This section summarises the full body of evidence provided in the four Review Papers presented to Welsh Government by CREW.
Section 1

Evidence presented

This document contributes to the Welsh Government Review of Regeneration by drawing conclusions from an analysis of regeneration practice in the UK and by considering international examples of good practice in different approaches to regeneration. The evidence is presented in a series of related papers available to download from the CREW website and the Regeneration Review website of the Welsh Government. The detailed analysis presented in the series of papers provides an understanding of:

Paper One: The History of UK Regeneration Policy
Paper Two: Meanwhile Uses
Paper Three: Enterprise Facilitation
Paper Four: High Streets and Town Centres

Paper One: Considers three identified periods of regeneration policy in the UK and tracks the evolution of urban and regeneration policy. The periods considered are

The pre-1968 period
1968 - 1997
1997-present

It also examines the roles of Special Purpose Vehicles employed during these periods.

Pre 1968:
The period before 1968 is effectively characterised by the regional assistance approach which attempted to redress economic under-development and uneven development in the British economy. Responding to spatial difference in economic performance, the policy provided regional assistance largely through the vehicle of the Regional Selective Assistance Programme established in 1932. This approach continued until the early 1980s and remained characteristic of the central approach of the Welsh Development Agency. Continuity with this approach continues in current policies including Economic Renewal: a new direction (WG, 2010) and the newly published Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan (WG, 2012). However, rather than direct assistance to specific companies which would have been the primary methodology in the past, the emphasis has shifted to establishing strongly favourable conditions for specific sectors of the economy to flourish by investing in skills and infrastructure. The importance of a strong economic back-
Conclusion 1: A background of a strong and diversified economy is a pre-requisite for regeneration and provides the employment which underpins a viable and sustainable society. Sectoral support mechanisms and infrastructural investment must provide the required economic environment for more localised regeneration programmes.

1968-1997:
From the mid-1960s a growing awareness of the partial failure of the welfare state to eradicate social problems led to the emergence of what we would now recognise as the first examples of urban policy. Fuelled by a concern for public order in the inner cities of the UK the first intervention The Urban Aid programme established the principle of spatial targeting of interventions and the now generalised practice of directing additional resources to areas of need.

Conclusion 2: The Urban Aid programme effectively established a continuing consensus that regeneration requires specific budgets focused on deprived communities to alleviate market failure and a cycle of deprivation.

Urban Aid was followed by the Community Development Programme which established 12 area-based projects throughout the UK. Largely criticised for an inadequate funding level and riven by differences of opinion about the causes of poverty the eventual collapse of this programme discredited community-based approaches for nearly two decades.

Conclusion 3: Regeneration policy must be clear and unambiguous in its aims and objectives to avoid dissonance between outcomes required by government and those developed by delivery agencies.

Continued concerns led to the publication of the 1997 White Paper: Policy for the Inner Cities and the subsequent 1978 Inner Urban Area Act which identified key approaches which we would now recognise as standard approaches to regeneration. These included:

- Partnership working between public, private and third sectors
- Spatial targeting of interventions in the poorest localities
- Integrated approaches in health, housing, education and employment
However, following the election of a Conservative government in 1979 there was no opportunity to deliver on these objectives and urban policy was radically transformed by the new government’s commitment to market-based strategies for the inner city. Rather than poverty-alleviation the new emphasis was on wealth creation, informed by ‘trickle-down’ theory. Faith was placed in the ability of the private sector to provide employment and wealth creation. However, at the same time, economic restructuring also created high levels of unemployment in the post-industrial communities of the UK and the following decade saw an exponential increase in levels of poverty. Market-orientated policy manifested in numerous attempts to combat market failure in the UK’s poorest communities and initiatives included:

- Urban development Corporations
- Enterprise zones. (EZ’s)
- Estate Action
- City Grant
- Garden Festivals
- Housing Action Trusts
- Urban Aid continued programme

Growing criticism of the jumble of policies and their increasingly recognised failure led by the late 1980s to challenges to the market-led approach and emerging practice in more successful areas demonstrated a more pragmatic approach was required, which was not solely informed by political ideology of the free-market.

**Conclusion 4:** Regeneration policy cannot be driven by ideological beliefs and political values but must be based on sound evidence of what works. Policies should be evidenced-based and continually informed by active review and evaluation.

