

A Regeneration Strategy for Powys:
A new approach

Final Report May 2011

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Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

The County Council's Corporate Plan (known as the Powys Change Plan) gives high priority to regeneration by making it one of its four key policy priorities, and in recognising its strategic significance as a function to not only the Council but also to other service providers and agencies in the County. The Regeneration Strategy has been prepared to put regeneration at the forefront of the Council's functions across all departments. However, this report outlines how the Council intends to deliver its priorities in partnership with other agencies across the County.

The Council has recognised that the preparation of a County-wide Regeneration Strategy presents an opportunity to reconsider how services and programmes which have a marked impact on the quality of people's lives can all contribute to the Council's Strategic Change programme. The overriding need to save at least £16 million over the next four years means that the Strategy needs to look at how the Council facilitates and enables other groups and service providers to contribute to the regeneration process and indeed reduce the regulatory culture that can often impede innovation and protract project implementation.

Widening the scope of regeneration in Powys will also be reinforced by the emerging thinking of the Coalition Government in terms of the growing emphasis on Localism and the 'Big Society' and relying upon the empowerment of local initiative and building the capacity to drive change at a local, community-based level.

2.0 Aims and Vision

The Strategy provides a framework within which the County Council and its partners will ensure that regeneration is embedded into everyday practice, to deliver outcomes which will have a positive impact upon not just the physical, social, environmental, but the economic and cultural attributes of the county as well.

It is based around a vision that: **"Regeneration in Powys will nurture and promote the County's assets and strengths as the means to addressing its weaknesses, by establishing a robust and sustainable economy that is based upon vibrant communities, and which enhances and protects the physical, social and cultural environment of Powys."**

The thrust of the strategy will be as much about 'change management' and managing people's expectations as it will be about policy and budgets. It will demand a different mind-set and a different approach to governance across Powys.

3.0 Key Themes

The Strategy focuses on nine key themes which reflect the strategic needs of the County including:

- **Environment and Place**
- **Education and Skills**
- **The Economy**
- **Health and wellbeing and the Community**
- **Quality of service provision**

- **Renewable energy alongside Research and Development**
- **The significance of Local Culture and the Creative Industries**
- **Tourism**
- **The needs of young people**

4.0 Objectives and Priorities

The report advocates the need to focus and prioritise the regeneration effort across the County. For each priority a cost implication is provided to help the County Council focus its decision making process. The key Priorities include:

Harnessing Community Strengths: An overwhelming strength of Powys is the breadth and range of people involved in regeneration activity. An early emphasis must be to assemble a network of people and organisations from across Powys who are interested in shaping the future of the County; establishing a web presence (blog and forum) for the new network and providing an organisational base so that the organisations can pursue priorities effectively will be early deliverables.

Council Assets as a Regeneration Catalyst: The County Council is a significant owner of land and premises which could be used to promote regeneration. The strategy recommends that a more holistic approach to property rationalisation is adopted so that regeneration objectives are considered against short term financial benefits. Introducing a framework for measuring short term budget savings against long term costs and socio-economic vitality must be a key early consideration.

Regeneration led Procurement: Extracting the maximum regenerative impact from existing spending is going to be increasingly important to the County Council and its partners. Through their purchasing of goods and services they must use their substantial purchasing power to lever the maximum local economic development to occur. It is an essential way of irrigating the local economy and strengthening local supply chains. In the short term therefore, the Council must analyse its expenditure and the multiplier effects generated by it, to determine the impact of increasing the proportion of local procurement. Increasing local procurement by 10% over the next three years could release millions of pounds into the Powys economy.

Information Communication Technology as a catalyst to regeneration: Broadband connectivity is fast becoming the key enabler to economic, social and educational improvement in rural communities. Those communities that have managed to provide high speed broadband have witnessed a reversal in out migration of young people and business owners. Poor connectivity in Powys is therefore a barrier to economic prosperity. Increasing the speed of broadband in Powys will assist in the diversification of the rural economy; encourage small business formation; support the growth of existing businesses; and make home-working more realistic.

Harnessing Powys' natural assets: The value of the County's natural assets cannot be overstated. Green tourism, capturing renewable energy from wind and water, building on centres of expertise in alternative energy and developing supply chains and technology for low carbon energy are all areas around which Powys could build its Green Economy.

To take advantage of this opportunity Powys needs to break down certain barriers, such as creating more capacity in the electricity grid, tackling skills shortages, improving

broadband availability, as well as short circuiting the lengthy planning decision making process.

Other areas which are identified include providing 'ecosystem services': carbon storage; water regulation; renewable energy; recreation and biodiversity. Powys has the potential to become a leader on these issues and by working collaboratively with CCW and EAW it can help to integrate economic regeneration/ monetary well-being with ecosystem services. The other potential growth area identified in the strategy is Sustainable Tourism; a co-ordinated approach to engage accommodation owners, retail, food, farming, tourism and leisure businesses will be required, and it is essential that the planning and impact of new tourism and development links with low carbon and ecosystem services.

Powys County Council should therefore quickly engage partners to develop a long term Renewable Energy Support program to provide profile, business network, supply chain development, skills and business, innovation support, market stimulation. In so doing it must develop, with partners, a method of accounting for ecosystems services, the value they bring to the local economy and use this information in its the decision making process.

Promoting Powys: How Powys' qualities are sold to the wider world will have a positive impact. Communicating this involves promoting tourism, but also Powys' values, attributes and unique selling points.

Tourism provides 12% of the total employment opportunities and brings in £615m to the local economy. While this is impressive, the strategy suggests that Powys has the natural attributes to do much better. The Regeneration Strategy aims to increase the amount of money entering the local economy and the ability to use tourism as the basis to promote the County - capitalising on its scale and as an area of wilderness and solitude while building on its existing 'eco-tourism' assets.

This should be achieved by promoting tourist destinations as part of Mid-Wales and in conjunction with Visit Wales' preferred regional thematic offer. Within this, the development of tourism in Powys should be directed through the following several themes: sports and activities; wilderness, ecology and wildlife; events; market towns; food; business and product quality; transport; 'eco' tourism; culture, music, language and arts; history and heritage.

It is advised that a Powys Tourism expo could be set up to bring together experts in the field so that they can share best practice and network to promote the concept of tourist destinations in Mid Wales and develop the tourism brand. However, it is suggested that this does not mean that the County should not be celebrated. Indeed it is advocated that a positive image of the County is cultivated within the wider framework.

Supporting Powys' Economy: Securing a resilient economy for Powys must be a high priority. Stakeholder consultations identified several key economic factors such as: a low wage economy; declining economic prosperity; reduced entrepreneurial activity; lack of a university; poor broadband connection. Despite this, because the Powys economy is largely founded upon agriculture and a diverse community of micro-businesses it has been described as the second most resilient economy in Wales.

However, the dominance of the agriculture sector means that the county's economy may be susceptible to fluctuation in value caused by more frequent extreme weather events, locally and globally. Furthermore the lack of large urbanized settlements means that the Powys economy must be driven by: diversity, flexibility and renewable assets.

The County is eligible for EU Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) under the "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" programme, which is aimed at supporting the economy. However the amount of funding available in the "Competitiveness" programme is much smaller than the funding available under the "Convergence" programme which many neighbouring counties are eligible for. This puts Powys at a direct disadvantage as investors and beneficiaries are more likely to operate and be located just across the border. In this sense the strategy emphasises that the County Council will be required to 'nurture' what exists, rather than artificially grafting on new sectors.

The principle aspects of the Powys economy that should be targeted for support are highlighted as: renewable energy generation and green technology; agriculture; tourism; and manufacturing.

Early and easily achieved deliverables could include:

- Establish an SMEs development programme;
- Optimise opportunities for SME's through procurement;
- Encourage construction companies to engage and develop local supply chains through training and workshops;
- Facilitate the clustering of SMEs to bid collectively for large projects;
- Involve partners in the support of SMEs by preparing high quality and well drafted bids;
- Establish high quality local enterprise by nurturing the intelligence and resourcefulness of local people through a process of mentoring.

Empowering Council officers: The County Council will need to match the creativity and enthusiasm of its residents, businesses and community groups. During consultation, 'working differently' emerged as a very strong theme, especially amongst Council employees who demonstrated a considerable appetite for change. To enable change to happen at all levels, Council employees will need to be empowered to: have greater responsibility, make decisions, manage projects and work cross-departmentally.

The corporate proposals to move to the Cabinet decision making structure will help this, but it is also suggested that the County Council will need to adopt IT solutions which help mitigate against the size of the county, by permitting staff to work in 'virtual teams'.

Facilitating the renaissance and resilience of Powys' town and village centres: One of the most prominent assets of Powys is the distinctive quality of its town and village centres. It is important that these qualities are emphasised to sustain, maintain, enhance and improve them. It is equally essential that providing this resilience does not rely on the availability of funding, but rather an extended menu of measures, which provide a commercial approach to place management. Much of this will rely on forming strong relationships with the trading communities in Powys' town centres and the development of Whole Town Strategies for each town. The strategies will demonstrate what can be achieved when stakeholders work together. Typical outcomes include: promoting a certain niche for each town centre; the rejuvenation of a Chamber of Trade;

the development of locally based loyalty cards; retail innovation and improvement; the introduction of town centre websites; creation of a programme of regular events; and the promoting/resisting of new development.

It is suggested that a methodology be developed which allows Council officers and other partners to work with town centre stakeholders so that this process can begin. This should include action planning workshops on a *Whole Town Strategy* approach. It is also advised that an action plan be devised to reduce unnecessary clutter in towns, and that the LDP be used to protect the vitality and viability of town centres through appropriate promotion and protection of town centres for and from development.

Housing Improvement as a regeneration strategy: Housing has become a major driver of regeneration throughout Wales and it has the potential to perform a similarly catalytic role in Powys. The Local Housing Market Assessment highlighted the need for more affordable housing in Wales (38.3% of the population of Powys would not have sufficient income to raise a first time buyer mortgage). Specific requirements identified include the need for: increased accommodation for the ageing population; 35% affordable housing; 1 and 2 bedroom homes; incentives to bring 2000 empty homes back to use.

While it is currently anticipated that the County Council is able to meet WHQS, (and do not require to transfer to a community mutual to satisfy its obligations) there may be merit in the County Council considering if 'Stock Transfer' may have a greater regenerative impact. By linking major home improvement programmes back to the regeneration priorities the County Council could achieve substantial economic multiplier effects.

By promoting Housing Renewal Area designations, the development of key sites for housing development in the emerging LDP, and substantially reducing the risk associated with these opportunities by conducting detailed stakeholder engagement, the County Council can increase the opportunity for private sector development and those who want to build their own home. The Strategy therefore recommends that the County Council investigates ways in which it can provide or promote direct finance opportunities to assist the housing development industry.

The Council also needs to consider how ARBED could be used as a regeneration tool, along with other opportunities such as community funding.

Maximise the Regenerative Impacts of Education and Training Expenditure:

Education underpins the vitality of any local economy but it can also make a vital contribution to many other regeneration objectives. Ensuring that young people have access to the optimum level of education must be a priority. The County currently faces a number of education challenges such as: from the large number of small schools resulting in a high unit cost per pupil; to the contraction in HE institutions around the county (from ten to six). However, there are opportunities, notably through the Council's *School Modernisation Programme*, which offers the opportunity to create integrated community and skills 'hubs' across the county. In the same context, the County Council is currently evaluating a number of options in terms of pre and post-16 education.

The County Council recognises the need to prioritise projects where *Schools Modernisation Programme*, investment in ICT and creation of co-located facilities can

maximise the regenerative impact of its educational expenditure on communities across Powys. The Strategy suggests that the County Council and its partners should seek to develop HE opportunities alongside increasing allowances for apprenticeships and developing a separate action plan to determine how school leavers can be best equipped with the skills to contribute to the Green Economy.

5.0 Evaluation framework

The strategy is clear on how these objectives will be met and indeed on how progress will be measured. The Results Based Accountability approach is to be adopted for the strategy priorities and it is intended that all partner agencies will sign up to it and factor it into their business planning, so that it is considered at both strategic and service delivery levels. This approach has been applied by the Council in the development of the Single Delivery Plan and a further case study is provided detailing how the approach has been used by the Scottish Government at a national level since 2008. The message is clear - the system must be kept simple.

The delivery of the Strategy centres on a three year Action Plan (2011-2014), which summarises the actions and recommendations of the strategy. This effectively details the 'quick wins' and provides some targets for each of the priorities that are detailed in Chapter 5. The plan is designed to be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Significantly however, there are some priorities that are more significant than others due to their role in more than one regeneration objective. These include: ICT as a catalyst to regeneration; exploiting the green economy; supporting the Powys economy; and empowering council officers.

6.0 Conclusions

The Strategy concludes with the following points:

The County Council's Regeneration Strategy has been prepared to place regeneration at the forefront of all Council thinking and actions of the Council and its partners. To successfully lay the foundations from which a strong Powys will emerge a holistic approach to regeneration was required.

However, this does not mean that the strategy constitutes a collection of strategic statements that have little resonance to everyday life in Powys. Rather the Three Year Action Plan seeks to provide the Council with a model of action points and targets that can be used to begin implementing the vision, and the Results Based Accountability and Regeneration Checklist provide a simple framework for evaluating regeneration progress.

What it does mean is that a fundamental shift in the culture and outlook of the Council is required. Research revealed that an appetite for such change is already evident in Council employees and that progress was already being undertaken as a result of the emerging 'Cabinet' led system of decision making. However it advocated that a further process of change management will be required to sufficiently prepare the council for the challenges of implementing the Strategy.

This is justified as a response to the broad range and complexity of the recommended priorities, which often impact and contribute to the pursuit of more than one objective.

In particular it is envisioned that the Council in accordance with its partners will need to become the guardian and champion of regeneration, and act as an enabling and facilitating force, as opposed to simply a regulatory one.

Furthermore and in light of the need for economic development, the Council will need to consider its political priorities, and ensure that the long term social and economic merits of development are not dismissed purely on the short-term environmental impacts on the local neighbourhood. In this respect it is advised that the Council will be required to work collaboratively with the Brecon Beacons National Park, so that a balanced approach to development is evident throughout Powys.

However, the final thought is given to the fact that despite the need for a fresh Council led approach, the Council is in a positive position with a number of regeneration opportunities available. Through collaborative working it is suggested that the Council and its partners will be able to implement regeneration as a core ideal in thinking and action, and effectively pursue the vision to create a robust and sustainable Powys.

7.0 Recommendations

The report makes 17 key recommendations in relation to the delivery and implementation of the Regeneration Strategy for Powys. These involve Powys County Council and its partners in:

1. Adopting this Strategy and facilitating the delivery of regeneration initiatives throughout the County.
2. Nurturing the relationship with existing community and voluntary organisations so that the Strategy becomes a shared vision.
3. Refining the quick-win projects and assembling multi-disciplinary departmental project groups to accelerate each regeneration priority.
4. Propagating the Results Based system of Accountability and the Regeneration Checklist, so staff understand how progress can be undertaken and measured.
5. Reviewing the Council's approach to the disposal of assets.
6. Developing the Procurement process to foster robust local supply chains and provider local contractors with the opportunity to tender for work.
7. Lobbying for effective high speed broadband coverage.
8. Enabling micro-business and social enterprises to succeed. Particularly those involved in the fields of renewable energy generation; agriculture; tourism and manufacturing.

9. Increasing the amount of apprenticeships by working with the Welsh Assembly Government and local SME's.

10. Improving the ICT infrastructure within the Council, including suitable broadband speed so that staff can work more efficiently and flexibly.

11. Collaborating with the Wales Environment Hub, CCW and EAW to determine a set of pilot ecosystem services projects.

12. Working with local communities to develop lasting, community owned structures for change and the development of Whole Town Strategies.

13. Study and review the respective regeneration impacts of stock retention and transfer in consultation with tenants, elected members and other key stakeholders.

14. Conducting an appraisal of surplus owned Council land to determine opportunities for affordable housing development. Technical studies and in some cases public engagement events will be required.

15. Developing a methodology for self builders to efficiently build their own homes.

16. Ensuring that the 'Schools Modernisation Programme' exploits all potential economic and social spin-off benefits.

17. Generating a process of project refinement to determine that the right information exists to develop the project proposals but also to refine project costs.

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1. The Background to the Regeneration Strategy

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document outlines the regeneration strategy for Powys. The strategy is a framework within which the County Council, alongside its partners, will ensure that regeneration is embedded into everyday practice to deliver improved physical, social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes for the County.

'Regeneration' is now a key 'improvement priority' for PCC and this Regeneration Strategy is intended to outline how regeneration will be supported in Powys.

This **final draft report** creates a framework for regeneration activity in Powys, this document establishes a clear decision making structure which prioritises effort and focus. This framework, which is explained in this report, is as follows:



1.2 What is regeneration?

There is no single constituted definition of what 'regeneration' is. Instead it is a term that is able to evolve to suit the context in which it is being used. However, many of the available definitions relate to urban settings where there is a combined degradation of the environment, economy and society.

The word 'regeneration' comes from biology where:

“regeneration is the process of renewal, restoration, and growth that makes ... ecosystems resilient to natural fluctuations or events that cause disturbance or damage”¹

The link between *regeneration* and *resilience* is particularly relevant to Powys and our interpretation of what regeneration means for the County. The other point of relevance, as will become apparent through this document, is that regeneration in Powys is not only a palliative process, but also a preventative one to ensure that places, economies and communities are equipped to thrive in the future.

PCC defines regeneration as:

‘The upgrading of an area taking a balanced approach to improving the wellbeing of communities through social, physical and economic improvements.’

It is clear that regeneration in Powys is going to be about more than bricks and mortar and will need to move beyond traditional approaches based on the repair and renovation of physical infrastructure.

1.3 Why does Powys need a regeneration strategy?

Powys needs a regeneration strategy because promoting “renewal, restoration and growth” in the most sparsely populated County in England and Wales requires a different approach. The challenges which the County currently faces (demographic change, hidden deprivation etc) and the threats which loom in the near future (impact of climate change, peak oil etc) mean that responding to these issues need to be carefully orchestrated so that Powys can build on what it does best to mitigate the pressures which it is currently facing and those which may disrupt the status quo in the future.

1.4 The original brief from Powys County Council

The brief recognises the importance of ‘regeneration’ becoming a corporate priority which will be positively influenced by all parts of the Council, not just one team or department in isolation. In this sense, the brief stresses the existence of ‘interdependencies’ across Council that are essential to the delivery of regeneration initiatives, but are frequently difficult to formalise in the absence of an adopted strategy.

Beyond this, the brief makes clear the important contribution that organisations and associations outside the County Council can make towards meeting the Council’s

¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeneration_\(biology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeneration_(biology))

objectives. For such activities to be harnessed a regeneration strategy with broad ownership is required.

The initial response to this brief from the consultant team envisioned:

“One overarching strategy which coordinates all public sector service provision with the aim of making Powys more resilient to change and sustainable as a place and as a County Council.”

1.5 Regeneration in Powys – the Role of the Council

In 2009 Powys County Council recognised that it would have to radically review how it was to operate with its partners to deliver quality services for its citizens, businesses and visitors to the County as a result of the emerging budgetary and demographic challenges it was facing. The Powys Regeneration Strategy sets out to transform the economic landscape of the County in order to deliver greater benefits for these groups.

The Regeneration Strategy responds to this context and reflects the four *Improvement Priorities* and six *Efficiency Priorities* and the new project structure which the Council has been defined in order to achieve its core Vision ‘to deliver efficient services for the Green Heart of Wales’

In January 2010 Powys County Council adopted a new Strategic Response Model which placed Regeneration within the top four priorities for the Council alongside Adult Living; Learning in the Community; and Climate Change, and these are reflected in the County Council’s ‘Change Plan 2011/14’.²

<p>Improvement Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Living • Learning in the Community • Regeneration; and • Climate Change 	<p>Efficiency Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes • ICT • Workforce • Support Services • Assets • Regulation
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Regeneration will of course be delivered across a number of different service areas including: Schools Modernisation; Community Services, Housing, Community Safety, Procurement, Highways and regulatory services and will be affected by cross cutting themes such as Sustainability and the Climate Change agenda.

