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This report aims to chronicle the main regeneration programmes launched in Wales since 1986, together with related ‘events and occurrences’, which have impacted both positively and negatively on regeneration outputs and outcomes. Doing so affords an opportunity to provide a clear perspective regarding how initiatives have developed and evolved in Wales. Combining this time series approach with a simple critical analysis of each initiative, can help to identify instances of both good and bad practice, thus potentially facilitating a more effective delivery of future regeneration programmes in Wales. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in both previous and current programme delivery, this report will contribute to the knowledge base of what works in Wales and begin the debate as to how to improve current and future initiatives.
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Introduction

The socio-economic and cultural environment of Wales has changed dramatically over the last two centuries. There was the initial success of nineteenth century industrialisation, followed by the turn of the century coal boom, culminating in the steady process of economic decline, degradation and social exclusion following the interwar period. This economic decline has prompted a plethora of government interventions, in the form of numerous government-led regeneration and redevelopment initiatives, differing in scale, scope and vision. These schemes have ranged from small, targeted social regeneration schemes, such as the Broadband Support Scheme, to large scale economic and physical regeneration programmes developed by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and subsequently by WAG, as well as a continuum of initiatives between. However, what has been lacking is a concise history of recent major regeneration initiatives, and a tangible knowledge base of what works in Wales. As such, there has been a tendency to “reinvent the wheel”, as opposed to building on previous success and learning from failures.

By considering the short time frame of current regeneration initiatives within a longer time frame of the state’s delivery of urban and regional policy measures, we are able to achieve an objective overview which historical timescales can provide. Adopting a historical perspective allows cause and effect and continuities and discontinuities to be distinguished more accurately. Identifying such continuities and discontinuities in the State’s delivery of regeneration initiatives in recent years is useful. It not only contextualises current regeneration initiatives, but may also highlight the discontinuous patchwork of initiatives that inevitably occur as a result of the nature of political process and foster a new holistic way of approaching regeneration in Wales.

However, a simple time series analysis of past regeneration initiatives is not enough in itself to identify best practice, or establish the groundwork on which to build a tangible knowledge base of what works in Wales, with regard to economic, physical and social regeneration. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to combine the time series research with a critical analysis of major past initiatives. In order to ensure good theoretical grounding within this research, the critical analysis itself needs to be informed by well researched theoretical evidence regarding the core principles which encompass ‘best practice’ in the delivery of regeneration programmes. The Professor Michael Parkinson/Liverpool John Moores University/Joseph Rowntree report of 1996 on strategic approaches to regeneration identified the following facets of design and delivery needing to be present if a regeneration programme was to be considered as strategic and representing best practice. These were:
• The presence of a clearly articulated vision and strategy.
• Clearly identified economic, environmental, and social priorities.
• Identification of the resources (in the broadest sense) that would be required to deliver a programme and over what timescales.
• Clear identification of the spatial, scale of targeting e.g. City, Neighbourhood etc.
• An established time scale appropriate to the regeneration task.
• The establishment of ‘base line’ conditions from which regeneration progress can be measured.

More recently, many of these principles have been affirmed (albeit not quite so explicitly or comprehensively) via influential commentary from, The Wales Audit Office, the previous Labour Government’s Department for Communities and Local Government proposed regeneration framework, the Parkinson et al report on the ‘Credit Crunch and Regeneration: Impact and Implications’, and BURA (N.B. now re-established, following its recent demise as the leading independent UK regeneration body).

Firstly, The Wales Audit Office in 2005 identified common features of successful regeneration, namely:

• Clear strategies based on need.
• Long term funding programmes of at least 10 years duration.
• Strategic partnerships that have identified clear roles and responsibilities.
• Strong leadership.
• Effective community engagement.

Secondly, the DCLG in 2009 proposed the following key principles in respect of taking forward a regeneration framework:

• Prioritise economic outcomes. But take account of environmental and social uses as well.
• Link regeneration initiatives to mainstream public service delivery.
• Ensure that the public, private, and third sector work together.
• Target investment, and not spread it too thinly.
• Focus on both need and opportunity in deprived areas.
• Ensure a strong ‘bottom up’ approach to regeneration initiatives.
• Ensure that evaluation is embedded in all regeneration projects.
• Link local initiatives to national, regional and sub regional economic plans and investments.
• Deliver high quality places.

Thirdly, Parkinson et al (2009), proposed some key principles with regard to taking regeneration forward in the current recessionary economic conditions.
These were:

- Have a long term strategy/plan in place.
- Provide committed and brave local leadership.
- Work even more in partnership.
- Deliver quality products.
- Retain delivery capacity.
- Provide public sector resources.
- Be innovative in respect of financial support.
- Increase flexibility, especially in how the planning system can support regeneration.

Fourthly, BURA in March 2010, in its proposals for a framework for regeneration recommended six key principles:

- Use regeneration to serve people and to facilitate their taking local action via a ‘bottom up’ approach, but not withdrawing from taking a ‘top down’ approach with associated public sector financial support.
- Ensure that regeneration is strategic and properly focused.
- Target ‘place’ and not, just ‘everywhere’ and at all spatial scales.
- Recognise the value of local community autonomy, capacity and knowledge but at the same time acknowledge the need for collective action.
- Ensure effective use of scarce financial resources.
- Use the accumulated knowledge of the delivery of past regeneration initiatives to facilitate efficient delivery.

Many of the above principles represent re-occurring themes, and in some cases a re-discovery of ‘forgotten truths’ which are as applicable now as they have been for the last thirty years in respect of the delivery of a combination of urban and regional policy measures. This will be demonstrated in the detailed analysis to follow.

However, at this point in the development of this paper, it is necessary to initially consider an outline time-series ‘identification’ which covers a wide range of activities in regeneration in Wales since 1986, and to explain why this date was chosen. This date has particular significance because there was a plethora of innovative urban regeneration initiatives being instigated in the UK via the introduction of the government’s Action for Cities programme and via the example of what was perceived by many commentators to be ‘cutting-edge’ regeneration work undertaken in the USA in Baltimore and more generally in the EZ/EC programme of regeneration initiatives. This paper does not claim to be fully comprehensive, but instead, attempts to identify the key programmes and ‘milestone’ events which have helped guide and
establish elements of ‘best practice’ from many initiatives that have the ability to inform and improve future best regeneration practice.

