



The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys has been set up and will work alongside a number of important Welsh Government strategies; programmes and projects and other major initiatives involving South Wales local authorities and public bodies, such as education and health. These include:

- **Taking Wales Forward 2016-21**

As the diagram above shows, the priorities in *Our Valleys, Our Future* are in line with the Welsh Government's Programme for Government *Taking Wales Forward*, which identifies four cross-cutting strategies where we can have the greatest impact:

- Prosperous and secure
- Healthy and active
- Ambitious and learning
- United and connected.

Prosperity for All: the national strategy (2017) sets out Welsh Government's objectives under four themes, and the actions within *Our Valleys, Our Future* and the supporting Delivery Plan contribute to the delivery of these objectives while responding to the specific needs of Valleys communities:

Prosperous and secure – our aim is to drive a Welsh Economy which spreads opportunity and tackles inequality, delivering individual and national prosperity. We will enable people to fulfil their ambitions and enhance their well-being

Context paper

through secure and sustainable employment. We will break down the barriers many face to getting a job, and create the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive. The Jobs and skills section of this plan supports this strategy theme.

- **Healthy and active** – our aim is to improve health and well-being in Wales, for individuals, families and communities, helping us to achieve our ambition of prosperity for all, taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention. Both the Better public services and My local community section of this plan support this theme, with actions which focus on improving health and well-being of those living in the Valleys.
- **Ambitious and learning** – our aim is to instil in everyone a passion to learn throughout their lives, inspiring them with the ambition to be the best they possibly can be. A prosperous Wales needs creative, highly skilled and adaptable people, so our education from the earliest age will be the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement. Specific actions about improving educational outcomes and to close the attainment gap for children and young people living in the Valleys are included in Better public services section.
- **United and connected** – our aim is to build a nation where people take pride in their communities, in the Welsh identity and language, and our place in the world. We are building the vital links that make it easier for people to come together, for the economy to grow, and for us to become a confident nation at ease with itself. The actions outlined within Better Public Services about public transport as well as those within My local community in relation to developing a Valleys Landscape Park will contribute to the delivery of this theme of the national strategy.

The national strategy identifies five priority areas as having the greatest potential contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being: early years; housing; social care; mental health; and skills and employability. The work of the Taskforce provides the opportunity to test and pilot new cross-cutting approaches in these areas.

- **City deals**

Our Valleys, Our Future explains that the taskforce will work with the two city deals – the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals – to deliver the actions outlined in high-level plan.

The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is the largest of its kind, bringing together 10 local authorities with an investment fund of £1.2bn over 20 years. The South Wales Metro is at the heart of the deal (<http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/metro/?lang=en>). The deal aims to create 25,000 new jobs and bring an extra £4 billion of private sector investment to South Wales.

Context paper

The Swansea Bay City Deal aims to boost the local economy by £1.8bn and create almost 10,000 new jobs over the next 15 years. It is backed by £1.3bn of investment.

- **Public service boards and wellbeing plans**

It is important the work of the taskforce results in lasting change for the South Wales Valleys.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹ created statutory public service boards, which replaced the voluntary local service boards in each local authority area. Each public service board must assesses the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in its area and sets objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to the Act's wellbeing goals.

Each public service board must prepare and publish a plan setting out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them – these are called local wellbeing plan. The taskforce has reviewed the local authority wellbeing assessments for the valleys and taken into account their findings in the development of *Our Valleys, Our Future*.

- **Employability delivery plan**

A key priority of *Our Valleys, Our Future* is good-quality jobs and the skills to do them. The Welsh Government is developing an employability delivery plan, which will reshape employability support for people who are both ready to re-enter the labour market and those who are furthest away from it, helping them to acquire the skills and experience needed to gain and maintain sustainable employment.

This plan will be developed by working across the Welsh Government and will be published by Christmas. The taskforce will work in conjunction with the Ministerial Employability Working Group and develop the plans together.

The employability delivery plan will focus our efforts across Welsh Government departments, stakeholder groups and partners to increase economic activity and participation. It will align a range of services which have an impact on an individual's ability to access, retain and progress within employment.

- **Regional skills partnerships**

Regional skills partnerships (RSPs) were set up to drive investment in skills in response to local needs. They are responsible for analysing economic challenges and likely growth areas to identify the skills needed in the workforce. They produce annual regional employment and skills plans, which influence the provision of skills in the region.

The taskforce has worked with the South East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership and the South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership to develop *Our Valleys, Our Future* and has drawn on their regional employment and skills plans to provide evidence for our proposals. We will continue to work with them as we develop our plans.

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

Context paper

- **Regional education consortia**

Regional education consortia work on behalf of local authorities to lead, orchestrate and coordinate improvement in the performance of schools and young people. Their overall aim is to improve outcomes for all young people; ensure the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning and support and empower school leaders to better lead their schools.

As we develop the proposals within *Our Valleys, Our Future*, particularly in relation to raising educational attainment in the Valleys, we will continue to draw on the knowledge and expertise of the consortia and ensure our plans are aligned with the wider work they are undertaking.