² Powys Change Plan: Stage 1: 2010-2014, Powys County Council, 2009

The significance of this change in outlook must not be underestimated, and the fact that *regeneration* has to become embedded in the philosophy of all the Council's service delivery areas will be vital to the successful delivery of the Strategy across the County.

It will be the role of the regeneration strategy to coordinate regeneration related activity in an overarching and 'holistic' manner that prioritises the County Council's policies and resources across its communities. In so doing it must also speak to and complement the outcomes of the Single Delivery Plan [SDP] which is being prepared by local statutory and non statutory partnerships in the County. This plan is intended to improve links and working arrangements for community planning by sharing a common framework of outcomes for public services in Powys and in so doing streamline decision making processes and build on existing good practice.

2. The factors which the Regeneration Strategy needs to address

2.1 Strategic Context

This section identifies some of the key information in relation to the regeneration of Powys that has emerged from the baseline research that supports this Regeneration Strategy.

Geography

Powys is an extensive, largely upland and extremely rural county covering over 5,000 square kilometres of the centre of Wales (approximately one quarter of the area of Wales).

Powys is a land-locked county at the centre of Wales. Its long boundary with England to the east adjoins Shropshire and Herefordshire and it borders 11 Welsh counties to the north, south and west. This suggests that the process of implementing this strategy will need to be undertaken in partnership with internal stakeholders, as well as those on Powys' borders.

The geographical features of the county present it with a number of unique assets, but also a range of challenges. The scale of the county and dispersed nature of the population presents challenges for the delivery of services in an equitable and efficient way. Budget cuts and rising transportation costs place an even greater strain on these services and is an issue that needs to be addressed within all areas of the County Council and encompassed by this Regeneration Strategy.

Powys' fine natural and historic features make it a popular destination for visitors who enjoy nature and outdoor activities. These natural attractions include the Brecon Beacons National Park, the rivers Severn, Wye and Usk, numerous national and other footpaths and trails, mountain ranges, reservoirs, waterfalls, Victorian towns, castles and other heritage features. This contributes significantly to the economy of Powys with an estimated £239.7 million in visitor spend in 2007. The value of these natural assets need to be carefully exploited to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

A hierarchy of settlements within the county is influenced by the aspirations of the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) and policy guiding development in Powys in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). In particular the WSP identifies Newtown as a 'Primary Settlement' which is supported by the UDP which highlights it as an 'area centre' and



one of the main centres of employment growth and inward investment alongside Ystradgynlais, Welshpool and Llandrindod Wells.

The geographical nature of Powys and the fact that there are no motorways and few dual carriageways has implications for accessibility and access to key services. Generally travelling distances for residents is greater, the cost of which will be impacted by the increasing cost of fuel. Some rural areas do not have access to broadband internet and suffer from a lack of mobile phone coverage which restricts the ability to dispense information and services via the internet and affects business location and the ability of people to work from home.

Demography

The current and projected demographic profile of the area presents a number of challenges for the future of Powys. With 26 persons per square kilometre (2008), Powys is the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales. The overall population of the county is growing at a slow rate due to net in-migration rather than natural growth. However, within the 15 to 29 year old age bracket there has been net out-migration, highlighting a key issue faced by the county of an aging population and so called 'brain drain'.

Limited higher education opportunities, a perceived lack of employment opportunities and poor access to services, and relatively high house prices is leading to the out-migration of the younger, economically active population. Alongside this, the quality of life that Powys offers is attracting a significant number of older people to the area and life expectancy is increasing resulting in an average age above the national average (44.0 in Powys in 2008 compared to 40.9 in Wales). In Powys in 2008 21.6% of the population were aged 65 and over compared to 18.0% in Wales as a whole. The increasing age of the population will put a further strain on services.

Economy

Powys has a relatively narrow economic base focused predominantly on agriculture and tourism with a high level of self-employment and many small businesses. The public sector is currently an important contributor to employment opportunities in the county.

The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Powys is lower than the Welsh average (2.7% compared to 4.3% in July 2009), however the average weekly income is lower than the Welsh average (£370.80 per week in Powys compared to £421.00 per week in Wales, 2008). Combined with the general greater cost of living in rural areas compared to urban areas, the lower levels on income experienced in Powys can contribute to social exclusion.

From this brief summary of the geographic, demographic and economic context of the county, it is evident that a number of issues conspire to create the need for a regeneration strategy that will address the current issues and help to prepare the county for additional challenges in the future.

2.2 Anticipated future challenges

The 'Change Plan 2011/14' establishes how Powys County Council proposes to cope with anticipated challenging financial settlements and the need to make cost savings and establishes the immediate fiscal context to this regeneration strategy. However, for the regeneration strategy to be effective it must become a long term undertaking, typically over a twenty year period. It is therefore necessary to consider the factors that will test the resilience of the County over this time frame. This section outlines some of the global factors that might have an impact of Powys in this period.

WLGA in their 2008 report *Futures and Horizon Scanning for Welsh Local Government*³ identified a number of over-arching trends which challenge the 'business as usual' approaches over the next 30 years, presenting new risks and opportunities to the UK and consequently to local communities, their governance structures and traditional approaches to policy. While many of these are macro trends are dealt with at an international, EU and national level, their consequences will be felt by Powys' communities and will therefore affect approaches to regeneration.

Potential instability in the developing world, the changing terrorist threat, the changing international landscape and global energy pressures all pose significant challenges for Britain. There will be increasing effects of climate change and increased pressure on global resources, especially fuel supply due to peak oil. Common 'transnational or macro level' factors which will profoundly influence our medium term 'horizon', were identified by the WLGA and include:

- Increasing levels of globalisation making national economies vulnerable, but providing opportunities for economic growth. Governments identify vulnerability in this system, but conversely, the business sector see retrenchment from globalisation and protectionism as major threats. Globalisation is seen to continue to heighten inequalities.
Challenge for Powys - make the economy resilient to future external shocks.
- Natural resources –increasing scarcity of resources that we rely on (oil, water, land and food) as the population grows and demand increases, as peak oil, peak gas and peak lithium reduce energy availability and climate change impacts are felt. This will be keenly felt by global and local economies. There will be an increase in competition and conflict regarding these resources, particularly regarding water stress and availability of staple foods including fish stocks.
Challenge for Powys - ensure local economy is resilient: energy security, food security, water and soil, peak oil.
- Technological change and innovation and the influence this will have on how communities, networks, individuals and organisations interact. This innovation, will heighten the visibility of disparity in society, influence our personal security and liberty, and develop a diaspora of networks and communities of interest. It may also provide solutions to some of the challenges we face in energy and health.
Challenge for Powys - ensure technology is equally available and does not encourage social disadvantage.
- Role of the individual - the increasingly powerful role played by individual and public attitudes, values, expectations and behaviours. Enhanced by IT,

³ WLGA & Netherwood Sustainable Futures (2008) Future and Horizon Scanning for Welsh Local Government

expectations for quality of life, goods and services will be higher. Secularism and materialism will grow, with capitalism continuing to be the dominant force in our lives. Gender equality will continue to grow in the developed world. There will continue to be a decline in civic values, with the individual's relationship with the state consumerist, with reduced obligation to the state and individuals being more self reliant.

Challenge for Powys - promote civic values, social entrepreneurship and alternative models of economic value (not wasteful, energy intensive and consumerist)

- Demographic and Social changes – with an ageing first world and youthful third world, migration, a growing urban poor and increased cultural complexity, communities and public services will face growing infrastructural, social and economic challenges .- including generational conflict in the developed world, middle classes become vulnerable to economic and social volatility, a rise in political extremism, communitarianism and retrenchment.

Challenge for Powys - ageing population, net out migration of young, lack of earners to pay for increased service demand.

Increased Migration. Ministry of Defence (2007) forecast that 230 m people will be living outside their country of origin by 2050 caused by failing states, conflict, climate change, poverty and poor governance, especially from sub-Sahara and SE Asia. This will result in humanitarian crisis and for recipient countries, increased demand on public services and potential destabilisation of communities.

Challenge for Powys - welcoming economic/climate migrants from EU and rest of the UK, and delivering services.

- Infectious disease will continue to limit growth in the developing world including HIV/Aids. There are high global risks of an influenza pandemic, which would profoundly affect society and the economy at all levels.

Challenge for Powys - managing the impact on Powys workforce and productivity and providing support to vulnerable sections of society.

- Global terrorism and rising sympathy with extremist sentiments; the exploitation of technology by organised criminal networks resulting in new types of crime and an increased likelihood of terrorist attacks, including on UK assets abroad . The use of chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear and emerging pulse weaponry is seen as high risk.

Challenge for Powys - ensuring resilience of IT systems and networks.

- Climate change – changing local climates will result in risks to infrastructure, settlements and land, agriculture and health in the UK and abroad. It will change migration patterns and alter our economy, both in terms of its impacts to our communities, coasts and landscape, but in our response to reducing our carbon emissions.

Challenge for Powys - ensuring resilience of energy, sewerage, transport and built infrastructure to climate change: ensuring infrastructure to capture alternative source of energy.

These trends may currently seem distant from local government in Wales, but they will influence communities, their resilience and ability to maintain and enhance well-being. All our Futures (ODPM 2006) also identified some of these challenges as influencing governance over the coming decade.

*The Ministry of Defence (2007) see an increasing emphasis on **local arrangements** to mitigate the effects of these trends in the interests of **socio-***

economic stability, a heightened pre-occupation with risk by governments and society, and a need to manage these risks at all levels of government.

Many of these trends have been identified through the consultation for this Strategy. The key requirement is to plan for the future, bearing these trends in mind, taking opportunities for regeneration which increase the resilience of Powys' communities and local economy, to manage tensions, factor in risks to strategic planning and develop strategies to deal with both abrupt and endemic change.

2.3 Local Regeneration Context

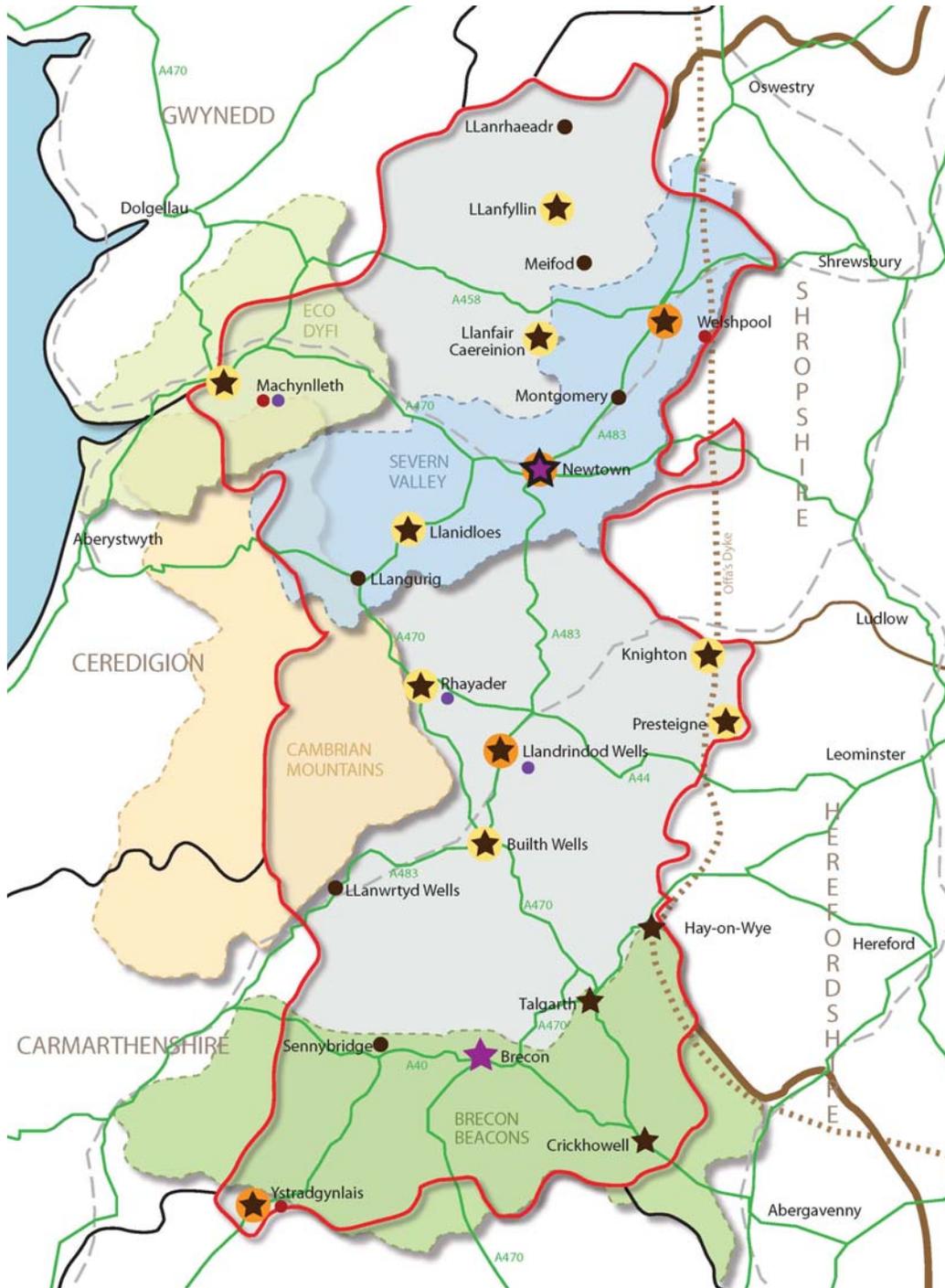
Powys has a wealth of resources on which to draw to deliver regeneration and a track record of initiatives and programmes which address some of the existing and projected issues. Some of these existing programmes which can be defined geographically are highlighted on the following plan (Image 1: Existing Regeneration Initiatives). It is important that these initiatives are considered within the wider regeneration strategy and continue to contribute to the regeneration of the county. They include the following:

- Cambrian Mountains Initiative
- Eco Dyfi
- Severn Valley Strategic Regeneration Programme
- Transition Towns in Machynlleth, Rhayader (emerging) and Llandrindod Wells
- Communities First areas in Welshpool, Bro Dyfi and Ystradgynlais
- Green Valleys Community Interest Company which is starting to make a substantial contribution to regeneration and resilience in the National park part of Powys.

In addition to this there is a range of county-wide initiatives that help to mitigate the areas of decline in the county. These include: the Rural Development Plan with projects at a national (Axis 1 and 2) and local level (Axis 3 and 4); Glasu a rural development initiative which provides support and assistance to businesses, individuals and community groups; Powys Local Investment Fund; Community Enablement Support Fund; and Powys Built Heritage Grant Fund. A summary of each of these initiatives is contained within the baseline research of the Interim Report.

Powys has a strong voluntary sector which is supported by Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO). PAVO estimates that there are 26,346 volunteers in Powys and that the voluntary sector contributes £173.6 million to the economy of the county.⁴ This track record of community engagement, support for social enterprise and volunteering could provide a springboard for new regeneration initiatives in the County

⁴ (WCVA - Essential information about the voluntary sector in Powys - Wales voluntary sector panel survey: Report 1.3.7 2005).



- Powys County Boundary
- A Roads
- - - Railway Lines
- Towns outside Powys
- ★ WSP Primary Settlement
- ★ WSP Primary Settlement to be developed
- ★ WSP Key Settlement
- Other Settlement
- UDP Area Centres
- UDP Employment & Investment Anchors
- Transition Town
- Communities First Area

Regeneration Context plan

2.4 Policy context

This Regeneration Strategy sits within a structure of existing policy and strategy documents that direct the delivery of services within Powys. As identified in Section 1.5 of this document, regeneration is relevant to all the Council's service delivery areas and must, therefore, take account of the relevant policy and guidance within these areas. A comprehensive review of key policy and strategy documents was undertaken as part of the background research for this strategy. A brief overview of the key documents and how they relate to this strategy is provided below:

Europe 2020

Europe 2020 is a 10-year strategy proposed by the European Commission on 3 March 2010 for reviving the economy of the European Union.⁵ It aims at "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth" with greater coordination of national and European policy. The strategy identifies five headline targets the European Union should take to boost growth and employment. All European funding will need to comply with the headline targets, which are:

- To raise the employment rate of the population aged 20–64 from the current 69% to at least 75%.
- To achieve the target of investing 3% of GDP in R&D in particular by improving the conditions for R&D investment by the private sector, and develop a new indicator to track innovation.
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right, increase the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency.
- To reduce the share of early school leavers to 10% from the current 15% and increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40%.
- To reduce the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines by 25%, lifting 20 million people out of poverty.^[2]

These in turn are broken down into the following seven flagship initiatives, which funding will also have to comply with:

- Innovation Union: to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to strengthen the innovation chain and boost levels of investment throughout the Union.
- Youth on the move: to enhance the performance of education systems and to reinforce the international attractiveness of Europe's higher education.
- A digital agenda for Europe: to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms.
- Resource efficient Europe: to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, by decarbonising the economy, increasing the use of renewable sources, modernising the transport sector and promoting energy efficiency.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe_2020

- An industrial policy for the globalisation era: to improve the business environment, especially for [SMEs](#), and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.
- An agenda for new skills and jobs: to modernise [labour markets](#) by facilitating labour mobility and the development of skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increasing labour participation and better matching labour supply and demand.
- European platform against poverty: to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.^[2]

Wales Spatial Plan

Powys falls within the Central Wales area of the plan which has the vision of 'high quality living and working in smaller-scale settlements set within a superb environment, providing dynamic models of rural sustainable development, moving all sectors to higher value-added activities'. A number of priorities for the area are identified based around the following:

- Building on the important key centres identified in the area
- Enabling appropriate and integrated growth and development
- Supporting existing rural economic sectors
- Broadening the economic base
- Realising the full potential of the area's diverse environment and its unique cultural identity; and
- Maximising accessibility, including broadband and telecommunication links.

Local Planning Policy Context The statutory planning framework for Powys consists of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted March 2010 for areas outside the Brecon Beacons National Park. The UDP identifies a sustainable growth strategy as the way forward for the development of the area. The strategy supports development in existing towns and villages which does not have an adverse effect on the local environment, economy and society. A delivery agreement is in place for the Local Development Plan which will supersede the UDP when adopted. The preparation of the Powys Local Development Plan commenced on 1st January 2011. The process for submitting candidate sites opened in February 2011 and closed in Spring 2011. During 2011, the County Council's LDP Team will be gathering evidence and engaging with the community and stakeholders to devise a Strategy for the Plan.

Powys Local Development Strategy

The document identifies the strategic objectives for Powys between 2007 and 2013, and acts as the basis for delivering the second round of the Rural Development Plan. The strategy's primary concern is to establish a robust and sustainable economy, which is supported by vibrant communities, and which enhances and protects the physical and cultural environment of Powys. To achieve this it defines four key objectives for Powys to pursue: Enterprising Powys; Green Powys; Brand Powys; and Access Powys. Combined these seek to create a Powys that encourages business growth, maximises its environmental credentials, builds upon its unique features and is well connected.

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Development Strategy Plan

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNP) have statutory responsibility for plan making and development management in the National Park. The Deposit Local Development Plan was approved in September 2010. It sets out policies and proposals to guide development in the National Park from 2007 to 2022 and beyond. These policies and proposals aim to meet the needs for housing, jobs and services whilst protecting the Park's high quality environment.

Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan

The National Park Management Plan: "Managing change together 2010-15" is a key policy document which has a bearing on sustainable regeneration. The Plan sets a vision for the future of the Park (20 years hence) and specifies actions and outcomes the Park Authority and key stakeholders will pursue in the next 5 years. Longer term vision statements within the Plan also describe the overarching ambitions for the Park over 20 years and, in the context of regeneration, include statements that by 2030 the Brecon Beacons National Park will be :

- Resilient, open & responsive to change-particularly climate change
- Less dependent on external supply chains
- A living landscape where people can earn a living from the land in innovative and sustainable manner
- Managed sustainably through active partnerships among the Park's stakeholders so that it continues to be a source of inspiration and enjoyment for future generations

'One Powys' Single Delivery Plan

The Single Delivery Plan is currently under preparation and is likely to be published in late 2011. The aim of the Single Delivery Plan is to improve public services for the citizens of Powys by bringing together strategic partners in one planning process, leading to the production of a One Powys Single Delivery Plan for the county. One Powys Single Delivery Plan will: -

- Better align organisational and community planning.
- Remove unnecessary duplication between the partnerships

The One Powys Single Delivery Plan will encompass the work of the following partnerships and plans in Powys: -

- Powys Local Service Board (Powys Community Strategy)
- Powys Children and Young People's Partnership (Powys Children's and Young People's Plan)
- Powys Community Safety Partnership (Powys Community Safety Plan)
- Powys Environmental Partnership
- Powys Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnership (Powys Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy)
- Powys Local Children's Safeguarding Board
- Powys Regeneration Partnership

In particular the 'One Powys' Single Delivery Plan is likely to advocate collaborative working and a more coherent multi-agency approach.

Powys Change Plan

This is the Council's main strategic document outlining the vision and how the Council will contribute to making Powys an even better place to live, work and visit. The Change Plan will contribute to PCC's aim of saving £16m by 2014. Regeneration is identified as one of the four Improvement Priorities in the plan and the production of this Regeneration Strategy is one of the objectives under the regeneration policy. The identified objectives and priorities of this report are intended to filter down into the operational strategies for each of the Council's service areas and the individuals within those service areas to ensure that each person within the Council is committed to achieving a common vision.

Sustainable Development Strategy

The Sustainable Development Strategy is due to be completed in Spring 2011 and sets out Powys County Council's vision for integrating social, economic and environmental issues in order to provide the most holistic and efficient services to the public. The emerging messages from this strategy need to be fed into the regeneration strategy for the County.

The Sustainable Development Strategy is set in the context of the the National Assembly for Wales duty ⁶to promote sustainable development in everything it does (one of only three governments in the world). The definition which Powys County Council has adopted as the corporate definition of sustainable development was developed by the UK:

“Sustainable Development means that we can make progress towards a world where we seek to simultaneously progress social, economic and environmental goals and policies in ways that develop and maintain a good quality of life for us all and enable future generations to do the same.”

Sustainable Development Commission (2000)

The Sustainable Development Strategy incorporates several objectives. These state that Powys County Council will:

- improve the quality of life for all the people of Powys, both now and in the future;
- take the lead in promoting, supporting and delivering sustainable development;
- ensure that the ‘whole life’ implications of decisions are addressed;
- assess the global implications of its actions and decisions;
- be alert to future legislation and requirements so that actions and policies are planned well in advance;
- consider social, environmental and economic issues in an integrated way;
- Be aware of similar work carried out within or outside the Authority;
- use resources efficiently and equitably;
- promote community engagement in our work;
- provide customer focused services, responsive to local needs;
- support and encourage local sustainable enterprise;
- allow everyone to have an equal opportunity to flourish;
- identify the most appropriate ways to tackle climate change.

Powys Regeneration Framework

⁶ Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1998

This framework document supports and proposes steps to implement the County's Community Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan by setting out the direction the county needs to take over the period from 2009 to 2013.

Rural Development Plan

The Rural Development Plan in Wales aims to encourage and help rural communities to think about the longer term potential of their area with the aim of strengthening farming and forestry industries in Wales, safeguarding and enhancing the environment and rural heritage and fostering competitive and sustainable businesses and thriving rural communities.

Strategic Regeneration in the Western Valleys

Part of the County of Powys is within the Western Valleys Strategic Regeneration Area. This document sets out the implementation of a partnership based sub-regional regeneration programme for the Western Valleys area. It identifies the key issues in the area and an action plan with strategic themes.

The vision and key outcomes of the most immediate policy framework is outlined in the table below. This table indicates how the outcomes of each of these strategies can be broadly categorised under the themes of environment/place, health/well being, access to services/service delivery, education/skills, and economy/prosperity.

Table 1 below sets out an analysis of the immediate policy framework, comparing their visions and outcomes. It demonstrates that there is significant synergy across the plans in terms of both the overarching visions and related indicators and outcomes, and has been used to shape the objectives set out in this Strategy.

ANALYSIS OF MOST IMMEDIATE POLICY FRAMEWORK					
	One Powys – Single Delivery Plan: Statement of Commitment (2010)	Powys Change Plan – Stage 1 (2010-14)	Rural Development Plan (2007-13)	Strategic Regeneration in the Western Valleys (2009-12)	Powys Strategic Regeneration Framework (2009 – 2013)
Vision / Aim	<i>“To improve public services for the citizens of Powys be bringing together strategic partners in one planning process, leading to the production of a single delivery plan for the county”</i> Incorporates Powys Community Strategy, PCYPP, PHSCWBS, Regeneration Partnership, Environmental Partnership and Community Safety Partnership plans	<i>“Efficient services for the Green Heart of Wales”</i> <i>By 2015 Powys will be a county with: coherent public services; intelligent and flexible delivery of public services; empowered people leading independent active lives within their communities; empowered communities delivering local services; ‘signed up’ communities.</i>	<i>“A robust and sustainable economy, based on vibrant communities, that enhances and protects the physical and cultural environment of Powys”</i>	<i>“A network of sustainable settlements with good connectivity to city region growth”</i>	<i>“Our vision for Powys in 2020 is of a place offering opportunity and services for all within thriving, sustainable, safe and healthy communities”</i>
Indicators / Outcomes	Outcomes	Improvement Priorities	Outcomes	Indicators	Objectives
1	People in Powys live in good quality affordable homes (4 indicators)	Adult Living	Enterprising Powys: Creating an enterprising environment that sustains and encourages the growth of new and existing micro and social businesses within Powys	Employment rate	Developing the economy
2	People in Powys enjoy a clean, safe and green environment (5 indicators)	Learning in the Community	Green Powys: Maximise the potential of Powys’ environmental credentials including both the emerging green economy and all aspects of the environment and land based activities at a community and business level	ILO Unemployment rate	Developing people and communities
3	People in Powys feel and are safe and confident (7 indicators)	Regeneration	Brand Powys: Build the value of Powys’ unique physical, social and cultural assets to enhance the potential of the tourism, food and creative sectors	Economic Inactivity Rate	Developing places
4	People in Powys have the skills to pursue their ambitions (5 indicators)	Climate Change	Access Powys: Addressing current gaps in delivering and accessing basic services, considering new, innovative and sustainable ways of overcoming barriers and supporting communities to address their requirements	% of working age adults with nil qualifications	
5	People in Powys are supported to get out of poverty (9 indicators)			% of working age adults qualified to NQF Level 2 or above	
6	People in Powys benefit from a thriving, diverse economy (6 indicators)			Gross disposable household income	
7	Powys families are safe and supportive places in which to live (5 indicators)			Migration flows (Patient Data Register System)	
8	People in Powys live in supportive, sharing and self-reliant communities (5 indicators)			Land Usage (Areas of environmental importance)	
9	People in Powys are healthy and independent (8 indicators)				
10	People in Powys can easily access the services they need (3 indicators)				

Key

	Environment / place based		Health / well being based		Access to services / service delivery
	Education / skills based		Economy / prosperity based		

3. Outcome of Stakeholder Consultation

This Regeneration Strategy has been informed by background research which has briefly been outlined in the previous sections. However, it has predominantly been shaped by the process and outcomes of consultation with stakeholders.

The consultation was principally undertaken through two one-day conferences. These events were used to inform stakeholders about the development of the regeneration strategy, to consult with them on their priorities and to help engender a level of support and ownership of the strategy through the knowledge that their involvement has shaped the direction and content of it. Stakeholders were deliberately consulted at an early stage in the development of the strategy to ensure that a broad local perspective of the key issues and opportunities was understood.

The first conference brought together a widerange of Council officers representing a variety of County Council departments and all levels of seniority. A series of group workshop sessions focussed on understanding the issues facing Powys County Council and how they might be tackled in the future.

The second conference gathered a blend of people from the County's voluntary and community sectors alongside representatives of Powys' private sector. At this session we asked participants to highlight the barriers to more effective regeneration and potential drivers of regeneration activity to overcome these.

In addition to the two main consultation sessions, a number of individuals and organisations were engaged with regarding more specific elements of the consultation. These contacts included:

- Mid Wales Housing Association;
- Tourism Partnership Mid Wales;
- Visit Wales; and
- PAVO

From each of the consultation sessions there was a degree of consensus around certain issues and opportunities. The following table provides a summary of the main messages that arose from the consultation.

Potential Drivers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of political structure to cabinet system • Promote the County with one voice • Supplement existing services with greater application of ICT • Development trust ownership of renewable energy generators (wind, hydro,

<p>solar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve strategic highway infrastructure • Enhanced tourism economy • Strong tradition of community resilience which needs to be nurtured • Develop links with other dispersed rural Counties in England, Scotland and Ireland • Potential to develop schools as community hubs so that they work for the whole community throughout the day • Enhance / protect landscape and habitat • Powys' cultural output is rich, varied and high quality • Broaden the economic base of the county. Enhance tourism, manufacturing, creative industries, promotion of SMEs • Harness landscape of county for tourism and energy • Create centres of excellence for food, outdoor sport, culture, renewable etc.
<p>Potential Barriers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived PCC emphasis on <i>regulation</i> rather than <i>enabling</i> • EU procurement regulations • Spending restrictions and centralization of services • Lack of broadband and poor mobile phone reception • Dispersed population • The scale of the County • Powys is not a well known place – localised identity with towns and parishes • Social challenges are less easy to spot in Powys compared to other areas • Tourism offer is fragmented • Lack of affordable housing in a low wage economy Limited understanding and awareness of the opportunities that currently exist • Public sector culture and attitude to change/risk • Effectiveness of inter-departmental communication in PCC • “Unique” issues in Powys not recognised by WAG
<p>Priorities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear leadership on regeneration by PCC • Create regeneration model bespoke to Powys - cannot rely on area based regeneration • Harness talent and energy of communities • Work with PAVO to support community organizations whose aims align with the regeneration strategy (i.e., transition towns, Cittaslow) Council planning for peak

oil and climate change scenarios

- Develop the quality of the tourism offer at every level (marketing, branding, service standards etc)
- Develop a system that enables PCC to spread the benefits of each decision/activity that it undertakes
- Develop the renewable sector as a key driver of change
- Fast broadband and enhanced mobile reception
- Continued consultation with stakeholders
- Enable PCC officers to take greater risks within agreed parameters
- Nurture PCC through process of change – ongoing process

The consultation presented a common need to focus on **'how'** things are done rather than **'what'** is done. This involves a shift change in the culture and attitudes of PCC and partners, and the fostering of talent and enthusiasm within the community. The desire for a more positive, 'can do' attitude was evident with a common vision uniting all aspects of the authority's activities.

This section of the strategy has identified the key points that emerged from the consultation. These findings permeate through strategy and have influenced its direction. Through the consultation it was also encouraging to see the number of positive activities and initiatives that are already being undertaken in Powys. It is these activities and the qualities that this represents in the people of Powys that will be integral to the delivery of the strategy and the future of the County.

4. A Vision for Life in Powys

4.1 Existing aspects of life in Powys to celebrate

This regeneration strategy aims to develop a regeneration framework which is bespoke to Powys. To achieve this, the strategy has been devised to nurture and promote the County's assets and strengths as a way of dealing with its weaknesses. These strengths include:

- The diversity and beauty of the County's rural landscape
- The handsome, but fragile, townscape of Powys' towns and villages
- The relative safety and security of life in Powys
- Diversity and resilience of Powys' communities at a shire and parish level
- The palpable sense of pride within its people
- Vitality of the Welsh language – 30% of Welsh speakers are young people
- The excellence exhibited in many different aspects of renewable energy and energy conservation
- The national profile of some Powys' major events / cultural networks
- The diversity of economic activity

Regeneration activity must protect and enhance these qualities.

4.2 A Vision which builds upon success

The Regeneration Vision for Powys in 2021 should be:

"Regeneration in Powys will nurture and promote the County's assets and strengths as the means to addressing its weaknesses, by establishing a robust and sustainable economy that is based upon vibrant communities, and which enhances and protects the physical, social and cultural environment of Powys."

4.3 Regeneration Objectives

The Vision will be realised and supported by a series of *Regeneration Objectives*. The purpose of these objectives is to create a clearer decision making framework for Powys County Council, its strategic partners and its communities.

'*Regeneration*' is one of the four improvement priorities of the Powys Change Plan and these Regeneration Objectives will help to structure how that improvement priority should be addressed and implemented.

These objectives have been derived from an analysis of the most immediate policy framework, (see table Section 2, page 18) and by assessing the outcomes of the stakeholder workshops and other research. The existing documents reveal that the following policy *themes* are highly relevant to regeneration in Powys:

- Environment/place
- Education and skills
- Economy
- Health/community; and
- Quality of service provision

Each of the above *themes* were also referred to throughout the discussions with stakeholders. However, at the stakeholder workshops, there were recurrent themes which are not yet apparent in many of the policy frameworks. The additional themes which were prominent in our sessions with stakeholders were:

- Powys' potential for renewable energy generation as well as research and development related to this sector
- The importance of the cultural and creative industries
- Tourism
- The need to retain young people and families in the County

It is suggested therefore that the regeneration objectives for Powys should be as follows:

Objective 1: Green Powys

The natural and built environments of Powys are key assets and every opportunity will be taken to sustain and enhance these attributes for the benefit of current and future generations of residents and visitors.

Objective 2: Skilled Powys

High quality training and learning opportunities will ensure that Powys' communities have the skills and qualifications that will enable them to lead happy, productive and

prosperous lives.

Objective 3: Resilient Communities

The County's communities will become more resilient, supportive and healthy.

Objective 4: Economic Development

Powys will prosper from a diverse economy where all businesses, are able to benefit from excellent training, business support and high speed digital connections.

Objective 5: Access to Services

Powys residents will have access to a choice of services from a range of integrated agencies and community organizations.

Objective 6: Renewable Energy

Powys will be a UK leader in renewable energy generation and energy conservation which will include a blend of public, private and community sector initiatives.

Objective 7: Cultural Powys

Powys will be positively associated the output of its artistic and cultural endeavours and the vitality of the Welsh language.

Objective 8: Tourism

Powys will nurture, develop and promote the diversity and quality of its tourism industry in order to further support the realisation of other objectives. This will particularly apply to tourism related to: outdoor sport and recreation, events, wildlife, heritage, culture, language, 'slow tourism' and food.

Objective 9: Location of Choice

Powys will be an attractive location for graduates and young families wishing to balance an excellent quality of life with promising careers.

5. Regeneration Priorities

5.1 Why a prioritised approach?

Presently, the standard model of regeneration in Wales is mostly organised on an area based approach. In this way regeneration effort has been focussed upon *Regeneration Areas* and *Communities First* wards designated by Welsh Assembly Government. Powys has been able to undertake regeneration activity from this approach by being included within a small part of the Western Valleys Regeneration

Area and also because of the three Communities First wards in Ystradgynlais, Oldford Estate, Welshpool and Bro Dyfi.

This area based approach to regeneration in Wales (particularly WAG's Strategic Regeneration Areas), has typically been based on a masterplan or other kind of strategy that is area specific and often spatially orientated. What has become clear from the research undertaken to complete this *Regeneration Strategy* is that it has not been possible to capture every opportunity within the County, or deal with each issue by taking an area based, or spatial approach. Instead, the stakeholder workshops have informed the process by clarifying the types of issues, which Powys faces, and the potential opportunities which can be exploited.

Given the challenges regarding the size and diversity of the County, it is important that the Regeneration Strategy has a clear focus for action and can prioritise effort. Therefore, whilst this strategy has spatial consequences, it has to be more priority-led in order to respond to the characteristics of the County.

The Vision together with the Objectives will create a clear framework for regeneration activity and enable the prioritisation of work – it will also create a sharper focus and consistent context for assessing intervention. Though the delivery of strategies will be facilitated by Powys County Council, the Council is clear that this will need to be supplemented by working closely at strategic and local levels with all relevant partners and stakeholders.

By focusing activity, , the County Council and its partners and stakeholders can bring forward change and improvement across the County to deliver the Vision. In order to guide the delivery of the Vision and Objectives, Regeneration Priorities have been developed, which are specific areas of focus for activity. These are:

- Harnessing community strength
- Using Council assets as regeneration catalysts
- Regeneration-led procurement
- Information Communication Technology as a catalyst to regeneration
- Harnessing Powys' natural assets
- Promoting Powys
- Supporting the Powys economy
- Empowering Council officers
- Facilitating the resilience and renaissance of Powys' town and village centres
- Housing improvement as a regeneration catalyst
- Maximising the regenerative impacts of education and training expenditure

5.2 Regeneration Priority 1 - Harnessing community strength

Priority Overview

Successful regeneration in Powys will go further than physical improvements by working closely with Powys' communities. An overwhelming strength of Powys is the breadth and range of people already engaged in activities to support others. There are over 3600 voluntary organisations operating in the county, with 26,346 volunteers and employing 3,344 staff.⁷ This energy is an important regeneration. A key theme of the Regeneration Strategy must therefore be how community involvement is supported, nurtured and harnessed to help implement the objectives and realise the vision.

The level of engagement and commitment was evident in the workshop session held with a range of third and private sector organisations. The passion of the attendees, knowledge of the county and understanding of which initiatives work and why, is something the Council must fully harness. Added to this the knowledge and commitment of its staff suggest that it is important that the County Council and the community stakeholders establish a shared vision and action plan for the future of the County.

Sharing the vision will mean that ownership of the Regeneration Strategy will also need to be shared. This will take time. Continued communication, building upon the stakeholder workshops, will be necessary with partners from the community voluntary sector. The Council's partners, including Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) will need to have a role in helping to facilitate this networking. They key messages which will need to be communicated are:

- The scope of the regeneration vision, objectives and priorities
- That the County Council needs others to help it achieve its ambitions for the County
- That the County Council will support and nurture groups and remove barriers to their effectiveness

Potential Quick Win 1

A potential first step could be to **assemble a regeneration network** of people and organisations from across Powys that are interested in the shaping the future of the County. This may be initially by building on the attendees who participated in the stakeholder workshops who strongly recommended that the dialogue which started in November 2010 is continued and broadened.

This network could have a web presence (such as a blog and a forum), it may wish to have a short e-newsletter and online forum (one is already used effectively by PAVO to contact its members), and may wish to establish a series of regular networking events to bring people together.

⁷ Powys Local Development Strategy (October 2009)

The network should also have clear parameters (framed by this strategy and the partnership structure of the County) but provide freedom for participants to contribute to initiatives and where relevant, start their own.

To scope this further, the Council needs to determine:

- How it will establish and support the regeneration network. (The main implication for resources is time and not cost.)
- What partners will formally wish to be part of this network, and how can they help disseminate knowledge about its establishment and work.
- How the regeneration network will be used? For instance it could be an excellent way of offering seminars to community groups which will help to deliver other priorities on subjects such as: business planning, community ownership of assets, etc

Other Potential Project Interventions

- Work with Transition Wales to support the existing initiatives and enable new ones to grow. Potential to follow other Councils by becoming a 'transition county'
- Clarify the support that is available from the County Council to community and voluntary organisations
- Enable 'community mentoring' to ensure that mature, successful organisations are able to pass their knowledge and expertise onto new groups
- Build on the experience of Community Land Trusts in Wales and expand the model across the County
- Use County Council assets to support community enterprises through the Community Development Trust model
- Explore future scenario planning with community groups to understand their potential responses to anticipated changes such as: peak oil, climate change, etc
- Develop techniques for the co-production of projects and initiatives with communities and different types of stakeholders
- Monitor UK and Welsh Assembly Government funding for 'Big Society' initiatives and monitor the formulation of the Localism Bill and its eventual Welsh implications

Key Messages

- Harnessing the support of Powys' communities is essential the successful implementation of the Regeneration Strategy
- Powys has a rich resource of community and voluntary sector organisations, but these need to be nurtured and supported by working through with partners including PAVO as the lead support agency for Powys' Third Sector
- Alongside partners including PAVO, formalise a community regeneration network to complement other efforts

Cost Implications

There are no capital cost implications of implementing this priority although developing initiatives under this priority will require the County Council and other partners to invest time.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys
- 2: Skilled Powys
- 3: Resilient Communities
- 4: Economic Development
- 5: Access to Services
- 6: Renewable Energy
- 7: Cultural Powys
- 8: Tourism
- 9: Location of Choice

5.3 Regeneration Priority 2 – Using Council assets as regeneration catalysts

Priority Overview

Powys County Council is a significant owner of land and premises. There is significant potential for the County Council to use these assets as catalysts for activities which fulfil the regeneration objectives.

