

Taskforce members discuss better transport links for the Valleys

The eighth meeting of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, which was held at Lewis School Pengam, in Bargoed, was a chance for the group to explore transport issues facing Valleys communities and learn more about how the latest developments in rail and bus transport, including the development of the South Wales Metro, could help address them.

Our Valleys Our Future, the recently published plan on how we deliver the priorities of the Taskforce, identified some of the actions required to improve and enhance the transport infrastructure in the Valleys.

Transport was one of the most commonly-raised issues by the public when the taskforce took evidence from Valleys communities. These engagement sessions helped to shape the taskforce's action and delivery plans – Our Valleys, Our Future – which was published in July and November 2017, respectively.

The Our Valleys, Our Future delivery plan identifies a series of actions required to improve and enhance the transport infrastructure across the Valleys.

Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, Alun Davies, who chairs the taskforce, said,

“We believe connectivity is key to supporting economic growth and building stronger communities.

“This meeting was a great opportunity to discuss with taskforce members the actions we are taking to improve infrastructure in the area, not only through the South Wales Metro project, but also from our wider actions on public transport which will in turn improve the economic growth for the Valleys region.”

He added that the South Wales Metro will not only improve links between communities but it will also support the local and wider Welsh economy by enhancing connectivity across Wales, the rest of the UK and Europe. It will allow people greater mobility and easier access to jobs and services.

Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, who is a member of the taskforce said

“We are moving forward with our vision of an integrated transport system, by looking to reshape public transport infrastructure and services across Wales.

“We will soon have rail franchising powers, so that we can, for the

first time, specify and let Wales and Borders rail services. We are also securing the transfer of the Valley Lines north of Cardiff Queen Street, where we can separate operation from the South Wales Main Line, enabling us to deliver the next phase of the South Wales Metro.

“We are also looking at reforming the planning and delivery of local bus services in Wales which should lead to a real tangible improvement for people in Valleys communities.”