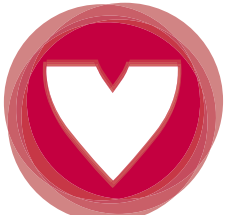




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein Cymoedd Ein Dyfodol



Our Valleys Our Future

Delivery Plan 2019-21



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#OurValleys

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Out of hours bus pilot. Working closely with DWP and the local job centres the pilot will provide affordable and accessible travel to connect people, communities and jobs.

Chair's Foreword

The role of the taskforce is to advise the Welsh Government on a new approach to investing in the future of our Valleys. An approach which will engage and empower local communities, build on their assets and restore a sense of hope and aspiration.

We have listened and continue to listen to people living and working in the Valleys. I am determined that, in this final phase of delivery¹ the Valleys taskforce focuses all its resources and efforts in order to make the most impact, both in the long and short term.

This year's Delivery Plan has therefore been stripped back – the focus and drive will be on the areas where we can make a real difference, which would not otherwise come about if it were not for the taskforce. That is not to say that those actions that have been removed are not continuing to progress. They very much are and continue to address a number of the outcomes stated in this document. However, they are overseen by other government departments. The cross-government Valleys taskforce programme board that is in place will ensure the join-up with these actions continues.

As we are approaching the end of the work programme during this Assembly term I am also conscious of the need for the outputs of the taskforce to go well beyond this term of government. This will be done through embedding our work in the long-term plans for Welsh Government and partnership working.

In July 2019 I announced that the taskforce has agreed to focus on seven priority areas, each driven by a subgroup of relevant experts that are responsible for taking forward the work.

These are as follows:

- Strategic hubs
- Foundational Economy²
- Entrepreneurship and business support
- Housing
- Valleys taskforce innovation fund
- Transport
- Valleys Regional Park.

The delivery plan reflects the fact that some subgroups are more established at this stage than others. For example, the actions for the Valleys Regional Park are very detailed as the subgroup for this has been in place for some time. Where subgroups have only recently been convened, this delivery plan will be refreshed in the future to capture any further actions that are agreed.

Although a number of existing actions are included in this version of the Delivery Plan, new actions relating specifically to the seven areas listed above have also been included.

As noted in the Progress Update September 2019 www.gov.wales/our-valleys-our-future-progress-update-2018-2019, a thematic approach is being taken to spending the £25m originally allocated to the Strategic Hubs. This will ensure the funding is used to scale up and spread good quality projects and initiatives designed in the Valleys. This is also more in keeping with the ambitions of the taskforce, as outlined in this Plan.

¹ The taskforce will be in place until March 2021.

² Foundational Economy is a name for those business activities that we use every day. Care and health services, food, housing, energy, construction, tourism and retailers on the high street are all examples of the foundational economy.

Taskforce members are responsible for overseeing and challenging ongoing progress. Since taking up the role of Chair of the taskforce I have taken the opportunity to ensure that the skills and expertise of the members of the taskforce reflect the new priority areas. I am extremely grateful for all the work of the original members that have stepped away and allowed new members to join. Details of taskforce members are detailed in Annex B.

In July this year I announced that the boundaries of the taskforce area are being extended to include the Gwendraeth and Amman Valleys. The First Minister has agreed to widening the boundaries as these areas are very much culturally part of the South Wales coalfield, with their distinctive heritage around anthracite mining, shared with the adjacent Valleys located to the east. The map to the right shows the new taskforce boundary (for monitoring purposes).

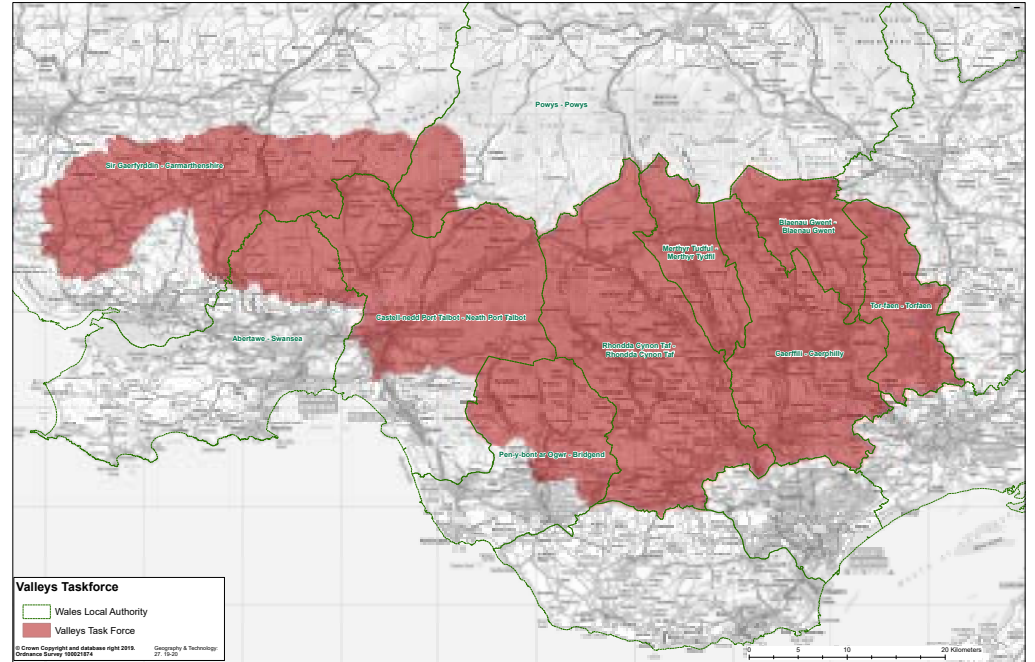
The work of the Valleys taskforce continues to embrace many aspects of the Well-being of Future Generations Act across the range of goals as well as our ways of working.

Delivering this plan will require all of us to work closely together, with continued dedication to make a positive difference to every person living and working in the South Wales Valleys.