In particular there was a growing recognition that local authorities and communities had a role in regeneration and the new City Challenge policy in 1991 saw the introduction of a programme based on competitive bidding for resources but which also recognised the need for partnership that was more inclusive of local governance and communities.

**Conclusion 5:** That comprehensive partnership, involving public, private and third sector organisations, is required for effective delivery.

and

**Conclusion 6:** That engagement with and involvement of local stakeholders and community organisations brings a dividend in maximising local impact.
This approach was consolidated in the Single Regeneration Budget programme (1994) which stressed the value of:

- Effective delivery partnership
- Private Sector Engagement
- A visible role for the voluntary sector which improved as the programme progressed.
- The application of more permeable boundaries
- The flexibility of approach

The experience of SRB reinforces Conclusions 5&6 and also suggests:

**Conclusion 7: That the avoidance of tightly prescribed spatial boundaries can improve programme outcomes**

This complex evolution of policy in this period led to a well-defined urban renewal and regeneration framework of core methods and approaches which continued to influence policy development following the election of a Labour government in 1997.

1997-present

With the 1997 Labour election it was clear from manifesto commitments that tackling poverty would be a major component of the new government’s programme. Signalled immediately by the creation of the Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet office and the commissioning of a wide-ranging series of Policy Action Team Reports eradicating poverty and social exclusion became a cross-cutting government programme. Consequently, regeneration developed a clear focus on promoting social inclusion in the poorest communities in the UK and developed a holistic approach in recognition of the multi-dimensional patterns of disadvantage experience by poor families and communities.

At the same time the devolution process was assigning these responsibilities to newly elected regional governments in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Here whilst similar conclusions had been formed and a consensus around the use of Area Based Initiatives (ABI) had been established there developed a degree of policy deviation in the actual mechanisms of delivery and the specific approaches being taken.

**Northern Ireland:** has developed a programme based on its original Target Social Need Policy and redeveloped from 1997 as New targeting Social need (NewTSN). Rather than a separate funding stream the programme attempted to develop regeneration through the activities of all government departments but subsequent reviews have identified little additional activity promoted by this approach beyond the expected actions of each department. The policy process has also suffered from disruption of delivery by periodic suspension of the assembly and return of responsibility to the Irish Office.
Conclusion 8: The attempts to develop a cross-cutting, inter-departmental delivery of NewTSN has much to commend it as a strategy to break down policy silos. Regrettably, there is a clear conclusion that it has failed in practice and that Departmental programmes have simply assigned already active programmes to the New TSN framework. Little additionality has been achieved and programme bending and mainstreaming has largely failed.

Conclusion 9: Fragmentation of delivery can be significantly damaging to the regeneration agenda. Fragmentation can occur from:
- rapidly changing policy and programmes
- by disrupted bureaucratic and administrative structures
- by developing complex and multi-stranded policies which do not connect
- by maintaining professional divisions and failing to develop cross-sectoral skills

Scotland: Analysis of regeneration policy in Scotland commences with the document Social Justice: a Scotland where everyone matters (Scottish Executive 1999). The policy platform this established combined an approach based on addressing ‘people’ issues such as poor educational performance and life-stages based poverty, along with ‘place’ based approaches to community renewal. A significant connection with housing renewal was made possible by the co-location within Scottish Government of regeneration and housing policy. Since that time Scottish policy has been characterised by constant change and a gradual erosion of community participation. Replacement of the Community Regeneration Fund by the farer Scotland Fund has been followed by the non-hypothecated allocation of regeneration budgets to the Scottish local authorities. Analysis of policy in Scotland suggests the following conclusions:

Conclusion 10: the early emphasis in Scotland on both 'people' and 'place' based initiatives acting in combination is worthwhile noting and emulating in future policy in Wales. Ensuring physical, urban and housing-led regeneration fully meshes with the wider Welsh Government anti-poverty programme is essential.

Conclusion 11. The common location of the housing and regeneration policy responsibility within, initially Communities Scotland, has ensured strong outcomes for improvement of housing quality in some of the most deprived housing communities.

Conclusion 12. A long-standing history of effective partnerships has ensured that the transition through different pol-
icy developments has ensured continuity of delivery and the bringing forward of learning from past programmes. However, this is felt to be put at risk by locating regeneration budgets within the Local Authority funding regime without the protection of hypothecation. It is not clear that all local authorities have the skills to deliver effective regeneration.

