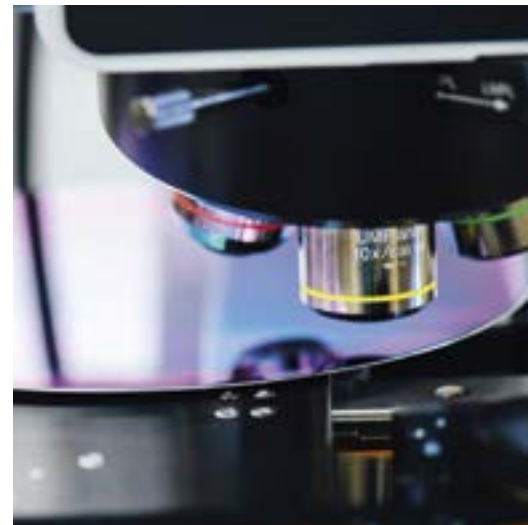




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Vision for Tech Valleys

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What

In 2027 the south Wales Valleys and Blaenau Gwent in particular, will be a globally recognised centre for the development of new technologies to support cutting edge industry. Wales will be internationally recognised as a leading location for the development and delivery of emerging technologies, particularly within the automotive sector. As host to significant organisations in the next wave of high value manufacturing, Blaenau Gwent will be a beacon for collaboration between business, academia and the public sector, delivering these ambitions through a series of strategic investments.

The vision for Tech Valleys will see the creation of at least 1500 sustainable jobs, predominantly within new technologies and advanced manufacturing across the Valleys area, but with Blaenau Gwent at the heart. The focus on higher quality job creation will also provide the entrepreneurial spark that will enable existing and new entrepreneurs to fulfil their business ambitions. This will be underpinned by developing advanced skills in the existing workforce and in the next wave of younger skilled people joining the labour market – able to live

and work within their local communities whilst competing on the international stage.

Tech Valleys will demonstrate that Wales possesses the world class infrastructure needed to start and grow businesses; to encourage development of indigenous businesses; and to compete globally to attract world class Foreign and Direct Investment. Key planks of the infrastructure for business growth will be evident within the Valleys: physical and digital infrastructure, along with the people and finance needed to drive successful business growth, driving industries of the future, despite any changes within the international geopolitical environment.

This vision epitomises the Welsh Government's *Prosperity for All* and *Economic Action Plan* recasting support to help build industries of the future from strong foundations; it seeks to pool knowledge, resource and expertise to strengthen economic foundations. It also provides an ambitious blueprint to develop distinctive regional strengths to future-proof the economy.



£100m has been allocated by the Welsh Government over ten years, to enable successful delivery of the vision for Tech Valleys. The overall value of the activity will be much higher as we seek to lever in other private and public sector investments, including from the UK Government's Industrial Strategy and by establishing strategic partnerships, bidding consortia and collaborations with academia, building upon the activity of the city deals.

With growth, fair work and decarbonisation at its heart, Tech Valleys will deliver on the Welsh Government's wider aims and aspirations, helping build a prosperous and secure Wales. The programme will be delivered through a portfolio of related and inter-dependent projects, centred on a number of economic infrastructure themes, with the clear vision of 1500 jobs in mind. It will form a combination of a proactive plan for delivering infrastructure coupled with a reactive approach to capturing investment projects as and when opportunities arise, together with the safeguarding of existing businesses and jobs.

These projects are likely to include activity in areas such as development and testing of battery and motor technology, 5G activity and the infrastructure needed for automated and ultra low emission vehicles. This will be underpinned by improved strategic planning in respect of the physical infrastructure needed to attract and grow businesses in areas such as land use and property interventions, coupled with a sustainable transport policy which focuses on carbon reduction and improved air quality.

Consideration will also be given to the role the Welsh Government and wider public sector can play through their interventions, for example siting new operations within the Blaenau Gwent area.

Delivery of a successful communications and branding strategy is vital to ensuring an international reputation for the Valleys as a hot spot for world leading technologies and businesses.

A number of performance indicators will be created to monitor and drive successful delivery of the vision alongside the jobs target, particularly around skills and employability.



When

It will take time to deliver on our widest objectives, but it is crucial that the people of Blaenau Gwent and the wider South Wales Valleys see clear and immediate tangible outcomes on the ground. Therefore the programme for Tech Valleys will include a mix of short, medium and strategic long term activities and associated targets.

This activity will include short term deliverables – principally identified by the work of the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board, such as development of new properties to provide facilities for SME growth and skills development, as well as potential large scale investments. The foundations for the activity will be laid in the early years, particularly in respect of 5G developments and property interventions.

In the medium term we expect to see developments in areas such as battery technology materialise, as well as the public sector interventions led by the Welsh Government, including the development of a new railway depot in the locality.

Skills development will underpin all this activity and will be a constant for delivery over the 10 year lifespan of the programme.

The activity across Tech Valleys will ebb and flow over the 10 year period, and it is vital that there is some flexibility built into the programme to cater for new, unforeseen developments, particularly in terms of new business approaches.

Who

Successful delivery of the vision for Tech Valleys will require national leadership and direction coupled with effective collaboration at a regional level. The Welsh Government will play its part in providing the direction, the framework and the core public sector funding for this work, drawing on other sources where possible to maximise the level of investment. It is crucial that local partners are well engaged in both the design and delivery of the programme, and we will build on the valuable work already undertaken by the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board to date. Whilst recognising the intrinsic role local stakeholders will play in delivering this vision, it will also be important to draw on wider national and international expertise from business, academia and the public sector.

The programme will require a clear governance structure, drawing on both public and private sectors, and on national and regional actors. It must

allow us to access the very best advice and provide strong leadership to take the programme forward. Welsh Government governance structures will be complemented by an external advisory network, led by industry with strong regional representation.

This work must be underpinned by nimble, agile behaviours, which demonstrate Wales is capable of acting quickly in response to the market; and with an open innovative approach enabling us to embrace new and emerging technologies and industries.

Due consideration will need to be given to emerging structures and activities under other regional banners, including the Valleys Taskforce and the city deals in both the Cardiff Capital Region and the Swansea Bay Area. All activity must be complementary, rather than adding complexity.