Lee Waters AM

Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport



Priority 1

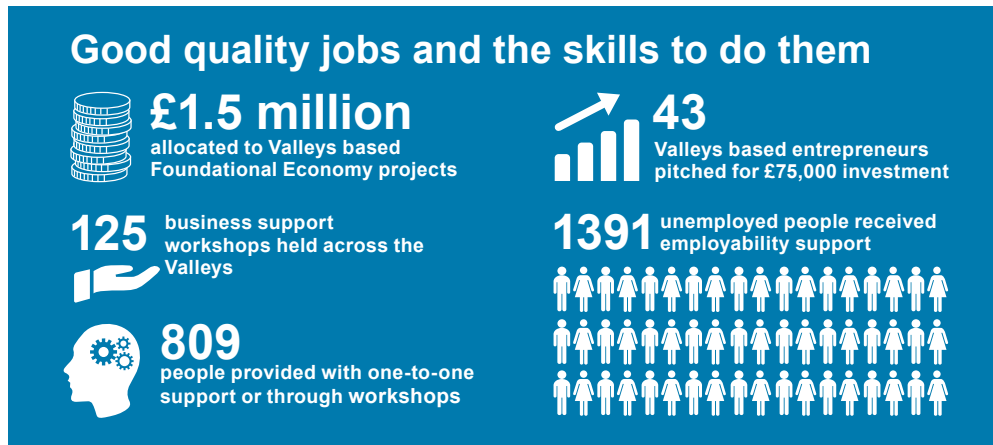
Good quality jobs and the skills to do them

The taskforce will continue to work closely with the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals to better align and, where appropriate, co-deliver some of its shared ambitions in areas such as the foundational economy; skills; data; energy and clean growth.

In addition to the actions set out in this plan, there are a number of other activities and programmes, which support this priority and our key target to help 7,000 people into fair work by 2021.

For example, the Regional Economic Framework for South East Wales will establish common goals and clear principles for collaborative working across the Region. It will explore the distinct economic opportunities and challenges in South East Wales and outline how Welsh Government will work with partners to implement the Economic Action Plan and deliver a more prosperous, more equal and sustainable Region.

Some of the key achievements for the taskforce in the past year include:



Pitchit Valleys. 43 Valleys based entrepreneurs pitched for £75,000 investment.



£10 million has been set aside by the Valleys Taskforce to help bring empty homes in the valleys back into use.



FE College, Cwmbran.



FE College, Cwmbran.

By 2021:

We will close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales. This means helping an extra 7,000 people into fair work and that thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs will be created in the Valleys.

People living in the Valleys will have access to the right skills to gain work.

Businesses will be fully supported to grow and thrive in the South Wales Valleys.



Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Strategic Hubs and maximising the economic impact of the A465			
<p>To monitor the progress and consider future funding proposals for the seven Strategic Hubs.</p>	<p>The strategic hubs will act as a focus for job creation by attracting private sector investment, allowing existing businesses to grow and promoting business start-ups. This will include realising economic regeneration opportunities through housing delivery and public service provision, while increasing connectivity through the South Wales Metro.</p>	<p>November 2019 – Establish a subgroup to agree and progress actions which will ensure the Strategic Hubs are supported to deliver their intended outcomes for their local areas.</p> <p>Ongoing – Undertake monitoring of progress and facilitate continued focused investment in the Strategic Hubs.</p> <p>Ongoing – Review and recommend any future funding proposals for the Strategic Hubs.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; two city deals; private sector developers; businesses.</p>
<p>Relocate more public sector jobs into the Valleys, including at the seven strategic hub locations, where appropriate in line with Welsh Government’s Location Strategy.</p>	<p>Public sector bodies and departments will relocate to parts of the South Wales Valleys, helping to support the local economy and provide a basis to develop job opportunities locally.</p>	<p>Ongoing – Continue to develop a pipeline of demand and work with local authorities to identify potential sites across the South Wales Valleys.</p> <p>Ongoing – Assess sites and opportunities to relocate and expand, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government arms-length bodies • Welsh public sector bodies • UK public sector bodies • Other Welsh Government departments. <p>Ongoing – Work with the UK Government to scope future opportunities.</p>	<p>Public sector organisations; Welsh Government; UK Government.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Strategic Hubs and maximising the economic impact of the A465			
<p>Make more publicly-owned land and property available in the Valleys for development.</p>	<p>Public land will be maximised to offer economic development opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing – Following a successful pilot in the Cwm Taf area, the Welsh Government will deliver the grant scheme, which made funding available for public service boards to undertake mapping to scope assets and identify collaborative opportunities for best use of the public sector asset base in Wales.</p> <p>Ongoing – Work with local authorities and the two city deals to assess where there are opportunities to align available land and property against strategic priorities, including links with the seven strategic hubs.</p>	<p>Local authorities; two city deals; UK Government; Welsh Government; NHS; public service boards.</p>
<p>Deliver a Heads of the Valleys economic strategy by Autumn 2020 identifying the range of national, strategic and local actions required to capitalise on the investment in the A465.</p>	<p>New supply chains will be developed and funding from infrastructure projects in the Valleys will be retained to create local quality jobs.</p>	<p>November 2019 – Establish a subgroup to agree and progress actions which will ensure the A465 investment is capitalised on to its full potential (further milestones to be added at an appropriate point).</p> <p>January 2020 – Undertake a review of existing mapping and engagement work in conjunction with Cardiff City Region and other key partners.</p> <p>Commission (if necessary) work to provide additional mapping and evidence.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; Transport for Wales; two city deals; LSKIP; private sector.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Strategic Hubs and maximising the economic impact of the A465			
Invest in the Wales wide data-mapping tool Data Map Wales to develop its resilience, functionality and content to provide easy access to geographical and statistical data that can be used to inform and encourage investment to the South Wales Valleys	Move to new cloud based infrastructure to ensure a stable, scalable, secure geo-portal for cross- government sharing to the private sector and the citizen. Improved awareness and access to Data Map Wales from public and private sector users. Improved numbers of datasets included to support decision-making around inward investment in the Valleys taskforce area	<p>December 2019 – Internal testing of the new platform Data Map Wales, working jointly with Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>January 2020 – Improved numbers of datasets, workshops with external partners and key policy partners</p> <p>March 2020 – Working with local authorities as partners to upload data to Data Map Wales.</p>	National Development Framework; local authorities; Natural Resources Wales.
Foundational Economy			
Roll-out, support and monitor the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund ³ .	Raise the foundational economy’s profile in the Valleys and stimulate debate and learning on what works.	<p>January 2020 – Hold an initial event with all successful Valleys projects to share information and guidance and begin to create a sense of belonging and interdependency as a cohort.</p> <p>Ongoing – Work with the formal Community of Practice (when established) and Valleys projects to draw out best practice and learning.</p>	Welsh Government including Business Wales; Ministerial Advisory Group; external support through community of practice (external partners to be determined); representatives of the Foundational Economy subgroup (Federation of Small Businesses; Cardiff City Deal; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; Welsh Government).
Spreading and scaling best practice by looking at social value within procurement. Using the methods of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to help to make quick progress.	Strengthening of local supply chains.	January 2020 – Work with Public Service Boards (as agreed pilots) to implement the recommendations from the CLES ⁴ report and draw out best practice and learning.	Welsh Government departments including Value Wales; Public Service Boards; Ministerial Advisory Group; representatives of the Foundational Economy subgroup (Federation of Small Businesses; Cardiff City Deal; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; Welsh Government).