Conclusion 13. A clear monitoring and evaluation policy should be established as a critical element of the design of regeneration programmes. It should include on-going monitoring which informs fine-tuning of programmes during their delivery as well as end of programmes evaluations which are vital to inform future policy design and delivery.

England: From 1997-2009 England experienced the most well-funded and most comprehensively evaluated programme of regeneration experienced in the UK. Alongside the New Deal variants targeting return to work for a wide range of individual circumstance, the labour Government also recognised the need for social and physical interventions in neighbourhoods that had become almost entirely disconnected from the labour market. Within the overall programme of Neighbourhood Renewal the New deal for Communities strategy targeted £2 billion over ten years at the 88 most deprived local authorities. NDC identified initially 17 Pathfinder programmes which were supplemented by a further 22 NDC schemes in 1999. A further £800 million was delivered by the Community renewal Fund, £45 million from the Neighbourhood Management Programme, £35 million from the Community Empowerment Fund and £50 million from the Community Chest programme. There were additional schemes to fund community wardens and local business development.

Key aspects of the programme included strong patterns of community engagement and local governance through the special vehicle of the New Deal partnerships. This local autonomy coupled with effective levels of funding have ensured generally positive evaluations of the programme both at local partnership and national level. The following conclusions are indicated by the experience of regeneration in England during this period:

Conclusion 14. To be effective, regeneration policy must be a key ministerial responsibility and enjoy whole government support alongside clear reporting structures to the office of the First Minister and Cabinet

Conclusion 15. Whilst every effort must be made to maximise the impact of any expenditure, the Welsh Government should take every opportunity to increase budgets available for regeneration. It can achieve this by exploring and
developing innovative approaches to funding, partnership and social procurement.

Conclusion 16. To assist in realising maximum regeneration funding levels Welsh Government should recognise the regeneration potential of all its revenue and capital expenditure to fully develop supply chain and employment opportunities throughout all departments. Adoption of the housing related Can Do Toolkit developed by i2i can assist in this objective.

Conclusion 17. Creation of a specialist delivery body can facilitate partnership, broker relationships and release energy for innovation and action. Distance from government and local government can facilitate decision-making and delivery.

This analysis of policy in the devolved regions has identified a number of implications for the review of regeneration in Wales. One key issue which informs future policy development must be the consideration of the role of Special Purpose Vehicles which has been a key element of all the policies analysed in this review.

Special Purpose Vehicles

Urban Development Corporations: were established within the context of the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and their attachment to private sector solutions to regeneration. Their role was to promote physical regeneration and wealth creation by land use strategies, promotion of industrial and commercial activity and developing housing and social facilities. Performance was measured by ‘hard’ indicators including jobs created, roads built, hectares of reclaimed land, levels of private sector investment and floor areas created in industrial and commercial premises. In practice little expenditure was directed at any social dimensions of regeneration. Particular concern was expressed at the time over their supplanting of local democracy and failure to engage with local communities.

Conclusion 18

Special delivery vehicles similar to UDCs have a potential role to play by providing independence of action and promoting public and private sector partnerships. However, they should be based on clear democratic principles and link either to existing democratic structures or provide alternative routes to community engagement similar to those developed in City Challenge, SRB and exemplified in NDC.

Urban Regeneration Companies: These criticisms informed the development of URCs by the Labour Government from
2000 as an attempt to retain the advantages of arms length delivery of regeneration. Key characteristics are their role as independent companies, their role in coordinating and delivering regeneration, their master-planning role, their leverage of private sector funding. Focusing almost exclusively on physical regeneration in order to attract investment to defined areas. Identified weaknesses have included their lack of planning and land compensation powers, limited levels of funding and lack of overall autonomy.

Conclusion 19
The use of arms length development vehicles such as UDC’s and URC’s can have benefit for the regeneration process by distancing decision making from government and promoting less risk aversion, faster development times and easier relationships with private sector investors. However, any vehicles developed for these purposes must attend to appropriate levels of democratic accountability and representation of the full range of stakeholders in the regeneration process.

