



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE	Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys – <i>Our Valleys, Our Future</i>
DATE	20 July 2017
BY	Alun Davies AM, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys will today publish its high-level action plan, *Our Valleys, Our Future*.

The plan sets out the taskforce's priorities for the future, based on extensive engagement with people living and working in the Valleys. It is also based on evidence the taskforce has taken over the course of the last year.

Our Valleys, Our Future has been developed around three key priorities:

- Good-quality jobs and the skills to do them
- Better public services
- The local community

It is the taskforce's ambition that by 2021 the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales will have been closed. This will be achieved by helping an additional 7,000 people into work and creating thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs in the Valleys.

Our Valleys, Our Future sets out a range of actions to achieve this goal, including creating six new strategic sites in specific areas across the Valleys where we will look to focus spending to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. The taskforce will work with local communities and local authorities to develop these hubs further to ensure their focus reflects the opportunities in each area.

The six sites are:

- Pontypridd/Treforest, focusing on residential, office, industrial and retail development
- Caerphilly/Ystrad Mynach, focusing on residential, office and industrial development
- Cwmbran, focusing on office, industrial and residential development

- Merthyr Tydfil, focusing on office, industrial and residential development
- Neath, focusing on industrial, residential, digital and energy development
- Ebbw Vale, focusing on a new automotive business park

We will also be looking to ensure more public sector jobs are relocated into the South Wales Valleys, including at the six strategic sites, where appropriate.

Over the course of the many public meetings and conversations held with people living and working in the Valleys, people told us that public services are not as joined-up as they could be.

Our Valleys, Our Future outlines work underway in three Valleys communities to identify barriers that prevent community action from reaching its full potential. The learning from these pathfinder projects in Llanhilleth, Ferndale and Glynneath and Banwen will help to drive change within Welsh Government and across local services.

The taskforce heard a wide range of opinions about the Valleys themselves, including about the natural beauty of the landscape but also concerns about accessibility. The plan includes a commitment to explore the development of a Valleys Landscape Park, which will support local communities to work with the public, private and third sectors to make the most of their area's natural resources and heritage.

The people living and working in each community know these areas best. We will therefore look to them to design and develop proposals which will meet their specific needs.

The establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys presents an exciting opportunity to focus efforts and resources across government to make real and lasting change. The next step is to turn these high-level priorities into specific actions.

The taskforce will work with people across the South Wales Valleys to develop a delivery plan, which will be published in the autumn.

I will update Members as the taskforce's work progresses in the coming months.



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#TalkValleys

Our Valleys, Our Future



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Chair's Foreword



I am delighted to publish *Our Valleys, Our Future – the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys* plan. This has been put together after listening to people living and working in the Valleys. It reflects their hopes and aspirations for the future of their families and local communities.

In July 2016, I was asked by First Minister Carwyn Jones to set up and lead a long-term piece of work, which will deliver real change for the South Wales Valleys; which will create good-quality jobs, closer to people's homes; improve people's skills and bring prosperity to all.

From the start, I was clear this taskforce will not be another case of the government deciding what is right for the South Wales Valleys. If we are to succeed where other programmes have fallen by the wayside, local communities and local people must be at the heart of the taskforce's work.

We have spent the first half of 2017 talking to and listening to people who live and work in the South Wales Valleys about what they want to see happen in their local communities, now and in the future. These interesting and insightful conversations – in public meetings, over tea and coffee and online – have helped to shape the priorities and actions in this plan.

These were not one-off conversations. I very much hope all the people and the businesses we have spoken to so far will continue to work with the members of the taskforce to help us deliver the plan we have created together.

Since starting the taskforce, I have often heard – and said – that there are more opportunities in the Valleys than there are challenges. We will build on these strengths, including the Valleys' unique and breath-taking geography. We will do more to celebrate our rich history; our environment; our culture and our green spaces – they have the potential to boost community wellbeing in the widest sense and become a magnet for visitors from home and from around the world.

I was born and brought up in Tredegar – I went to Tredegar Comprehensive School. Today, I have the privilege of representing Blaenau Gwent in the National Assembly. I've seen many changes in the Valleys over my lifetime – many of them for the better but some of them for the worse.

I want this taskforce to make a positive difference, not just to the South Wales Valleys as a whole, but to every person living and working in the Valleys.

Our first year has been fast-paced and we have had open, frank and wide-ranging conversations in taskforce meetings as we have listened to and considered evidence with people from Llanhilleth to Glynneath. This is the beginning of an exciting opportunity to work together to change lives for the better. If we don't, we will have failed.