³ Details of projects that are being supported by the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund can be found here www.businesswales.gov.wales/foundational-economy.

⁴ The CLES report, by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), is an independent report commissioned by the Welsh Government and sets out recommendations on implementing progressive procurement activities which represent local wellbeing priorities

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Foundational Economy			
<p>Create a subgroup on the foundational economy to develop milestones based on the Welsh Government’s approach to the foundational economy which focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an experimental fund • maximising the impact of procurement spending to generate local wealth • developing a strong base of grounded, medium-size firms. 	<p>Promote and enhance the foundational economy in the Valleys.</p>	<p>November 2019 – Establishment of subgroup.</p> <p>More detailed actions and milestones will be developed by the subgroup and the Delivery Plan will be refreshed at an appropriate point.</p>	<p>Federation of Small Businesses; Cardiff City Deal; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; Welsh Government; all members of foundational economy subgroup.</p>
<p>Roll-out Better Jobs Closer to Home in the Valleys to create real opportunities and decent jobs where the need is greatest. This includes using public procurement to support local businesses and supply chains.</p>	<p>Local jobs will be supported and the use of procurement levers to intervene where local supply chains can create jobs will be tested.</p>	<p>See page 10 for further details.</p> <p>Pilot 1 December 2019: First indication of sustainability of work and job numbers. To be reported every quarter.</p> <p>Pilot 2 December 2019: Lessons learned report to be finalised.</p> <p>Pilot 3 January 2020: Way forward to be agreed and finalised.</p> <p>Pilot 4 December 2019: Lessons learned report to be finalised.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; NHS; Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf councils; Blaenau Gwent enterprise zone; WCVA; Wales Co-op; social enterprises responsible for operating the four pilots; Wales TUC.</p>

Better Jobs Closer to Home

Four commercial pilots have been launched in response to the TUC Wales Better Jobs Closer to Home campaign. These have involved the use of procurement legislation to reserve suitable contracts, enabling existing and new supported factories to provide employment and training opportunities for the most disadvantaged people in the area.

Better Jobs Closer to Home is testing a series of commercial interventions; the success of the pilots will allow similar interventions to take place, helping other public sector organisations to run such procurements and removing the presumption that it cannot be done.

Pilot one

Garment manufacturing in Ebbw Vale, creating 25 new jobs for disadvantaged people.

This pilot will appoint a social partner to operate a manufacturing unit in Ebbw Vale. The manufacturing unit will operate as an intermediate labour market in the foundational economic supply chain, making high-end garments for use in industries, including the public sector.

Outcome – 25 new jobs for disadvantaged people.

The factory opened for business in September 2019.

Pilot two

Full-time employment for existing part-time staff at EBO Signs in Ebbw Vale.

This was an existing social enterprise, which only employs disadvantaged people with the aim to increase the hours of work for the current workforce.

Outcome – sustainable business operating environment for disabled people.

However, although the initial aim of the pilot to increase demand was achieved, this was not enough to keep the social enterprise operating. Sadly, the Enterprise went into administration at the start of summer 2019. Employment has been found with other social enterprises for the majority of staff involved.

Pilot three

The original pilot was to establish a paint re-engineering plant in Rhondda Cynon Taf, creating 10 new jobs for disadvantaged people with the aim of creating 25 new jobs for disadvantaged people, reduced embodied carbon in the construction supply chain in Wales.

However, on-going delays with the development of the premises has led to the scope of the pilot being reviewed.

Pilot four

Increase waste paper demand for Elite Paper Solutions in Pentre-Bach, Merthyr Tydfil, creating opportunities for disadvantaged people to gain vital work experience.

This is an existing social enterprise employing disabled, homeless and previously long-term unemployed people, operating as an intermediate labour market. The company collects sorts and shreds waste paper but needs more tonnage of paper. **Outcome** – to increase the opportunities for further employment and for the operation to become self-sustaining.

As at November 2019, this pilot continues to be a success with 46 new people employed over the last financial year.

