



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Strategic Approach to Regeneration – Western Valleys

Date: 13 November 2008

By: Leighton Andrews, Deputy Minister for Regeneration

As a Government, we recognised that in order to deliver long-lasting economic and social outcomes, we needed to co-ordinate our regeneration activities in terms of investment in both people and places. The most successful regeneration activity requires genuine partnership working between communities, across a wide range of public, private and third sector bodies, and linking holistically initiatives in employment, skills, social enterprise community development and housing

Today I am announcing our intention to develop the Western Valleys area of South Wales as a Strategic Regeneration Area. The Western Valleys is part of the spatial plan area identified as Swansea Bay Waterfront and Western Valleys. It is very much identified with its history of heavy industry in mining, steel and chemicals. It is today still suffering from the decline of these industries and as a consequence has a number of areas identified in the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008 as some of the most deprived in Wales.

The Western Valleys has a number of Communities First Partnership areas and suffers from lack of investment and jobs. The area offers the second greatest potential in South West Wales, to realise the benefits of a more strategic approach to regeneration.

I propose to support all the Communities First Partnerships in the area to be actively involved through a new strategic co-ordination. This will replace the existing Cross Border Partnership structure in the Amman Valley. In that area

we will now focus our support on frontline community projects, taking careful note of the existing plans and aspirations of the community members and organisations who have supported the Cross-Border Partnership up to now.

Discussions are continuing regarding the potential scope of the Western Valleys area, which will seek to provide a regeneration focus on communities within a potential geography stretching from the Amman Valley in the West across to the Upper Garw and Ogmore valleys of Bridgend in the East and extend north to the community of Ystradgynlais

A more strategic, long-term and holistic approach to regeneration is required in this area. Regeneration approaches which fail to address the skills and employability needs of people and communities alongside physical and environmental improvements may leave longstanding social issues such as economic inactivity, poverty and social exclusion untouched. Part of the strategic response in the Western Valleys will be collaboration with DWP to extend the City strategy approach to tackling economic inactivity that is working so well in the Heads of the Valleys.