This is a high-level action plan, which describes what we, the taskforce, want to do and how we will work with the Welsh Government, with local government and health boards, with schools and colleges with the private and third sectors and with the two city deals – Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay.

We want your feedback over the summer to help us further refine this plan and to help us start delivering these changes.

I look forward to working with people living and working in the South Wales Valleys over the coming months and years.

Alun Davies AM

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language and chair of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys

Introduction

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016 after the National Assembly election and the EU referendum. It is chaired by Alun Davies, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language. Ken Skates, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and Julie James, the Minister for Skills and Science also sit on the taskforce.

The other taskforce members are:

- Ann Beynon, chair of the Cardiff Capital Region Board
- Andrew Diplock, entrepreneur, business advisor and Angel Investor
- Judith Evans, principal of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- Dr Chris Jones, chair of Cwm Taf University Health Board
- Martin Mansfield, general secretary, Wales TUC
- Cllr Andrew Morgan, leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
- Professor Brian Morgan, Cardiff University
- Jocelyn Davies, former Plaid Cymru Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration
- Fiona Jones, director of work services Wales and national employer and partnership team, Department for Work and Pensions
- Joanne Foster, government and business relations leader UK, GE Aviation
- Gaynor Richards, director, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service



The South Wales Valleys

The South Wales Valleys is one of the most distinctive areas of Wales – the Valleys are known for their history; their geography and stunning landscapes and for their culture. When we talk about the Valleys, we speak about close-knit, welcoming and friendly communities.

But the Valleys also face a unique set of deep-rooted challenges, largely caused by the decline of heavy industry and the end of coal-mining. The area lags behind the rest of Wales in economic terms; in terms of quality and length of life and in educational attainment and skills.

There have been a series of regeneration initiatives for the Valleys over the last 50 years, which have helped to transform the landscape and the area currently qualifies for European Union structural funding.

It is important that the Valleys are not defined by its challenges – many towns and communities are doing well; the Valleys are home to successful and growing businesses and public services employ many tens of thousands of people.

The Valleys are home to up to 30% of the Welsh population – every day tens of thousands of people commute south to Newport, Cardiff and Swansea to power the Welsh economy – and every weekend thousands travel north to the Valleys attracted by their growing reputation for adventure sports.

However, the sense of optimism experienced by many is not shared by all in the Valleys. Too many people do not have access to the skills they need to get a good job; for too many people, the only jobs available are insecure and low paid. Many people feel let down by their local public services and the gap between rich and poor remains stubbornly and shamefully wide.

The Brexit vote in the South Wales Valleys showed many people feel left behind and left out. It wasn't just a vote about EU membership but a vote in which people said they felt insecure about their place in the world; about their job prospects and their future.

The taskforce has been working with local communities in the South Wales Valleys to develop this high-level plan, which sets out the main actions it will take by 2021.

By 2021, the UK will have left the EU – a different relationship will have been negotiated with Europe and also between the four countries within the UK.

In South Wales, work will have begun on a number of major, multi-million pound infrastructure projects, which will have a significant impact on people living in the Valleys and the taskforce's work. These include the South Wales Metro and the M4, subject to the outcome of the public inquiry.

The taskforce will work closely with the Welsh Government to ensure that it maximises every opportunity for the Valleys from these infrastructure projects and other key commitments.

We will work closely with local councils in the Valleys and with the two city deals – the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals offer real opportunities for the Valleys.



The Cardiff Capital Region city deal is the largest of its kind, bringing together 10 local authorities with an investment fund of £1.2bn over 20 years. The Swansea Bay city deal is backed by £1.3bn of investment and aims to boost the local economy by £1.8bn over the next 15 years.

We will also work closely with businesses, with the third sector and with schools, colleges and the NHS.

The taskforce has developed this plan in response to what people living and working in the Valleys told us during 2017 – you can read a full report about what people told us [here](#).

The taskforce has also considered a lot of evidence at its meetings, which has influenced this plan. This evidence is available [here](#). And we have also taken account of some key Welsh Government strategies and initiatives, such as the development of the employability delivery plan and Taking Wales Forward. More detail is available [here](#).

Our three priorities are:

Good quality jobs and the skills to do them

Better public services

My local community

The taskforce will be holding a series of public events over the coming months to talk to people about this high-level plan.

We want your feedback about the priorities and our proposals for action. We also want your help to deliver these. The taskforce will publish a detailed delivery plan in the autumn based on your feedback.