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Entrepreneurship and business support			
<p>Develop and promote a thriving entrepreneurship culture in the Valleys by connecting stakeholder partners to deliver ‘easy to access’ support to those people thinking about entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>More effective, joined-up approaches to supporting entrepreneurs and businesses. People and businesses acting on entrepreneurial ambition and opportunity.</p>	<p>April 2020 – Deliver a pre-start pilot scheme for people in northern Valleys communities to explore and encourage initial conversation, idea development and early steps to entrepreneurship and access to other support.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Work with partners through Big Ideas Wales, to identify entrepreneur role models and deliver inspirational sessions to young people in schools, colleges, universities and community settings with a focus on converting ideas to action.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Provide grant awards to colleges and universities to enable them to deliver activities to accelerate student entrepreneurship and help strengthen institutional capacity to own and drive entrepreneurship action.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Work with business support partners from Valleys communities, to deliver a programme of community- led enterprise activities that will identify and engage with disadvantaged individuals to help them explore self-employment as a positive career option.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Deliver pre-start support via the Valleys enterprise hubs in Caerphilly and Carmarthen and via outreach satellites across Valleys communities to stimulate ideas and encourage action leading to business starts.</p>	<p>Big Ideas Wales; colleges and Universities; Welsh Government; Business in Focus; Welsh ICE; Business Wales; Be The Spark; local authorities; Welsh Government; local partners.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Entrepreneurship and business support			
<p>Deliver practical support to help people in Valleys communities create sustainable new businesses including innovation driven enterprises.</p>	<p>An increase in the number of new business starts.</p>	<p>July 2020 – Deliver a series of Business Surgeries in collaboration with local and community based partners to support potential entrepreneurs through the start-up phase and link them up with appropriate business support.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Business Wales support available to those thinking about or wanting to start a new business (combination of digital, workshops and advisory).</p> <p>By May 2021 – Access to financial support to new starts through the Development Bank of Wales and Angels Invest Wales.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Deliver start-up support via the Valleys enterprise hubs in Caerphilly and Carmarthen and via outreach satellite locations across valleys communities, to stimulate ideas and encourage action leading to business starts. This will also include provision of flexible co-working space and ‘wrap-around’ business support from a range of sources and partners (including private sector).</p> <p>By May 2021 – Deliver community-led entrepreneurship activities to support potential entrepreneurs through the start-up phase and link them up with appropriate business support.</p>	<p>Business Wales; Development Bank; Angels Invest Wales; banks and private investors; Welsh ICE; Business in Focus, Business Wales; Be The Spark; colleges, universities and local authority partners; Welsh Government initially working with procured partners to deliver; Local Government; Assembly Members’ Offices; other local partners.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Entrepreneurship and business support			
<p>Target valleys businesses from the foundational economy and those demonstrating high growth potential and offer them extra support.</p>	<p>Steady and accelerated business growth and scale-up through increased sales, export opportunities, access to funding and hiring staff.</p>	<p>December 2019 – Work with external partners to deliver a Valleys ‘PitchIt’ event with a group of private equity investors linked to Angels Invest Wales and with ‘wrap-around’ business support from partners across the ecosystem.</p> <p>June 2020 – Deliver small-scale Peer to Peer support group for foundational economy and high growth business founders/leaders.</p> <p>October 2020 – Explore opportunities through Be The Spark and the MIT Industrial Liaison Programme to deliver topical, ad-hoc sessions with inspirational business leaders, partners and academics in the valleys area.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Work through Business Wales to provide practical business support and assistance to aid steady business growth for all businesses including social enterprises, through a combination of digital, workshops and advisory support.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Targeted support to high potential and scale-up businesses through the Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme (AGP).</p> <p>By May 2021 – Access to growth and scale-up finance (debt and equity) through the Development Bank of Wales and Angels Invest Wales.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Identify learning from the Valleys social care business support pilot and explore options to deliver this in other parts of the valleys.</p>	<p>Welsh Government including Business Wales; Development Bank; Angels Invest Wales; banks and private investors; Be The Spark; colleges and universities; Valleys entrepreneurs.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Entrepreneurship and business support			
Provide advice and guidance to businesses in the Valleys taskforce area relating to the circular economy and innovation.	Increased resource efficiency and associated cost savings and new/protected jobs in businesses and the third sector.	<p>By May 2021 – Businesses in the Valleys taskforce area can access up to 8 days’ fully funded advice and guidance for eligible manufacturing or design projects which could relate to the circular economy.</p> <p>By May 2021 – Business Wales as part of its support offer will provide resource efficiency advice to Valleys businesses and promote awareness of the circular economy via its social media channels.</p>	Businesses and support through SMART Cymru and Business Wales.
Ahead of the start of Job Support Wales in April 2020, provide employability support to unemployed people within the Valleys taskforce areas through the Access Programme.	Job-seekers who are out-of-work for less than 24 months in the Valleys taskforce area will have enhanced access to employability support.	April 2020 – Over 2000 individuals within the Valleys to have accessed employability and skills support through Access to attain and retain employment.	Welsh Government; Careers Wales; other employability programmes.

Priority 2

Better Public Services

The actions that the taskforce will be taking forward to improve public services during the coming year are detailed on the following pages.

In addition to these, progress continues to be made across a number of actions, even though they are no longer a focus of the taskforce. For example, ways in which to promote social prescribing are being trialled through a number of pilots across Wales, including in Caerphilly. Link co-ordinators have been working with people to set their own personal goals geared at empowering them to develop alternative non-clinical responses to managing and improving their mental wellbeing. This could be, for example, through social and physical activities, financial support and befriending. The pilots will be evaluated, which will determine which interventions are most effective and will help inform future policy on social prescribing for mental health across Wales.

Year on year the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) has been expanded to support the most disadvantaged learners, including those from the Valleys. As well as the free school meals element, the PDG suite now includes looked after children, those in the early years, those in pupil referral units and education other than at school provision. The newest element – PDG-Access – has been introduced to support parents with some of the costs of the school day. Children in Wales were commissioned to produce a “Cost of the School Day” guide which is available here www.hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/780da5bf-2216-476e-bba0-208fa18330e8

Pilots across Wales, including in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen, have been delivered to strengthen mental health support in schools. These will run until December 2020 which will coincide with the final evaluation.

Some of the key achievements for the taskforce in the past year include:

Better Public Services

Developing community transport pilots
in Neath and Blaenau Gwent



Out of hours bus pilot
in Valleys communities

£10 million
allocated to the Valleys Empty Homes initiative

By 2021:

Public services will be working with the third sector and local communities to respond to people's needs.

Support will be available to help people lead healthier lifestyles, improving their physical and mental wellbeing and addressing health inequalities.

