

Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys

12 February, 10:30 – 12:00 Lewis School Pengam, Gilfach, Bargoed CF81 8LJ

In attendance:

Taskforce Members

Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, Alun Davies AM
(Chair)

Leader of the House and Chief Whip, Julie James AM

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan AM

Ann Beynon, Former BT Chief Executive and Chair of Cardiff City Region City Deal Board

Jocelyn Davies, Former Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration

Judith Evans, Principal, Coleg y Cymoedd

Dr Chris Jones, Interim Chair, HEIW

Fiona Jones, Director DWP

Andrew Diplock, Entrepreneur, Angel Investor and Advisor

Brian Morgan, Professor of Entrepreneurship at Cardiff Met University

Programme Board Members

Maureen Howell, Equality and Prosperity – Deputy Director

John Howells, Director, Housing and Regeneration (SRO)

David Rosser, Chief Regional Officer for South East

Valleys Taskforce Team

Deri AP Hywel, Valleys Taskforce Project Lead

Phil Lewis, Head of Prosperity for All

Kelly Clement, Valleys Taskforce Officer (note-taker)

Speakers

Simon Jones – Director Economic Infrastructure

Nathan Barnhouse – Rail Programme Director

Madeleine Brindley, Special Advisor

Hefin David AM

Apologies:

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM

Cllr Andrew Morgan, Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf

Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, Wales TUC

Gaynor Richards, NPTCVC

Tracey Burke, DG, EPS

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services (ARD) welcomed taskforce members to the eighth meeting and thanked taskforce members for the time and dedication given to date
2. ARD welcomed Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning (EM) to her first meeting as a taskforce member

3. ARD gave an update on the newsletters circulated to 700+ stakeholders (mainly people that have attended public engagement events) and invited members to consider any input they could contribute

Item 2: Transport

4. Simon Jones (SJ) presented a paper on transport. A competitive procurement process for the rail service and Metro Operator and Development Partner contract has started and three bids have been received. Bid evaluation is currently underway and the outcome will be announced in early May. The new operator would then take over from October.
5. SJ highlighted the challenges of working with the privatised bus companies. There is a need to consider how to get best value for the £250m investment. There needs to be a change of focus that provides good quality, high capacity trains with bus routes with the aim of getting passengers to the railway stations.
6. ARD said that whatever we do, the benefits need to meet the top end of the valleys. New stations need to be located on the valleys line and this will generate future investment.
7. A discussion took place around costs. SJ was keen to invest in fairer fares for the valleys as sometimes the place where the jobs are, have the highest fares.
8. Members commented that transport needs to be available for where you are, where you want to be and when you want to be there. We may need an incentive to get people out of the car? For example, introducing congestion charges and highlighting air quality issues.
9. ARD invited member to respond via letter/email to emphasise what the priorities are and how we should be taking these forward by the end of February

Item 3: Matters arising from 30 November meeting

10. At the last Ministerial Taskforce meeting it was suggested that more formal arrangements should be put in place to align the work of Welsh Government with that of the CCR City Deal. David Rosser (DR) presented a paper to show:
 - The current Cardiff Capital Region City Deal governance structure and;
 - Various themed groups, along with the City Deal Lead and the current Welsh Government representation at each forum

Item 4: Any other business and closing remarks

11. ARD asked the taskforce members to continue to look at the delivery plan. In the July taskforce meeting progress against the delivery plan will be reported on and what action is required to meet the expectations
12. ARD provided an update on the further consideration to the Western Valleys Strategic Hub. A decision will be made in April as to whether we include or not.
13. The next meeting was scheduled for 23 April 2018.
14. Once again, ARD thanked taskforce members as well as all other contributors to the meeting.

