

Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys, 28 November
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 City 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
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
Huw Morris, Welsh Government, Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning
Presenters
Duncan Hamer, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Entrepreneurship and Delivery
Chris Sutton, Director, JLL
Guests
Dawn Chadwick, Welsh Government Communications Team
Andrew Falleyn, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Infrastructure Delivery
Leigh Hughes, LSKIP, Cardiff City Deal Board
Alun Owen, Merthyr County Borough Council
Janet Owen Jones, Welsh Government, Head of Strategic Development and Delivery
Marion Stapleton, Welsh Government, Deputy Director, Cross Cutting Strategy Team
Cllr Debbie Wilcox, LSKIP, Newport City Council
Taskforce secretariat
Nathan Cook, Welsh Government
Laura Evans, Welsh Government
Lucy Hoddinott, Welsh Government
Beverley Morgan, Welsh Government

1: Welcome and Introductions

The Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language welcomed taskforce members to the second meeting. He explained that the focus of the meeting was to explore how access to good-quality jobs and employability skills could be increased.

2: South Wales Metro and Infrastructure

Chris Sutton (JL) delivered a presentation on the South Wales Metro system outlining the potential investment and commercial opportunities. Key discussion points included:

- The need to spread growth and investment around the South Wales Region, not just along the M4 corridor. Including the need to ensure that 'fit for purpose' roads, land and industrial sites were available before the Metro becomes operational.
- The development of existing towns such as Merthyr Tydfil as hubs, encouraging dispersal of investment and wealth, particularly where towns were likely to become transport interchanges/ hubs as a result of the Metro.
- The importance of attracting the private sector to Wales and possible financial incentives which could be offered.
- The increased use of existing community buildings by SMEs which could have a dual benefit of rejuvenating local communities and towns.
- The role of enterprise zones in pulling existing resources together and the role of the Welsh Government and local authorities in delivering enterprise zones which are fit for purpose.

3: Entrepreneurship

Duncan Hamer, Welsh Government Deputy Director, Entrepreneurship & Delivery, provided a short presentation outlining the work of Welsh Government in relation to entrepreneurship. Key discussion points included:

- Apprenticeships and how they could be better advertised and utilised. Young people could be given the skills to start up their own business or to progress into developing their own company.
- Better support for private sector companies in understanding what a modern apprenticeship entails.
- Regional apprenticeship schemes and regional plans to provide schools with greater clarity in regard to what pathways are available.
- The importance of softer skills in a young person's education / apprenticeship. Confidence and social skills have a big impact on whether people can set up their own business.
- The need to develop an understanding of the barriers preventing young people entering apprenticeships and also the barriers to entrepreneurship / starting their own businesses.
- Engagement with existing entrepreneurs who could be encouraged to share their experiences with young people. They could also be consulted to find out what could be done to retain skills, entrepreneurs and businesses in the valleys.

- The use of starter units in the valleys by entrepreneurs and how the number of units could be increased.
- The need to build on existing proposals being taken forward by the Cardiff City Deal on a “business support offer”.

4: Employability

Jo-Anne Daniels, Welsh Government Director, Communities & Tackling Poverty and Huw Morris, Welsh Government Group Director Skills, Higher Education & Lifelong Learning delivered a presentation outlining key Welsh Government employability programmes and the forthcoming Employability Plan. Key discussion points included:

- Transport and accessibility were key considerations for employability.
- The need for greater join-up between Welsh Government and the Department for Work and Pensions. Fewer schemes which were clearer to understand and access.
- A need for better careers advice.
- The new Employability Plan aimed to reduce a lot of complexities around accessing work programmes leading to an intensive, sustained approach.
- The possibility of using the valleys as a test bed for the Welsh Government’s Employability Plan.
- The need for a central approach under which all the work across the valleys could operate.

Action: Building on the taskforce discussions, officials have been commissioned to produce a draft outline of a Jobs and Employability Plan for the valleys

Next meeting: 2 February 2017

Close.