



HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: VALLEYS TASK FORCE – ACTIVITY IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of activities being progressed within the County Borough as part of the Valleys Taskforce Initiative.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys (Valleys Taskforce) was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016. The taskforce is in place until 2021 so is now in its final delivery phase. In 2019 the Taskforce agreed to focus on seven priority areas, each driven by a subgroup of relevant experts that are responsible for taking forward the work, the report provides an overview of activity in the county borough against the seven priority areas.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To note the content of the Report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To keep the Scrutiny Committee informed of Taskforce Initiatives which are being delivered by the Council and its Partners across the county borough.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016. The role of the Valleys Taskforce is to advise the Welsh Government on a new approach to investing in the future of the Valleys. An approach which they hoped would engage and empower local communities, build on their assets and restore a sense of hope and aspiration.

- 5.2 In 2017 the Taskforce undertook extensive engagement with people living and working in the Valleys through a series of workshops and on-line engagement. This led to the publication of *Our Valleys, Our Future*, the Taskforce's high-level plan. The plan was based around the following three priority areas:
- Good quality Jobs and the skills to do them
 - Better Public Services
 - My Local Community
- 5.3 The Taskforce is in place until 2021 so is now in its final delivery phase. In 2019 the Taskforce agreed to focus on seven priority areas, each driven by a subgroup of relevant experts that are responsible for taking forward the work as follows:
- Strategic hubs and maximising the economic impact of the A465
 - Foundational Economy
 - Entrepreneurship and business support
 - Housing
 - Valleys taskforce innovation fund
 - Transport
 - Valleys Regional Park.
- 5.4 A significant amount of VTF activity has been focussed on Caerphilly Town as it forms a major component of the Caerphilly/Ystrad Mynach Strategic Hub which has been prioritised for investment by Welsh Government, the Cardiff Capital Region and the Valleys Taskforce.
- 5.5 A Placemaking Plan for Caerphilly Town has been prepared in partnership with the Valleys Taskforce, Transport for Wales, Welsh Government and key stakeholders to target appropriate regional investment opportunities (Metro Plus, HQ building, Caerphilly Castle Leisure Quarter, Park Lane Hotel, Ness Tar Redevelopment etc) to achieve maximum impact and take forward the next phases of physical regeneration and place making.
- 5.6 The identified VTF Strategic Hubs will act as a focus for job creation by attracting private sector investment, allowing existing businesses to grow and promoting business start-ups through (in part) the Regional Business Hub at Welsh Ice. This will include realising economic regeneration opportunities through the town centre first policy principle, delivery of new housing and public service provision, whilst increasing connectivity to jobs and services through the South Wales Metro.
- 5.7 A wide range of VTF activities is also taking place throughout the county borough under the seven VTF priority areas. This activity is varied and includes:
- the provision of new homes on public sector land;
 - the development of new business units in the Heads of the Valleys and Nelson;
 - targeted investment to the three Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways at Cwmcarn, Penallta Parc and Caerphilly Castle;
 - working closely with business and Welsh Ice to accelerate growth and
 - working closely with business to stimulate the foundational economy;
 - the pilot of the alumni in two schools in the county borough,
 - the preparation of a strategy for the Heads of the Valleys A465 Corridor, etc.
 - Bringing empty homes back into use.

A detailed overview is contained in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

- 5.8 Welsh Government are fast approaching the end of the work programme which ends during this Assembly term and the Minister has indicated that the outputs of the Taskforce need to continue beyond this. Ministers therefore intend to embed the work of the Taskforce into the long-term plans for Welsh Government and future partnership working to enable it to continue when the Taskforce concludes.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

- 7.1 The report contributes towards or impacts predominantly on the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Objective 2 - Enabling employment.

Objective 3 - Addressing the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough.

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment.

Objective 5 – Creating a County Borough that supports a Healthy Lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Objective 6 – Supporting citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.

A Foundation for Success 2018-2023.

- 7.2 The report recommendations contribute towards the following Regeneration Objectives to:

- Build a more resilient and diversified economy for the county borough;
- Support economic growth, innovation and enterprise;
- Create an environment that nurtures business;
- Enhance the competitiveness of the county borough;
- Boost business support;
- Enhance opportunities for physical improvement and investment through active place making; and

- Improve the delivery and diversity the housing stock across all tenures within the county borough to meet housing need and create strong cohesive communities.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 This work of the Valleys Taskforce contributes to the Well-being objectives as set out above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and it is aimed at improving the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the area.

8.2 As such it aligns with the following well-being goals:

- A Prosperous Wales – Providing more jobs and housing in the area will create more wealth for the local population.
- A Resilient Wales – Providing additional and more diverse employment and housing opportunities will make the area more resilient to external economic factors.
- A Healthier Wales – Providing a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities through the targeted intervention of investment at our Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways will afford residents with enhanced access to the countryside and to cultural activities for their improved health and well being
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities – providing local employment and more diverse housing options will help to stabilise and develop local communities and prevent outmigration.

8.3 The report recommendations are consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act. The five ways of working of the sustainable development principle, listed in the Act are:

- Long Term – The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their long-term needs;
- Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring, or getting worse, may help public bodies meet their objectives;
- Integration – Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies;
- Collaboration – Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives;
- Involvement – The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equalities implications associated with this report for any specific groups or individuals therefore a full equalities impact assessment has not been carried out.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 All consultation responses are reflected in the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Valleys Taskforce Initiative Activities