaker, Economic Development Consultant
Huw Williams, Swansea Creative Hub

Collective/Organisational Written Responses:

RSCW
Landscape Institute Wales

We would like to thank Mike Cuddy, Andrew Dakin, Richard Essex, Hayley Macnamara, and Ged Mchugh for undertaking the majority of the interviews.