Business Improvement Districts: International and wider UK experience points to the value of this approach which brings the local authority together with the business and commercial community. The latter, following a ballot of at least 505 of local traders, agree to pay an additional rate levy which they are able to determine how it is spent to improve the business and trading district. Typically associated with larger towns these nevertheless have recognised potential for smaller town centres. Advocates stress the value of achieving a business community which can inform local authority priorities and develop its own social capital. Wales currently has only one operational BIDS at Swansea which with over 800 members is one of the largest in the UK. Based on success to date the Swansea BID achieved a 63% majority vote for extending the BID by a further 5 years.

Conclusion 20
The international evidence as well as local experience in Swansea points to the value of promoting BIDS in Wales and this should form a clear element of any revised regeneration programme.

Enterprise Zones: Enterprise Zones are identified locations where specific incentives are offered to attract new industrial and commercial activity. Essentially similar to the regional assistance approach EZ is an attempt to weight the distribution of economic activity towards areas of poor economic performance. Incentives can include: access to finance, rates concessions, diverse support packages, International trade advice, help with finding a location, workforce and skills development plus links with industry networks. Academic opinion is divided
about their success. Earlier approaches in the 1980s raised concern about displacement effects as industries were encouraged to move often from existing areas of poor economic performance. More recent approaches developed by Welsh Government have adopted a more strategic approach and link to the promotion of key industrial sectors. Although it is too early to judge the overall effectiveness of these policies this time around, the Welsh Enterprise Zones have received strong cross-party political support and strong support in the media and public opinion. There have also been some early success and job creation in Deeside and St Athan.

Conclusion 21
The current Welsh Enterprise Zones support in general the objectives of regeneration and all opportunities should be taken to engage the regeneration policy with the opportunities that may be represented by Enterprise Zones. However, this should be subject to review to ensure that Enterprise Zones do live-up to the early promise at this stage and do not suffer similar issues of displacement to those experienced in previous applications of this approach.

Part Two: Wider UK and International experience
To supplement the review of UK policy a series of case studies have been conducted by CREW and commissioned from appropriate experts. These consist of:

- A review of meanwhile Uses programme Bristol and New South Wales Australia
- A review of Sirolli Enterprise facilitation (Blaenau Gwent and Sydney)
- A series of 8 international urban regeneration projects
- This case study material suggests a number of key conclusions that can help inform the review of regeneration.

Meanwhile Uses: Paper Two presents the case studies of ‘meanwhile uses in the UK and Australia. Evidence from the case studies suggests a strong and clear potential for the contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of town centres in Wales by developing a programme of meanwhile uses. However, it should also be noted that the success of the approach leads to more permanent uses of empty premises which can become part of the local economy and provide real employment and commercial and retail activity. Although identified as meanwhile or pop-up programmes the implications for longer-term solutions are also clear.

Conclusion 22
Welsh Government should develop and fund a central programme of support for meanwhile uses that recognizes the potential to revitalise the high street and promote business start-ups.
Conclusion 23
The potential will be most easily achieved through effective partnership between local authorities, Welsh Government and appropriate agencies such as the Arts Council in Wales.

Conclusion 24
Initial work should replicate the legal and planning guidance developed in New South Wales to provide reassurance to landlords and potential tenants of their legal positions.

Enterprise Facilitation: The evidence provided from both the Blaenau Gwent experience and the Auburn, Sydney experience points to the potential to create new businesses in even the most disadvantaged communities. The wider international evidence for the success of the Siroli approach is clear and this experience suggests significant potential for achieving similar benefits in a greater number of communities in Wales.

Conclusion 25
Enterprise Facilitation initiatives in Wales should be actively supported and funded in future regeneration policy.

Conclusion 26
Linking Enterprise Facilitation to a meanwhile uses strategy could significantly improve the outcomes from both approaches.

The Commissioned Town Centre Case Studies:
Paper 4 presents the evidence drawn from our case studies of high street and town centre interventions. As well as the case studies completed by CREW and presented above we have also commissioned a series of case studies from international experts on various aspects of regeneration. These include a series of 8 case studies on internationally recognised best practice. Variously these reflect some of our earlier conclusions and reinforce some of the implications of practice in the UK and beyond that we have identified earlier. In particular evidence from the case studies supports the case for:

- collaboration and partnership (Conclusion 5&6)
- creation of specialist delivery vehicles (Conclusion 17&19)
- The potential role of BIDS (Conclusion 20)
- The value of meanwhile uses for empty high street premises (Conclusion 22,23,24)
Furthermore, the case studies present compelling evidence for

- Retention of area-based approaches
- A clear role for the arts and creative industries
- Diversification of the high street
- The value of releasing the regenerative capacity of public sector land-holdings through LABVs
- The utilisation of sense of place and historical character to ensure that regeneration works with the ‘existing grain’ of a place
- Residential densification of town and city centres.

