

**Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys, 18 September 2017**

**15:00 – 17:00, University of South Wales, Treforest Campus, Pontypridd**

**Taskforce members**

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies AM (Chair)  
Ann Beynon, Chair, Cardiff City Region Board, Former BT Chief Executive  
Jocelyn Davies, Former Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration  
Andrew Diplock, Entrepreneur, Angel Investor and Advisor  
Fiona Jones, Director DWP  
Cllr Andrew Morgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf

**Board members**

Helen Davies, Welsh Government, Economy, Skills and Natural Resources (on behalf of Tracey Burke)  
John Howells, Welsh Government, Director, Housing and Regeneration  
Maureen Howell, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Equality and Prosperity Division  
Deri Ap Hywel, Welsh Government, Valleys Taskforce Project Lead  
Chris Tudor-Smith, Welsh Government, Public Health Bill SRO  
Deborah McMillan, Welsh Government, Local Authority Professional Advisor, Education  
Phil Lewis, Welsh Government, Head of Prosperity for All, Equality and Prosperity

**Taskforce secretariat**

Dawn Chadwick, Welsh Government, Senior Communications and Marketing Manager  
Lisa Rimmer, Welsh Government, Valleys Taskforce Senior Programme Manager, Equality and Prosperity (note-taker)

**Apologies**

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM  
Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James AM  
Madeleine Brindley, Special Advisor  
Judith Evans, Principal, Coleg y Cymoedd  
Dr Chris Jones, Chair, Cwm Taf University Health Board  
Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, TUC  
Prof. Brian Morgan, Cardiff University  
Gaynor Richards, Director, NPT Community Voluntary Council

Item 1: Welcome and introductions

1. The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language (ARD) welcomed taskforce members to the sixth meeting. He noted that, since the last meeting in June, the high level plan, *Our Valleys, Our Future*, had been launched and had largely been welcomed.
2. ARD reported that there had been some useful public engagement events held over recent weeks, with constructive comments made by the attendees.
3. The more detailed Delivery Plan was due to be published in the autumn.

Item 2: Priority 1 – Good quality jobs and the skills to do them

*Business Growth and Start-Ups*

4. Feedback from the external workshop was discussed and key points included:
  - a. There was a complex environment for entrepreneurs starting up new businesses; there were a myriad of support schemes.
  - b. “Be the Spark” was a positive action the taskforce could work on to develop business growth and start-ups. One of the most effective support mechanisms for new businesses was peer support. The taskforce needed to maximise opportunities for people in growth businesses to speak to those with established businesses. This could be done within the Be the Spark framework.
  - c. There were already a number of entrepreneurial networks in place that the taskforce should tap in to.
  - d. There was a need to celebrate success, for example through award ceremonies.
  - e. It was essential that the taskforce was aligned with and worked in parallel to the City Deals.

*Strategic Hubs*

5. A summary of the external stakeholder workshop was presented and the key points included:
  - a. One of the main opportunities brought about by the taskforce was that it could identify funding sources and strategically bringing them together.
  - b. The issue of ‘clawback’ was discussed. It was agreed that the Cwm Taf pilot report [due to be published 25.09.17] presented a good evidence base and it should be used to inform actions.

*Foundational Economy*

6. A summary of the external stakeholder workshop was presented and it was noted that there was a need to align with the work of the Learning, Skills, Innovation and Partnership (LSKIP) who had already developed proposals on this matter and there was the potential for them to take the lead of many of these actions. The City Deals, LSKIP and the taskforce needed to come together to deliver on this work.
7. Taskforce members were reminded that Cathy Parker from the Institute of Place Management would be presenting findings on an evidence base for what worked and what doesn't in terms of town centre regeneration and community development on 22.09.17 at the Orbit Centre in Merthyr Tydfil.

*Employability Pipeline*

8. Taskforce members discussed this workstream and the following key discussion points were noted:
  - a. There needed to be strong links between what businesses needed, in terms of skills, with what schools and colleges were offering.
  - b. It was suggested that this was an area where there was too much complexity.

Item 3: Priority 2 - Better public services

*Community hubs*

9. It was reported that the community hubs stakeholder meeting had been positive and it highlighted how much good work was already going on across the Valleys.
10. It was noted that this linked to work being carried out to encourage schools to make their facilities available to communities, free of charge. It was also suggested that Job Centres could be used more flexibly to host partners and providers.
11. The need to align with Integrated Health and Social Care Centres was highlighted.

Item 4: Valleys Landscape Park

12. Feedback from the external stakeholder workshop was provided and the following key points were noted:
  - a. There had been agreement that the title for the work was misleading but there was yet to be a better suggestion!
  - b. The attendees at the workshop had been clear about what success would look like.
  - c. There needed to be an element of quality assurance for this to be a success.
  - d. There was also a need to develop further thinking for actions focussing on heritage. The All Wales Resilience survey would be published in the coming weeks and Welsh culture and heritage had come out strongly in the findings.
  - e. The next steps would be to secure funding for the lead and support team and to build a repository of the projects already in place that link to the proposed Landscape Park.

Item 5: Closing remarks

13. ARD thanked taskforce members for their valuable contributions.
14. It was agreed that the near final version of the Delivery Plan would be shared with the taskforce members on 6.10.17 with a view to comments being returned to the taskforce team by 13.10.17.