

## #TalkValleys comes to Ebbw Vale

These are the three priorities in Our Valleys, Our Future – the high-level action plan launched by the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, in July.

The Ebbw Vale meeting was the latest in a series of public engagement events taking place in September and early October to discuss the plan.

Key themes to emerge from previous engagement sessions have included the need to work with businesses to develop skills; issues in relation to local transport and connectivity; the regeneration of local high streets; the need for public services to work better together and the cost and availability of child care.

All of these have been reflected in Our Valleys, Our Future, which was developed based on feedback from people living and working in the South Wales Valleys at the beginning of the year.

Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language Alun Davies AM; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Ken Skates AM; Ann Lloyd, Chair of Aneurin Bevan Health Board and event Chair, local entrepreneur Andrew Diplock, were all at the event.

Our Valleys, Our Future 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 helping 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 said:

“Earlier today, the Economy Secretary announced funding for a new 50,000 sq feet industrial space in Rhyd Y Blew, Ebbw Vale. This is the first stage in the development of the £100m Automatic Technology Park in Ebbw Vale which will create up to 1500 new full time jobs in the area.

This is good news, however I recognise that there is more work to be done and the taskforce will continue with its programme of engagement with valleys communities with a view to the publication of a detailed delivery plan later in the Autumn.”