The County Council is facing difficult decisions in terms of asset management. Only 39% of the Councils buildings are in either a good or satisfactory condition (Wales average is 67%) and almost 60% of the Council owned buildings in Powys are in poor condition compared with a Wales average of 29%.⁸

Given the need to make £16m of savings over four years and the overall condition of Council stock, it will become increasingly difficult for the Council to sustain the current configuration of its property portfolio. The standard response to such troubling circumstances is to dispose of property which may:

- be too costly to improve or maintain
- surplus to requirements; or
- carry substantial revenue liabilities which cannot be sustained

In this case the closure and/or disposal of assets (or liabilities) may be a means of income generation and revenue reduction for the County Council. This rationale for property rationalisation is entirely understandable. However, this approach risks being one dimensional and short term/budget driven as it severely limits the ability of the County Council to discharge their other obligations towards 'regeneration' as a corporate improvement priority.

A more holistic approach to property rationalisation is required which should consider estate management and short term budget implications against possible long term negative socio economic impact. Such an approach will enable immediate budget management to be compared to long term broader impact on economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

By adopting a more holistic approach to asset management the County Council needs to use their assets as catalysts for initiatives which reduce the budget deficit but also have positive long term outcomes on the socio-economic wellbeing of the County. This approach might include:

- Using land/premises to capitalise a social enterprise (such as a Community Land Trust or Community Development Trust)
- Using land/premises as a form of a loan to a social enterprise
- Using capital receipts to cross fund other regeneration projects in the locality

⁸ Powys County Council (March, 2004) Asset Management Plan

- Adopting alternative revenue regimes where buildings/land are maintained or staffed by volunteers

By adopting this approach, the disposal and management of Council assets become a form of enabling and regeneration pump priming rather than mere disposal.

It is understandable that the closure and sale of some Council owned property is likely to be unavoidable and may have a negative impact on the resilience of communities and local economies. These impacts need to be minimised wherever possible and mechanisms to assess broader impact, beyond County Council budgets need to be devised.

Potential Quick Win 1

Applying a consistent framework to measuring the impact of asset disposal or alterations in asset management will help the County Council to make better informed decisions.

An initiative is required which will measure short term budget saving against long term cost to socio-economic vitality. Whilst we recognise that highlighting these losses may occasionally make for difficult reading, they will help the Council to avoid making decisions which might damage the County's most fragile communities and economies. The most appropriate measurement technique for this is likely to be *Social Return on Investment* (SROI) ⁹ which is an analytic tool for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value. It incorporates social, environmental and economic costs and benefits into decision making, providing a fuller picture of how value is created or destroyed.

As of the 1st April 2011 the SROI will be used by the Coventry Partnership, to provide an opportunity for organisations from the voluntary and community sectors to make an application to have Council owned assets transferred to them for management. Each application will be considered against a transparent and robust scoring mechanism ensuring that the applicants understand all the elements of managing the asset that they are applying for and that it is suitable for purpose¹⁰. Training and support will be offered by Council officers or other partner organisations working together in line with the SDP to help applicants improve their capability and skills. Each application will be considered against the benefit it brings to the community and the City's long term planning and redevelopment objectives.

Potential Quick Win 2

In cases where a decision has been taken to dispose of land or premises or alter asset management, the County Council should consider other potential scenarios (some of which are highlighted above). These scenarios should all test the viability of using the asset to pump prime activities which might contribute to the regeneration objectives (4.3).

⁹ www.neweconomics.org/projects/social-return-investment

¹⁰ <http://www.coventrypartnership.com/assettransfer>

As a matter of priority, the County Council should liaise with partners including PAVO, Town Councils, Rural Community Action Partnerships and the Village Hall Network to analyse the relationship by overlaying communities' aspirations and the Council's assets. This process will need to understand:

- Community need
- Community capacity to intervene and sustain that involvement
- Proposed Council changes to Council estate (e.g. disposal or change of management) Proposed timescales for change - the transfer of an asset to a community is not an 'overnight' process. The time needed for the process of initial engagement and then subsequent capacity building and project development support, needs to be invested if such ventures are to be successful. Availability of additional funding support to the Community (which are likely to emerge through the 'Big Society')

This could be a direct output of the network highlighted in Priority 1. Community Development Trusts are possibly the most appropriate stakeholder, although according to the Development Trust Association there are no constituted groups in Powys, which is a potential barrier which may need to be overcome.

Key Messages

- A broader appreciation of cost and value is required to enable decisions to be taken which take into account local economic and social implications
- Council assets are potential opportunities pump prime social enterprises
- Local networks need to be utilised to overlap community need with opportunities to pump prime via Council assets

Cost Implications

Developing the expertise to apply the SROI assessment framework to Powys' needs will require a moderate revenue budget for further feasibility work. This is anticipated to be below £50,000.

The cost of developing an approach to releasing assets for the benefit of the community and social enterprise will require officer time to map the opportunities across the county. On the basis of this initial exercise the County Council will be able to begin to build a profile of:

- The cost of not obtaining true market value for released assets
- The cost saving of greater community/voluntary management of existing assets
- The value of the asset transfer to socio-economic character of the County (based on SROI) and 'ecosystem services' (see page 42).

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys**
- 3: Resilient Communities**

NB: Other objectives are also likely to be supported, but these will depend on the focus of each individual project opportunity.

5.4 Regeneration Priority 3 – Regeneration- led procurement

Priority Overview

Powys is unlikely to benefit from a substantial injection of new regeneration funding, so extracting the maximum regenerative impact from existing spending is going to be an essential regeneration activity for Powys. The County Council and its partners, through their procurement of goods and services, must ensure that their substantial purchasing power enables local economic development to occur.

Powys County Council purchases £129.5m of services each year. Capturing and utilising this huge spending power is an essential way of irrigating the local economy and strengthening local supply chains. Every pound spent locally is worth £1.76 to the local economy as suppliers re-spend throughout the supply chain and in other local businesses. However, for every £1 spent on an external contractor, only 36p is retained locally.¹²

In the current economic climate it is more imperative than ever that the County Council and its partners on the Local Service Board are able to support local businesses to ensure money is generated, retained and encouraged to flow through local economies, rather than to 'leak out' to adjacent Counties.

“When the market is weak, authorities are encouraged to see if they can develop the market and help new entrants. This may be especially necessary if small and medium enterprises, social enterprises and voluntary sector bodies are to be encouraged to bid for contracts.”¹³

The County Council and its partners must be able to use the procurement process to exert a strong influence in establishing potential contractor's commitment to: creating local job opportunities, skills and training and in the selection of their sub contractors and supply chains. Furthermore, the County Council needs to ensure that local contractors are given an opportunity to tender for work. This can apply to all areas of the County Council and its partners, such as: catering, construction, building and grounds maintenance, transport and distribution, professional services, social care services etc. Whilst it is essential that the County Council enable greater accessibility for local suppliers, it will also be important that they are able to develop the competence of these suppliers to provide appropriate standards of service which

¹² New Economics Foundation (2005) *Public Spending for Public Benefit: How the public sector can use its purchasing power to deliver local economic development*

¹³ The Audit Commission (2002) *Competitive Procurement: learning from audit inspection and research* (London: Audit Commission Publications)

larger, established businesses typically find easier to manage. This will be explored under Priority 7.

The Council can exert a strong influence to ensure that through its procurement and contract management practices actively benefits Powys by:

- Designing packaging arrangements that provide opportunities for small and medium construction companies to tender as direct contractors;
- Designing evaluation criteria, pre-qualification and tender documentation that will optimise value for money, quality and community benefit;
- Engaging with local authority's economic development team to participate in the pre-procurement process;
- Designing effective monitoring arrangements throughout the contract operation and post project review
- Forecasting labour demand and working closely with suppliers to maximise local engagement on projects.
- Raising awareness among SMEs about the procurement process and ways they are able to register or collaborating with other suppliers; and
- Ensuring that suppliers are aware of the County's commitment to regeneration and the objectives for achieving this. For instance, suppliers may be asked to reduce waste, or increase the use of renewable energy in expediting contracts

The construction industry is one of the most important sectors in creating such opportunities. As well as producing physical regeneration, the construction process should also be recognised as part of that social and economic regeneration agenda. The Council has recognised this in its recent procurement of a 4 year framework contract, and incorporated many innovative practice features into its approach. It is considered that many of the features would be beneficial to the Council if they were also applied to the procurement of other services such as catering, professional services etc.

Potential Quick Win 1

The County Council should undertake an analysis of its expenditure and the multiplier effect generated by this to determine the potential impact of increasing the proportion of local procurement. This will help to highlight the significant impact that this can have on local economies. Northumberland County Council conducted a similar exercise in 2005 and concluded that a ten per cent increase in the proportion of the council's annual procurement spent locally would mean £34 million extra circulating in the local economy each year. ¹⁴

¹⁴ <http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/buying-local-worth-400-cent-more>

Potential Quick Win 2

Powys County Council, and its partners, should commit to a ten percent increase in local procurement in the next three years and devise a strategy to increase this by an achievable amount thereafter. The Council should undertake research, potentially using the LM3 model (New Economics Foundation) to determine the multiplier effect of this change.

Potential Quick Win 3

Potential exists to explore the issue of joint procurement arrangements between the County Council and other partners. This has the potential to bring more bodies into a culture of local purchasing, as well as potentially offering participants the benefits of greater cost saving through bulk purchase.

Key Messages

- The procurement process is an important way of ensuring beneficial impacts which contribute to the regeneration objectives of the Strategy
- Ensure that locally based SMEs are able to tender for contracts
- Procuring locally will have a measurable multiplier effect upon Powys' economy

Cost Implications

The cost of undertaking analysis to determine the multiplier effect of its considerable spending power is likely to require specialist expertise. It is not anticipated that the costs for developing this model are likely to exceed £50,000.

The cost of committing to an increase in local procurement will be in officer time required to build the necessary legal frameworks for procurement, but more significantly, to develop the capacity of local suppliers to fully benefit from this policy.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- | |
|--|
| <p>1: Green Powys</p> <p>4: Economic Development</p> |
|--|

5.5 Regeneration Priority 4 – Information Communication Technology as a catalyst to regeneration

Priority Overview

The development of broadband infrastructure across the County was a key theme raised in both of the stakeholder workshops. Indeed, it is a theme that is being raised in rural communities throughout the UK:

“We hereby declare that isolation is the greatest threat to the sustainability of rural communities and that better communication is vital to our society”.¹⁵

Such a striking reflection is an effective reminder that connectivity is fast becoming the ‘key enabler’ to guaranteeing economic, social and educational improvement in rural communities. Those communities that have managed to provide high speed broadband coverage have witnessed a reversal in the traditional out-migration of young people and business owners, with an increasing number of talented people now choosing to move from urban areas to enjoy a better quality of life whilst still being able to tap into worldwide markets¹⁶. The frequently slow speed of existing broadband coverage in Powys, inflicted as it is with numerous ‘slow spots’ and ‘not spots’ is therefore a significant barrier, which prevents Powys sharing in this economic prosperity¹⁷.

It is envisaged that increasing the speed of broadband in Powys will assist in the diversification of the rural economy; encourage small business formation; support the growth of existing businesses by reducing operating costs and opening up new markets; and make home-working a realistic alternative for employees. It will also increase the County’s attractiveness to new businesses and industries, which will be encouraged to expand into the area through the combination of high quality living and connectivity. Finally the social impacts will be great, with improvements to education; greater access to information and services for elderly and disabled people; and increased energy conservation all anticipated.

The positive impact that high speed broadband can have has been recognised by the Welsh Assembly Government in its recent policy document *‘Economic Renewal: a new direction’*. This established that “all businesses in Wales will have access to next generation broadband by the middle of 2016, and that all households will be enabled by 2020” (WAG, 2010, p.10). Moreover, the digital economy (ICT) is recognised as a priority area for research and development, and ICT is identified as one of six key sectors for targeted business support.

¹⁵ www.broadbandcumbria.com/about/186-2/

¹⁶ Dr Tim Williams (February 2011) *Connecting communities: The impacts of broadband on communities in the UK and its implications for Australia*

¹⁷ www.broadband-notspot.org.uk

Whilst the Council is developing its ICT approach, (it is already delivering its eWorkflow platform with Civica to deliver £5 million of savings, and has delivered the 'Powys Connections' programme to provide advice and grant funding to micro businesses and social enterprises to develop specialised ICT), there is a role for a dedicated workstream to consider ICT provision for four specific uses – business, education, community, and public services as a whole across the county.

"The Welsh Assembly Government is determined to find ways of opening up access for the relatively few areas in Wales that remain unable to benefit from broadband services."

Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones (October 2010)

Potential Quick Win 1

Lead and develop an ICT strategy and investment roadmap – for example can the schools modernisation programme deliver ICT networks across the county which can reduce the need for travel.

Potential Quick Win 2

Organisations like the Rural Broadband Partnership are well versed in developing community-owned responses to 'slow spots' and 'not spots'. Utilising the assistance of such organisations will place emphasis on community owned responses to achieve comprehensive broadband coverage in Powys, and will allow the Council and its partners to prepare a comprehensive case for broadband coverage in Powys. Such an approach will also increase the likelihood of accessing financial support from relevant funding – the Welsh Assembly Government's Broadband Support Scheme (via RDP), for example, and will provide a structure through which to raise additional funds more equally.

An example of such a partnership has been launched in Carmarthenshire, where the Carmarthenshire Community Broadband Partnership (CCBP) will provide a high-speed internet service throughout the county, creating high speed access in the areas where there is no broadband currently available. Initially, two main masts will be installed, one at Garn Big (Carmel) and the other at Crychan (Cynghordy) providing a service to the county's known black spots and poor service areas. The project will work in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly Government Broadband Support Scheme to provide high-speed access, and a range of phone and media services.

Depending upon the appetite of community groups for high speed broadband, it could be worth exploring the feasibility of exploring a community owned broadband

scheme. The most famous example of this is the Cybermoor scheme, which is the product of the Alston Moor community in Cumbria¹⁸.

Potential Quick Win 3

Appoint a community digital champion, who will promote the need for high speed broadband throughout the County. The individual should preferably be appointed from outside of the County Council, and will act as the coordinator for a high speed broadband network and will bring together WAG, potential service providers, community broadband partnerships and the County Council. Their role will be to develop a broadband solution relevant to Powys' needs.

Other Potential Project Interventions

- Consider how to develop and improve appropriate relations with businesses, business groups, and key partner institutions such as local Further Education colleges and nearby university faculties or other local authorities who are leading on ICT, to improve the ICT infrastructure;
- Consider how to maintain ICT support services to SMEs and micro businesses;
- Giving people the skills to use online services via high speed broadband confidently is just as important as the quality of connection. The County Council and partners need to consider how best practice can be applied to Powys;

Seek out and examine best practice elsewhere and consider its applicability to Powys. For instance: The Cybermoor community broadband initiative in Cumbria. In the development of this priority, the Council can seek to bring on board the support of organisations outside the Council. This priority is cross cutting and can support work being undertaken across other priorities and help the Council to achieve several other regeneration objectives.

Cost Implications

The ICT investment roadmap will require specialist support if this expertise does not exist within the County Council. It is unlikely that this support, if procured from outside the organisation is likely to exceed £100,000. It is unknown what the technical requirements of providing new broadband infrastructure may cost. This will be an outcome of the investment strategy which will need to identify the costs attributable to the private and public sectors.

The development of community broadband is something which will require officer time rather than capital funding. This should be focussed on several pilot projects.

The cost of a Powys Broadband Champion is, at this stage, unknown. Further feasibility work will be necessary and this will need to build upon experience gained in other similar communities. A working budget of £100,000 for two years should be considered.

¹⁸ www.cybermoor.org

Key Messages

- High speed internet connectivity is a way of overcoming physical isolation
- WAG is committed, as part of their Economic Renewal strategy to get all businesses on next generation broadband
- Better broadband has the potential to make Powys a more attractive place to live and do business
- Technical connection is one half of the solution, the other is to ensure people are able to maximise its potential
- Other similar rural areas are succeeding with community run broadband schemes

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 2: Skilled Powys
- 3: Resilient Communities
- 4: Economic Development
- 5: Access to Services
- 6: Renewable Energy
- 7: Cultural Powys
- 9: Location of Choice

5.6 Regeneration Priority 5 - Harnessing Powys' Natural Assets

Priority Overview

Powys' natural assets, its landscape, resources and the quality of its environment were key themes highlighted in consultations and discussions of regeneration objectives. Careful stewardship of Powys natural assets has significant potential to improve the environment, the economy and the vitality of communities. These natural assets can be described in three distinct groups.

- *natural resources* – the landscape, habitats and species, ecosystem services
- *exploiting primary resources* - those processes exploiting and developing agriculture, forestry – and the ongoing added value of food development and timber technology
- *green energy* – the development of renewable energy using the primary resources of the landscape, wind and water.

WAGs strategy architecture, including *Economic Renewal: A new direction (2010)*, *Energy Strategy: A low carbon revolution; and Green Jobs Strategy for Wales (2009)*, all seek to provide the conditions to develop this area of regeneration. At a UK level, the proposed Energy Security and Green Economy Bill (2010) seeks to provide the finance to pump prime this activity with access to £1 billion of finance from a Green Investment Bank, £200 million for low carbon technology, and £860 million from the Renewable Heat Incentive. In Wales £30 million is earmarked for ARBED to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock, WEFO is providing funds for Community Scale Renewables and funding is also available via Rural Development Axis 2 and the Wood Energy Business Scheme. The Feed in Tariff also provides incentives for community scale and business investment in microgeneration technology. Policy and financial conditions are good to develop Powys' green economy- there are strong government and fiscal drivers.

Central Wales economic forum carried out research into *Renewable Energy in Mid-Wales (URSI/Quantum 2010)* which provides an indication of what a green economy might look like in rural Wales. The report highlighted particular opportunities in developing high value businesses and supply chains for onshore wind, biomass, anaerobic digestion and microgeneration (solar, photovoltaics and hydro), a local market for biomass, companies offering operational and maintenance support, planning and surveying consultancy, supply chains for hardware and software, installation, research and woodland businesses. Building on the expertise in CAT, Dulas and the Green Valleys Initiative were seen as key to developing this sector.

“As the cradle of the industrial revolution, Wales led the world in coal and steel; now it is well placed to take a leading role in low carbon and sustainable energy sources

such as wind, tide, hydro-electric and biomass. With abundant natural resources and businesses that can exploit the opportunity, this is a sector with strong growth potential across low carbon energy, energy efficiency, energy storage and infrastructure, pollution control, environmental management, research and consultancy”

Economic Renewal: a new direction (WAG) July 2010

Of existing companies in this sector in Mid-Wales, the report suggested that 75% had less than 10 employees, however the scale of employment growth in this sector was forecast from 782 in 2010 to 3360 in 2020. This is clearly an opportunity for Powys. However, barriers need to be dealt with, including: the capacity of the electricity grid to accommodate extra and dispersed generation, skills shortages, broadband availability and speed, the lengthy decision making process via the planning function and competition from elsewhere, with local business support and networking attracting businesses and investors to other parts of the UK.

Business support and networking is vital to developing this aspect of a green economy. Existing networks such as METNET Renewable Energy Support Programme in the English border counties provides profile, supply chain development function, skills development, business and innovation support and market stimulation. Powys needs to provide a similar 'hub' to develop opportunities in this sector, for business, social and community enterprise.