**Conclusion 27:** These strategies have been deployed with considerable success internationally and in the UK and whilst no single method can present a fool-proof prescription which will work in all instances, the learning that can be derived from constantly reviewing and understanding best-practice cannot be over-estimated.
A range of recent reports have suggested a very fluid policy context in which regeneration takes place. This section considers the key implications of current policy development.
In the economic and political climate developing during the financial crisis there has been considerable emphasis on establishing more effective patterns of government expenditure and ensuring high impact delivery of policy and outcomes. This has focused attention on more strategic issues and a number of reports issued in recent weeks have implications for the review of regeneration. The key reports are:

- The Wales Infrastructural Investment Plan (WIIP)
- The Local Growth Zones report
- The City Region Report

**WIIP**

The WIIP sets out the Welsh Government key infrastructural investment priorities identifying:

- Social Infrastructure: Housing, Regeneration, Education and Health

These prioritised investment areas link significantly with the regeneration agenda in Wales and the Review of Regeneration can ensure that there is support for the ‘cross-cutting’ collaboration with the stakeholders identified which include local government, the wider public services, the private sector and the UK government.

**Conclusion 28:** The Welsh Government Review of Regeneration should explore how the subsequent regeneration policy can support the infrastructural objectives of the WIIP.

**Local Growth Zones (LGZ)**

The recent Task and Finish Group publication examines the applicability of the concept of Local Growth Zones in the County of Powys. The LGZ approach brings some of the infrastructural investment approaches of the WIIP together with some of the methods employed in Enterprise Zones to encourage business development. The report proposes a multi-stranded framework that identifies communications, transport connectivity, property renewal, planning facilitation, training and innovative funding as...
pre-requisites for regeneration in Powys. Significantly, the report identifies ‘niche’ roles for the key towns to ensure a more strategic economic development of the sub-region.

**Conclusion 29: The LGZ report for Powys points to approaches to regeneration and economic renewal that could have wider applicability in Wales especially in rural sub-regions. The Review of Regeneration provides an opportunity to further test the value of the identified approach.**

**The City Region Report**

The City Region Report confirms the international evidence for the advantages of City Regions and recommends the formation of two city regions centred on Cardiff and Swansea. The report identifies key drivers of improved strategic planning, improved connectivity and better investment. These all have major resonance with the regeneration agenda and any future regeneration policy should be set within the context of the city regions if they are implemented in the manner recommended by the report.

**Recommendation 30: The Review consultation should include a consideration of the implications of the city region for delivering regeneration in the designated city region areas.**

In addition to these key reports it is also important that the Regeneration Review fully engages with current consultations and forthcoming legislation in the Sustainability Bill, the Housing White Paper, the Planning White Paper, and the Active Travel Bill.

**Spatial Planning**

The discussion of the three reports has highlighted an emerging concern with a need to facilitate a spatial planning and investment framework for regeneration and economic growth. This is also a theme consistently returned to by the National Regeneration Panel, which holds a consensus view that Wales requires a ‘tiered’ spatial framework and integrated hierarchy of development to promote joined-up national, regional, sub-regional and local regeneration objectives. A spatial framework would permit the identification of higher level, national regeneration objectives whilst enabling a degree of autonomy for how they are delivered at the local level. It would also prevent competition between towns and regions by developing distinctive patterns of development based on local resources and assets. This suggests a need to revisit and revitalise but more importantly implement a Wales Spatial Plan, which might be better termed a Spatial Planning and Investment Framework.
Recommendation 31: Effective regeneration requires an integrated hierarchical or ‘tiered’ spatial approach that links national, regional, sub-regional and local objectives within a unified planning and investment framework. Revisiting and revitalising the Wales Spatial Plan could achieve this.