Examples of major regeneration initiatives of all types from the previous 25 years, including rural, urban, community and social initiatives are included in the following timeline. Taking this approach enables us to give a sense of activity range that has been undertaken in Wales, the various trajectories of regeneration over time, and how initiatives have (or have not) been linked together in order to holistically address economic failure, poverty, degradation and social exclusion. In essence therefore the following work follows a time series process, in order to try to clarify the development of Welsh regeneration initiatives.
Outline Timeline


1987 – The instigation of the WDA’s Urban Renewal Unit (N.B. which later became the Urban Development Department), following on from the first all-Wales Urban Renewal Conference held in Cardiff in December 1986.

1987 – Instigation of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation.


1991– The Re-launch of the WDA’s Urban Development Department and its associated programmes, which included the all-Wales land reclamation programme.

1991 – The extension of the Valleys Programme from 3 to 5 years (to 1993).


1993 – The WDA/CBI Conference on the future of urban development in Wales led by the Welsh Secretary of State.

1993 – EU endorsement to the WDA’s Urban Development programme as a national best regeneration practice approach.

1994 – The NAO Report in respect of the WDA’s all Wales land reclamation programme which provided a positive endorsement (i.e. a ‘notable achievement’).

1994 – Replacement of the Urban Programme in Wales by the SDS Programme.

1994 – Abandonment of the WDA’s explicit urban development programme.

1997 – The delivery of the LG project in Newport.

1998 – Amalgamation of DBRW and LAW with WDA. N.B. the WDA inherits DBRW’s social and community regeneration powers.

2000 – The introduction of new EU Objective 1, 2 and 3 Areas, and a Rural Development Plan Area all with associated funding regimes.

2000 – The instigation of an all Wales community regeneration programme by the WDA.

2000 – Instigation of the first Wales Rural Development Plan (RDP).

2001 – Instigation of the Communities First Programme.

2002 – Instigation of the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP).

2002 – Announcement of the intended creation of the DCFW, and launch of the WDA’s design quality initiative.

2002 – Production of the Five Counties Regeneration Framework.


2003 – Creation of the Newport Urban Regeneration Company (Newport Unlimited).


2006 – Merger of the, WTB, ELWa and the WDA with WAG.

2006 – Introduction of the Heads of the Valleys programme under the WAG SRA initiative followed by the subsequent instigation of six other major area based regeneration initiatives throughout Wales.
2007 – Instigation of new EU designated ‘Convergence and Competitive’ areas and associated funding regimes.


2009 – The introduction of a Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales.

2009 – Establishment of the Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales.

Time-Series Analysis

Owing to the similarities of the perceived priorities of best practice arising from the public, private and third sectors, as indicated above, past major regeneration policies and programmes in Wales will primarily be analysed by identifying qualitative and process issues with a particular reference to the six core principles presented by Professor Michael Parkinson as these encapsulate the most succinct presentation of the general consensus regarding “strategic regeneration”.

The simple critical analysis approach has been taken in order to consider a qualitative view, and focus on what has been the principal features of the various programmes, initiatives and events of the last 30 years or so in Wales’s ‘world of regeneration’. Significantly, there have been no long term formal studies (over the past 20 or 25 years) undertaken in respect of individual Welsh regeneration programmes. Therefore a rigorous quantitative view in respect of outputs and outcomes achieved is not possible. However, via appendices included in this report, summary quantitative data is included in respect of some of the regeneration programmes which have been formally and informally evaluated over medium and short timescales. These consist of three regeneration initiatives i.e. The Valleys, 1988-1992; the greater Barry area, 1995-2006 Newport Unlimited, 2003-2009. These have been provided to give an indication of what sorts of quantitative outputs from regeneration programmes have been recorded in the past.
Detailed Timeline Analysis


Key features were:

- Targeted the South Wales Valleys.
- Focused on environmental improvement.
- Aimed to encourage investment by the private sector.
- Selection of recipient area and town locations based on local application for funds by the Borough Councils to central government (i.e. the Welsh Office).

1987 – The instigation of the WDA’s Urban Renewal Unit (Following on from the first all-Wales Urban Renewal Conference held in Cardiff in December 1986.)

Features were:

- ‘A multi million pound programme’.
- A strong property focused approach.
- Seven public-private partnerships schemes.
- Targeted on derelict and ‘needy’ areas i.e. Deeside, Newport, Pontypridd, Llanelli, Barry, Aberconwy, Gwynedd i.e. Bangor, Caernarfon and Holyhead.
- Designed to equip Wales for the 21st Century (therefore strategic?).
- No suggestion of a social and community focus. N.B. This was not part of the WDA’s statutory remit as prescribed at its instigation in 1975.
- Strong political patronage from the Welsh SOS.


Features were:

- Large scale financial resources.
- A targeted spatial location.
- Economic and environmental focus. N.B. Very limited community/social focus.
- A commitment to the development of a master plan and regeneration strategy (albeit the master plan was re-defined number of times over the life of the project).
- A strong ‘top down’ approach from central government (which resulted in local criticism with regard to a lack of partnership working and transparent governance to the undertaking of regeneration projects).
• An approach to monitoring and evaluation which was limited by the small range of indicators employed which were particularly economic and environmentally focused.
• Strong political patronage from the Conservative UK Government.

Key features were:

• An integrated approach to urban renewal, embracing education and training, tourism, strategic physical infrastructure, health, housing etc.
• A partnership approach to delivery.
• An established time scale.
• A spatially targeted location.
• Committed financial resources.
• Strong political patronage from the Welsh Secretary of State.

And note:
• The on-going existence of the all Wales Urban Programme (from 1969?). The Urban Programme enabled Local Authorities to undertake economic, environmental and social projects aimed at redressing deprivation in urban areas.
• (2) The WDA’s all Wales Land Reclamation Programme (Inherited from the Welsh Office in 1976).