Listening to what the Valleys want

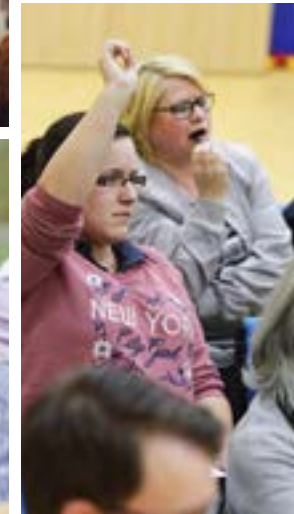
The taskforce has been holding events across the South Wales Valleys to talk to and listen to people, businesses and communities about their priorities for the future.

We have met, talked to and listened to people in formal public meetings; in focus groups; in meetings with young people, parents of school children and businesses. We've spoken to people through social media and face-to-face.

Extensive local and community engagement has taken place since the taskforce was established and the views gathered through this engagement have informed this plan.

During the discussions, many people questioned whether their voices would be heard. *Our Valleys, Our Future* is the result of these conversations. We will continue to work with people, businesses and local communities to further develop and deliver this plan.

Details of all future events will be available on our website¹, Facebook² and Twitter³ pages.



¹ [gov.wales/talkvalleys](https://www.gov.wales/talkvalleys)

² <https://www.facebook.com/talkvalleys/>

³ [#talkvalleys](https://twitter.com/wg_communities)

Priority 1

Good quality jobs and the skills to do them

The only jobs in the area are zero-hour contract work or call centre work. There's no chance of a career and progression within your job in the Valleys.



Good-quality jobs and the opportunity to develop the skills to get a good job was a clear priority to come out of both the feedback from the public and the evidence the taskforce received. The taskforce was also told that jobs and skills needed to be supported by affordable and accessible public transport.

The taskforce is determined to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales – it will work with public and private sector employers to create new fair, secure and sustainable jobs in the Valleys. It will work with the Welsh Government, local government and the city deals to attract new employers to the South Wales Valleys.

To close the current employment gap and ensure employment levels in the South Wales Valleys are the same as the Welsh average will mean we will help around 7,000 unemployed or economically-inactive people living in the Valleys into work (at the current level).

To do this, thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs across the Valleys will be created and there will be support and access to skills and training to help people get a job and stay in well-paid work.

We will take full advantage of the South Wales Metro and other transport infrastructure developments, including the ongoing work to complete the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road. We will work with both the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals to maximise benefits for people living in the Valleys.



Vision: by 2021

We will close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales – this means helping an additional 7,000 people into work and that thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs will be created in the Valleys

People living in the Valleys will have access to the right skills to gain work.

Businesses will be fully supported to grow and thrive in the South Wales Valleys.

You said...	We will...
<p>There aren't enough job opportunities within reach of many Valleys communities.</p> <p>There are too many zero-hours contracts and too much temporary and agency work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore all options to target investment and create new strategic hubs in specific areas across the Valleys. These will be areas where public money is focused to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. The focus of each hub will reflect the opportunities and demand in a particular area and their aspirations for the future. The hub locations are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontypridd/Treforest, focusing on residential, office, industrial and retail development • Caerphilly/Ystrad Mynach, focusing on residential, office and industrial development • Cwmbran, focusing on office, industrial and residential development • Merthyr Tydfil, focusing on office, industrial and residential development • Neath, focusing on industrial, residential, digital and energy development. We will also create a strategic hub in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ebbw Vale, focusing on a new automotive technology business park, with the potential to support 1,500 new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. This will be backed by £100m of Welsh Government investment over 10 years. The first phase will deliver 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space. • We will introduce programmes to support new and existing employers in Blaenau Gwent with skills development for the local workforce and explore the possibility of locating a South Wales Metro depot in the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone. 2. Relocate more public sector jobs into the Valleys, including at the six proposed strategic hub locations, where appropriate. For example, Transport for Wales is committed to establishing its new headquarters in Pontypridd. 3. Make more publicly-owned land and property available in the Valleys for development. 4. Maximise job opportunities in the local foundational economy – businesses we use every day and see all around us, such as retail, care and the food industry. 5. Support the creation of more digital jobs in the Valleys and develop two digital technology hubs to help new business start-ups in the sector. 6. Roll-out <i>Better Jobs Closer to Home</i> in the Valleys to create real opportunities and decent jobs where the need is greatest. This includes using public procurement to support local businesses and supply chains. 7. Exploit the job creation potential from major infrastructure investment, including the South Wales Metro, the M4 and the ongoing work to dual A465 and new affordable housing. 8. Maximise the creation of green jobs and business opportunities from investment in energy efficiency through the Welsh Government's <i>Warm Homes</i> programme.