A green economy in Powys is not just about low carbon technology. Powys natural assets provide 'ecosystem services' which are often hidden within traditional economic and accounting systems, but nevertheless provide economic services to our communities and the wider economy. Ecosystem services can be categorised into four areas

- Supporting (nutrients and soils)
- Provisioning (food, fibre, fuel, water)
- Regulating (carbon storage, climate regulation, water purification, flood protection)
- Cultural (educational, recreational, aesthetic value)

At present CCW are undertaking a research project called *Mapping Ecosystem Services - sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being*¹⁹. This research project is considering the following questions:

- how can the consideration of biodiversity conservation be integrated into a range of economic sectors?
- how can ecosystem services contribute to social well-being and improve the liveability of places?

¹⁹ <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/managing-land-and-sea/sustaining-ecosystem-services.aspx>

- how can the potential of green jobs be realised by building on the 'free' benefits ecosystems offer?

The following services have been mapped: carbon storage, water regulation, renewable energy, fibre, recreation and underpinning the supporting services, biodiversity. The National Ecosystem Assessment promoted by DEFRA gets into the economic modelling - which has as yet to be considered in Wales.

There is significant potential for Powys to be a Wales leader on this issue by integrating this thinking into economic regeneration, and working collaboratively with CCW, EAW and academia to start placing monetary and well-being value on ecosystems services. The 2001 CCW study offered a methodology to assign economic value to ecosystem services. It is recommended that PCC develop a collaborative process with the Wales Environment Hub at Bangor, CCW and EAW to determine a suite of appropriate pilot projects. The BBNPA also have expertise and knowledge in helping to deliver a robust method of accounting for ecosystem services.

These functions and processes provide resilience to a local rural economy, for example via soil quality for agricultural production, leisure opportunities for tourists or water for our communities. Powys needs to account for the wealth of these assets in its approach to regeneration. By using this lens, an inventory of ecosystem services could inform the cost/benefits of a proposed development in monetary terms, enabling decision makers to properly account for the impact of a development on Powys' natural assets. EAW and CCW are already developing these techniques.

CCW, National Trust and others produced a report, *Valuing Our Environment* in (2001) suggesting that jobs in on the environment sector provided £6 billion to Welsh GDP, 1 in 6 welsh jobs, £1.8 billion in wages. It is clear than in Powys, given the role of agriculture, countryside management and forestry, their supply chains and support services in the local economy that this sector forms a major part of any approach to developing a Green Economy.

In 2006 Wales Rural Observatory considered these issues in a report *Assessing Eco-Economy of Rural Wales* (2006) suggesting characteristics of a successful rural green economy are:

- creatively linking environmental value with economic value and attaching a monetary value to ecosystem services in agriculture forestry, tourism etc.
- providing a supportive local institutional and partnership ethos (particularly with land management authorities- FC, CCW, NT, EAW, NPA)
- considering demand management and growth of the green economy via positive public procurement and supply chain development
- quality and density of interactions and relationships between different sectors

The other potential growth area of Powys' future Green Economy is the area of Sustainable Tourism. WAGs *Sustainable Tourism Framework* (2007) provides a touchstone for development of Sustainable Tourism across Wales focusing on resource efficiency (energy use, food consumption) for tourism business and

visitors, considerate development of tourism infrastructure (transport, waste, sewerage) and business opportunities (e.g. agri-environment based tourism). WAGs *Tourism Investment Strategy* developed a collaborative project under the EU Convergence (Environment for Growth) programme with CADW, CCW, Environment Agency, Valleys Regional Park and tourism groups at the spatial plan level which committed £17m over 5 years. This illustrates the potential for developing Sustainable Tourism as part of the Powys offer. A co-ordinated approach to engage accommodation, retail, food, farmers, tourism and leisure businesses will be needed. The planning and impact of new tourism development needs to link with low carbon and ecosystem services approaches previously described.

Potential Quick Win 1

Develop, with partners a long term Renewable Energy Support Programme to provide - profile, business network, supply chain development, skills and business, innovation support, market stimulation. Use this as part of the Powys regeneration reputation - the 'home' of renewables technology, innovation and development in Wales.

Potential Quick Win 2

Develop, with partners a method of accounting for ecosystems services, the value they bring to the local economy and use this information in decision making. Use this as part of the Powys reputation for showing long term thinking, long term resilience, and excellent stewardship of high value natural assets.

Other Potential Project Interventions

- replicate the Green Valleys Initiative in two further areas by 2015. Identify potential areas and seek funding to initiate.
- build upon the Centre of Excellence in Machynlleth (CAT, Dulas etc.) as a centre for: learning, green tourism, research and development but also spin-off industries.
- market Parc Eco Dyfi as a centre for 'green employment'
- market Powys as a place to live low carbon lifestyles as well as work in the green technology sector – low carbon, 'slower' lifestyle, good quality environment
- The use of on farm micro hydro or other small scale renewable projects to supplement and future proof small farm incomes should be encouraged wherever possible within the current planning and environmental consenting regimes
- focus work on skills and training on low carbon technology production, installation and maintenance
- use broadband and business clusters as part of Renewable Energy Support Programme to demonstrate excellence in low impact, high value business (minimising travel - maximising new technology to 'do' business)

- develop links with FHE sector to maximise R&D in low carbon, ecosystems services and sustainable tourism. Market opportunities to undergraduates and postgraduates to undertake applied research in Powys. A green knowledge economy.
- co-ordinate a Powys approach to Sustainable Tourism with partners to deliver resource efficiencies and market this as part of the Powys offer.
- Work with PAVO to support Powys' 3500 voluntary organisations to play their part in developing green opportunities for the County.

Key messages of this section to include:

- development of low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure, services, skills and employment should form a central part of Powys' regeneration
- the role of ecosystem services and related employment are integral to Powys' future regeneration. This needs to be accounted for.
- high value discussion, co-ordination, networking and project work with partners is needed to develop a green economy in Powys. This needs upfront and long term investment to work.
- long term resilience, stewardship of natural assets, forward thinking are strong messages to give as part of the regeneration approach.

Cost Implications

The cost of the Renewable Energy Support Programme will be revenue based by using existing officer time. It is anticipated that the type of skills required for this work would have been developed through the work of Glasu in implementing RDP schemes. Successfully developing a Renewable Energy Support Programme and the ecosystem services will require dedicated and professional input. One full time equivalent post will be required to facilitate the implementation of these two initiatives.

The Ecosystem Services costs may be borne from within existing revenue budgets and is not a capital project.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: **Green Powys**
- 2: **Skilled Powys**
- 3: **Resilient Communities**
- 4: **Economic Development**
- 6: **Renewable Energy**
- 8: **Tourism**

9: Location of Choice

5.7 Regeneration Priority 6 - Promoting Powys

Priority Overview

How Powys' qualities are sold to the wider world is likely to have an significant positive impact upon the County and can therefore help to meet the Vision and Objectives of the regeneration strategy.

Promoting Powys covers two main topics, these are:

- Tourism promotion and destination marketing for potential visitors as tourists
- Communicating Powys' values, attributes and unique selling points of all aspects of the County and the celebration of success which is likely to be targeted towards: potential investors, potential partners and people considering migrating to Powys

Tourism as a means of developing the economy has been a recurrent theme of discussions with stakeholders. There appears to be a broad recognition that tourism is an important potential component of Powys's economy, both now and in the future.

4.6m people per annum come into the County to enjoy its beautiful rolling countryside and attractive towns, its forest, reservoirs, lakes and rivers, its wildlife, outstanding events and festivals and its Welshness. In doing so, they spend over £615m in the local economy which support 12,152 FTE jobs. Tourism currently provides 12% of the total employment opportunities in the County which is high in comparison the Welsh average of 8%.²⁰

On the face of it this is impressive but, in truth, Powys has all the natural attributes to do much better. It has all the ingredients for successful sustainable tourism including walking, cycling, riding, fishing, watersports, wildlife watching and activity tourism. For Powys, a competitive tourism offer in the context of the regeneration strategy means:

- An increase in the amount of 'new money' entering the local economy and the positive multiplier impact of this for local people
- The ability to use tourism as the basis from which a positive image of the County can be projected which will have an impact on broader economic development
- Opportunities for small businesses
- Potential to support local services which resident communities can benefit from (e.g., public transport)
- The need for effective asset management, especially in relation to ecosystems, habitats and landscapes
- Opportunities to distinguish Powys from other parts of Wales by selling something unique and distinctive
- Capitalising on the scale of the County as an area of wilderness and solitude

²⁰ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432115/report.aspx>

- Building on its existing 'eco-tourism' assets such as Centre for Alternative Energy and Cambrian Mountains Initiative, Brecon Beacons National Park and the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve.

There are already six objectives for tourism in Mid-Wales which include²¹:

- increasing the quality of the visitor experience and supporting infrastructure
- increasing leisure, heritage and cultural opportunities for both visitors and local people
- developing key sectors for sustainable growth
- attracting high spending staying visitors
- extending the tourism season
- strengthening the area's sense of identity on a sub-regional and local basis.

This regeneration strategy supports these objectives. In addition to this, the recent Rural Development Programme (2007 – 2013) highlights the need to build on the value of Powys unique physical, social and cultural assets to enhance the potential of the tourism, food and creative sectors. It highlights the need to:

"improve and promote Powys' tourism product by building on its unique selling points such as its landscape and natural environment whilst making sure it is safeguarded."

The aim of Sustainable Tourism Powys, a project under the Rural Development Plan is to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry in Powys by increasing and raising the quality of facilities, improving accessibility of individual tourism producers and improving the performance of tourism businesses and attractions.

To realise the vision for the County there will be a need to nurture, support, direct and harness the growth of tourism in Powys. This should be achieved by working in partnership with Visit Wales and Tourism Partnership Mid Wales. The emphasis should be on low volume, high value tourism for the discerning visitor who wants beautiful scenery, activity and excellent creative comforts.

Tourism in Powys will be promoted as part of Mid-Wales, rather than as Powys in isolation, in conjunction with Visit Wales preferred approach for a regional, thematic offer. Within this, the development of tourism in Powys should be directed along several themes which should incorporate:

Theme	Example
Sport and activities	Walking tourism building on the successful Leaping Stiles project which has generated a network of walking routes from communities as well as long distance routes like the Offa's

²¹ The Tourism Opportunities Action Plan Framework : Enhancing Tourism In Central Wales (2007)

	Dyke path and the Wye Valley Walk. As well as mountain biking linked to forest sites
Wilderness, ecology and wildlife	Red kite feeding at Gigrin Farm Rhayader, the Osprey project near Machynlleth and working in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts
Events	Events and festivals, both national, regional and local, as part of an integrated year round programme including Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Hay on Wye, Green Man Festival, Bog snorkelling at Llanwrtyd Wells
Market towns	Celebrating Powys' contribution to the handsome Market Towns of Mid-Wales
Food	Promoting local produce through bespoke branding (such as the Cambrian Mountains Initiative) and food festivals.
Business and product quality	Working with tourism 'providers' such as guest houses, restaurants, attractions to improve quality
Transport	It is important to maximise the potential of visitor facilities from towns and villages to garages, cafés and hotels by making them attractive and welcoming and encouraging travellers to stop, use the facilities and explore.
'Eco' tourism	Developing a reputation for low impact tourism linked to other thematic elements
Culture, music, language and arts	Celebrate the achievement of Powys cultural communities and the vibrancy of the Welsh language
History and heritage	Heritage and culture linking together historic sites and museums as an integrated package

The National Park has now been designated by Visit Wales (with Powys CC agreement) as a destination in its own right and is pursuing a process of destination management based on partnership development and sustainability.

Although Powys has an abundance of potential opportunities to exploit it will be important that the 'product' offer is nurtured and supported by:

- skills development and training at all levels

- high quality websites and marketing
- welcoming appearance and first impressions

The strategy for promoting tourism in Powys is about talking about the place in the context of Mid-Wales. This is the most appropriate approach in terms of tourism, as it fits neatly with national strategies and is also consistent with the fact that Powys is an administrative and political entity, which resonates poorly with holidaying guests.

However, this does not mean that the County of Powys should not be promoted or celebrated. Indeed, not 'selling' what the County can offer is missing a major opportunity to attract people, business and funding to the area. Therefore, the regeneration process needs to focus on promoting the success of Powys as a place and cultivating a positive image of the County which will help to attract: potential investors, businesses looking to relocate and people wanting to migrate. In this sense, the County Council, alongside other partners, need to determine the values which they want to portray and the means by which they do this. Essentially, it might say "this is how we do things here".

Communicating Powys' selling points needs to focus on what is good about life and business in the County, whilst emphasising the sectors and activities in which Powys is leading Wales and the UK. It is important that Powys has a profile which is built upon the many things which it does far better than other places in Wales and the UK. For example, this might include:

- Thriving, resilient communities
- Agriculture, food, water and forestry
- Manufacturing
- Research and development – particularly in relation to renewable and low carbon lifestyles
- Renewable energy
- Tourism (in all its many forms)

This process of communication may also focus on what is happening in Powys to make the place even better (the outcomes of this strategy). This may include the construction of new schools to improve an already excellent education system and future enhancements to broadband coverage and speed etc.

Potential Quick Win 1

Hosting a Powys Tourism Expo could bring together a broad variety of companies, agencies and organisations to: share best practice, attend numerous seminars, network, exhibit and learn from one another and keynote speakers. This event would provide the opportunity to connect with a large audience of tourism operators and businesses in a single event. The purpose of the event would be to enable the private sector to improve tourism within the County.

Potential Quick Win 2

Work with partners to develop a set of values for the County which need to be effectively communicated. Work with appropriately qualified marketing and branding professionals to develop a website, social networking forms and a media campaign which will help to raise the profile of the County as a place to live and do business. There is also potential for this process to communicate how Powys is moving forward by explaining the initiatives which arise from this strategy and the action plan.

Other potential project interventions

- Support measures for e-marketing within the tourism sectors
- Audit of tourism in Powys to define tourism success stories and share these with relevant people/organisations throughout the County
- Develop the notion of Powys being 'the home of renewable energy in Wales' (see 5.1)

Key Messages

- Powys' assets are rich but tourism in the County has the potential to make a much more significant contribution to regeneration
- Tourism has the potential to work across several other priorities such as 5 and 7
- Low volume, high value tourism provides the best fit with Powys' offer
- Skills development and support is required if Powys' tourism industry is to fulfil its potential
- Communicate Powys' approach to resilience, wellbeing, prosperity and regeneration to a broader audience beyond potential tourists as a way of encouraging people to live and invest in the County

Cost Implications

There are revenue costs of a tourism expo in the County, which will need to be determined and borne by the County Council. These will include venue hire and marketing, although some of this could be recouped by selling space to exhibitors.

It is not currently known whether the County Council has the internal capacity to undertake a branding review. An anticipated cost for using external expertise is likely to be in the region of £25,000.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys
- 3: Resilient Communities

4: Economic Development

5: Access to Services

7: Cultural Powys

8: Tourism

5.8 Regeneration Priority 7 - Supporting Powys' economy

Priority Overview

Securing Powys' future will rely on having an economy that is "resilient to natural fluctuations or events that cause disturbance or damage" (1.1.2). This regeneration strategy sets out the main priorities for economic development which emerged through the research and stakeholder consultation.

The headline economic factors which this Regeneration Strategy has identified and seeks to address are:

Issues	Opportunities
<p>Low wage economy – In 2007 weekly full time pay in Powys was £34.30 lower than the Welsh average.</p>	<p>Diverse employment base - 73.2% of the 4,601 workplaces surveyed in the 2007 Annual Business Inquiry for Powys were Micro Enterprises employing less than 5 people (Wales 67.7%)</p>
<p>Declining economic prosperity - Powys GVA fell from 76% of UK average to 67% between 2003 & 2005. Whilst the figure for Wales only fell 1%.²²</p>	<p>Excellence in green technology – as a result of Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)</p>
<p>Reducing entrepreneurial activity – high proportion of self employment (20% in 2008), but this is declining (from 25% in 2004)²³</p>	<p>Importance of food – agriculture equates to 41% of the employment structure (compared to 16% for Wales)²⁴</p>
<p>Lack of a University – to generate R&D and high value added sectors</p>	<p>High level of economic activity - the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Powys is lower than the Welsh average (2.7% compared to 4.3% in July 2009)²⁵</p>
<p>Poor broadband connectivity – speeds less than 2MBps is normal (50MBps is average)</p>	<p>High quality education - the school reorganisation and modernisation programmes are combining to create community skill hubs</p>

²² National Assembly for Wales (2009) *Regional & Local Gross Value Added*

²³ ONS, 2008

²⁴ ONS, 2008

²⁵ ONS, 2008

“Powys has the highest concentration of self-employed workers in Wales.”

Experian, 2010

This Regeneration Strategy for Powys, unlike others in Wales, does not have to confront major structural economic change. Whilst there are issues to address, Powys’ economy is largely founded upon agriculture and a diverse community of micro-businesses. The absence of large employers and the preponderance of micro-businesses means that Powys’ economy has been described as the second most resilient in Wales, behind Monmouthshire.²⁶

Agriculture is clearly very important to Powys. Apart from making up the most dominant economic sector it is possibly also the reason for the high proportion of businesses employing very small numbers of people. This importance means that Powys has a crucial role to play in future UK food security, but it also suggests that the County’s economy may be particularly susceptible to fluctuations in value caused by more frequent extreme weather events, locally and globally. Ensuring that farms are able to tap into other sources of income is therefore crucially important for them to be able to cope with fluctuating prices. Farm diversification is therefore extremely important to enabling the Powys economy to be more resilient. It is the role of development management to determine the impact of diversification on the broader environment and ecosystem services.

The lack of large urbanised settlements and concentrated areas of population means that Powys’ economy must be driven by: diversity, flexibility and renewable assets. The ineligibility to access funding for the County such as EU Convergence Funding also dictates that the County Council and their partners cannot rely upon being able to attract substantial new employers to the County via grants or gap funding to remediate and service development sites.

Therefore, to make Powys’ economy more resilient it needs to be supported by nurturing what is already here, rather than artificially grafting on new sectors. There are several sectors of Powys’ existing economy which should have particular emphasis as they are well aligned to: national and local policy frameworks, local appetite and interest (as demonstrated at stakeholder workshops) and current funding arrangements. The aspects of Powys’ economy which should be targeted for support and development are as follows:

Sector	Rationale
Renewable energy generation and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of ‘centre of excellence’ at CAT • Natural assets (e.g. strategic area of search for windfarms and rivers) • Micro expertise through Green Valleys Initiative • Strong policy drivers

²⁶ Experian (2010) *Understanding Resilience, Background Information – Wales*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing local, national and global demand • Potential £50bn WAG investment in large renewable energy and other low carbon electricity projects over the next 10 to 15 years²⁷
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of Powys culture • Most prominent component of existing economy (41%) • Growing consumer awareness of provenance of food and quality • Strong, yet diverse agricultural sector is important to whole of Powys' economy • Scope for diversification
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and quality of tourism assets (e.g. Cambrian Mountains, Elan Valley) • Proximity to large conurbations • Sector currently underperforming in Powys²⁸ • Clear framework of national and local strategies and policies
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of high quality manufacturing sector in County • Presence of <i>Mid Wales Manufacturing</i> at partnership level • Potential for manufacturing to contribute to green economy • UK manufacturing is seeing strongest growth for fifteen years (4.3% in August 2010)
Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of health and social care to Powys economy • Growing importance in an ageing population

Potential Quick Win 1

²⁷ A Low Carbon Revolution – The Welsh Assembly Government Policy Statement (March 2010) as cited in Research into the Renewable Energy Sector in Mid Wales (August 2010) Central Wales Economic Forum

²⁸ ONS (2008)

SMEs are often the lifeblood of a region and play a vital role in supporting local economies in terms of:

- employment
- recruiting apprentices, many of whom go on to become masters of their trade, take up managerial or professional roles or even form their own new businesses
- using local suppliers

A particularly important feature of this priority will be to establish an SME development programme, harnessing the roles of the Council's various partners, with the Council taking an active role in:

- Optimising opportunities for SMEs through procurement
- Encouraging construction companies to engage and develop their local supply chains through training and improvement workshops
- Facilitating the clustering of SMEs to bid collectively as a consortium for large projects
- Involving the Council's partners (Colleges, Chamber of Commerce, PAVO etc) in supporting the SMEs in achieving competitive advantage by preparing high quality, well drafted bids that highlight the company's strengths, good practices and unique selling points.

