

Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys, 02 February 2017
Action Points

Taskforce members
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies AM (Chair)
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM
Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James AM
Ann Beynon, Chair of the Cardiff Capital Region Board
Jocelyn Davies, Former Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration
Andrew Diplock, Director of Strategy and Governance, Inprova Energy
Judith Evans, Principal, Coleg Y Cymoedd
Dr Chris Jones, Chair of the Cwm Taf University Health Board
Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, TUC
Cllr Andrew Morgan, Council Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf
Professor Brian Morgan, Cardiff University
Fiona Jones, Director, DWP
Gaynor Richards, Director, NPT Community Voluntary Council
Board members
Madeleine Brindley, Special Advisor
Tracey Burke, Welsh Government, Director, Economy, Science & Transport Strategy
Jo-Anne Daniels, Welsh Government, Director, Communities & Tackling Poverty
Owen Evans, Welsh Government, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education and Public Services
Maureen Howell, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Equality and Prosperity
John Howells, Welsh Government, Director, Housing and Regeneration
Ruth Meadows, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Digital and Strategic Comms
Reg Kilpatrick, Director, Local Government, Welsh Government
Duncan Forbes, Chief Executive, Bron Afon Community Housing Association
Gill Richardson, Executive Director of Public Health, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer
Simon Dean, Deputy Chief Executive NHS Wales
Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director, Central South Wales Education Consortium
Presenters
Ian Williams, Deputy Director, Sector Development, Welsh Government
Geraint Rees, Professional School & Local Authority Adviser, Education Directorate, Welsh Government
Guests
Dawn Chadwick, Welsh Government Communications Team
Taskforce secretariat
Laura Evans, Welsh Government
Lucy Hoddinott, Welsh Government

1: Welcome and Introductions

The Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language (ARD) welcomed taskforce members to the third meeting. He explained that the focus of the meeting was to explore how public services could be better aligned in the valleys.

2: Visions, Priorities and Lead Responsibilities

Taskforce members discussed a Welsh Government paper which outlined the vision and key priorities for the taskforce. Key discussion points included:

- The need for an ambitious programme for the next four years and beyond. It was important for taskforce members to have the lead in taking this work forward, working alongside officials and avoiding working in silos.
- The importance of an investment strategy which exploits commercial gain in key sites across the valleys, as championed by Chris Sutton during the taskforce's last meeting.
- There should be a focus on making sure that existing programmes are fit for purpose and existing consultation work should not be duplicated but used to inform the work of the taskforce.
- There were some concerns about the focus on tourism in the paper, members cautioned against 'tidying the place up for visitors' before focussing on the real issues that face local communities.
- Members stressed that access to good quality jobs with a clear progression pathway is one of the key issues faced by many valleys communities and should be a priority.

3: Health and Social Services

Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer, delivered a presentation on the health offer for the valleys as outlined in the accompanying paper and the outcomes from an associated Health and Social Care workshop. Key discussion points included:

- The need for community hubs and integration of services which build on community assets, with a caution that the hubs needed to be easily accessible to the communities that they serve.
- Better place-based planning was needed. Community health hubs should be planned in conjunction with Metro planning and other policy planning, such as housing.
- The need for multi-disciplinary working, enabling health workers to work together and cross the divide between primary and secondary care.
- Encouraging health workers to consider alternatives to better health including social prescribing. There was a strong link between the environment and accessibility of green spaces and better physical health.

4: Education

Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director, Central South Wales Education Consortium, delivered a presentation about what the education offer for the valleys could be, including the strengths of the most successful schools. Key discussion points included:

- The need for the best teachers in areas that need them most where schools are struggling.
- The need to guide children through employment options at a younger age in order highlight alternative career options and give students greater ambition.
- Start education at a younger age and include mothers and families of pre-school children to encourage attainment and ambition. Intervention with the whole family was vital.
- A holistic approach to education, including looking at offering vocational training for students from age 14 instead of forcing all students to follow a purely academic route should be considered.
- The need to look at place-based budgeting and how all grants in a community are being used collectively.
- The possibility of providing free transport to under 16s.

5. Housing

Duncan Forbes, Chief Executive of Bron Afon Housing Association, introduced the discussion and outlined the housing offer for the valleys. Key discussion points included:

- Innovative finance models to build new homes and provide assistance to home owners who do not have the capital to invest in their own homes.
- The need to consider the provision of social housing prior to any announcement of the Metro transport hubs in order to avoid gentrification of these areas when land values rise. These hubs must bring value to local people.
- Support through housing for young people to help keep them in their communities and keep communities thriving. Improving estates and town centres including infrastructure could help to build resilient communities.
- The use of brown fields sites and public assets to provide new housing.

Action:

Next meeting: 3 April 2017

Close.