

Valleys Regional Park to be source of 'national pride'

Alun Davies set out new proposals to make the most of the natural and cultural heritage of the Valleys, which could have a transformative effect on the local, and national, economy.

Earlier this month, we announced £7m of capital funding over two years, to establish the Valleys Regional Park in the draft Budget. Mr Davies, who is chair of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, will set out how that investment will kick start work to put the Valleys in the vanguard globally, with a national and international profile.

We will:

- develop a high-quality network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves and country parks, rivers, reservoirs and canals, as well as heritage sites and attractions, crucially connect them with our towns and villages;
- connect Valleys with high-quality walking trails and cycle routes;
- invest in existing sites across the Valleys as Discovery Gateways, to encourage more active lifestyles and showcase the best of the Valleys.

The Cabinet Secretary, who visited other regional parks across Europe to help inform this work, described plans as a statement of ambition about what can be achieved in the Valleys.

He said,

“The Valleys Regional Park is not a one-off project or initiative; it is at the very heart of our ambition to help Valleys communities to maximise the opportunities afforded by our natural and cultural heritage to deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits.

“The Valleys are home to some of the most distinctive and breathtaking natural landscapes in Wales and the UK. But for too long their charm, beauty and cultural heritage; their ability to attract visitors; and to be fully used and recognised by communities themselves, has been overlooked and undervalued. This ends here.

“We will build on the innovative projects already being undertaken and developed by communities across the Valleys – involving more communities, and creating a peer-to-peer, skill sharing network – to get us started.

“We will work closely with local authorities and other partners in the Valleys to identify existing sites which match our ambition and will announce the location of the first phase of Discovery Gateways

by the end of the year.”

Chair of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales to step down

She was appointed in November 2015, and will step down from the post with effect from 30 November due to a combination of other competing work commitments and personal reasons.

Mutale Merrill said:

“At a time when legislation is to be brought forward to introduce a new Citizens’ Voice body for Wales, the role of Chair should be performed by someone who is able to lead the Board of CHCs through the transitional period, which extends beyond my current term of office.

I wish my successor well during this important time and would be delighted to speak to prospective candidates about the role.”

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mutale for the enormous contribution she has made over the last three years in protecting and strengthening the value and integrity of Community Health Councils across Wales and equipping them to take advantage of the changes and improvements that lie ahead. I know that Mutale has enjoyed her time in post, and I wish her well for the future.”

The Welsh Government is recruiting a new Chair through the Public Appointments process. The appointment is remunerated and the closing date for applications is 8th November 2018.

£43 million investment in housing for

the future

Houses that generate their own power, flats with vertical gardens and homes built using local supply chains are some of the projects to share in £43m of innovative housing funding this year.

Tuesday 16 October 2018

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans will today announce which projects will share in the second phase of the three-year Innovative Housing Programme, worth £90m in total.

Successful projects include:

- Nearly £7m for Pobl Group who are developing 225 homes near Tonyrefail. The investment will create the infrastructure to ensure the homes can act as power stations – a UK first at this scale
- £4m for Cartrefi Croeso to build 30 homes in Burry Port using Welsh timber, local off-site manufacturing using local labour, featuring Tŷ Solar panels manufactured in West Wales
- £650,000 for Denbighshire Council to work with partners to establish a factory to produce timber-framed Passivhaus homes for local social landlords. Cartrefi Conwy will receive £442,000 to build 16 homes using the system. The local supply chain will provide training to local people who might otherwise face barriers to the jobs market
- £1m for Anglesey Council working with Coed Cymru and social housing providers to deliver an affordable and flexible housing construction system using local Welsh softwood and support the development of a local supply chain
- £1.1m for Flintshire Council to build 12 apartments with the flexibility to meet changing needs in social housing including apartments size, wheelchair accessibility and supported living
- £1.9m for Newydd Housing Association to build 23 homes as well as space for start-ups and established businesses as part of the Goods Shed development in Barry
- £2.6m for Powys Council to build 26 low-carbon homes in Newtown using Welsh timber
- £839,000 for Wales and West Housing Association to build 14 homes in Bridgend using the Solcer House model which incorporates energy efficiency and renewable technologies
- £568,000 for Gwynedd Council to build four adaptable pods to Passivhaus standard to provide stable intermediate accommodation for homeless people.
- £9m for Linc Cymru Housing Association to create 50 homes in a timber tower with vertical greening in Cardiff

Rebecca Evans said:

“We are investing in our Innovative Housing Programme to reduce fuel poverty, reduce the impact of house building on the environment, and reduce the health and wellbeing inequalities which are exacerbated by poor quality housing.