1990 to present – Introduction of the Groundwork Programme in Wales
(N.B. – the co-ordinating body Groundwork Wales was established in 1998)

Presently - Groundwork Wales is a charity which helps people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects, and to live and work in a greener way. It is part of Groundwork in Wales, a leading local, regional and national environmental regeneration network building sustainable communities across Wales.

• Excellent evaluation - Groundwork Wales records its physical achievements on an annual basis, and publishes key facts and figures on its website showing the public what it has actually achieved.
• Funding based on achievements - In 2004 Groundwork commissioned a study into its achievements and the opportunities for developing the movement in Wales. As a result of the initial achievements made, a three year funding package was agreed with WAG in 2006 for 2006-09. Since then Groundwork has made considerable progress and has doubled the number of local authority areas in which it is active.
• Ground Wales has a clearly articulated vision and strategy published on its website.
• Ground Wales encourages working with communities and in partnership with other groups and organisations.
• Being an independent charity Groundwork is somewhat freed from political biases, and bases its projects and interventions strategically on a greatest need basis.
• Groundwork has existed for a sufficient time to bring about measurable improvement in Wales.

1991 – Launch of the WDA’s Urban Development Programme.
Features were:

• The development of the programme had been informed by the previous experience of operating the Urban Renewal Unit (see above).
• A strategic/comprehensive approach to urban decay.
• 30 targeted urban locations in North Wales and South Wales. Targeting based on supply/demand, cost, benefits and need.
• Enhanced financial resources.
• A hierarchical management and financial resource approach dependent on the degree of regeneration opportunity available. N.B. a governance approach commensurate to the ‘task’.
• Combining the land reclamation and urban regeneration functions of the WDA in to a single directorate.
• From 1987/1988 expenditure on the programme grew from it utilising 6% of the WDA’s budget to 25% (£29M) in 1994/95. N.B. it then declined to 8% (and less) of the total WDA budget in future years.

1991 – Extension of the Valleys Programme from 3 to 5 years via ‘The Valleys: Partnership with the People’.


This Festival, along with others previously undertaken, in 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990 in other locations in the UK suffering from multiple ‘decline’, were the ‘flagships’ of conservative regeneration policy. Essentially this comprised reclaiming derelict land, providing new infrastructure and making sites available for property development and investment by the private sector. The Ebbw Vale Garden Festival secured the reclamation and regeneration of a 200 acre site, an out town retail development, and circa 370 houses albeit only 25 have been built by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).
1993 – A WDA/CBI Conference on the future of urban development in Wales with significant patronage from the Welsh Secretary of State.

The key principles promoted by the Secretary of State were:

- The need to follow comprehensive regeneration strategies designed to service local needs and opportunities.
- The importance of taking a joined-up approach to regeneration.
- Recognition of the value of partnerships and particularly involving central government, local government and the private sector.
- The value that local and regional regeneration initiatives can make to national economies.


This instigation of a further programme was undertaken on the recommendation of the then recently departed Secretary of State for Wales.

1993 – EU endorsement to the WDA’s Urban Development programme as a best regeneration practice approach.

The programme was set up with the benefit of best practice advice on urban regeneration from Victor Hausner and Associates, who had advised the Carter administration in the USA, and conservative government Ministers in the UK.

1994 – An NAO Report provided a positive endorsement (a ‘notable achievement’) to the WDA’s all Wales Land Reclamation programme.

Key features of the programme were considered to be as follows:

- A programme of scale i.e. all Wales (and which enjoyed cross-party political support and patronage).
- Appropriate financial resources commensurate to the task.
- A partnership arrangement with the local authorities and the private sector.
- Guided by a clear development strategy.
- Securing good value for money.


Professor Kevin Morgan of Cardiff University made a contribution to this
nomination and suggested as follow:

‘Cynon Valley has pioneered a unique strategy for urban regeneration built around the aims and objectives not of broad brush national policy, but locally agreed strategies and projects. Government policy-makers must urgently look to the Joint Venture model as a replacement for their unworkable development corporations’.

1994 – Replacement of the Urban Programme in Wales by the Strategic Development Scheme Programme (SDS). Key features were:

- A move towards more economic and environmental projects.
- Reduced funding i.e. £50M in 1997 across the whole of Wales.
- A three year funding approach (not annual) and therefore an aspiration that the programme could be more ‘strategic.’
- Aspired to ‘lever in’ private sector finance via regeneration projects e.g. town centre regeneration projects.

1994/95 – Abandonment of the WDA’s explicit urban development programme.

The proposed evaluation of the programme was cancelled in 1994, which represented a failure to monitor progress and contribute to the knowledge base of Welsh regeneration initiatives.

1997 – Delivery of the LG project in Newport.

£247M was paid to secure this FDI project and the cost was born by a combination of the Welsh Office and the WDA. The cost of the delivery of this FDI project resulted in the depletion of WDA local regeneration budgets and some Welsh Office main stream programme budgets.

The securing of this project to South Wales was perceived to be an opportunistic UK response to the potential supply of a large FDI project rather than a strategic response to Wales’s overall economic needs.

1998 – Amalgamation of LAW and DBRW with the WDA.

The WDA inherited DBRW’s social and community regeneration powers and potentially an enhanced regeneration delivery capacity via the LAW’s staff and financial resources.
2000 – The instigation of an all Wales community regeneration programme by the WDA. Key features were:

- An area based approach to community regeneration.
- A focus on regeneration projects which maximise economic outputs.
- Recognition of the long term nature of community regeneration.
- Recognition of the important role of the third sector/social economy.
- The importance of a partnership approach.
- Be responsive to local needs and opportunities.
- Be delivered at a local level.
- Only achieved critical mass in Mid and West regions and largely unused in the SE Division of the WDA

2000 – Introduction of the First Rural Development Plan

The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006 formerly set the framework for a range of rural development measures and schemes run by the Welsh Assembly Government.