You said...	We will...
Businesses want more support to set up and grow their businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better align business support for start-ups and existing businesses, encouraging and providing support for potential entrepreneurs. Improve the conversion of initial enquiries into active support which provides employability capacity or new business starts by 25%. 2. For 100 of the Valleys businesses with the greatest growth potential, there will be access to a bespoke, integrated package of recruitment, training and business development support to create jobs, increase skill levels of existing staff and boost productivity.
Do more to help people get the jobs which are available – a school in Caerphilly told the taskforce how it works with local employers to help young people understand work opportunities and what skills and qualifications are needed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide targeted careers advice to help young people to access jobs, particularly in new and growth sectors and also entrepreneurial opportunities. We will fast track the introduction of a new education business exchange service and the introduction of account executives who will work with schools and colleges in the Valleys. 2. Provide access to a bespoke package of skills support by expanding employability programmes, which help people who are unemployed into work. 3. Provide support and training for people who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive to gain skills to secure a job. We will ensure employment and skills programmes which support those furthest from work are joined-up and we will work with employers to develop social clauses to ensure this happens. 4. Deliver a shared apprenticeship model to stimulate the market in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), health, tourism, hospitality, farming, woodland management and micro-hydro technology. 5. Create more apprenticeship opportunities, including in the public sector and in the sports and youth work sectors. 6. Help students in college, work-based learning and university to maintain and develop their Welsh language skills to meet demand in key sectors, such as health and social care.
Availability and the cost of childcare in some areas can act as a deterrent to returning to work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start to deliver and test the Welsh Government's <i>childcare offer</i>⁴ in parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Caerphilly from September 2017. Pilot the offer throughout Blaenau Gwent, focusing on how obstacles to employability created by childcare needs can be broken down. 2. Work with the National Day Nurseries Association on a bid to the WCVA's active inclusion fund to encourage people who are economically inactive to take up work placements in day care nurseries.
<p>There is a lack of consistent, fully-informed careers advice for young people.</p> <p>Young people need “work skills” to ensure they are ready for employment. For example, time-keeping and confidence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As described above, fast-track the introduction of Careers Wales' new education business exchange service in the Valleys in 2017. This will provide information to schools about work experience and other support available from employers. 2. Strengthen industry-led engagement in schools and local communities to encourage young people to consider careers in digital industries. 3. Work with businesses to understand current and future digital skills needs to ensure skills and apprenticeship schemes meet their needs.

⁴<http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2017/update/?lang=en>

Priority 2

Better public services

There's no consistency with the bus routes – they change the numbers and cancel services without warning.



We heard many stories about excellent public services in the Valleys but we also heard that services are not as joined-up as they could be. We were struck by evidence that public bodies are trying to involve people in decisions, which will affect their lives, but we were told by many people that being heard can be a problem.

You told us that public services need to be more responsive to the needs of local communities and there is a general need to join services up more effectively to maximise their impact, especially as public funding is so tight.

Schools and colleges play a key role – they are absolutely critical in giving children their best start in life and helping them to reach their full potential.

The taskforce wants to see children in the Valleys do better at school and college – we want overall attainment and results to improve and we want the gap between children on free school meals and their classmates to close. We will work with schools, colleges and local communities to make sure that young people can take advantage of all the opportunities open to them.

We don't want people's lives to be blighted by poor physical or mental health – we want health services to be there when people need help but we also want people to understand how to take care of themselves.

We will work with the NHS and social services to provide care as close to home as possible and ensure communities have the skills to lead healthy lives.

Unreliable and uncoordinated public transport across the Valleys can stop people accessing jobs, education, training, and simply meeting friends and family. Many people told us this should be a key priority for the taskforce as so many other priorities depend on good transport links.



Vision: by 2021

Public services will be working with the third sector and local communities to respond to people's needs.

Support will be available to help people lead healthier lifestyles, improving their physical and mental wellbeing and addressing health inequalities.

Public transport will be joined-up, affordable and help people get to work, school or training and to leisure facilities.

We will improve education outcomes for all children and close the attainment gap.