Core Regeneration Sectors

Over the last twenty years a number of sectors have emerged as key drivers for regeneration. During the last decade property-led regeneration characterised many urban renewal projects, with large-scale apartment developments providing the financial resources for regeneration areas especially those associated with dockland and waterside locations. Town centres have been more associated with retail-led development with major projects such as the Cardiff St David’s Centre driving the regeneration of the wider area. However, there is now a consensus that both these models cannot function in the current economic climate or indeed are not likely to be viable again in the longer-term. Consequently, attention is focusing on other potential drivers for regeneration.

Housing-Led Regeneration

RSLs in Wales have long been associated with community development activities initially within the context of the Housing Plus agenda. Providing services and support beyond the basic housing function has ensured that regeneration has been a feature of the housing scene in Wales. This has been given considerable impetus by the Stock Transfer process where the ‘offer letter’ to tenants has included clear regeneration promises to improve education, health and employment of residents. LSVTs in Wales are providing exemplar regeneration projects, identified in the Welsh Government Social Research Report (Report No: 20/2012). This focus is in addition to the regenerative effects of the general housing spend (WERU) and specialised investment programmes such as ARBED. The housing sector has also led the way in developing social models of procurement with high levels of community benefit (i2i). More recently, the borrowing capacity of RSLs has been identified as providing a route to a wider and more extensive social role for housing providers. This bears the potential for Housing Associations to work with local and central government to provide facilities for education, health and the wider social infrastructure.

Recommendation 32: The Regeneration Review should examine ways to maximise the potential for housing-led regeneration by developing further the relationship between Welsh Government and the Housing Sector.
Heritage-led regeneration

Attention has also focused recently on the potential of the rich heritage assets evident in Wales. Often driven by local community organisations, development of heritage assets for economic and physical renewal is an important route to town centre development. Understanding and promoting local heritage can provide the unique focus for a town centre renewal and establish the basis for a local and visitor based economy. Developed from effective sense of place studies and linking local assets this approach can provide the uniqueness and distinctive offer that has been so successfully exploited in towns such as Hay-on-Wye and more recently Talgarth. Such initiatives also often become the catalyst for much wider objectives of economic renewal and environmental sustainability.

Recommendation 33: The Regeneration Review should fully explore the potential in Wales for linking regeneration to heritage assets and facilitating local, community energies in their development.

Events-led regeneration

In recent years in Wales there has been a burgeoning of events in a wide range of locations. From music and literature to sport and food-based events there are many examples of attempts to energise local economies by attracting large numbers of visitors on special occasions in the hope that a longer-term visitor economy materialises. With the Hay Literature Festival and the Brecon Jazz Festival as notable examples these have become large-scale events in the national calendar. At the other end of the scale more localised events have a role to play, for example in Town Centre regeneration, and artisan food and farmers markets have become common place. Consequently, regeneration impacts can be identified with a range of events from the national scale to the local community scale. Maximising the economic and employment impact of events can be an important element of regeneration strategy.

Recommendation 34: The Regeneration Review should invite comment and opinion on the potential for events-led regeneration to contribute to local economic development and place marketing.
Based on the evidence assembled from the various components of our evidence for the Welsh Government Review of Regeneration we offer key suggestions for interventions which have a good evidence base of effectiveness.
The evidence presented in the different elements of this review has led to a number of conclusions that can inform the development of future regeneration policy in Wales. More specifically, they point to a number of essential potential interventions that the Regeneration Review Consultation document should provide as key points for consultation. Specifically we believe that the evidence presented here supports a range of interventions which could significantly contribute to the regeneration of Wales and which can do so even in the context of budgetary constraint.

The emphasis in this listing is on the regeneration of town centres. However, this is in the context of town centres as localised hubs of development for wider catchment areas. It is critical that the wider, integrated approach to regeneration developed in the Regeneration Areas, and particularly in the HOV, is not lost. Regeneration policy must also tackle the housing, skills and health agendas.

We have categorised and described the interventions as follows:

**Potential Interventions**

**Intervention 1:** A positive response to the impact of the economic recession on town centres and seaside towns in terms of vacant property and potential reuse.

- Each local authority sets up a fund (e.g. via Prudential borrowing) to purchase interests in vacant properties in town centres. These will be a combination of freehold and leasehold purchases (over variable timescales e.g. 5-10 years). Properties will then be offered to local and niche traders at peppercorn or subsidised rents, and coupled with performance level agreements designed to ensure guaranteed opening hours (and days), and to facilitate building improvement works. This could potentially be coupled with a new public sector town improvement grant system. In addition the properties will be ‘traded on’ over time to create a virtuous circle of purchases/disposals.