Public transport will be joined-up, affordable and help people get to work, school or training and to leisure facilities.

We will improve education outcomes for all children and close the attainment gap.



Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Housing			
Roll out phase one of the Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) Empty Homes Grant Scheme across the Valleys taskforce area.	An increase in the number of empty homes being brought back into use across the Valleys which will increase the supply of affordable housing as well as decrease the likelihood of anti-social behaviour in those areas.	<p>November 2019 – RCT to have a team in place to begin delivery of phase one of the Scheme across the Valleys taskforce areas.</p> <p>November 2019 – Local authorities across the Valleys taskforce who intend to take part in the scheme to sign up to the Service Level Agreement that will be provided.</p> <p>November 2019 – Local authorities to support the promotion of the scheme within their areas through targeted promotion and social media.</p>	Welsh Government; RCT; local authorities.
Develop and begin phase two of the RCT Empty Homes Grant. Criteria will include benefits for contribution to the decarbonisation agenda through use of energy efficiency measures, and access for Registered Social Landlords and local authority Councils to apply to bring social homes back in to use.	Benefits to the local economy, more empty homes back into use and an increase in energy efficient homes.	<p>November 2019 – Establish the Valleys taskforce Housing subgroup and hold its first meeting to consider how phase two of the grant could look.</p> <p>January 2020 – Subgroup to present key changes of the phase two model to the Valleys taskforce.</p> <p>April 2020 – Begin delivery of the phase two scheme.</p> <p>Ongoing – Regular progress reports to be provided to Welsh Government to monitor and report on take-up of the scheme.</p>	Welsh Government departments; local authorities; Registered Social Landlords; Development Bank of Wales (all represented on the Housing subgroup).

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Housing			
<p>Engage closely with the Cardiff Capital City Deal region, who have identified housing as a priority. Ensure funding is complementary to lever in the maximum benefit for South East Wales (the majority of which will be in the Valleys).</p> <p>In 2017-18 the Property Development Fund was expanded by investing an additional £30m and the Wales Stalled Sites Fund was launched with a 40m investment, via the Development Bank for Wales. Through both there will be a total investment (with recycling) of £430m.</p>	<p>Increase in number of new homes built in the Valleys.</p>	<p>April 2020 – Report of total spend in the taskforce area so far through each scheme.</p> <p>April 2020 – Report on total number of SMEs supported through each scheme in the taskforce area.</p> <p>April 2020 – Number of properties built as a result of support through the schemes.</p> <p>April 2020 – Ensure that there is sufficient investment in the Valleys, and take corrective action with the Development Bank if there is not a sufficient enough focus on the Valleys.</p>	<p>Cardiff Capital Region City Deal; Development Bank of Wales; Federation of Master Builders; SME house builders; local authorities.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Housing			
<p>Where appropriate, embed the relevant recommendations from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) report “Effective housing for people on low incomes in the Welsh Valleys” which was published in June 2018 in taking forward the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Supply Review (published in April 2019).</p>	<p>The particular housing needs of the taskforce area will be considered by the taking forward the recommendations from the independent review of affordable housing supply. This includes but is not limited to recommendations around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding housing need • Housing quality standards • Rent policy • Local authorities as enablers and builders • Public sector land and • Financing affordable housing. 	<p>Whilst the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Supply Review are made for Wales as a whole, they will address a number of the issues raised in the JRF report. It is proposed that exactly how each of the Affordable Housing Supply Review recommendations is implemented is finalised by April 2020 (with some exceptions that will require longer to develop). However, some aspects will deliver in advance of this which relate directly to the JRF report recommendations such as:</p> <p>October/November 2019 – Social rent policy decision to be announced</p> <p>November/December 2019 – Revised housing quality standards to be published for implementation from 2020</p> <p>December/January 2020 – Strengthened Housing Revenue Account (HRA) guidance to be published/shared with local authorities (LA) to support greater LA build.</p>	<p>JRF; Affordable Housing Review Independent Panel; local authorities; RSLs; Bevan Foundation.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Taskforce Innovation Fund			
<p>Develop an alumni programme, which compliments existing schemes, that all secondary schools in the South Wales Valleys can access.</p>	<p>Young people to access local role models to raise aspirations, encourage entrepreneurship and to raise awareness of different careers and learning/career pathways.</p>	<p>November 2019 – Establish Alumni subgroup.</p> <p>November 2019 – Evaluate existing alumni programmes to understand the benefits and limitations of each and propose options for a new scheme.</p> <p>November 2019 – Assess options for either working with existing contractors or programmes to develop the alumni scheme or develop a new contract, possibly through a procurement process.</p> <p>December 2019 – Identify a group of secondary schools as the initial cohort to develop the scheme and act as a test bed.</p> <p>Ongoing – Facilitate a series of workshops for headteachers to gauge support and achieve buy-in. Work with business managers (below) to see how this role can be utilised to support the alumni scheme.</p> <p>April 2020 – Announce the new scheme which will be rolled-out to an initial cohort of secondary schools. Continuous review of schools and progress to be undertaken up to that point.</p>	<p>Coleg y Cymoedd; Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW); secondary schools; colleges; Welsh Government; Business Wales; Careers Wales.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Taskforce Innovation Fund			
Community focused, highly-skilled business managers to support and increase connections between local community partners and schools. Pilots taking place in Valleys taskforce areas including: Bridgend; Caerphilly (2 clusters); Rhondda Cynon Taff (3 clusters); and Torfaen.	Engagement of schools with community partners will provide a range of benefits, including a wider range of enriched learning experiences, improved standards, and increased use of school premises.	November 2019 – Funding awarded and delivery commenced. May 2020 – Final report/case study from pilot areas to be completed. Regular updates will be completed.	Welsh Government; schools; local authorities; regional consortia; community partners; third sector.
Transport			
A Transport subgroup to be established to set the direction for innovative transport solutions in the South Wales Valleys. Their work will build on the key issues raised during the Valleys taskforce and Transport for Wales public engagement events which were held across the region during September and October 2019.	Services to be better coordinated, improved quality, frequency and affordability of travel.	November 2019 – first meeting of subgroup to be held. Shape and monitor the success of three public transport pilots in the Valleys, including: the Department of Work and Pensions Valleys to Work pilot in the Rhondda, the Transport for Wales Integrated Responsive Travel pilot in Blaenau Gwent and a Community Transport pilot in Neath. More detailed actions and milestones will be developed by the subgroup and the Delivery Plan will be refreshed at an appropriate point.	Transport for Wales; Welsh Government; Sustrans; Confederation of Passenger Transport; Community Transport Association; Cardiff City Region; local authorities.