The monitoring of this programme will be important to demonstrate impact against targets. New Economics Foundation's LM3 methodology is one way of demonstrating the impact of this approach.

Potential Quick Win 2

Farm diversification can help to safeguard Powys' rural economy by providing additional sources of income which can help to maintain viability when commodity prices are low. A good example of this is the Rural Development Plan Axis 3 Farm Diversification (Measure 311). Within this, capital grants can be used for renewable energy installations, purchasing necessary equipment, site preparation and building works. Whilst revenue grants can be used for: websites, marketing materials, consultancy fees or professional development (if not eligible for funding elsewhere such as Farming Connect).

Some examples of areas of activity that might be supported by Axis 3:

- Renewable energy production
- Website development
- Tourism activities or accommodation
- Equine services
- On-farm retail and mobile catering
- Added value food brands
- Craft and local products
- Training and education facilities

Potential Quick Win 3

Powys needs to adopt a model of development that creates wealth from within communities by nurturing intelligence and resourcefulness of local people by mentoring local talent. The aim is the creation of quality local enterprises that diversify the economic base, create jobs, respect the natural environment, and seek to infuse the community with local vigour.

There are numerous enterprise mentoring models that the County Council could deploy for limited cost. The most prominent are *Enterprise Facilitation* (Sirolli Institute) and *Bizzfizz* (New Economics Foundation and the Civic Trust).

Successful mentoring is based on the passion, entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity found in every community. Both models use trained facilitators to establish mentoring panels from successful local businesses which are then enabled to assist and support fledgling businesses within their communities.

Sirolli Enterprise facilitators are active internationally. In the UK facilitators are currently working in Liverpool, Northumberland and Blaenau Gwent. Whereas during 2002 to 2006, Bizzfizz supported over 1,000 clients in 13 communities across England.

Powys should identify a small number of pilot communities where this approach can be trialed. The outcomes of these pilot projects should be carefully monitored and appraised to determine the how this approach could be up-scaled to be applied to the rest of the County.

Other Potential Project Interventions

Whilst there are groups which already support businesses in Powys such as Mid-Wales Manufacturing and the Farmers Unions there is much that Powys County Council and its partners can do to enable Powys' economy to flourish. This may include:

- Lobbying for investment in high-speed broadband to Welsh Assembly Government and private sector providers. (See Priority 4)
- Considering how the Local Development Plan might:
 - Enable people to run businesses from their home or annex buildings
 - Relax planning policies in certain locations or circumstances
- Improving the business support information published on the County Council website
- Developing a one-stop-shop approach to streamlined business support and advice to Powys' manufacturing sector by working with partner organisations like Mid-Wales Manufacturing
- Develop targeted business support to micro-businesses

- Supporting Powys SMEs to give them the skills which enable them to bid for public sector contracts
- Considering areas where unnecessary or excessive regulation are inhibiting enterprise
- Maintaining many of the supportive measures which have been implemented through Glasu via the Rural Development Plan

Key Messages

- Economic diversity is key to Powys future
- Broadband is an essential way of unleashing the potential of SME's and in particular 'home-workers'
- Several key sectors will drive Powys' future
- The County Council have a crucial enabling role to facilitate economic resilience

Cost Implications

The creation of the SME Development Programme will not require any capital funding, but will require substantial officer time.

The creation of the mentoring programme, if approached in the way suggested, will require the procurement of external expertise. It is anticipated that the cost of running a small number of pilot projects in the manner outlined above is unlikely to exceed £40,000.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys**
- 2: Skilled Powys**
- 3: Resilient Communities**
- 4: Economic Development**
- 6: Renewable Energy**
- 7: Cultural Powys**
- 8: Tourism**
- 9: Location of Choice**

5.9 Regeneration Priority 8 - Empowering Council officers

Priority Overview

Regenerating Powys will require the County Council to match the creativity, energy and enthusiasm of its resident and business communities by becoming more responsive and proactive. Of all the issues considered during stakeholder consultation 'working differently' was one of the most prominent, especially among Council employees who demonstrated a tremendous appetite for change.

For this change to happen in a way which supports the regeneration Strategy, Council employees who have a potential influence, however minor, on the delivery of regeneration objectives will need to be empowered to: take greater responsibility, make decisions, manage projects and work cross-departmentally. This applies to all levels of the County Council. The Powys Change Plan, Single Delivery Plan and move to a Cabinet model of governance will create the appropriate conditions where this regeneration priority can flourish.

The key mechanism for initiating this change is imminent – the move to a Cabinet system. This will enable Powys County Council to develop an environment where powers for certain types of decision making (i.e., non-contentious decisions under certain financial thresholds) can be delegated from Councillors to Senior Officers. This will not only speed up decision making, but will create a less hierarchical structure that will allow a culture of delegation to permeate through the organisation.

One of the challenges of managing personnel in Powys is the physical size of the County. Some of the outcomes of this are:

- valuable time is spent travelling
- expenses claims are a substantial budget burden
- staff are physically remote from one another, emphasising the professional 'silos' that exist to some extent in any large organisation

'Working differently' will require the Council to adopt IT solutions which will help to mitigate the size of the County and increase productivity. The use of applications like: Cisco Webex, Skype and teleconferencing will liberate staff by enabling them work in 'virtual teams' which are actually dispersed throughout the County (in Council offices and from home offices). However, the need for effective broadband coverage is an essential precondition for this to be effective.

Moving away from more hierarchical forms of management is becoming more common. For instance many Local Authorities have adopted the 'development team' approach, where inter-departmental project teams are assembled for agreed projects. A common application of this is through area development management teams which bring together traditional disciplines of Building Control, Development Control, Environmental Health and Estates functions. Indeed, Glasu, already appear to be structured on a similar basis.

Powys County Council has a plethora of strategies to guide activity. Whilst, it has not been the purpose of this report to appraise these strategies for suitability or impact, an assessment of *clarity* has been undertaken. This assessment along with feedback from stakeholder workshops has highlighted that greater 'strategy clarity' is required in order to focus and join up effort. Highlighting where the Regeneration Strategy sits in the context of the 'golden thread' will be an essential way of ensuring that Council officials and members are all able to contribute to 'regeneration' as a corporate improvement priority.

Empowering Council officers will require clear parameters to be drawn so that officers are given the scope and freedom to take risks within the agreed parameters. The Single Delivery Plan, Powys Change Plan and this regeneration strategy provide clarity about corporate priorities. There is potential that the regeneration strategy is merely seen as another initiative which results in increased workload, without increasing staff numbers or budgets. However, the purpose of this approach is to do more with less, which will mean making sure that officers are spending more time on activities which count and no time on those which are outside of the policy/strategy parameters.

Potential Quick Win 1

There is scope for each of the regeneration priorities outlined in this section to be led by a small project group. The group should ideally be made up of people whose skills are complementary and suited to the nature of the work stream. Each regeneration priority will, in effect, become a pilot project of what could be achieved if this model of skills focused task based working were applied to broader aspects of Council activity.

The key to the success of the group is to ensure that the officers have sufficient empowerment to be able to take actions and decisions that will cut through barriers that would otherwise hinder progress. The project team may call upon the skills of other people as required.

Ideally, the same people should not be part of the leadership of more than one work stream to allow them sufficient time to make progress on any actions and also to minimise their time commitments away from their other duties.

Spreading the workload may also provide some development opportunities for upcoming potential managers and rising stars within the Council.

The location of the individuals is not essential as they should be encouraged to utilise a variety of communication systems (such as teleconferencing and Skype) to project manage the regeneration priority.

Training may be provided to the project teams in terms of:

- a full project briefing on the scope of the workstream and expected outcomes and timescales

- The extent of their roles and responsibilities
- Reporting arrangements
- Communication systems and tools e.g. document sharing, video conferencing, etc.

Potential Quick Win 2

Powys County Council and other partners should consider a review of current activities which are already underway which fit with the regeneration strategy. In addition to this, activities and/or initiatives which may undermine the objectives of the strategy should also be indicated.

Other Potential Project Interventions

- A Powys regeneration newsletter highlighting good practice and project successes
- Staff profiles – and how they helped achieve regeneration priorities
- Explore future scenario planning with Council officers to understand their potential responses to anticipated changes such as: peak oil, climate change, etc.

Key Messages

- Demand to work differently was very prominent from Council officers through stakeholder workshop
- Streamlined decision making is possible via a move to a Cabinet system
- Information technology is an essential way of overcoming geographical distance and departmental barriers
- Strategy decluttering and clarification will help ensure that regeneration objectives are more clearly understood
- The development team or project-led working can help to deliver results

Cost Implications

The recommended quick win project will require officer time to develop and will eventually require broadband and Council IT infrastructure to be of an appropriate standard (see Priority 4). Quick Win 2 is likely to require dedicated officer support for a six month period.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys
- 2: Skilled Powys
- 3: Resilient Communities
- 4: Economic Development
- 5: Access to Services
- 6: Renewable Energy
- 7: Cultural Powys
- 8: Tourism
- 9: Location of Choice

5.10 Regeneration Priority 9 - Facilitating the resilience and renaissance of Powys' town and village centres

Priority Overview

Achieving a network of town and village centres which are attractive and vibrant is an important way in which the Regeneration Strategy can help to make the County more appealing, commercially vibrant and resilient. One of Powys' most prominent assets is the distinctive quality of its network of market towns and village centres. It is important that these qualities are emphasised to:

- sustain them as attractive and vibrant places to live
- maintain them as places to access goods and services
- enhance them as places for employment and commerce
- improve them to make them attractive and places for tourism (see Priority 6)

Town and village centre regeneration in Powys will need to adopt a different approach to that which is being applied elsewhere in Wales. The resilience of Powys' town and village centres should not rely on the availability of funding to contribute towards capital improvements, although this would be welcome wherever it is available (for example Townscape Heritage Initiative funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund or in Ystradgynlais, through Western Valleys Regeneration Area funding). Instead, an extended menu of measures need to be adopted which will enable Powys' towns to thrive which takes a more social and commercial approach to place management. This is based on a *Whole Town Strategy* approach.

The trading communities in Powys's town centres are critical partners in making these places work better. Whilst it is not always easy, the County Council, and other public sector partners need to build strong relationships with traders and other town centre stakeholders which are based around shared agendas and positive outcomes.

The County Council need to facilitate these relationships so that they result in realistic *Whole Town Strategies*, ideally one will be prepared for each town, but this will depend on the appetite of local people becoming involved. The ownership of these plans should rest with the community and not the County Council. It will be the County Council's role to facilitate and support the local town centre stakeholders.

The purpose of these Strategies will be to demonstrate what can be achieved by all of the stakeholders working together to develop realistic but positive ideas which will help towns thrive in the future. As well as honing ideas, the process should be about empowering traders to take a more proactive role in the promotion and management of their towns, rather just relying upon the County Council, WAG or BBNPA. In places, where organisations and networks are already mature this will be relatively easy to implement, whereas in other places with lower capacity a longer period of support and development will be required.

An approach to this has been developed through the Sustaining Small Expanding Towns (SusSET) project, an EU initiative sponsored by the INTERREG IIIc programme, involving 12 towns - with populations between 5,000 and 35,000 - from Scotland, Sweden, Poland and Greece. In general terms, the Scottish and Swedish towns are steadily growing,

whilst the Polish and Greek towns are in the process of restructuring and trying to grow sustainably. Together, these 12 towns have worked for almost three years to explore and share their ideas and experiences. The results are contained in the *Scottish Toolkit for Sustainable Small Town Strategy*²⁹. This *Whole Town Strategy* is an approach which should be replicated in Powys and could be implemented through the preparation of town centre action plans with stakeholders.



Typical outcomes of this type of action planning process might include:

- The agreement of developing the town to promote a certain niche (e.g. the model developed by Hay-on-Wye book town or Ludlow as a 'food town')
- The creation or rejuvenation of a Chamber of Trade
- The development of locally based loyalty cards
- The encouragement of retail innovation and improvement (e.g., shop window competitions)
- The development of town centre websites
- Targeted capital expenditure such as Christmas lights, public realm enhancements, building enhancements etc
- The creation or rejuvenation of a programme of regular events
- A local awards programme for business improvement

²⁹ <http://www.susset.org/index.html>

- Promoting proposals for appropriate new development
- Resisting proposals for new development detrimental to the town centre

Powys County Council and other partners need to invest in its town centre traders. These people provide important sources of local jobs and represent essential locations for goods and services in rural communities, which if lost can have devastating consequences. The approaches based upon mentoring outlined in 5.8 are highly relevant to town centre traders.

One of the ways of commencing the process, might be via the LDP, which will need to carefully consider the impact of new development on town centres in conjunction with local stakeholders.

An effective approach to enhancing the physical attractiveness of town centres, without the necessity of external capital funding, is by working with the Local Highway Authority (and sometimes, WAG as trunk road agency) to reduce the amount of clutter in Powys's town centres. This has benefits in terms of reducing highways maintenance, but can have a considerable impact upon increasing the quality of townscape and legibility for drivers and pedestrians. *Manual for Streets 2* (Department for Transport, 2010), which has been adopted by WAG as policy guidance, suggests that each piece of street furniture should "earn its right" to be in the public realm. Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 01/08 *Traffic Management & Streetscape* (Department for Transport 2008) develops similar recommendations for clutter removal and should be adopted by the Local Highway Authority (the County Council) if not already done so.

Potential Quick Win 1

Develop a methodology which allows Council officers and other partners to work with town centre stakeholders. This should include action planning workshops on a Whole Town Strategy approach. These workshops should partly comprise of:

- An exploration of the issues and opportunities
- Best practice advice on what other similar places have been able to achieve
- The focusing of ideas and solutions into short, medium and long term actions
- These sessions should also support and develop the knowledge and understanding of the participants so that they are able to maintain involvement and reduce the necessity for ongoing Council responsibility

Potential Quick Win 2

Undertake a review of signs, lines, columns and markings in each town centre and develop a five year, prioritised action plan for the reduction of unnecessary clutter. Use this as the guide to future town centre highway maintenance so that, gradually, the amount of unnecessary regulatory equipment and markings in town centres is reduced.

Potential Quick Win 3

Use the LDP process to advocate the protection of the vitality and viability of town centres by either promoting town centre development sites or protecting town centres from potentially inappropriate development.

Key Messages

- A process of involving town centre stakeholders in developing a Whole Town Strategy for their place will help the County Council to facilitate town centre regeneration
- Invest in town centre traders as sources of important local employment
- Improve the quality of town centres through minor, ongoing works (such as clutter removal) rather than relying upon major capital improvement programmes

Cost Implications

The cost of running the series of spatial planning events will require officer time to develop a carefully designed methodology to consultation. There is a requirement for two full time equivalent posts/secondments for one year. Alternatively, external expertise could be considered, the cost of which is unlikely to exceed £50,000.

A review of town centre clutter will result in cost savings following an initial expenditure to review the amount of regulatory equipment in each town.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys**
- 3: Resilient Communities**
- 4: Economic Development**
- 5: Access to Services**

5.11 Regeneration Priority 10 - Housing improvement as a regeneration catalyst

Priority Overview

Housing has become one of the major drivers for regeneration elsewhere in Wales and has the potential to become a significant catalyst in Powys.

One of the key requirements highlighted by the Local Housing Market Assessment (Powys County Council, 2010) was the need for affordable housing. This illustrates the importance of enhancing incomes by supporting the economy (Priority 7, 5.8), but also by increasing the supply of properties accessible to those on low incomes.

“38.3% of Powys households would not have sufficient income to raise a first-time buyer mortgage on a 2-bedroom ‘starter home’ house in Powys”

Local Housing Market Assessment (Powys County Council, 2010)

The Powys Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) highlights the following issues:

- Ageing population - high need for sheltered accommodation & care homes. Need to provide the elderly with downsizing opportunities in-order to free up existing family accommodation.
- Affordability – a need for affordable housing (35%) which includes: Social rented accommodation and intermediate tenure accommodation (which includes Affordable Housing for Sale, Shared-ownership, shared equity (e.g. Homebuy scheme) and Intermediate rent).
- Decreasing household size - need for 1 & 2 bedroom accommodation
- Even though Powys has a high level of housing need, it also has approximately 2000 empty homes which require incentives to bring them back into use.³⁰

Achieving Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is an important commitment to invest in social housing stock in the County. It is currently anticipated that the County Council are able to meet WHQS and unlike other Authorities the County Council are not currently considering transferring stock to a community mutual in order to satisfy their WHQS obligations. Therefore, the ability to meet this commitment and achieve maximum regenerative impact is within the County Council’s direct control. However, the County Council should assess whether transferring to a stock transfer organisation could have greater regenerative impact than if the stock remained in the County Council.

The County Council manage 5445 dwellings in Powys (as of March 2008) and there are around 2,500 Housing Association properties in the County. Achieving WHQS is an important initiative that will help to fulfil the objectives of this Regeneration Strategy. To achieve this, the implementation of WHQS needs to be targeted to ensure that Powys County Council and Housing Associations are not just meeting WHQS but are also

³⁰ (Source - Council Tax register of unoccupied properties).

simultaneously working towards many of the obligations of this strategy. Guidance such as the WAG 'Can Do Toolkit' is an important way of maximising the benefit of housing investment to ensure appropriate training, local jobs and targeted procurement. By linking major home improvement programmes back to the regeneration priorities the County Council has the ability to achieve a substantial multiplier effect from this process. The main priorities which intersect with this are:

- Priority 1 - Harnessing community strength
- Priority 3 - Regeneration led procurement
- Priority 5 - Exploiting the green economy
- Priority 7 – Supporting the Powys economy
- Priority 8 - Empowering Council officers
- Priority 11 - Education, Skills and Training

As well as improvements to public sector stock there are also needs and opportunities to improve the quality of private sector properties. The main tool for achieving this is through Housing Renewal Area designation. There are already three Housing Renewal Areas in Powys (Llanwddyn, Llandrindod and Hay-on-Wye). There may be opportunities to consider the regenerative role of obtaining funding for the development of new Housing Renewal Areas even though, nationally, funding for Renewal Areas is being reduced.

However, one of the major problems in Powys, relative to the rest of 'urbanised' Wales, is the dispersed nature of the housing stock. Rather than having concentrated areas of housing in need of repair (such as areas of the Valleys or urban Victorian terraces) almost half of Powys' stock which are classified as 'unfit' are detached properties (Local Housing Market Assessment (Powys County Council, 2010)), indicating that the most likely properties in poor condition are isolated rural dwellings.

Funding reductions dictate that there may not be any further opportunities to consider the regenerative role of designating new *Housing Renewal Areas*. However, there are emerging tools to deal with unfit properties dispersed over rural areas. These include:

- Interest free loans
- Energy efficiency measures
- Specialist advice and assistance
- Enforcement action

The newly formed Private Sector Housing / Rural Housing Enabler Partnership should identify opportunities to use private sector housing funding to provide cheap/interest free loans to private landlords to bring back into use empty properties for rent. A priority will be to determine mechanisms which promote the improvement of isolated rural dwellings

Phase 1 of WAG's ARBED programme will be completed in Spring 2011. This programme sought to improve the energy efficiency of some of Wales' most inefficient homes in areas of deprivation with many of these being of non-traditional construction. Phase one of ARBED was largely area based, i.e., focussed upon renewal areas, WAG regeneration areas and Communities First areas. Phase 2 of ARBED is being launched imminently and

Powys County Council will need to consider how the County's communities are able to benefit from this funding. Arbed will link well with a number of initiatives already ongoing or in the process of development around feed in tariffs and also the £400k a year PCC currently invest via the Wales ECO Centre by way of the Co2i scheme which provides incentive for private households to fit energy saving measures in their homes.

