

Priority area	Strategic Hubs - Good quality jobs and the skills to do them
Policy lead within taskforce team	John Howells
Action, as stated in “Our Valleys, Our Future”	Seven strategic hubs will be created across the South Wales Valleys to focus public money and provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs.

Milestone	Progress
January 2018 – Create a development blueprint for the next 15 years. This will identify priority projects across the seven strategic hubs.	<p>Following a series of engagement events in the autumn, local authorities, linking with Welsh Government, local communities and businesses, led on the development of project proposals for each of the seven hub areas and beginning the process of creating a clearer framework for further investment..</p> <p>Hub seminars with local stakeholders were then held between November and January to sanity check and challenge the emerging thinking. These facilitated discussions were constructive and were able to highlight those projects on which all parties could focus in the short term.</p>
April 2018 – Agree initial costed investment programme for each of the seven strategic hubs for the period 2018-21.	<p>Discussions with policy leads / budget holders have been held at the Welsh Government to identify a shortlist of priority project proposals that can be funded through existing budgets. The shortlist has been discussed with local authorities and delivery priorities agreed.</p> <p>The process of scrutinising these projects is continuing. We have drawn together all government departments with an interest to inform this process. Projects are therefore being considered for their wider economic and social impact whilst also ensuring closer alignment with core funding streams. Detached consideration or business cases has been held up by a delay in agreeing the South East Wales priorities for the new Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme.</p> <p>As part of the 2019-19 Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru, we are exploring the case and need for additional strategic hubs. Colleagues in our Knowledge and Analytical Services Division have considered the impact of a number of proposed hubs, taking into account number of people a new hub would benefit, and also journey time using public transport for commuting to work. Officials have been liaising with Carmarthenshire Local Authority who have developed proposals for a hub in Ammanford based on the Valleys taskforce model A seminar being held on 5 July in Ammanford, run by Carmarthenshire County Council and will follow the same format as the Valleys Taskforce hub seminars that were held between November and January.</p>

	<p>The Minister for Housing and Regeneration will attend, along with a number of Welsh Government officials.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	
<p>The hubs will need to provide a coherent approach to drive economic development, as opposed to working in isolation. This will need to consider the opportunity for specific linkages and to draw upon strengths in the local economy.</p> <p>For maximum impact the regional priorities for regeneration programmes such as Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme and Building for the Future need to be aligned to strategic hubs. These messages have been clear and consistent from the outset.</p> <p>A need to consider wider public sector job creation and investment in the scope of the hubs to act as an enabler.</p> <p>Transport was the most raised concern across all of the hub seminars. Connectivity across the hubs will be supported by the metro, however, the need for a coherent transport network in the short term will need to ensure join up.</p> <p>There are concerns that some of the projects submitted might not achieve a wider strategic impact. There will be a continuing need to balance wider economic impact with the pressures associated with the limited budget.</p>	
<p>Reported by:</p>	<p>Nicola Forrest 18 June 2018</p>