Priority 3

My local community

As above, there are a number of programmes and activities taking place across Wales that will benefit the Valleys and address the issues the taskforce has been told about during engagement with communities. For example, £2.86million has been awarded through the Welsh Government Building for the Future (BFF) programme, including £650k from the Valleys taskforce for the restoration and redevelopment of Maesteg Town Hall. This £6.87 million project will transform the Town Hall into a multi-use facility which will accommodate eight SMEs and 30 jobs including the creation of nine new jobs.

Under the same scheme, the Taff Vale scheme in Pontypridd is receiving around £10 million and will bring 10,000 workers to the centre of the town.

As part of the Targeted Regeneration Investment programme, two thematic intervention schemes (the Urban Centre Property Enhancement Fund and the Urban Centre Living Grant) are progressing well, with a good pipeline of projects in place. This will improve commercial properties in our strategic hub towns and enable the conversion of vacant floorspace above commercial premises into residential use.

Regeneration Loan funding of £2.5 million has been provided to Bridgend County Borough Council to bring forward land for housing at the Washery West site, Maesteg in the Llynfi Valley.

Actions are being taken to address serious risks to the health of people living in Valleys communities as a result of poor air quality, as part of the Clean Air Plan for Wales.

Some of the key achievements for the taskforce in the past year include:



By 2021:

A Valleys Regional Park will have been set up to help local communities celebrate and maximise the use of the natural resources and heritage.

Valleys town centres will be vibrant places, with attractive green spaces, which support local economies.

The Valleys will be a recognised tourist destination, attracting visitors from across the UK and beyond.



Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Regional Park			
Develop a new, positive narrative for tourism in the Valleys and identify projects to meet current and future tourism demand, focusing on the landscape, heritage and people.	<p>The Valleys enjoy a reputation for high-quality outdoor recreation with communities and businesses benefiting from a thriving visitor economy.</p> <p>The Valleys are recognised nationally and internationally for the quality and beauty of their unique, distinctive landscapes and heritage.</p> <p>Number of visitors to Valleys destinations and the visitor spend will increase.</p>	<p>June 2020 – Continue to take forward key private sector-led tourism developments in the Valleys.</p> <p>March 2020 – If launching a new round of funding is successful, targeted support for small scale tourism infrastructure projects in the Valleys will be available.</p> <p>By July 2020 – Initiation of £5m Caerphilly Castle Investment Programme – transforming the monument into a world class heritage attraction.</p>	Welsh Government; local authorities; tourism sector; third sector; private sector, Visit Wales; community sector.
Identify opportunities to attract new events to the Valleys – sporting events, such as mountain biking and orienteering, and develop existing events, such as the Steelhouse Festival, in Ebbw Vale.	<p>The number of visitors to Valleys destinations and visitor spend will increase.</p> <p>The profile of the Valleys as an area for sporting and cultural events will be raised.</p>	<p>November 2019 – Start effective engagement with The Wales Way⁵, to create stronger links and better understanding of the opportunities that are possible in the Valleys, in preparation for Spring/Summer 2020.</p>	Welsh Government; local authorities; Sports Wales; Arts Council for Wales; Visit Wales; tourism sector.
Creation of a dedicated, skilled team hosted with strong links to Welsh Government and Valleys Regional Park partners, to support the development and implementation of the Valleys Regional Park.	<p>An appropriately skilled support team is in place to deliver the Valleys Regional Park vision and build partnership working across all sectors and with communities.</p>	<p>December 2019 – Full support team place.</p>	Welsh Government; Natural Resources Wales; local authorities; Third Sector; Health Boards; Public Health Wales.