There are numerous opportunities to consider the role of community finance and enterprise to support home improvement which enhances energy efficiency. Robert Owen Community Banking Fund is offering Renewable Energy Loans and Home Improvement Loans to Powys residents and the County Council should explore the opportunities for expanding this kind of enabling *community mutual* as a way of promoting housing improvement.

The County Council, therefore need to work with Housing Associations and WAG to coordinate increasing the supply of affordable housing in the County . An example of this is the £6.2m scheme to build 50 "affordable" homes with Mid Wales Housing Association in Newtown, using £3.2m of Strategic Capital Investment Fund (SCIF). This scheme was a major component of PCC's housing strategy and that in addition to SCIF funding, PCC is investing its own money to provide intermediate rented housing that tenants will have the option to purchase at a later stage.

Sustaining Powys into the future is going to be dependent on having an adequate supply of housing and jobs. The Local Housing Market Assessment (Powys County Council, 2010) suggests that Powys requires over 4000 new homes by 2014 and has over 2000 properties currently vacant. Therefore the Local Development Plan will need to identify an appropriate supply of land to meet the requirements of the County's communities. Traditionally, the most likely source of investment for new homes in the County was through private sector developers and WAG's Social Housing Grant (SHG), provided to Housing Associations to develop affordable housing. Given that the housing market remains extremely cautious and SHG is likely to be reduced in 2011/2012, the County Council quickly need to adopt new mechanisms for increasing housing supply. Some of these mechanisms might include:

- Exploring the contribution that self build can make and what the Council can do to facilitate this
- Providing the private sector with de-risked opportunities to speculate (i.e., by allocating sites, conducting thorough advance consultation and preparing detailed development briefs)
- Investigating alternative means of providing funding support for residential development
- Intermediate market housing

Intermediate market housing is one way of increasingly the availability of housing in the County. Until recently many people accessed the housing market via 100%+ mortgages. This is clearly a large area of unmet need, and many Housing Associations/Councils, including those in Powys, are actively developing intermediate rentschemes which enable the tenant to build up a deposit to secure purchase in the future. In ensuring scarce social housing grant (SHG) has maximum impact, the development of intermediate rent schemes requires less grant, and clearly enables more housing to be provided, with a knock on effect on the building industry in the area. The emergence of new models of

delivery is something which can help to have an impact on the regeneration objectives for Powys.

One opportunity to bring forward the amount of new housing that Powys needs will be to monitor the progression of the Localism Bill in England and understand its eventual transition into Wales. This is especially relevant where housing development opportunities have overriding community support.

Powys County Council and other social landlords have the opportunity to use its housing stock as a way of engaging with local communities in the regeneration process. Housing management is extremely tenant focused and as a result of this, people based service mainstream housing management brings with it numerous opportunities to achieve the regeneration 'multiplier effect' mentioned elsewhere in this report. An example of this is the way that Bron Afon Housing (former Torfaen CBC) are managing their rent arrears. Rather than pursue a punitive approach (i.e., a series of reminder letters followed by eviction), housing managers and debt councillors have worked with tenants to address the underlying reasons for arrears. This has dramatically reduced tenant turnover and rent arrears (with the associated savings to the organisation) but has also had a considerable impact on the quality of life of Bron Afon's tenants.

Potential Quick Win 1

Promote the development of key sites for housing development through the LDP, particularly with more flexible policies in built up areas and substantially de-risk these opportunities by conducting detailed stakeholder engagement, community planning exercises and (where the County Council is the landowner) technical studies to reduce uncertainty to the private sector. Wherever possible, development briefs and Supplementary Planning Guidance should be prepared for sites to give clarity to potential developers regarding the type of use and site configurations which would be supported by the County Council and Brecon Beacons National Park as Local Planning Authorities.

Potential Quick Win 2

Capitalise on Powys' quality of life by providing a fast track service to people who want to build their own home. This might include greater collaboration between planners, building surveyors, potential funding sources, renewable energy advice. Whilst important, this measure is not going to solve the County's housing issues and needs to be complemented by other initiatives.

Potential Quick Win 3

The County Council should investigate ways in which it provides direct finance for affordable housing development and in-particular those undertaking self-builds or seeking to purchase affordable housing for sale e.g. mortgage guarantees, mortgages, loans, development finance etc. A project initiative which involves some kind of bridging loan/mortgage guarantees, should it be expedient and lawful to do so. This is something that has been discussed in the Affordable Housing Partnership and with finance with a view to producing an options paper to Board/Cabinet.

Potential Quick Win 4

The County Council should work with its partners to develop a common housing needs register to capture all manner of housing need as well as being a tool for lean process and simplification of current systems for the benefit of landlords and applicants. In time we would foresee this encompassing other forms of social letting through our partnership working with the private sector.

These mechanisms (and many others) should be considered by the Affordable Housing Partnership who would also be a beneficiary of the type of procurement modifications discussed above.

Other Potential Project Interventions

- Assess regenerative costs/benefits of transferring stock to new organisation
- Explore opportunities for encouraging the improvement of isolated rural dwellings, particularly through the LDP by creating flexible policies which promote the conversion of rural buildings for housing
- Work with Housing Associations to coordinate increasing the supply of housing for sale through low cost home ownership
- Use the emerging Localism Bill as a way of working with communities who want to promote sites for development which meet local needs

Key Messages

- WHQS needs to be targeted to maximise regeneration 'multiplier effect' – WAG's 'Can Do Toolkit' demonstrates how this can be achieved in the housing sector
- Community finance has scope to encourage small scale developments from within communities
- Removing the barriers for all forms of potential housing development is required in order to address the County's acute housing shortage

Cost Implications

In order to determine a cost for 'de-risking development opportunities' a list of sites would need to be identified and prioritised. Costs for completing this will require officer time and the procurement of external expertise.

Fast tracking self build by reducing uncertainty is an activity that would require the investment of officer time or not more than £35,000 if conducted by external assistance.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

- 1: Green Powys
- 2: Skilled Powys
- 3: Resilient Communities

5: Access to Services

9: Location of Choice

5.12 Regeneration Priority 11 – Maximise the regenerative impacts of education and training expenditure**Priority Overview**

The County Council is committed to maintaining high standards of education and training in Powys. The County Council recognises how education underpins the vitality of the local economy but also the vital contribution it can offer to many of the regeneration objectives the County Council seeks to deliver (in terms of skills, culture, resilience and economic development). Education and training are also fundamental to the measures of quality of life which the Council seeks to maintain. It must therefore be a priority of the Strategy to ensure that young people have access to the optimum level of education and training in order that they can continue to reside in the county and contribute to its economic well-being.

The County Council currently faces a number of education challenges. There are a large number of small schools; which result in a high unit cost per pupil. This is being addressed through school reorganisation to achieve better utilisation of school facilities and resources whilst reducing revenue costs. This suggests that there is a significant potential to ensure that school reorganisation is able to release numerous benefits which accord with this strategy. The procurement process of schools reorganisation is therefore of critical importance.

While the County Council and Coleg Powys are currently evaluating a number of options in terms of Pre and Post-16 education and training, the Council's School Modernisation Programme offers a number of major opportunities to create Integrated Community and Skills 'Hubs' across the County.

Coleg Powys are the only Further Education college in Powys and they are looking to develop and enhance Higher Education provision in the county in line with Higher Education Funding Council for Wales regionalisation strategy. The Higher Education (HE) system in Wales is undergoing significant change, which will have a bearing upon Powys. The contraction of university education from ten Welsh Universities to six is going to mean a contraction in the HE education across the Country. The Education Minister has intimated that new Foundation Degree developments should include the FE sector. Coleg Powys is working with partners to enhance the foundation degree and also HE provision in Powys. Coleg Powys have also submitted a tender for an increased cohort for Work Based Learning provision together with Coleg Ceredigion, Powys Training and Powys County Council. Coleg Powys hope this will provide increased opportunities for apprenticeships in Powys. The future of education in Powys will need to be a blend of skills development, HE, FE and new types of apprenticeships. The rise in tuition fees and the anticipated decrease in the number of eighteen year olds going to University suggest that fewer young people will be leaving the County in the future than they did under the expansion of University education under successive Labour Governments.

Potential Quick Win 1

The County Council needs to prioritise projects where the Schools Modernisation Programme, investment in ICT and the creation of co-located facilities such as

childcare, health and social services and adult training (as advocated by the 21st Century Schools Programme) can maximise the regenerative impact of educational expenditure on communities across Powys.

Potential Quick Win 2

Instead of courting a stronger University presence in the County, the Council and its partners should ensure that the absence of HE education in Powys is compensated by an increased allowance for apprenticeships. (The Government propose to create 100,000 new apprenticeships by 2014). A quick win will be to work with the County's employers to consider ways of developing apprenticeships for school-leavers. To support their commitment the government is to make £1.4bn available for apprenticeships in 2011-12. Vince Cable said businesses and young people should see apprenticeships as "a first-class way to start a career". Powys County Council should work with WAG to ensure that, as a County without access to HE, Powys should be given priority for future funding to support apprenticeships.

Potential Quick Win 3

Given the importance of the green economy to Powys' future the County Council and its partners need to develop a separate action plan to determine how school leavers can be equipped with the skills to contribute to the three distinct groups of this part of the economy (5.1 - *natural resources, exploiting primary resources and green energy*)

Key Messages

- High standards of education are important to the vitality of the local economy
- Skills hubs have potential to act as regeneration catalysts
- Powys County Council should concentrate upon apprenticeships rather than universities as a means of providing 18 year olds with high quality skills
- Skills development should be focussed upon the green economy

Cost Implications

The cost of the schools modernisation quick win project would be funded by the existing commitments under the schools modernisation programme.

It is not known what the costs of developing apprenticeships in the County would be and further research will be necessary to provide Powys with the opportunity to bid for new funding.

Regeneration Objectives addressed

2: Skilled Powys

3: Resilient Communities

4: Economic Development

5: Access to Services

6: Renewable Energy

9: Location of Choice

6. The Role of the County Council

6.1 *Exploiting the County-wide remit*

Powys County Council is one of the few organisations whose remit covers the whole of the County. In addition to this the County Council is in a unique position of being able to continue to develop relationships with key partners to implement the regeneration vision and objectives. These partners include:

- PAVO
- Dyfed-Powys Police
- Powys Teaching Health Board
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Coleg Powys
- CADW
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Environment Agency
- Visit Wales
- Mid Wales Manufacturing
- Mid Wales Housing Association
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Many of these partnerships are already mature through the Local Service Board. The relationships between these partners are undergoing a process of refinement through the preparation of the Single Delivery Plan (see p.18). In addition to this the County Council are able to build upon the relationships that they have with the County's varied communities.

6.2 *Assisting with regeneration funding*

In the next three years Powys is likely to benefit from £3m-£4m of European funding through 'the Rural Development Plan, which is due to finish in 2013. There is currently uncertainty regarding the future of European funding for Powys after 2013 although it is almost certain that there will be some. EU funding for research and development are likely to be boosted, whereas others might diminish. There is also the possibility of a gradual move away from grants towards soft loans and repayable grants towards soft loans and repayable grants. Future European funding is likely to be made more outcomes focussed.

It is going to be increasingly important therefore that the County Council works in tandem with partners and uses mainstream funding to maximum benefit. It is likely that European funding will need to be supplemented with assistance from the huge variety of other forms of funding. Building awareness of these funds among partners

will be important, including EU funds other than Structural Funds and domestic funds. There may even be a necessity for the Council to support their partners in obtaining funding and/or clarifying the types of funds available. For instance, the National Lottery funds which will increase in prominence following the completion of the 2012 London Olympics. The increase in the share of Lottery good causes income from 16.7% to 20% by 2012-2013, will amount to around £50 million extra money a year, meaning that from 2013 to 2019 there will be an annual awards budget of around £300 million. However, lottery funding will remain competitive, and is likely to become geared towards more strategic projects.

6.3 The Council as a enabler and champion of regeneration

The role for the County Council in the regeneration of the Powys will be as a guardian, *enabler* and *champion* of Powys':

- Natural resources
- Communities
- Habitats and landscapes
- Reputation and image
- Infrastructure
- Economies
- Towns, villages and hamlets

All of this is likely to be set into context of a smaller, smarter public sector. This will mean that, to succeed, the regeneration strategy will require clear leadership but broad ownership. It will be Powys County Councils' role to facilitate leadership, and develop regeneration consensus. The process that has informed the preparation of this regeneration strategy has already made significant steps toward the latter. The 'One Powys' Single Delivery Plan is therefore an important means by which the County Council can help to facilitate broad consensus and ownership.

Powys County Council will be able to provide effective regeneration leadership by working towards the vision, objectives and priorities throughout every aspect of service delivery, but they will need to achieve this by developing close working relationships with partners. Powys County Council is already a prominent voice for regeneration, but the clarity of purpose arising from this strategy will mean that the County Council will be able to take a more effective role in championing the County.

In addition to this, being clear about the direction of the regeneration strategy will enable other partners to support the County Council through their own activities. Part of the leadership role of the County Council will therefore involve communicating the regeneration strategy to others and developing joint solutions and facilitating other organisations.

6.4 From Regulating to Enabling

The central premise of the Powys Regeneration Strategy is that the County Council becomes an 'enabler and facilitator' as opposed to purely a regulator; focusing on what the communities of Powys can achieve with the support of the County Council'. This resonates with the Coalition Government's ethos of 'Localism' and the 'Big Society', relying upon the empowerment of local initiative and building the capacity to drive change at a local, community-based level.

The impending restructuring of the decision-making structure of the County Council and the work that has been progressed in rationalising the Strategic Response Model / Single Delivery Plan will be instrumental in facilitating this change not just in its strategic outlook but also in its streamlined decision-making processes. Moving to a Cabinet structure will undoubtedly strengthen this agenda for change. The fact that Regeneration now sits as one of the four key themes of Council activity means that it will also play a fundamental part in delivering that change.

6.5 Establishing the Vision and Facilitating Regeneration Partnership Working

Effective strategy and delivery arises from effective facilitation. The Council is the most appropriate organisation to take the lead role in terms of regeneration due to its overarching remit, but will need to do so with the close cooperation of its partners. The County Council will need to provide such leadership by establishing and ensuring some key features are in place and maintaining high quality dialogue with the contributing partners in the form of an annual overarching strategic service delivery plan. The key features are:

- A clear vision is established as well as setting out the fundamental values and behaviours that must be in place to deliver that vision.
- The key objectives and priorities that are required to be focused on are clearly identified.
- That corporate key performance indicators and targets are set out in the strategic service delivery plan
- That an effective cross cutting performance management framework is established and monitored by the Council ideally within the Chief Executives Department on a quarterly basis, ending with the production of an annual performance review.
- Establishing a systematic hierarchy of communication and reporting. "The Golden Thread", this is set out in 2 below

Having established the vision the regeneration objective, quick win projects and performance indicators for regeneration it must be recognised that several partners will contribute to the themes and objectives in different ways. The role of the County Council, will be partly about defining the parameters within which the objectives of the regeneration strategy can be realised.

It is recommended that each of the partners produce their own annual service delivery plan that provides clear linkages between their actions and activities and

the themes, activities and performance indicators set out in the Councils strategic service delivery plan.

Each partner must review their performance on quarterly basis, ending with the production of an annual performance review.

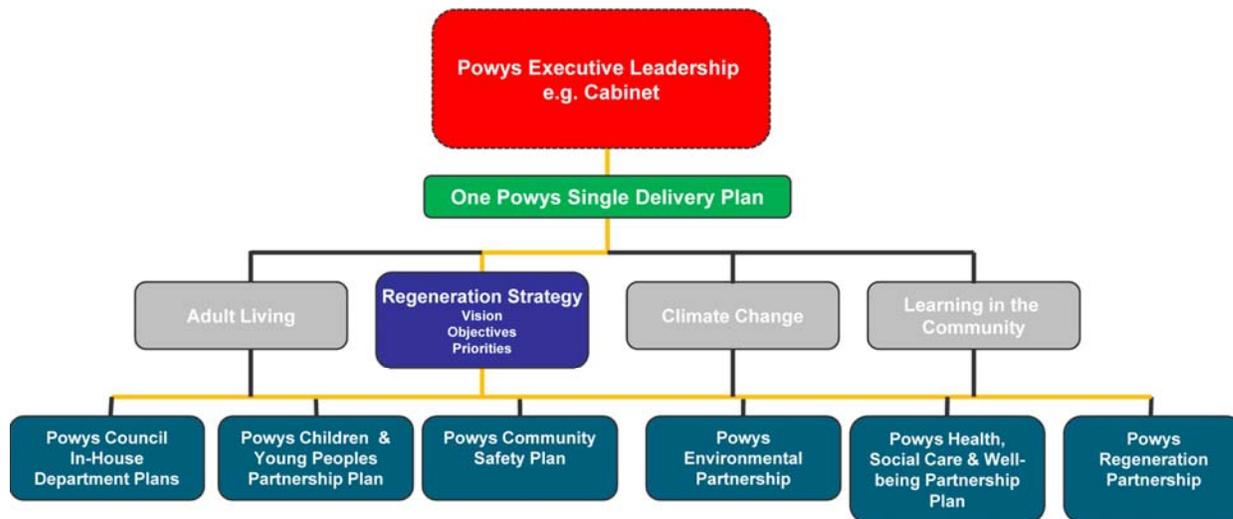


Image 2: The relationship between the regeneration strategy and the 'golden thread'

7. Evaluation Framework

This section details the how the Strategy will be implemented and how progress will be measured, taking account of the vision, objectives and priorities set out in earlier sections. Referring back to the analysis of other related plans and strategies, there is clear synergy with the Objectives of the Regeneration Strategy, this is set out below in table x:

Vision Powys								
Regeneration in Powys will nurture and promote the County’s assets and strengths as the means to addressing its weaknesses, by establishing a robust and sustainable economy that is based upon vibrant communities, and which enhances and protects the physical, social and cultural environment of Powys.								
Themes								
Environment/ place	Education and skills	Economy/ prosperity	Health/ well being	Access to service/deli very	Tourism & reputation	Young people	Culture and creative industries	Renewable energy & R&D
Objective 1 – Green Powys	Objective 2 – Skilled Powys	Objective 4 – Economic Development	Objective 3 – Resilient Communities	Objective 5 – Access to Services	Objective 7 – Cultural Powys	Objective 5 – Access to Services	Objective 7 – Cultural Powys	Objective 4 – Economic Development
Objective 6 – Renewable Energy		Objective 6 – Renewable Energy			Objective 8 - Tourism		Objective 8 - Tourism	Objective 6 – Renewable Energy
		Objective 8 – Tourism						
Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice	Objective 9 – Location of choice

The eleven Priorities will contribute to delivering one or more of the Objectives, with one notable exception, that of Objective 9 – “Powys will be the location of choice for graduates and young families” – which will be supported by all of the activities of the council and its partners, as the Council seeks to both retain and attract young people.

7.1 Key principles

- a. Results Based Accountability approach - this is the approach is driving the One Powys Single Delivery Plan - beginning with the identification of 'where we want to be' – in this case the 2021 vision. We then examine the indicators that can track progress towards this. The RBA approach recommends no more than three or four measures (indicators). We recommend this approach is taken for the strategy priorities, and signed up to by all partner agencies, factored into their business planning, and considered at both a **strategic** and **service delivery** level.
- b. Through this strategy, a clear framework of objectives is established which allows Powys County Council and its partners to track progress.
- c. The 3 year action plan will set out core indicators where appropriate and recommended priority activities to 2014.

7.2 Results Based Accountability

This Regeneration Strategy is an **outcomes based strategy**, which follows the principles of **Results Based Accountability (RBA)**. This approach has been applied by the Council and Local Services Board in the development of the Single Delivery Plan, and is predicated on clear principles – partners agree the vision and end results, and work back to identify the most important indicators to track to measure progress.