- Clear planned vision and focus evidenced by the identification of main 7 aims and three focused priorities.
- Well funded via partnerships between the public and private sectors as well as the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) allocations from the European Union (EU), which resulted in over €500 million in rural development and agri-environment Measures over seven years.
- The budget allocation of 88% of EAGGF resources towards ‘Agri-environmental’ Schemes and Measures supporting farmers in ‘Less Favoured Areas’ (LFA) demonstrates the strategic significance and overwhelming focus of the RDP on issues concerning the development of a sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural industry, which maintained the rural heritage of Wales.
- The plan was well monitored and evaluated which helped develop the knowledge base which aided in the creation of the second RDP.
- Does the emergence of a second RDP immediately following this one imply that the timescale was too short to achieve the aims of the plan?

2001 – Instigation of the Communities First Programme

Communities First is the Welsh Assembly Government's flagship programme to improve the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales. Key features:

- Communities First is entirely based on partnership working.
  Communities First enables and encourages Public Sector, Third Sector
and Private sector organizations to work together to achieve common goals. However the lack of program bending is a well documented issue.

- The initial goal of targeting the 100 most deprived wards in Wales was an admirable one; however political sensitivities and local action have lead to an ever increasing number of CF areas (now over 150) which may dilute the effectiveness of the programme.
- CF has clearly targeted economic and social priorities, and well defined spatial targeting.
- Having an 11 year lifespan thus far has allowed the initiative to achieve some notable successes.
- Although never comparative to England’s NDC programme the resources available to CF have been sufficient, to bring about positive social change in many communities.
- Lack of appropriate evaluation at both national and local levels.

2002 – Instigation of the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP)

The Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP) is a competitive grant scheme operated by the Welsh Assembly Government to help community and voluntary organisations provide facilities or carry out activities which will promote the regeneration of communities.

- Well funded - Since 2002 the Community Facilities and Activities Programme has awarded over £39 million to projects throughout Wales.
- Well targeted - Spatially the scheme is available to community organisations from across Wales.
- Intended as a fund for organisations to draw upon to fill remaining gaps in finances after all other sources of support have been explored, CFAP is able to strategically fill the gaps in the delivery of community regeneration.
- Due to its nature there is little clearly articulated strategy or plans.


This initiative was instigated via:

- Patronage from HRH the Prince of Wales.
- A recognition of what was happening in England via the creation of CABE and the recommendations contained in the 1999 DETR /Rogers,
Towards an Urban Renaissance’ report. N.B. Particularly recognition of the importance of ‘achieving design excellence’ as an essential 5th ‘condition’ if regeneration and renaissance was to be secured. The other four conditions being, ‘creating economic strength, taking economic responsibility, investing in urban government, and prioritising social well-being’.

- The increasing focus of Cardiff University in teaching urban design and the appointment of an influential Professor in this discipline in 1996.
- Significant interest in the WDA from certain key managers and executives in pursuing and promoting design quality within the natural and built environments.

2002 – Creation of the Design Commission for Wales.

The DCFW was created as result of recognition that raising the standard of design and architecture everywhere in Wales was an essential component of future competitiveness and social and economic success. And also reflected the earlier creation of its sister body, CABE in England. And see above regarding the WDA’s Design Guide.

2002 – Production of the Five Counties Regeneration Framework.

This framework was completed in response to the substantive closure of the Ebbw Vale and Llanwern steel plants. It was anticipated that the five Local authorities (i.e. Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Torfaen, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire) affected would work in concert together to undertake large strategic regeneration projects that would have both local and regional impact. There has however been limited success in achieving suitable projects and in part this has been due to the difficulties of achieving a consensus of approach by the five local authorities.

2003 – Introduction of Cymorth: Children and Youth Support Fund

Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund” aims to provide a network of targeted support for children and young people within a framework of universal provision, in order to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged families.

- Cymorth is administered through Children and Young People’s Partnerships within each local authority. It has replaced Sure Start, Children and Youth Partnership Fund, National Childcare Strategy, Youth Access Initiative and the Play Grant. Cymorth highlights both successful partnership working and an integrated strategic approach between subsequent regeneration initiatives.
• A clearly articulated aim of trying to have a positive impact on the indicators of well-being for children and young people in the medium term; which is framed around 5 themes of work.

• Cymorth has been well funded, receiving between £40 to £57 million each year since its inception.

• Cymorth has been well evaluated. The final evaluation of Cymorth is primarily positive, however it did identify that:

'[T]he performance management systems in place were not robust enough to enable systematic assessments to be made of the benefits for the children and young people directly participating in the projects.' (Evaluation of Cymorth Final Report, 2010, P.56)

This highlights the need for impartial evaluations of all initiatives; not only to improve them, but also to identify positive and negative aspects of initiatives in order to build a knowledge base that can inform and improve future policy. This also highlights that there are often skills deficits on the managerial and delivery side which feed into the ‘implementation gap’.

2003 – The introduction of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

The vision behind the WHQS is that everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

• The WHQS has a clearly identified vision and strategy, which encourages partnership working.
• The WHQS is supported by i2i (inform 2 involve) which is an Assembly Government project providing support to local authorities and tenants in the process of achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This represents a good practice where initiatives have been dovetailed in order to holistically tackle physical degradation.
• The WHQS has clearly identified housing priorities, with an all-Wales remit.
• Due to the nature of the WHQS the evaluation process clearly identifies what has been achieved as a results of the initiative (In terms of the number of dwellings that have been brought up to the WHQS, and those still falling short of the standard.)
• The WHQS has been generously funded – The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) alone has received between £60 - £108 million per year.
2003– Creation of the Newport Urban Regeneration Company (Newport Unlimited). And Wales’s only URC.

A response to the ‘need’ emanating from the ‘Corus closures’ (and see above) and the ‘opportunity’ which the regeneration of the City of Newport presented.

Key features in respect of the delivery vehicle and the regeneration programme were:

- Strong political patronage to the instigation of a URC from the then Leader of Newport City Council.