⁵ www.visitwales.com/inspire-me/wales-way

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Regional Park			
<p>Development of Valleys Regional Park Theme one: Landscape, Culture and Identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with partners, deliver 11 Discovery Gateway sites across the Valleys. Identify potential discovery trails to link with the Discovery Gateways. 	<p>Discovery Gateways are exemplar flagship sites that showcase the Valleys.</p> <p>Better cooperation and coordination across Valleys authorities and other partners through cross-promotion, signposting, and best practice exchange to promote themselves and the wider region’s cultural and natural assets.</p> <p>Discovery Gateways function as partnership sites where communities and local businesses are better linked to support health and well-being and the foundational economy.</p> <p>Greater interest in and knowledge of the Valleys natural and cultural heritage and pan-Valleys attractions amongst visitors and local people.</p> <p>Enhanced sustainable tourism providing an economic boost.</p> <p>A positive narrative of the Valleys to help change negative internal and external perceptions.</p>	<p>December 2019 – Social Media presence sharing VRP events and opportunities.</p> <p>March 2020 – Community events held at each of the Discovery Gateway sites to share development plans and discuss the wider VRP ambitions.</p> <p>March 2020 – First phase Valleys Regional Park website launched.</p> <p>March 2020 – Discovery Gateways will be closely working with Natural Resources Wales on their emerging themes and opportunities for delivery of the Welsh Government’s Environment Act and Natural Resource Policy through the medium of Area Statements and Public Service Board Wellbeing plans.</p> <p>April 2020 – first phase of Discovery Gateway development completed.</p> <p>June 2020 – Discovery Gateway co-operation and co-ordination plan in place reflecting the Discovery Gateway Criteria.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities, Natural Resources Wales; third sector; Visit Wales; Love the Valleys; Health Boards; Public Health Wales.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Regional Park			
	<p>Valleys Regional Park is helping deliver operational aspects of the Area Statements and Public Service Boards Well-being Plans.</p> <p>Improved ecosystems and ecosystem services in the Valleys.</p> <p>More people are familiar with the Valleys landscape and heritage through formal events and increased informal access and usage.</p> <p>The Valleys’ landscapes and associated heritage and culture enjoy a higher national and international profile through the Valleys Regional Park and linking to the Wales Way.</p>	<p>July 2020 – Valleys Regional Park events programme in place across the Discovery Gateways. (Working closely with Visit Wales and Love the Valleys)</p> <p>March 2021 – Discovery Gateway action plans detailing how they contribute to Area Statements and their Local Wellbeing plan objectives in place.</p> <p>March 2021 – Further website enhancements made with version 2 website launched.</p> <p>March 2021 – Second Phase Discovery Gateway development completed.</p>	
<p>Development of Valleys Regional Park Theme two: Recreation and Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link opportunities through Valleys Regional Park development with the Metro to promote the Valleys Regional Park and support Active Travel (walking and cycling) opportunities to contribute to enhanced well-being in the Valleys. • Work across Welsh Government and partners to promote access to the countryside to develop opportunities to increase green social prescribing. 	<p>The Valleys are host to a wide selection of sustainable outdoor activities used by communities and visitors.</p> <p>The Valleys is home to a series of well-used iconic trails for walking and cycling, such as the Taff Trail, connecting Cardiff to the Brecon Beacons, and the Celtic Trail.</p> <p>The Valleys Regional Park Influences the development of relevant health policy and programmes to underpin well-being.</p> <p>The Valleys are at the forefront of working with its environmental assets to support improved health and well-being.</p>	<p>December 2019 – The Valleys Regional Park team is working with policy professionals in Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and others to influence policy development and funding in relation to wellbeing activities.</p> <p>March 2020 – Outdoor activities, trails and appropriate outdoor and heritage tourism attractions are promoted through the Valleys Regional Park website and social media.</p> <p>March 2020 – The Transport for Wales ‘Adopt a Station’ scheme will be supported and promoted through VRP activity and VRP partners.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; Transport for Wales; Health Boards, Public Health Wales; third sector; Natural Resources Wales; Visit Wales; Registered Social Landlords.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Regional Park			
	<p>The Valleys Regional Park has raised the profile of opportunities through increased outdoor activity amongst health professionals and communities.</p> <p>Green social-prescribing initiatives have encouraged more people to venture out, to supporting improved health and well-being.</p> <p>Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the valleys to support projects that enhance green infrastructure in housing estates.</p>	<p>April 2020 – Valleys Regional Park Well-being Network established.</p> <p>April 2020 – Transport for Wales ‘Explore the Valleys’ guide developed for the core Valleys Lines.</p> <p>May 2020 – Workshop involving Registered Social Landlords within the Valleys Regional Park area.</p> <p>Ongoing – The Valleys Regional Park partnership and Valleys communities contribute to the development of Transport for Wales Station Travel Plans (STP’s) that will include walking and cycling.</p>	
<p>Development of Valleys Regional (VRP) Park Theme three: Communities and Enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain a peer-to-peer support network to ensure there is strong and effective community involvement in meeting the aims and objectives of the Valleys Regional Park. • Explore development of potential foundational economy opportunities related to energy and the environment. Where appropriate, provide support to community organisations to encourage the development of locally-owned community renewable energy schemes in the Valleys. 	<p>Community groups across the Valleys and Wales have developed expertise and skills in implementing their projects and initiatives through better working and enhanced funding.</p> <p>Community groups deliver their projects effectively through enhanced Valleys Regional Park partner support around issues including land ownership and leasing and funding.</p> <p>Communities are integral to the Valleys Regional Park development with enhanced capacity and confidence amongst community groups and organisations across the Valleys.</p>	<p>March 2020 – Exercise to map community activity across the Valleys complete.</p> <p>March 2020 – Database of community activity available through the Valleys Regional Park website.</p> <p>April 2020 – Guardians scheme established developing skills and wellbeing activities initially working out of the Discovery Gateways.</p> <p>April 2020 – Community conference with a focus on the development of a peer-to-peer network to support developing community projects.</p> <p>June 2020 – Working paper to explore development options for a community-based delivery taskforce to support training, skills development and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; community groups; Natural Resources Wales; third sector.</p>

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Valleys Regional Park			
<p>Establish guidance and support that brings together information on funding sources and opportunities that can be accessed to support the delivery of the Valleys Regional Park vision and outcomes.</p>	<p>Partners, communities and other stakeholders are fully aware of the funding available and supported through the bidding/funding process.</p>	<p>December 2019 – The Valleys Regional Park team will work with Welsh Government departments to reflect the desired outcomes in relation to funding programmes (Visit Wales, Healthy and Active, Active Travel and Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing), and have input in evaluating future bids.</p> <p>January 2020 – A role is in place in the Valleys Regional Park support team with a focus on funding. This will work with all sectors to explore and develop policy, funding and investment opportunities for Valleys Regional Park-related activities.</p> <p>March 2020 – The first phase of the Valleys Regional Park website will link to and promote funding opportunities.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; funding organisations; third sector; private sector.</p>
<p>Secure long term future of the Valleys Regional Park.</p>	<p>A funding structure is in place to support the development of the Valleys Regional Park in the medium to long term with the appropriate governance.</p> <p>Policies are in place to support the long term ambition maintaining and improving the landscape across the Valleys.</p>	<p>January 2020 – Options for medium/long term funding developed for consideration by Welsh Government.</p> <p>Ongoing – The Valleys Regional Park team and partnership will continue to work with Welsh Government to consider options around the development of an appropriate land designation for the Valleys.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; local authorities; Natural Resources Wales; third sector; Private Sector.</p>

