

Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys

30 November 2017, 09:30 – 12:00 The Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Folly View, Penygarn, Pontypool NP4 8BU

In attendance:

Taskforce Members

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

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM

Leader of the House and Chief Whip, Julie James AM

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

Jocelyn Davies, Former Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration

Judith Evans, Principal, Coleg y Cymoedd

Dr Chris Jones, Chair, Cwm Taf University Health Board

Fiona Jones, Director DWP

Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, Wales TUC

Cllr Andrew Morgan, Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf

Programme Board Members

Tim Howard, Deputy Director of Property

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

Lisa Rimmer, Valleys Taskforce Senior Programme Manager (note-taker)

Speakers

Ruth Meadows, Deputy Director – Digital and Strategic Communications –
Pathfinder lead

Ruth Studley, Deputy Director Communities First Transition – Pathfinder lead

Amelia John, Deputy Director, Communities Division – Pathfinder lead

Simon Griffiths, Head of Commercial Innovation

Nigel Elias, Programme Manager - Better Jobs Closer to Home

Rachel Garside-Jones, Deputy Director – Skills, Employability and EU Funding

David Roberts, Knowledge and Analytical Services

Apologies:

Andrew Diplock, Entrepreneur, Angel Investor and Advisor

Madeleine Brindley, Special Advisor

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services (ARD) welcomed taskforce members to the seventh meeting and thanked taskforce members for the time and dedication given to date.
2. It was noted that the detailed delivery plan which supports Our Valleys, Our Future, was published on 7 November.

3. ARD reported that, following the Cabinet reshuffle, Ministerial taskforce members would remain the same. However, consideration would be given to how Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Housing and Regeneration could input in the future.
4. In terms of governance, a Valleys Taskforce programme board was in place that also met quarterly. The Board's role was to oversee and take overall responsibility for the delivery of the actions in the plan.
5. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure (KS) noted his intention to publish an Economic Action Plan by the end of the year, to provide further detail on how we will implement the commitments set out in *Prosperity for All*. The Plan would be wide-ranging and draw on the levers available across Government to grow the economy, spread opportunity, and promote well-being.
6. KS explained that there would also be a strong focus on a new economic contract between business and government. The purpose would be to enhance government's relationship with business, based on a mutual understanding of the respective roles and the contribution all parties can make to achieving shared objectives for a more prosperous and secure Wales. The intention was that this would help drive added value from the business support offered.

Item 2: The Valleys Taskforce: roles and arrangements

7. A paper was presented which proposed updates to the taskforce terms of reference and set out the remit of the taskforce going forward.
8. MH highlighted the important role of taskforce members to scrutinise the work of Welsh Government and hold officials to account.
9. LR agreed to share the document that recently went to the Valleys Taskforce Programme Board which outlined reporting and governance arrangements, and how officials are held to account.

Item 3: Strategic Hubs and Demonstration of Mapping Work

10. DH and DR presented an electronic map which had been compiled which plotted several of the valleys taskforce interventions as well as related factors such as GPs and healthcare services, City Deal projects and transport developments. The map had been designed as a tool to support better strategic thinking. The taskforce discussed this and the following key points were made:
 11. ARD stressed the importance of the strategic hubs reflecting the needs of each locality and they should be developed through ongoing discussions with people living in those localities.
 12. The locations of the hubs had been chosen based on early mapping work which analysed where the potential for biggest impact would be. They were also chosen based on location and accessibility with approximately three quarters of people living in the Valleys able to access one of the locations on public transport within 45 minutes.
 13. Local authorities were leading on the development of the hubs. They had developed a list of priorities and carried out initial stakeholder work.
 14. By the end of January 2018 it was intended that a blueprint of priority projects for each of the seven hubs would have been developed. By April

- 2018 funding sources for the priorities would have been identified.
15. It was queried whether the tool could be used to project consequentials. DR noted that it was not designed to be a modelling tool; however if a special analysis was undertaken, that could be overlaid. It was agreed that the purpose would need to be clear and that would determine what data sets were needed and available. Accessibility was discussed and it was suggested that a “hackathon” might be arranged to test the security of the data. It was agreed that it would be a good thing if private sector data could also be added although, there would need to be restrictions on the openness of certain, sensitive data. More generally the taskforce felt that the development of a mapping tool as presented provided an excellent opportunity to deepen partnership working across the Valleys region.

Item 4: Better Jobs Closer to Home

16. RG-J presented an update paper on Better Jobs Closer to Home, noting it was a key manifesto commitment.
17. SG presented each of the four pilots, and comments were invited from the taskforce members.
18. The work that had been carried out to date was welcomed. The following questions were put forward:
 - how assessment had been built into the pilots
 - how would the work be scaled up?
 - why was it not 90% of the Transport for Wales contract (rather than the commitment to place 5% of orders for all branding new signage)?
19. The Leader of the House and Chief Whip (JJ) noted that the four pilots were being carried out to find out what works well, which drive costs down etc. The 5% agreed with the Transport for Wales fits with the fair work agenda. It was not about supporting people get into *any* job.
20. Due to time constraints, taskforce members were encouraged to contact Simon Griffiths directly with any further queries or comments.

Item 5: Valleys Pathfinders – emerging themes and observations

21. PL noted that the pilot would come to an end at the end of the financial year and there would be significant reporting at that stage.
22. The work was being supported by Cynefin which would establish citizen journalists in the three pathfinders to measure change. A report was due to be submitted on this shortly.
23. RM, RS and AJ who were working within the three pathfinder areas, presented initial findings.
24. Taskforce members pressed for the pathfinder projects to move as quickly as possible into the delivery phase in order to address the issues that had been identified to date. It was agreed that officials should report further on development of the pilots in six months time.

Item 6: Any other business and closing remarks

25. The next meeting was scheduled for 12 February 2018.
26. Once again, ARD thanked taskforce members as well as all other contributors to the meeting.