- An Independent company, limited by guarantee. The URC was set up in Newport in 2002/03 and the three principal partners were WAG, WDA and Newport City Council. The partnership now comprises WAG and NCC, following the merger of the WDA with WAG in 2006.

- Its principal role is to coordinate the delivery of economic regeneration. It does not have statutory powers e.g. no planning or land compensation powers (N.B. it is inevitable that any large scale regeneration initiative will have to facilitate a spatial re-arrangement of land uses and therefore possessing these powers or having access to the powers via their member partners is vital). Neither does it hold assets; rather it relies on its member partners to do this on its behalf.

- Its primary role is to address significant development opportunities by developing and managing the implementation of a strategic master plan; and to build business confidence and realise a collective vision for the future of the area.

- Notwithstanding that the URC was set up primarily to realise physical development opportunities in order to attract investment in to the designated area, complimentary social and community regeneration was anticipated via NCC taking direct responsibility for delivering these aspects.

- An unlimited life span, but 10 years has been the general experience of URC’s elsewhere in the UK.

- No committed financial resources beyond year 3 (£30M initially) N.B. annual levels of funding are at the behest of the partners. WAG currently provides £3m a year of capital finance.

- Followed the lead of the rest of the UK with regard to the creation of URCs as recommended in the DETR/Rogers report mentioned above.
• A joint public/private sector Board (which meets every month) provides the management and guidance to the delivery of the regeneration programme.


This was initially intended to provide an over-arching planning and investment framework with a linked national, regional and local emphasis, and to particularly service Wales’s economic needs and opportunities. Significantly, it was intended to follow best EU planning practice in this regard. Its reduction to a loose planning framework, a lack of ‘buy-in’ from many influential stakeholders, its lack of interaction with cross-border areas in England and its lack of integration with the Communities First initiative has hampered its credibility and capacity.


This report made many cogent observations in respect of the delivery of regeneration in Wales including highlighting a lack of coordination, inadequate funding, short term horizons, lack of a strategic approach etc.


Key features:

• Strong political patronage from Andrew Davies AM the then Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks.
• Follows a regeneration strategy which has been the subject of a previous consultation process (i.e. ‘Heads ..We Win..’ 2005).
• Leadership provided via a Programme Board (with public and private sector representation), a dedicated Programme Director, and project team.
• A holistic and strategic approach to regeneration embracing, economic inactivity, education and skills, health, image, tourism connectivity, environment etc.
• Dedicated financial resources.
• A partnership approach to delivery embracing a wide set of stakeholders.
• Delivery acknowledged as being dependent on key programme linkages.
• Targeting via, themes, sectors beneficiary groups and all within a discrete area based approach.
A significant further major initiative aimed at tackling the Valleys area.

2007 and onwards – Introduction of further Strategic Regeneration Areas (SRA) – now known as just Regeneration Areas (RAs).

Following on from the approach taken with the Heads of the Valleys initiative, Regeneration Areas aim to address inequalities experienced across geographical locations in Wales by investing in places that are currently under-performing, both economically and in terms of their wellbeing, in order to raise their performance. There are currently 7 RAs: Heads of the Valleys, Môn a Menai, North Wales coast, Aberystwyth, Western Valleys, Swansea and Barry.

Key Features:

- Each RA is produces a clearly articulated plan / framework.
- Overall Regeneration Areas’ priorities are loosely defined as improving areas that are currently underperforming; however individual area’s plans are more targeted.
- Adequate resources are supplied over appropriate timescales, however it is unclear what happens after the initial designated RA period expires or whether funding is linked to success, greatest need or political sensitivity.
- Identification of spatial areas and scale of targeting appears somewhat non-strategic and subject to a degree of political influence.

2006 – Merger of the WTB, ELWa and the WDA with WAG.

The merger particularly raised expectations of enhanced coordination in the delivery of regeneration initiatives in Wales.


This organisation comprising the main professional bodies (e.g. RICS, RTPI, RIBA, ICE, CIH, ILA etc) servicing the development of the natural and built environments in Wales was formed via leadership from the RICS. Its instigation had its genesis in recommendations made previously via the 1999 DETR/Rogers Urban renaissance report and the 2004 Egan review on practitioner skills where it was acknowledged that the lack of appropriate, skills, qualities knowledge and experience was hampering the effective delivery of regeneration initiatives. The RSCW has significantly raised the level of awareness of the importance of skills development within Wales but a significant part of its work has now been subsumed in to CREW’s operations.
(and see below).

2007 – The delivery of the Second Rural Development Plan

The Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales 2007-2013 is part of a joint Welsh Assembly Government and European Union (EU) strategy. It covers four areas namely: agriculture and forestry, environment and countryside, quality of life in rural areas and locally based approaches to rural development.

- The second RDP looks to have been well planned, as it assessed welsh agriculture in terms of strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats during its inception.
- This diligent planning has resulted in a clearly identified set of priorities with the plan.
- The second RDP is well funded with a total budget of £795 million with £195 million coming from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

2007 – The delivery of the Flying Start initiative

Flying Start is targeted at 0-3 year olds in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. It aims to create positive outcomes in the medium and long term. It is a prescriptive programme, based on international evidence of what works. Flying Start brings together education, childcare, health and social services and combines the voluntary, private and statutory sectors to offer preventative interventions that influence child outcomes. The scheme builds on and complements existing valuable work done under the Sure Start theme of the Cymorth grant scheme. The settlement also provides for continuing capital investment within Flying Start to make sure that facilities support the high quality required, and that the childcare settings needed are within the disadvantaged areas targeted.

- A targeted vision based on examples of Best Practise, and evidence of a joined up policy approach.
- Well funded - The programme became operational in 2007/08 with an allocation of £44 million over the first two years of the initial four year commitment.
- It encourages partnership working as funding is administered as a grant to Local Authorities and targeted on their most deprived areas.
- It has been evaluated by independent organisations, which have praised the success of the Flying Start Scheme.
- Has well established medium and long term aims.
2009 – The introduction of the Arbed Programme

The Arbed programme is Wales’ Strategic Energy Performance Investment Programme. The Arbed programme supports the One Wales ambitions to reduce climate change, eradicate fuel poverty and boost economic development and regeneration in Wales. It is designed to bring environmental, social and economic benefits to Wales. It will coordinate investment into the energy performance of Welsh homes. This involves working with social housing providers to make communities in deprived areas of Wales more energy efficient. The WAG are doing this by retro-fitting homes with innovative measures including solid wall insulation and renewable technologies such as solar panels and heat pumps.