You said...	We will...
Public services need to be better joined-up.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake ground-breaking work in three Valleys communities – Llanhilleth, Ferndale and Glynneath/Banwen – to look at how services and local delivery can be better joined-up. A senior Welsh Government official will work with established community projects to identify barriers preventing community action from reaching its full potential. These three pathfinder projects will drive change in the Welsh Government and help improve local services in the three communities. 2. Work with local councils to develop a joined-up, responsive early years system, which puts the unique needs of each child at its heart. This will build on the integrated service approach of programmes such as Flying Start.
Facilities and services for communities should be better used. For example, schools could be used after hours by other public services and third sector organisations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use existing – and create new – community hubs, in which the NHS, social services, schools and job centres work together with the third sector to provide services for local communities. We will work with local communities and local councils to develop these and decide where these will be based. 2. Build on the Welsh Government’s <i>21st Century Schools</i> programme to focus on the co-location of services and the community use of school buildings. This will allow schools to be used in a more flexible way so they offer facilities for other public services outside school hours. 3. Expand the use of highly-skilled business managers to support and increase connections between local communities and schools.
Health services need to be better equipped to deal with an aging population. There should also be better join-up between GPs and non-clinical services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Test new approaches to improve access to mental health and personal wellbeing support. This will enable GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local services, provided by community and voluntary sector organisations, which meet a person’s needs. 2. Develop training opportunities and career pathways for people living in the Valleys in a range of key health and social services roles, including dental care workers, nursing and health and care support workers. This will help identify where bespoke solutions are needed to address local recruitment challenges. 3. Develop a widening access programme for young people from the Valleys who want a career in health and social care, including medicine. This will build on the Seren⁵ network.
People do not feel supported by mental health services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritise the Valleys for the roll-out of the wellbeing bond – a new initiative designed to help increase physical activity and mental wellbeing. 2. Promote social prescribing, including piloting new ways to connect people with mental health support, for example, through the arts and culture; sports and active recreation; community choirs and the use of green spaces.

⁵ Seren supports Wales’ brightest sixth formers achieve their academic potential and gain entry to leading universities.

You said...	We will...
<p>Poor quality housing and too many empty properties can have a detrimental impact on the wider community and can be the cause of anti-social behaviour.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Valleys councils to improve public support for energy conservation and home improvement measures. This will build on work the taskforce heard about from people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf, where home improvement loans of up to £25,000 are available to home-owners, landlords and developers. This has helped to reduce the number of empty homes in the area.
<p>There continues to be a shortage of good-quality, affordable housing.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the opportunities provided by the South Wales Metro to reinvigorate housing in the Valleys. 2. Widen housing choice by unlocking stalled housing sites through joint working with the city deal partnerships. 3. Support local builders to build the homes people need through a new partnership between Valleys councils and Finance Wales. 4. Explore new housing options in the most disadvantaged communities through joint working between registered social landlords in the Valleys following work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
<p>Public transport is disjointed, expensive and prevents people accessing employment, education and training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the proposed South Wales Metro hubs act as key community points, providing a focus for housing, health, education and other public service investments. 2. Work with rail and bus providers to ensure public transport throughout the Valleys is more frequent and affordable and that it links to active travel – cycling and walking – as part of the development of the South Wales Metro. 3. Improve public transport services to better reflect the needs of local communities and businesses, including people who work irregular and part-time hours. 4. Explore the feasibility of expanding a young people’s discounted fare scheme across public transport. 5. Pilot new bus routes and expand the availability of community transport across the Valleys. This will build on work in the Cynon Valley, where volunteer-led community transport is helping disabled people. 6. Improve the availability of travel information using digital technology, such as apps, as well as traditional methods. This will help people to plan their journeys more effectively.

Priority 3

My local community

There's a nice walk nearby – by the waterfalls but there's mess everywhere. Teenagers light fires and leave rubbish as they don't have anything else to do.



The South Wales Valleys have a long and proud history and are at the heart of Welsh culture. They are home to some of the most distinctive and breath-taking natural landscapes in Wales.

The Valleys are not a single community but many different and diverse people – these differences were evident as we moved from community to community, speaking to different people and groups. People expressed a range of opinions about where they live – from feeling strong community pride in their local area; to speaking about the negative connotations, which have become associated with the Valleys.

But there was widespread agreement that we could do more with the Valleys' natural environment, its culture and heritage so they can be enjoyed more widely by local people and those living further afield. The Valleys' culture and heritage could be the backdrop to a new future for the area.

Projects like the planned new Afan Valley Adventure Resort at the head of the Afan and Llynfi valleys, have the potential to transform the local area for people living nearby and to attract visitors and tourists, while also boosting skills and employment.

