

# Minister sets out Valleys taskforce priorities

Speaking a year after the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was launched, the Minister said the taskforce's plan – Our Valleys, Our Future – will be published on July 20.

The taskforce was set up to work with communities and local businesses across the South Wales Valleys and aims to deliver lasting economic change; create good-quality jobs closer to people's homes, improve skill levels and bring prosperity to all.

The taskforce has spent the year taking evidence and listening to people living and working in the Valleys – these #TalkValleys conversations have helped to shape the taskforce's priorities for the future and Our Valleys, Our Future.

The upcoming plan will build upon infrastructure investments already announced for South Wales, including the Metro, affordable housing and M4 relief road.

In a statement in the Senedd today the Minister set out some of the taskforce's priorities, ahead of the plan's publication next week;

- Closing the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales by getting an additional 7,000 people into work by 2021, and creating thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs;
- Creating new strategic hubs in six areas across the Valleys, including the new automotive technology business park for Ebbw Vale, announced by Ken Skates last month;
- Exploring the concept of a Valleys Landscape Park, to help local communities build on their many natural assets, including the potential for community energy generation and tourism.

Mr Davies said:

"We are launching Our Valleys, Our Future at a time of unprecedented infrastructure investment in South Wales – the South Wales Metro, the two city deals, our commitment to invest in affordable housing and the M4 relief road all offer opportunities for people living in the Valleys. These are opportunities which we must, and will, maximise.

"I am determined the taskforce will make a positive difference to Valleys communities and we must now work together to turn this vision into action. This is the beginning of a longer-term journey, which is being shaped by people working and living in the Valleys.

"I am excited to be part of this work in this region, which is so

close to my heart, where I was born and brought up. I am hopeful that together we can make transformational, long-lasting change through this approach.”