- This initiative has been well funded - Initial Stage funding of £30 million which reached completion March 21st 2011, and a further £37 million is to be invested by the Welsh Assembly Government to extend its successful Arbed scheme.
- Encourages partnership working and is backed by £29 million financial support from the European Regional Development Fund.
- Has a succinct and well targeted plan, and clearly identified purpose.
- Appears to have been allowed an appropriate timeframe for successful completion.
- Programme of precedent – it is the largest programme of its type underway in the UK.
- Clearly identifies economic, environmental and social objectives and priorities.
- Second Phase of Arbed commences January 2012

2009 – The introduction of a Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales

The Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales is the new Urban Development Fund created by the Welsh Assembly Government specifically to encourage and promote sustainable development across Wales. The fund aims to stimulate significant investment in urban development and compliment the WAG’s investment in People and the Economy, delivering social, economic and financial returns. The Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales has been created within the framework of the JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) initiative, where European funding is used as seed capital to kick start regeneration projects. Importantly, financial support from the Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales is to be provided in the form of loans and investment capital (N.B. not grants), which will need to be repaid within an agreed timescale. The Fund is not able to provide support in the form of grants.
• Well funded – ‘In 2009 the Welsh Assembly was one of the first UK regions to qualify for JESSICA funding. This secured £25m of European investment to match the Welsh Assembly Government’s £30m injection of property assets to seed the Welsh Urban Development Fund.’ (RIFW website)

• Encourages partnership working.

• The fund is strategic and aims initially to target specified commercial areas.

• Timescale - Unlike a one-off grant, this fund can be re-cycled and re-invested, which means the money goes further and delivers better long-term results.

2009 – Establishment of the Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales.

Four key areas of activity were established for CREW in order to promote excellence in regeneration. These were as follows:

• Undertake training, education and up-skilling.
• Undertake rigorous research.
• Collect information and undertake its dissemination.
• Facilitate an exchange of experience and excellence.
Conclusions

The primary purpose of this work is to facilitate debate around the subject of regeneration in Wales. It is hoped that by providing this clear perspective of what has occurred in Wales, together with structured critique highlighting good and bad practice, that the resulting debate will lead to more effective regeneration policy development and delivery in the future. Clearly, there are many conclusions to be drawn out of this work, a large scope for debate and clear examples of what has been successful and what has failed in Wales. However, what has been presented, and the resulting debate, is not intended to create negative criticisms of regeneration policy or programme delivery in Wales. All too often in Wales, comments are presented in the form of negative criticisms as opposed to genuine constructive critique. This can lead to a climate in which failures are hidden and constructive comments met with hostility; resulting in missed opportunities to build upon aspects of policy and delivery that have been successful and improve upon aspects that may not have been successful. Future regeneration initiatives will benefit as much from avoiding the mistakes of the past, as they will from repeating the successes. This debate has the potential to greatly improve the policies and delivery of regeneration in Wales, providing that the focus remains on positively identifying a best practice formula for future regeneration. That said, the resulting conclusions from this work are likely to be generic, thus applicable within a wider British context, and possibly other sectors.

It is also important to stress that this review is of specifically targeted regeneration programmes and has not assessed the regenerative impact of wider ranging policies in health, housing and education. These inevitably influence the context in which regeneration takes place. The health and educational characteristics of the Welsh population have a critical impact on collective capacity to regenerate the most disadvantaged communities. Additionally, there is increased recognition that the ‘mainstream’ spend of local and central government creates major regeneration opportunities through ‘smart procurement’ which maximises local supply change development and associated targeted training and recruitment clauses which favour local residents in the delivery of key contracts in health, education and housing. This wider regeneration role of Welsh Government policy will be further explored in a second paper.

Below are the initial conclusions from the report. The list is not in order of priority and is by no means exhaustive. It is expected that more conclusions will be added as a result of the subsequent debate stimulated by this report. These conclusions are informed by the Parkinson criteria explained in the
introduction; however some important conclusions are not directly addressed by this criterion. This is because the Parkinson criterion provides an evaluation of individual initiatives whereas the conclusions herewith also encompass features of regeneration policy and delivery that appear to be prerequisites to a successful regeneration initiative. This presents an opportunity to build upon the Parkinson criteria in the forth-coming debate in order to create a truly robust set of core principles of ‘Best Practice’ regeneration policy and delivery in Wales.

Initial conclusions having regard to the Parkinson criteria and other ‘framework guidance’ identified above:

- Many of the spatially targeted locations in Wales have been the subject of repeated regeneration initiatives over the last 30 years. This suggests that the initiatives have either:
  - Been financially under resourced.
  - Have not been undertaken in accordance with the knowledge of previous regeneration ‘successes and failures’.
  - Have had to be repeated in the face of wider structural forces which are continuing to make ‘places and people’ worse off.
  - Been too short in duration.

- Political patronage/interest in regeneration is a key to successful and sustainable programmes. In this regard cross-party political support is particularly valuable.

- ‘Targeting’ should not be based on political prioritisation. Rather, a robust democratically endorsed strategy should be followed which identifies a series of objective criteria of need. However, having suggested this, it is accepted that ‘territorial crisis management’ may at times be a critical political and need imperative.

- Regeneration programmes may reflect the international and national cultural ‘flavour of the month’. Thus overlooking key priorities.

- Regeneration programmes are particularly vulnerable to competing public sector cash requirements. This often means that available and forecasted budgets are liable to change at short notice, potentially resulting in a dilution of current policy.