Outcomes based approach: Scotland Performs

This approach has been taken by the devolved Scottish Government at a national level since 2008 and is constituted of four parts. There are **5 strategic objectives**:

- Wealthier and fairer; Smarter; Healthier; Safer and Stronger; and Greener

Supported by **7 'Purpose Targets'**:

- Economic Growth; Productivity; Participation; Population; Solidarity; Cohesion; and Sustainability

These are in turn supported by **15 National Outcomes** which describe what the government wants to achieve over the next 10 years and articulate the purpose in more detail. The 15 outcomes are supported **45 National Indicators**.

NHS Scotland is the first partner organisation to report through this National Performance Framework, though the government is aiming to get other public bodies on board in due course.

Applicability to this framework:

1. This is a **clear** approach from the Scottish Government with a single purpose, and Powys' Single Delivery Plan follows these same lines.

2. The '**Powys-i**' project could be adapted to track the performance against the agreed indicators as the Scottish Government's website does, with symbols providing a clear snapshot as to whether performance against the indicators by the Council and its partners is **improving, being maintained, or worsening**.³¹



³¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/performance>

By agreeing indicators to monitor the progress for each of the priorities, the Council will be able to rigorously monitor the regeneration outcomes. Equally, the delivery arrangements for all of the recommended activities need to be clearly and carefully scoped, with accountability agreed so as to further enhance the impact from the work.

The indicators recommended to be monitored are at a **county-wide level**, and their annual monitoring could be included in the information publicly available on 'Powys-i', to enhance the level of engagement and ownership from Powys residents.

7.3 Three Year Action Plan (2011-14)

This County Council lead Action Plan summarises the actions and recommendations from the Regeneration Strategy. Where appropriate, longer term recommendations are highlighted. This Plan is capable of being monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the Council and its partners via the Regeneration Programme Board and Local Service Board. The Action Plan comprises the main part of this monitoring and evaluation section.

This Strategy is the starting point to drive future regeneration activity in the County, and cannot be delivered by the Council operating independently. Rather, this Action Plan needs to be developed and agreed with the Council's partners. Consequently, although the action plan includes many actions for the Council initially, it is anticipated that partners will be involved as implementation of the plan progresses.

In order to ensure a clear path for monitoring regeneration activity, the indicators proposed, where applicable, match those being developed for the One Powys Plan. This will ensure monitoring activity and analysis is as streamlined across the Council and partner organisations as possible. As some of these indicators are not being tracked currently in this form, a key action in Year 1 for some of the Priorities is to establish the data baseline against which future progress can be measured.

Priority	Actions
Priority 1 – Harnessing community strength	The council should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble a network of people and organisations from across Powys who are interested in shaping the future of the County. The stakeholder surgeries should be used as the foundation for this network. • Establish a web presence (blog and forum) for the newly created network, and organise a calendar of events for participants. • Consider how the network will be established and supported. The main implication is time and not cost. • Advertise and identify what partners will formally wish to be included. • Decide how the network will be used. For example as

	an instrument to help in the pursuit of other priorities.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Establish a Powys Regeneration network of people and organisations interested in and committed to delivering the regeneration of Powys – with a web presence and clear objectives.</p> <p>Yr 2: Seek to increase the numbers visiting the website and contributing to the Powys Regeneration network from Yr 1.</p> <p>Yr 3: Seek to increase the numbers visiting the website and contributing to the Powys Regeneration network from Yr 2.</p> <p>Yr 1, 2, 3: Seek to increase the levels of formal and informal voluntary activity (in line with One Powys indicators)</p> <p>Yr 1, 2, 3: Seek to increase the level of community participation (in line with One Powys indicators)</p>
Priority 2 – Council assets	<p>It is recommended that the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a framework for measuring the impact of asset disposal or alterations in asset management. • Introduce a framework for measuring short term budget saving against long term cost to socio-economic vitality. This may make for uncomfortable reading, but will protect fragile economies in decision making. The SROI technique is recommended. • Consider alternative scenarios where decisions have been taken to dispose of land or premises or alter asset management. • Liaise with rural partners in overlaying the communities aspirations and the council's assets.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Develop and introduce a framework for measuring the impact of asset disposal – providing training to all key departmental staff; track the number of times used and decisions/outcomes.</p> <p>Yr 2: Track the usage of the framework tool and regularly review (suggest bi-monthly). Regeneration Board to consider its effectiveness and recommend amendments/further training if needed.</p> <p>Yr 3: Track the usage of the framework tool and review quarterly. Regeneration Board to consider its effectiveness and recommend amendments/further training if needed.</p>

	Yr 1, 2, 3: Seek to increase the number of services run by local communities (in line with One Powys indicator).
Priority 3 - Procurement	<p>It is suggested that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an analysis of its expenditure and the multiplier effect generated by this to determine the impact of increasing the proportion of local procurement. • Increase local procurement over the next three years by ten percent, and devise a strategy to increase this by an achievable amount thereafter. Such an increase should release an additional £2.2m into the economy.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Undertake an analysis of expenditure by the Council and consider how local procurement could be increased.</p> <p>Yr 1,2,3: Seek to increase local procurement by ten percent over 2011-14. Annual review to consider initiatives implemented and success / need for amendment.</p>
Priority 4 - ICT	<p>The Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and develop an ICT strategy and investment roadmap. • Partner with organisations like the Rural Broadband Partnership to develop community solutions to 'slow spots and 'not-spots'. To achieve this funding from the Welsh Assembly Government Broadband Support Scheme will need to be utilised. • Appoint a digital champion to act as the hub around which a pro high speed broadband network will develop.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Develop, agree with partners and launch an ICT strategy and investment roadmap.</p> <p>Yr 1: Work with partners to establish baseline data of connectivity across the County, not-spots and slow-spots. Agree approach to reduce not-spots and work with WAG to deliver Next Generation broadband connectivity to commercial premises by 2016 and all households by 2020 – seek to set stretch targets to exceed these targets. Agree targets for Yr 2.</p> <p>Yr 2: Reduce the number of not-spots/slow spots – seek to increase the number of households and businesses with broadband connectivity. Set stretch targets for Yr 3.</p> <p>Yr 3: Reduce the number of not-spots/slow spots – seek to increase the number of households and businesses with broadband connectivity. Set stretch targets for Yr 4.</p>
Priority 5 – Green economy	It is suggested that the Council:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage partners to develop a long term Renewable Energy Support Programme, to help the County embrace the Green Economy. For example, it will help to develop a profile and business network. Work with partners to develop a method of accounting for ecosystems services, and the value they bring to the local economy. This method can be used in development decisions.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Work with partners to establish a Renewable Energy Support Programme including a method to measure the value renewable energy initiatives / projects bring to the local economy.</p> <p>Yr 2: Assess the delivery of the Programme and total benefit brought to the local economy, and set realistic stretch target for Yr 3.</p> <p>Yr 3: Assess the delivery of the Programme and seek to increase the benefit brought to the local economy and set realistic stretch target for Yr 4.</p>
Priority 6 – Promoting Powys	<p>The Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a Powys Tourism Expo to bring together a broad variety of companies, agencies and organisations involved in the tourism to share best practice, network and improve tourism within the area. Conduct a feasibility study to ensure that destinations in Powys have a high profile and are destinations of choice
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Scope and agree resource requirement for a Powys Tourism Expo.</p> <p>Yr 1: Conduct a feasibility study to determine ways of raising the profile of destinations in Powys</p> <p>Yr 1: Seek to increase tourism activity (in line with One Powys indicator).</p> <p>Yr 2: Seek to increase tourism activity (in line with One Powys indicator).</p> <p>Yr 3: Seek to increase tourism activity (in line with One Powys indicator).</p>
Priority 7 – Supporting Powys' Economy	<p>It is recommended that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an SME development programme. Optimise opportunities for SMEs through procurement. Encourage construction companies to engage and develop local supply chains through training and improvement workshops. Facilitate the clustering of SMEs to bid collectively as a

	<p>consortium for large projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve partners in the support of the SMEs, by preparing high quality and well drafted bids. • Create high quality local enterprise by nurturing the intelligence and resourcefulness of local people through a process of mentoring.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Establish an SME development programme and optimise opportunities for SMEs through procurement including through facilitating training and mentoring. Assess the number/proportion of SMEs accessing public sector contracts.</p> <p>Yr 2: Seek to increase the number of SMEs accessing public sector contracts from Yr 1.</p> <p>Yr 3: Seek to increase the number of SMEs accessing public sector contracts from Yr 2.</p>
Priority 8 – Empowered officers	<p>The Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a small project group to lead each of the regeneration priorities outlined. The group should ideally constitute people whose skills are complementary, and should not be involved in more than one work stream. • Undertake an audit of existing initiatives which support or conflict with the Regeneration Strategy and develop recommendations for cessation or amendment of these activities.
Targets	<p>Yr 1: Establish project groups for the agreed regeneration priorities. Review progress, issues to be resolved and best practice to disseminate quarterly (to be led by Regeneration Programme Board). Any more immediate blockages to be resolved by project groups outside of the quarterly review meetings.</p> <p>Yr1: Identify existing Council activities which are consistent with the Objectives and Priorities of this Strategy and those which are not</p> <p>Yr 2 / 3: Review membership of project groups and any issues arising/best practice quarterly.</p>
Priority 9 – Town & Village Centres	<p>It is recommended that the Council:</p> <p>Yr1: Develop and facilitate a series of linked community planning events to identify how local people perceive their town (Whole Town Strategy approach). Embracing physical and historical features should be central to these sessions, but the focus should be on the potential niches that the settlement could perform in the future. End of Yr 1, review the outcomes of the workshops and determine an action plan for Yr 2/3.</p>

	<p>Yr1: Audit each town centre to determine superfluous regulatory signs, lines, equipment and road markings and develop a prioritised programme for clutter reduction.</p> <p>Yr 2/3: Implement the programme.</p>
Targets	
Priority 10 – Housing quality	<p>It is suggested that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of key sites for housing development in the LDP. To de-risk these opportunities detailed stakeholder engagement will be required with local communities, and technical studies will be necessary to reduce private sector uncertainty. • Capitalise on Powys’s quality of life by providing a fast track service to people who want to build their own home. Greater collaboration between planners, surveyors, funders and renewable energy advisors is recommended to achieve this.
Targets	<p>Yr 1/2/3: Increase the affordability ratio of mean average house price in sales and rental over the year to mean gross annual wages for full time employees working in the County (in line with One Powys indicator).</p> <p>Yr 1/2/3: Increase the levels of housing quality and appropriateness (public and private sector), (in line with One Powys indicator).</p>
Priority 11 - Education	<p>The Council needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise projects where the Schools Modernisation Programme, investment in ICT and the location of co-located facilities can maximise the impact the regenerative impact of educational expenditure on communities across Powys • Increase the allowance for apprenticeships, by seeking Welsh Assembly Government funding, and working with the local employers to consider easy ways of developing apprenticeships. • Develop an action plan to determine how school leavers can be equipped with the skills to contribute to the green economy.
Target	<p>Yr 1: Review the Schools Modernisation Programme to ensure regenerative impact is maximised.</p> <p>Yr 1: Seek WAG funding to increase the allowance for apprenticeships across a range of sectors.</p> <p>Yr 1: Working with partners (education providers, local</p>

	businesses) develop an action plan to determine how training for school leavers can be developed and delivered for jobs in the green economy.
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7.4 Prioritisation of Action Points

Each of these categories of recommended actions are important in the pursuit of establishing a sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Powys. However, in light of financial constraints, it is advised that those priority areas which address more of the document's objectives, should be prioritised for pursuit.

The priorities are all important components in ensuring a prosperous and resilient County. However, there are some priorities which are likely to have impact across more of the regeneration objectives than others. These are:

- Information Communication Technology as a catalyst to regeneration
- Harnessing Community Strength
- Harnessing Powys' natural assets
- Supporting Powys' economy
- Empowering Council officers

It is recommended that initial effort needs to be focused on these five key areas where progress is likely to meet numerous regeneration objectives.

8. Regeneration checklist

8.1 Checklist

It is important that the regeneration strategy is able to inform decision making and behaviour, but given its substantial scope it is fully recognised that this report will not be read cover to cover by everyone.

However, it is important that regeneration becomes part of the language of Powys County Council and hopefully of its partners. Therefore, the purpose of the checklist is to enable County Council officers, both those who work involves a direct 'regeneration' function and those who may have an indirect outcome to understand how their work links back to the regeneration strategy.

The checklist should be used as frequently as possible to help embed regeneration into the decision making process. The initial parameters of the 'checklist' are as follows:

Impact	
<i>What impact will your intervention have on Powys?:</i>	
Economy	
Environment	
Communities	

Objectives	
<i>Which of the regeneration objectives does this particular intervention help to realise and how?</i>	
1: Green Powys	
2: Skilled Powys	
3: Resilient Communities	
4: Economic Development	
5: Access to Services	
6: Renewable Energy	
7: Cultural Powys	
8: Tourism	
9: Location of Choice	

Priorities	
<i>Which of the regeneration priorities does this particular intervention help to realise and how?</i>	
Harnessing community strength	
Using Council assets as regeneration catalysts	
Regeneration-led procurement	
Information Communication Technology as a catalyst to regeneration	
Harnessing Powys' natural assets	
Promoting Powys	
Supporting the Powys economy	
Empowering Council officers	
Facilitating the resilience and renaissance of Powys' town and village centres	
Ensuring that housing improvements [WHQS] becomes a catalyst for community based regeneration	
Maximising the regenerative impacts of education and training expenditure	

Ownership & Collaboration
<i>What other departments and organisations are there which may have, or have had a role in this intervention? (list)</i>

Regeneration Multiplier	
<i>Have the opportunities for 'regeneration multipliers' been fully evaluated?</i>	
What are they?	
How can they be delivered?	

8.2 Implementation of the checklist

The use of the checklist is intended to be a voluntary exercise that is encouraged by Senior Managers and Directors throughout the County Council. This is not intended to be a 'tick box' exercise or another layer of bureaucracy. As regeneration is now at the heart of corporate policy for the County Council, this checklist is intended as a reminder to ensure that officers throughout the County are able to discharge their functions in a way which works towards these important corporate objectives.

In addition, this approach might also be adopted by colleagues in other organisations which make up the Local Service Board as a way of ensuring that these important objectives are implemented through services across the County.

9. Conclusion & Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

The County Council's Corporate Plan identifies regeneration as one of four key policy priorities, and recognises its strategic significance as a function to not only the Council but also to other service providers and agencies in the County. The Regeneration Strategy has therefore been prepared to place regeneration at the forefront of the Council's thinking and actions across all departments and in its interactions with its partners.

It became apparent from as early as the baseline research and stakeholder consultation that if the Strategy was to succeed in this respect, and begin laying the foundations from which a strong Powys would emerge, an holistic approach to regeneration would be required. This necessity is manifested in the Strategy's vision for the County, which seeks to nurture a robust and sustainable economy that promotes the County's strengths and is fuelled by a vibrant environment and successful communities. The strategy's key themes, regeneration objectives and priorities reiterate this required extensive approach.

This does not, however, mean that the strategy constitutes a collection of strategic statements that have little resonance to everyday life in Powys. Quite to the contrary, the Three Year Action Plan seeks to provide a series of action points and targets that could be used to begin implementing the vision which seeks to establish a thriving Powys. Furthermore the advocated Results Based Accountability approach, as a means of providing an evaluation framework, and the Regeneration Checklist provide a simple and effective method of checking progress towards the vision.

What it does mean is that a fundamental shift in the culture and outlook of the County Council and its partners is required. The stakeholder sessions revealed that Council employees have an appetite for such a change, and progress is already being undertaken as a result of the decision to adopt a 'Cabinet' led political structure and decision making process. But it is felt that a further process of change- management will be required to prepare Council Officers and political members for the challenges of implementing the Strategy.

The broad range and complexity of the recommended priorities - many of which impact upon more than one objective - in particular require the Council to adapt, and it is specifically envisioned that the Council in accordance with its partners will need to become the facilitator and champion of regeneration within the County. In this respect the Council will become more than simply a regulatory force, and rather will enable and facilitate the communities of Powys to work towards fulfilling the vision set out in the Strategy.

Given the need for economic development within the County, a further challenge for the Council will be to consider its political priorities and to begin focusing on the potential outcomes of economic activity. This will involve considering the lifetime costs and benefits of development; the possible multiplier effects to the social and economic well-being of the broader community, as opposed to just the short-term environmental impact of a development on its immediate neighbourhood.

The need for a fresh approach should not, however, detract from the fact that at present the County is in the encouraging position of having a number of regeneration opportunities available. Indeed with a pioneering County Council working with its partners, acting in accordance with and enabling a range of enthusiastic community groups, the future for regeneration throughout the county will be decidedly positive, and the ambition to establish a vibrant Powys with a robust economy, one that will be quickly realised.

9.2 Recommendations

In order to successfully implement the Strategy's vision for regeneration throughout the County the following key recommendations have been distilled:

1. It is advised that the County Council in conjunction with its partners adopt this Strategy and facilitate the delivery of regeneration initiatives throughout the County.
2. The Council should nurture the working relationship with the existing community and voluntary organisations. This will ensure that the strategy becomes a shared vision. A key initial component of this will involve establishing a network of people and organisations who are interested in working towards the County's future prosperity.

It is also suggested that the Council establish new groups that can assist in contributing to the vision, through working with Transition Wales, monitoring the implications of the 'Big Society' and Localism Agenda and utilising Council assets.

3. A process of refining the quick-win projects and assembling multi-disciplinary/cross departmental project groups (including local partners where necessary) will be required to accelerate the suggested quick wins of each regeneration priority.
4. The Results Based system of accountability should be dispersed and explained to all Council Officers so that all have a clear idea of how progress will be measured. Furthermore, the 'Regeneration Checklist' should be promoted to enable officers to have a sharper understanding of how their actions and role contribute to the strategy.
5. The Council should review its approach to the disposal of assets, and undertake a balanced approach to consider short term economic gain against longer term social and economic development. This should ensure that assets become regeneration 'pump primers'.
6. The procurement process should be used to exert a strong influence and foster robust local supply chains. The Council and its partners must ensure that local contractors are given the opportunity to tender for work. Methodologies from the New Economic Foundation should be used to accurately measure the value of increasing local procurement.
7. Given the critical role that effective broadband coverage will have on the realisation of the Strategy, the Council will need to lobby for high speed broadband access. Relevant funding opportunities can be sought via the Welsh Assembly Government, and organisations like the Rural Broadband Partnership have considerable experience of working with rural communities interested in increasing their connectivity.
8. The Council and its partners need to enable micro-business and social enterprises to succeed. In particular, support should be given to those working in the fields of renewable energy generation; agriculture; tourism and manufacturing. Reducing unnecessary regulation and developing a network of mentors within the

community should provide a solid basis for micro-businesses and social enterprises to succeed.

9. The Council and its partners should work with the Welsh Assembly and local SME's to ensure that Powys benefits from the proposed increases to apprenticeships. The renewable energy sector, in particular, should be targeted as an area for increase.
10. The ICT infrastructure, including suitable broadband speed, within the County Council will require improvement. This will allow Council staff to work more efficiently by minimising the need to travel.
11. The Council should undertake a collaborative process with the Wales Environment Hub, CCW and EAW to determine a set of pilot projects that place an economic value on ecosystem services and integrate this into broader economic assessment.
12. Work should be undertaken with local communities to develop lasting, community owned structures for change which will develop regeneration action plans in the shape of *Whole Town Strategies*. These should feed into the various thematic approaches to enhancing the contribution of tourism to the economy of the County.
13. The Council should study and review the respective regenerative impacts of stock retention and of transferring its stock to a new housing association and involve tenants, members and other key stakeholders in this process
14. An appraisal of surplus Council owned land is required to determine opportunities for affordable housing development. This will mitigate against the anticipated shortfall and create broader regeneration benefits. Technical studies and in some cases public engagement events will be required.
15. A methodology for self builders to efficiently build their own homes should be developed. This should include guidance on how to negotiate planning regulations and incorporate energy efficiency.
16. The Council should ensure that the schools modernisation programme explores and exploits all of the potential spin-off benefits that could help to deliver further regeneration benefits.
17. A process of project refinement will be necessary to determine that the right information exists to develop regeneration project proposals and to refine potential project costs.