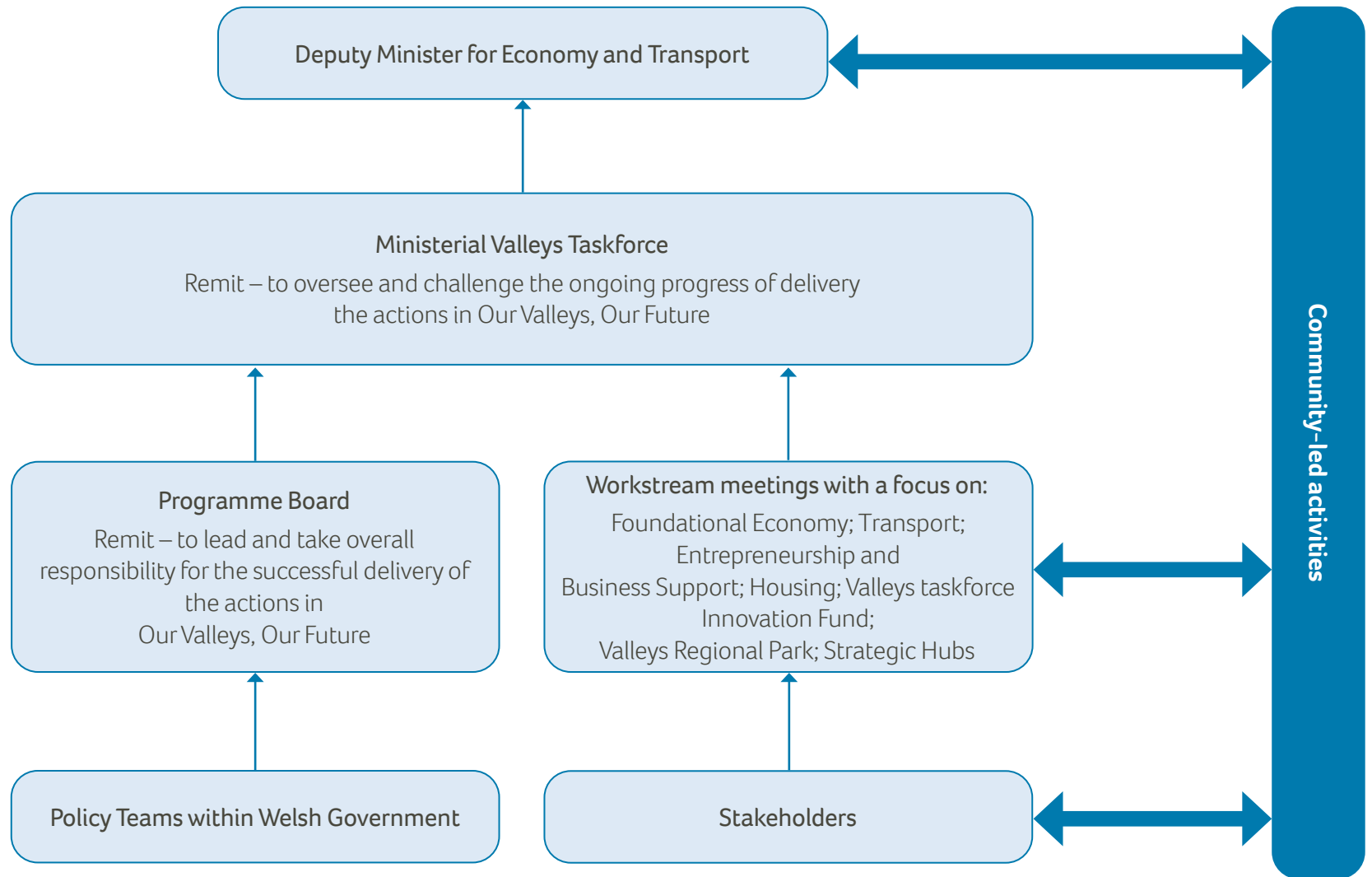
Engagement

Internal and external engagement continues to shape the work of the taskforce and underpins delivery of our key priorities. A number of networks are now well established with more than 500 people directly involved and many more reached via the cascading of information to local networks. These are critical relationships and it is important to make it easy for Valleys stakeholders to collaborate, particularly when aiming to deliver long-term, sustainable change.

The taskforce’s work will act as a pilot to inform the Welsh Government’s future approach to engagement, involving communities in policy making and working flexibly across policy boundaries to deliver the commitments in *Taking Wales Forward and Prosperity for All*.

Action	Expected outcome	Key milestones	Partners
Engagement			
<p>Work with the Welsh Government organisational and engagement division to pilot a new Welsh Government Citizen Engagement Platform (proof of concept) amongst one of our established Valleys taskforce networks.</p> <p>The pilots will be used to evaluate the approach, and determine possible future development and expansion of a digital platform for the Welsh Government.</p> <p>Stakeholders and citizens will be supported to collaborate and engage with one another and Welsh Government more easily, regularly communicating, sharing best practice and shaping Welsh Government policy.</p>	<p>A citizen engagement platform will be in place, to provide wider, online opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to engage with Welsh Government.</p>	<p>February/March 2020 – pilot new proof of concept citizen engagement platform through Valleys taskforce network.</p>	<p>Welsh Government; Ministers, Community Voluntary Councils, local authorities; universities.</p>

Annex A: Governance



Annex B: Taskforce membership

Ministerial Valleys Taskforce



Top Row, Left - Right

James Davies, Executive Chairman, Industry Wales (Chair of Strategic Hubs/A465 subgroup)

Lee Waters AM, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

(Chair of taskforce and Chair of Valleys Taskforce Innovation Fund – Alumni subgroup)

Wendy Walters, Chief Executive, Carmarthenshire County Council

Dawn Bowden, Welsh Labour Assembly Member, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney

(Chair of Transport subgroup)

Bottom Row, Left - Right

Andrew Morgan, Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council (lead of Housing subgroup)

Nicola Somerville, Head of Inclusive Growth & Business Development,

Office of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Josh Miles, Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses

(Chair of Foundational Economy subgroup)

Ruth Treharne, Director of Planning and Performance, Cwm Taf Health Board

(lead of Valleys Regional Park subgroup)

