

# Our Valleys, Our Future

These are the three priorities for Our Valleys, Our Future – the high-level action plan by the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, which will be launched today by Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Minister Alun Davies.

The Minister will join Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates and other taskforce members to launch the plan at the opening of another exciting Valleys scheme, a newly refurbished play centre with the Fern Partnership, called FuZe.

Our Valleys, Our Future has been developed following feedback from people living and working in the Valleys.

It sets out a range of aims and actions in each of the three priority areas, including:

- 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
- launching three pathfinder projects to look at how services and local delivery can be better joined-up in Llanhilleth, Ferndale and in Glynneath and Banwen
- exploring the development of a Valleys Landscape Park, which has the potential to help local communities use their natural and environmental resources for tourism, energy generation and health and wellbeing purposes.

The Minister will say,

“Our Valleys, Our Future is not simply a plan for the Valleys. It is a plan from the Valleys.

“From the start, I have been clear this taskforce will not be another case of the government deciding what is right for the Valleys. If we are to succeed, local communities and local people must be at the heart of our work.

“FuZe is a fantastic example of this; a community-led project that has changed the community it serves. One of the main aims of the taskforce is to empower communities and we must continue to listen and learn.”

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

The taskforce will work to maximize job opportunities in the local economy – businesses such as retail, care and the food industry. It will also encourage and provide support for existing and potential entrepreneurs.

It will also explore 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.