

**Alun Davies AC/AM**  
**Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes**  
**Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language**

Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee  
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John Griffiths AM  
Chair  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

12 October 2016

Dear John,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys on 21 September. In your subsequent letter, you have asked for further information following the first meeting of the taskforce, which took place on 22 and 23 September.

Copies of the papers and minutes from our meeting will be published on the Welsh Government's valleys taskforce webpage later this week. <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/?lang=en>

Following feedback during this taskforce meeting, the terms of reference are still in draft form but will be agreed electronically prior to the next meeting on 28 November. They will be published on the webpage.

The taskforce identified a number of key challenges at its first meeting, which can be grouped under the following four headings:

- Better integration and coordination across public services;
- Increased access to good quality jobs, increasing employability skills;
- Positive communication and true community engagement;
- Maximising benefits from structures and organisations working with and in the valleys.

The taskforce includes representation from those taking forward the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and those working with the Cardiff City Region. The taskforce will build on, rather than duplicate, these related areas of government-sponsored activity. As I explained to the committee, it is not my intention to build separate and parallel delivery structures.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

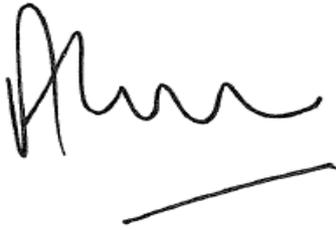
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Genuine engagement with local communities will be vital to the work of the taskforce. We want to get to the heart of what valleys communities really want and to do this we will explore innovative methods of engagement. A communication and engagement plan is being developed and I would be pleased to share this with the committee once it is finalised.

The implications of the EU referendum and the future withdrawal of the UK from the European Union were discussed by the taskforce at its first meeting. It is too soon to determine what the implications will be for the valleys, however, we will keep this important subject under review.

The work of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys is at a developmental stage – it will evolve over the five years of this term of government and be informed by our continuous engagement with valleys communities. With this in mind, I will be pleased to keep the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Alun Davies AC/AM**

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