This, and other schemes like it, will be key to the development of the Valleys Landscape Park idea, together with smaller-scale projects, including community woodlands.

Some communities told the taskforce they could benefit more from renewable energy developments and others spoke about the need to modernise town centres, moving away from the traditional idea that they should be developed as shopping centres.



Vision: by 2021

A Valleys Landscape Park will have been set up to help local communities celebrate and maximise the use of the natural resources and heritage.

Valleys town centres will be vibrant places, with attractive green spaces, which support local economies.

The Valleys will be a recognised tourist destination, attracting visitors from across Wales, the UK and beyond.

You said...	We will...
<p>We are not making the most of the rich natural resources and cultural heritage of the Valleys.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the development of a Valleys Landscape Park. This will help local communities to work with the public, private and third sectors to celebrate and maximise the use of the area's natural resources and heritage. <p>Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving physical and mental wellbeing • Employment through green infrastructure • Renewable energy schemes • Positively promoting the Valleys as a tourist destination • Creating 21st century homes using local sources of timber • Responding to the challenge of fly-tipping • Supporting the Welsh language.
<p>Town centres need to be refocused.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure national and local government regeneration strategies challenge the traditional model of the town centre, based on what communities want and need. Support initiatives which promote a mixture of housing, retail, business and green spaces. 2. Explore the impact of free car parking on town centres in the Valleys – you told us that Cwmbran Shopping has free car parking every day and this can encourage trade and help town centres compete with out-of-town retail parks.
<p>Renewable energy provides real opportunities for local communities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the development of locally-owned community renewable energy schemes in the Valleys. We will identify the best opportunities by bringing together local and national agencies to deliver projects. 2. Develop new mechanisms for managing and using energy generated through renewable schemes with the ultimate aim of the Valleys powering its own communities. 3. Work with local and national partners to tackle fuel poverty in the Valleys and meet decarbonisation targets by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the scale of investment in home energy efficiency by identifying opportunities to encourage and support people who can invest in improving the energy efficiency of their homes; • Promote the support available through the Welsh Government's <i>Warm Homes</i> programme to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of people on low incomes or living in the most deprived communities in the Valleys.

You said...	We will...
There is a need to increase tourism in the area, focusing on the Valley's heritage and natural beauty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="768 193 2031 296">1. Develop a new, positive narrative for tourism in the Valleys and identify projects to meet current and future tourism demand, focusing on the landscape, heritage and people. We will build on successful ventures, such as Bike Park Wales which has attracted many visitors to Merthyr Tydfil.<li data-bbox="768 312 2031 387">2. Identify opportunities to attract new events to the Valleys – sporting events, such as mountain biking and orienteering, and develop existing events, such as the Steelhouse Festival, in Ebbw Vale.
The physical environment needs to be better maintained and fly-tipping and littering must be tackled.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="768 403 1854 440">1. Improve the physical environment of communities by investing in green infrastructure.<li data-bbox="768 456 1910 523">2. Co-ordinate action with local communities and businesses in areas affected by littering and fly-tipping to achieve a rubbish-free environment.

Looking forward

***Our Valleys, Our Future* is a high-level action plan setting out the taskforce's priorities, based on the evidence we have heard and feedback from people living and working in the South Wales Valleys.**

We want to hear your views about this plan and about how these priorities can be developed further. Your feedback, views and evidence will help us develop a detailed delivery plan, which will set out:

- How we will achieve these priorities
- Who should be involved
- The expected benefits
- The timescales for completion
- How we will measure success.

Given the unique features of different communities in the South Wales Valleys, some actions may initially be tailored to particular areas.

If we are to develop and deliver a stretching and ambitious work plan, effective delivery will require an ongoing partnership with the public and close working with statutory bodies, particularly local authorities.

The delivery plan will be published in autumn 2017. We want to continue to hear as many views as possible. Details of all future public engagement events will be available on our website⁶, Facebook⁷ and Twitter⁸ pages.



⁶ [gov.wales/talkvalleys](https://www.gov.wales/talkvalleys)

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/talkvalleys/>

⁸ [#wg_communities #talkvalleys](https://twitter.com/wg_communities)

Further Information

All inquiries about this plan should be sent to:

Valleys Taskforce
Education and Public Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

email: talkvalleys@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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A summary and a young person's version of this document can be found on our website at the following address: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>

Related documents

- *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>
- *Taking Wales Forward 2016 – 2021*
<http://gov.wales/about/programme-for-government/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Summary of Engagement*
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Summary of Evidence*
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Context*
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>