- Active encouragement of ‘meanwhile’ / potential permanent uses of empty premises on the basis of rent and rates free / subsidy. These can include retail spaces used by arts, community and creative industries groups but should also look to developing uses of empty office spaces as business incubators for emerging and start-up businesses on the same basis. This arrangement could be undertaken with public and private sector property owners.
Strategic land and property acquisition through LABVs; and by community lease and purchase with more effective public sector asset management in favour of supporting town centre and seaside town regeneration.

Application of the Powys model of bringing into use, long-term empty homes, to empty retail premises, through small loans for property owners to tackle repair and bring buildings into use. This arrangement could be on the basis of a low cost revolving fund programme that recycles loan repayments to ensure continuity of delivery.

**Intervention 2:** Establishing the basis for enhancing environmental quality and a unique sense of place in town centres and seaside towns:

- New characterisation/sense of place studies designed to specifically encourage community interest and investment, and ‘place loyalty’ in town centres. The studies would be prepared by the local business and social communities as part of a refreshment of existing town centre regeneration strategies or as part of the preparation of new strategies, in each case to be instigated by LAs.

- A new private sector Town Improvement Grant system to specifically operate in town centres to attract private investment by making up the investment shortfall in areas of market failure.

- Funding for feasibility studies of new or refreshed town centre regeneration strategies and improvement initiatives.

- Developing creative solutions to use green energy to deliver town centre regeneration.

- Infrastructural and place based improvement to the trading environment via a new public sector town improvement grant system.

**Intervention 3:** Housing specific actions that contribute towards improvements and increasing activity in town centre functions.

- Promotion of living accommodation in redundant retail premises in order to change the economic profile of the High Street and introduce residential populations. A variant of this approach could support ‘live/work’ units occupied by artistic, creative industries and crafts based businesses. Potential of Welsh Government assistance by making finance available through additional Housing Grant
to RSL’s who are prepared to prioritise town centre housing projects.

The specific provision of housing for the elderly in or adjacent to town centres, thereby improving accessibility of the elderly to a range of services provided within town centres.

**Intervention 4: Training and business support**

- Training support for local retailers through the National Centre and local Colleges of FE. Designed to promote higher quality retail offer, improved customer services and parallel internet trading.

- New business support programmes by WG (or via LA’s) for local retailers, including making public sector ‘purchasing power’ available to subsidise business purchasing.

- The provision of managerial support from WG by providing expert regeneration practitioners, and financial support from WG to provide town centre champions on three to five year contracts.

- Further implementation of Sirolli Institute programmes of Enterprise Facilitation.

**Intervention 5: Support for innovative organisational and sector based models.**

- The promotion of new BIDs in Wales which incorporate support from both occupiers and owners. International evidence for the success of BIDS suggests we need to actively promote and support the approach in Wales.

- Support for the development of social enterprises and co-operatives in terms of a wide range of businesses (retail, cultural / craft businesses and creative industries etc.). European best practice has shown that these business models work extremely effectively in the ‘independent’ sector (e.g. Emilia Romagna, Italy; and Rhone Alpe, France). In this context the encouragement of community uses of town centre premises can lead to the emergence of these types of business model. These models can also access new forms of investment support.

- Full application of social and community procurement practice to all government, local government and public authority expenditure in Wales to promote employment opportunities, skills acquisition and supply chain development.
This set of interventions is provided as a comprehensive listing of potential approaches that could work in Wales. The Welsh Government Review of Regeneration can be used as a mechanism for prioritising from this extensive listing to determine a set of realisable interventions which are aligned with the Programme for Government and current budgetary limits. In any transition to these interventions care should be taken to avoid immediate termination of existing Regeneration Area initiatives, and Welsh Government should facilitate a finalisation of existing commitments in a comprehensive and ordered manner by well ordered exit strategies. Additionally, opportunity should be taken for future policy to build on the best practice that has been established through these existing policy delivery mechanisms.

Additionally, the selected interventions should be complementary to, and have greater integration with, regeneration related policies and activities that are being taken forward by other Ministerial portfolio / WG departments, such as the Enterprise Zone programme; Local Growth Zone proposals, RIFW (Jessica Programme), the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan, Communities First etc.