

# Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee

## EIN(2) 03-06(p4)

**Date: 7 June 2006**

**Venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

**Title: 'Turning Heads... A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020'**

### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update for the Committee on the Heads of the Valleys Strategy.

### **Background**

2. 'Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020' will be launched later this month. It will be accompanied by a 3 year Action Plan.

3. The Strategy is the result of extensive consultation and research following the publication of 'Heads – We Win... A Strategic Framework for the Heads of the Valleys' in March 2004, when I announced £140m of special funding for a regeneration partnership to tackle the issues that face the Heads of the Valleys.

4. The partnership involves stakeholders from across the public, private and voluntary sectors, including five local authorities. The Programme area comprises the northern parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Torfaen, as well the whole of Blaenau-Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

5. It is estimated that the public sector alone spends £1bn per year in the Heads of the Valleys. The task for the Programme will be to influence this spending so as to derive maximum benefit and value for money. The Programme will also aim to lever in additional investment, including at least £360m from the private sector, as well as Structural Funds and other sources such as the Big Lottery Fund.

6. Following a comprehensive assessment of baseline information and wide stakeholder input, the Strategy has been designed to tackle the real issues facing the area and maximise its advantages and opportunities. It has been developed around five priority themes:

- An attractive and well-used natural, historic and built environment
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities
- A well-educated, skilled and healthier population
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure offer
- Public confidence in shared bright future

### **Next steps**

7. Once launched, the Strategy will be subject to 12 weeks' consultation before being finalised. I will bring this to EIN Committee as part of the consultation. It will then be reviewed at least once every three years to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

8. The next task for the Programme Team is to begin work on the 'Heads of the Valleys Spatial Framework', as well as taking forward the programmes and projects described in the Strategy and Action Plan.

9. Key issues such as raising skills levels and helping people into work will be addressed throughout the Programme. In addition, the Action Plan accompanying the Strategy describes the major foci for investment in the next three years:

- 2006/07: Major environmental (landscape-scale) projects
- 2007/08: Renewal of key town centres
- 2008/09: Development of the tourism and leisure offer

The major projects for 2006/07 and 2007/08 are currently being developed.

## **Cross Cutting Themes**

10. 'Turning Heads...' crosses over a number of Ministerial portfolios, as well as many of the area of EIN policy/operation. Officials from across the Welsh Assembly Government (as well as other stakeholders) have been closely involved in the Strategy development process.

11. The Heads of the Valleys Programme is a partnership, delivering on the 'Making the Connections' agenda.

12. The principles of equality of opportunity and sustainable development are at the heart of the approach described in the Strategy.

13. To ensure that the Strategy delivers on these principles, it is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as race/equality and health impact assessments.

## **Action for Committee**

14. To note this update.

**Andrew Davies**  
**Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks**

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