- There has been a myriad of individual regeneration initiatives, but these have frequently not been joined up. Certainly, there is a lack of appreciation of the importance of recognising the required integration of strategies, policies, programmes and projects via hierarchical/vertical
and horizontal connections (which incidentally the Wales Spatial Plan could have dealt with). In this regard, departmentalism, self interest, lack of a big picture/vision, lack of an understanding of what is best practice etc, are all reasons for this ‘paucity of connection’.

- Evaluation undertaken has been limited in focus. It has tended to concentrate on ‘product’ and not ‘process’. Hence, there has been a lack of consideration as to what has facilitated or obstructed the delivery of regeneration initiatives with regard to their management. In order to create a workable knowledge base which can inform future regeneration policies, it is imperative to ensure that evaluations are capturing the correct aspects of an initiatives experience.

- Programmes have in many cases been set up without having regard to available base line data, and in anticipation of regular monitoring and evaluation (which in many cases has not happened, thus denying the opportunity for one programme to effectively inform another via rigorous critique).

- ‘Re-packaging’ of regeneration programmes and projects frequently takes place but the re-design of new programmes is not necessarily informed by the experience of the delivery of previous programmes. In many cases this is because regeneration practitioners ‘leave’ and their accumulated experience is not ‘captured’. In this regard, a particular phenomenon should be noted, and this is that very experienced leaders of regeneration initiatives are frequently ‘moved on’ by their employers when political leadership or political control changes either at a local or central government level. As is clear from past experience the timescales for this can be fairly short.

It may also be suggested that it is politically fashionable to create new initiatives as a ‘political landmark’ often regardless of the previous policy’s successes. A possible remedy to this situation would be to undertake independent evaluations of all major initiatives, both during and after their lifespan. Having a centralised knowledge base would simplify the process of finding reliable information of what works, and what can be improved to ensure that future regeneration policy is an improvement on its predecessors. Also by having a robust and consistent evaluation system, it would be possible to effectively compare outputs and outcomes from different regeneration initiatives, thus further adding to the accumulated knowledge base of good regeneration practise in Wales.

- The principal delivery agents may have to shift around over time e.g. from central to local government, to local community groups etc and
vice versa.

- Wider structural forces (e.g. economic globalisation, the peripheral location of Wales within the EU etc) have at least impaired, and in some cases, negated the value of local regeneration initiatives.

- Best practice advice, has when available, helped to improve the regeneration programme and project delivery capacity in Wales.

- Some regeneration programmes have had to embrace a local partnership based approach but with resultant increased transaction costs. In some circumstances ‘top down’ single purpose vehicles with more autonomy may be a more effective regeneration vehicle.

- Practitioner skills issues have arrived late on the scene within the time line. These are critical components for the success and failure of programme design and delivery.

- With many regeneration initiatives there has been a lack of continuity and connection between ‘vision, strategy, policies, programmes and projects’ (i.e. a failure to follow the previous Labour Government’s VSOP approach).

- On many occasions regeneration programmes have been instigated with a ‘watered down’ approach to following best practice in design and delivery. In some cases this has been due to knowledge of what is best practice having not been researched, but generally it has been due to the inadequacy of financial resources and the desire to ‘spread the jam too thinly’ across the whole of Wales based on a political expediency.

- As regeneration is so all encompassing with regard to ‘issues of attention’, programme management and public sector ‘directorates of responsibility’ need to be as wide as possible to facilitate an effective inter-organisational joined-up approach. E.g. amalgamating directorates responsible for community regeneration with directorates responsible for physical and economic regeneration.

**Wales in Context**

This paper has suggested some criticism of the regeneration initiatives undertaken in Wales over the last 25 years. However, regeneration in Wales via central and local government working in partnership with key public, private and third sector stakeholders has for many years been at the ‘cutting edge’ of regeneration and economic development delivery practice within the
UK, and indeed within Europe. For example the long tradition of ‘good practice’ which was established by the WDA (and also its Scottish counterparts), and the tangible outputs and outcomes it has achieved from 1976 onwards, was influential in the then Labour Government’s decision in 1997 to create RDA’s in England (NB but with these to now close in 2012 via a conservative party election manifesto pledge). A multitude of the RDA’s programmes and initiatives were ‘borrowed’ and directly adapted for use in England based on what ‘had worked and what hadn’t worked’ in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Similarly, Communities First has been regarded in the rest of the UK as an exemplar of community involvement in regeneration. In this sense England owes a debt to Wales and the other Celtic countries with regard to the development of good practice from which it has benefited.

Wales could always have been even more effective in the delivery of regeneration and economic development initiatives, but in its defence, wider structural forces such as its peripheral economic and geographical location within Europe and its history of de-industrialisation and associated environmental degradation have always meant that regeneration was going to be an expensive ‘uphill task’. Equally, in England it could be argued that in many locations, there is less market failure and environmental degradation, hence regeneration is a far less challenging task with potentially less financial resources being required on a project by project basis.

Any criticism that has been expressed regarding Wales’s history of the delivery of regeneration initiatives could just as easily have been made in respect of English regeneration initiatives, and maybe more stridently. There has been even more of a ‘patch work quilt’ approach to regeneration in England than in Wales. In particular, the overall coordination of initiatives has been poor and the multiplicity of policy programmes which have some reference to urban and regional policy have been particularly confusing. In addition within England there has been a particular propensity to ‘chop and change’ with regard to the perceived appropriateness of the URC and UDC delivery models to undertake regeneration in discrete urban locations.

However, in one aspect of delivery, England stole a march on Wales when in response to recommendations contained in the Rogers/DETR Urban Renaissance Report of 1999 suggesting the importance of developing enhanced regeneration practitioner skills and also subsequently in the Egan Report of 2004, the English RDA’s set up a network of centres of excellence to facilitate this development. In Wales the development of regeneration practitioner skills was promoted by the RSCW from 2007 onwards, but its importance was not recognised via a WAG policy endorsement until the creation of CREW in 2009.
A key challenge for Wales is to once again perform at the ‘cutting-edge’ of innovative economic development and regeneration practice within Europe. To achieve this, lessons need to be learnt from the past delivery of programmes and projects, but of equal importance is the need to develop new innovative approaches to securing ‘wealth creation’ in the widest sense and to learn to adapt more quickly to changing economic, physical, social and political conditions. To achieve this will require innovation, and ‘managed risk’ to be undertaken in the development of policy and in delivery.

