

Valleys road improvements must bring wider benefits

The meeting also discussed the ambitious plans published by the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, which is chaired by Alun Davies.

He said:

“The A465 – the Heads of the Valleys road – is one of the key east-west strategic links in Wales. Part of the Trans-European Road Network, it is an international gateway for our economy in South Wales.

“When the dualling is complete, there will be a continuous dual carriageway from the M4 along the A465 to the midlands and beyond.

“We are working to make the most of the opportunities from this, building on the Valleys Taskforce’s ambitious plans, including a commitment to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales.

“This means ensuring projects like this include employment and training opportunities for the local community and that Welsh companies can compete for sub-contracts. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy Ken Skates has also been clear through the new Economic Action Plan that he wants to see more public investment with a social purpose of this kind in the Welsh economy over the next few years.”

Dr Victoria Winckler, director of the Bevan Foundation, added:

“We have fantastic resources in our Valleys communities, which is why we must work together to ensure big infrastructure projects like the Heads of the Valleys dualling make the most of procurement, of our people and our spectacular surroundings to bring benefits to our communities.

“We are delighted to be working with the Welsh Government and the Industrial Communities Alliance to make sure the most is made of the A465. As a route, it is at least as significant to the people living in the Heads of the Valleys sub-region as the South Wales Metro. In dramatically shortening journey times both within the Heads of the Valleys area and the rest of Wales and the UK, it has the potential to transform the region.”

Mr Davies continued,

“This is a part of Wales which is full of opportunities, rich in culture, people and natural resources and in hope and ambition. As we work to bring about lasting social and economic prosperity for all our Valleys communities, it’s vital we make the most of all the opportunities at hand.”