“It is clear that if the scale and pace of house-building is to increase significantly, traditional approaches are unlikely to deliver on their own. Done the right way, we have an opportunity to build high quality, near zero carbon homes, capturing and boosting the skills and expertise within the Welsh construction and manufacturing industries.”

[Appointment of Interim Chair of Natural Resources Wales announced](#)

Sir David Henshaw is a past Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council and has held Chair roles in the NHS including the North West Strategic Health Authority and Alder Hey Foundation Trust Children’s Hospital leading the Board in the building of the new hospital. He has also been brought in to support a number of challenged NHS Hospital Trusts as an Interim Chair.

The process to recruit five new board members is currently underway, with new members also expected to commence in post on 1 November 2018.

The Interim Chair and new Board Members will join the five current members of the Board. A recruitment process for a new Chair will get underway in early 2019.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Natural Resources Wales is responsible for sustainably managing, maintaining and using Wales’ natural resources and I attach great importance to its role and the work of its board. I am pleased to announce Sir David has been appointed as Interim Chair. Sir David has a proven track record in providing strong Board level leadership and significant experience in helping organisations navigate transformation.

He, along with the new Board members currently being recruited, will join existing board members from 1 November. His immediate priorities will include supporting the organisation as it works to build more effective structures and ways of working, improving governance, building stronger relationships with stakeholders and overseeing the induction of new Board members when they are

appointed in November.

“I would like to also take the opportunity to thank Acting Chair, Madeleine Havard, for all her hard work and leadership since taking on the role.”

Clare Pillman, NRW’s Chief Executive said:

“Sir David Henshaw’s track record speaks for itself and I look forward to working with him in shaping NRW’s next chapter and in addressing some of our immediate and longer-term priorities.”

Sir David Henshaw, NRW’s Interim Chair said:

“I am very pleased to have been asked by the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs to take on this role. I look forward to working with Clare, the Board and all the staff to progress NRW’s delivery of its objectives.”

Madeleine Havard, NRW’s Acting Chair said:

“Both NRW’s Board and staff will benefit greatly from Sir David Henshaw’s huge experience in public service. I am also sure Sir David will enjoy his new role, and get great satisfaction from working with the excellent NRW team, who do such an important job for the people and environment of Wales.”

[“We must build on the success of Train, Work, Live” – Vaughan Gething](#)

The medical phase of the campaign, now entering its third year, promotes Wales internationally as an excellent place for doctors, including GPs, to train, work and live.

The campaign includes two financial incentive schemes: a targeted scheme offering a £20,000 incentive to GP trainees taking up posts in specified areas [Ceredigion, North Wales and Pembrokeshire], with a trend of low fill rates, and a universal scheme offering a one off payment for all GP trainees to cover the cost of one sitting of their final examinations. Incentives will continue to be available in 2019.

The campaign also highlights a number of benefits for doctors coming to Wales, including an Education Contract for junior doctors, the first in the UK. It guarantees ring-fenced time for learning within the working week to ensure trainee doctors will have access to a wide range of educational opportunities to support their career development.

Since the launch of the Train Work Live campaign, there has been a significant increase in the number of GP training places filled, including in some of the traditionally hard to recruit to rural areas. There have also been improved fill rates in other specialities which have featured as part of the campaign.

In addition to attracting GPs to Wales, this year's campaign will also continue to encourage doctors to consider training as a psychiatrist in Wales; it will also have a focus on supporting the recruitment of medical staff to roles in critical care.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Train, Work, Live is one of our flagship marketing campaigns and I've been delighted with what it has achieved so far.

“I am keen we continue to build on its success to ensure Wales has the medical workforce needed not only now, but in the future as well.”