Regeneration programmes will be required which will effectively integrate the differing economic, environmental, and social needs and opportunities which exist in certain discrete locations, both to achieve new prosperity and to manage decline. To achieve this will certainly require new governance arrangements. And in addition there is a need for a new generation of regeneration practitioners with appropriate skills, qualities, knowledge, and experience, in order to secure the tangible new cutting-edge approach to regeneration and economic development which is urgently required.

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Appendix 1 – Quantitative Outputs of Regeneration – The Valleys programme

**The Valleys. A Programme for the People.1988-1993.**

**Expenditure profile:**

Urban Programme - £92M.
Urban Development Programme - £25M
Roads Expenditure-Transport Grant allocation to LA’s - £81M
Roads Expenditure-Trunk Roads - £12M
Welsh Office Support for Industry (RDG) - £35M
Welsh Office Support for Industry (RSA) - £55M
Welsh Office Support for Industry (REG) - £1M
WDA Factory Building - £95M
WDA Business Development - £4M
WDA Investment - £7M
WDA Urban Development - £19M.
WDA Derelict Land Clearance - £77M
WDA Environmental Improvements - £5M
Employment Department programmes - £243M
**Total-£751M**

**Quantitative Outputs:**

(N.B. the Welsh Office/Victor Hausner and Associates’ formal evaluation indicated that there were a considerable number of gaps, inconsistencies and anomalies in the output information. Hence in view of the unreliability of the information, the following nominated outputs are examples only and not an exhaustive list).

- An additional private sector investment of £700M.
- 2.6M sq ft of new industrial floorspace created.
- Over 2000 acres of derelict land cleared by the WDA.
- The creation/safeguarding of 24,000 jobs.
- The refurbishment of seven arts centres.
- The promotion of the Valleys Live 92 Festival.
- The encouragement of five community revival strategies.
- The undertaking of the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival.

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• Plus further outputs derived from additional investment in health care, social services, housing, training, enterprise and urban renewal.

Appendix 2 – Quantitative Outputs of Regeneration – Barry

**Regeneration of the greater Barry area 1995-2005.**

**Principal sources of expenditure and amounts.**

• WDA-£27M (principally land reclamation and urban/area development net expenditure after claw back from land sale proceeds).
• Vale of Glamorgan Council-£1 3.5M.
• Welsh Office and WAG SDS/LRF/PRF-£5.2M.
• Lottery-£1.3M.
• **Total-circa £47M.**

However it should be noted that subsequent to 2005, WAG received a large capital receipt from its inherited share of the WDA/Associated Ports Joint Venture agreement following the disposal of the remaining No 1 Dock lands to a private sector consortium of housing developers. This share put the financial input from central government in to the overall regeneration project back in to a credit position.

**Quantitative outputs.**

• Private sector investment - £99M.
• Permanent jobs - 538.
• Short term construction jobs - 1302.
• Roads constructed - circa 5.5miles.
• Training and education places created - 280.
• Land reclaimed - 320 acres.
• Land environmentally improved and landscaped etc - 276 acres.
• Buildings constructed and improved – 8.6 M sq ft.
• Community/voluntary sector input of £3M psi equivalent (based on voluntary hours worked) from one project i.e. the Barry Steam Railway.

N.B. further anticipated private sector investment in Barry over the next 10 years in regeneration projects is likely to significantly improve the leverage of
private sector investment from the public sector investment already made/to be made over the next 2/3 years. Hence, it is anticipated that the financial leverage ratio which will be ultimately achieved will be well beyond the central government minimum leverage requirement of 1:4 set by the WDA in 1995.

Appendix 3 – Quantitative Outputs of Regeneration – Newport Unlimited

The Work of Newport Unlimited, 2003-2011

Capital Expenditure to date: 2002/3 – 2010/11

- WDA-£5.341m
- WAG-£28.58m
- NCC-£38.003m

Total – £72m

Revenue (operating costs):

£6.737M (i.e. expenditure of £800K/£900K per year and split approx 1/3rd NCC and 2/3rd WAG. But with an annual budget allocation of £999K per year)

The above regeneration expenditure figures are not entirely comprehensive. For example, WAG Transport Grant provided in respect of the city centre boulevarding scheme and the new central railway station is not included. Neither is any WAG expenditure associated with the Government relocations at West Newport.

Outputs to date:

- Private sector investment – 2010/11 estimate of £218m
- Delivered 149 residential units with 1210 more under construction.
- To date has delivered 441 student bedrooms of a proposed 941.
- Has under construction 161,000sq.ft of retail space, of a proposed 794,000sq.ft.
- Has delivered 583,000sq.ft of office space, of a proposed 2,217,000sq.ft.
- 188,000sq.ft of purpose built health and education floor space under construction.
- Has delivered 75,000sq.ft of floor space for industrial, manufacturing and research and development purposes.
- Has created 3,347 gross full-time jobs (1,535 net full time jobs).
- Has created 191 gross construction jobs (87 net construction jobs).
- Has made a gross contribution to the local economy of £218,000,000 and an adjusted net contribution of £98,000,000.
- Has made a net contribution of £124,000,000 to the regional economy.
In an independent assessment by AECOM (2009), it was concluded that Newport unlimited has performed relatively well compared to English Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs). After considering the volume of pre-development work such as site preparation and remediation, the scale of Newport’s outputs is relatively high. Broadly speaking the top performing URCs fall into two broad groups; the high achievers - Liverpool Vision, New East Manchester and Clyde Waterfront. These URCs have had considerably higher funding than the rest and have been in business since 1999/2000. The rest have all delivered significant volumes of new floor space and mixed performance against the other criteria. Taking the output targets as a whole Newport comes in 6th out of the top 15 URCs, despite being a younger initiative and having received significantly less funding than the other top URCs. The data indicated in terms of outputs etc was current/projected at that time.