

South Wales East Regional Committee

SWERC(2) 01-06 (p.4)

Date:	17 February 2006
Time:	10.00am - 12.30pm
Venue:	Beaufort Theatre and Ballroom, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale
Title:	Jill Shuker – Merthyr Tydfil CBC

The Renaissance of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough and the development of the Town as an area hub for the Heads of the Valleys

Introduction

Two decades of reclamation and regeneration in the 1980's and 1990's provided over 41 hectares of land available for development throughout Merthyr Tydfil. This was the result of significant public and private sector investment costing over £55 million and has provided opportunities for industrial, commercial, retail, leisure and housing developments. Significant investment in infrastructure with the dualled A470 from Cardiff and the current programme to dual the Heads of the Valleys Road (A465) from Hirwaun to Abergavenny also places Merthyr Tydfil in an ideal location to develop as a strategic area hub.

Within the policy context of the Wales Spatial Plan, Merthyr Tydfil, as well as Ebbw Vale, is clearly identified as a key driver for regeneration in the Heads of the Valleys zone and the strategy for the South East – The Capital Network includes working "with our partners to develop an ambitious programme of joined-up regeneration action along the Heads of the Valleys corridor which will complement the planned upgrading of the A465. The aim of this will be to improve quality of life, retain and attract residents, and increase the prosperity of the whole area focusing initially on unlocking the potential of Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale.....The Heads of the Valleys corridor will be strengthened as an attractive location for people to live and for development, to help secure more balanced prosperity across the area. Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale are the key centres on the corridor."

Economic development and regeneration are at the heart of the Local Authority's Vision and Strategic Aims and there are a significant number of regeneration projects and initiatives both underway and planned for Merthyr Tydfil which are outlined below, aligned to the key themes of the Heads of the Valleys Strategic Framework.

Unlocking the Potential of our People:

- Development of a modern, integrated Lifelong Learning Campus working with Merthyr Tydfil College, University of Glamorgan & Tydfil Training Ltd to develop a site that offers exciting opportunities for curriculum development and linking learning and business.
- Neighbourhood Learning Centre set up in 2003 in the Gurnos Community Workshops, with £2.4mill of Objective One Funding, which offers help back into work for local people, with training provided in a range of areas, including ICT, retail, hairdressing, etc
- Working with Job Centre Plus to deliver the Want2Work project.
- Working with the Local Health Board and Trust to develop primary health care facilities to serve our communities.
- Approximately £12 million pounds committed through the 8 local Communities First Partnerships to tackle inequalities in the most deprived communities.

Unlocking the Potential of our Places:

- The County Borough is 100% Broadband enabled
- £35mill Cyfarthfa Retail Park opened in April 2005, bringing 500 new jobs and retailers B&Q, Matalan, Currys, JJB (Retail & Health Club), Brantano, NEXT and Outfit to the area.
- Brand new Tesco opened in the Town Centre in 2003, with a shopping arcade linking this to the main High Street.
- Major Town Centre Regeneration Programme including the development of a café quarter, gateway schemes, building enhancements, streetscape & environmental improvements, signage as well as larger projects including the Old Town Hall and Bus Station.
- New Housing Developments across the County Borough by companies such as Barratt Homes, Redrow and Persimmon.
- Relocation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Social Justice Ministry in September 2006,

bringing 450 jobs into the town.

- The development of the VITEC, providing a modern business and training facility at the Cyfarthfa Furnaces with funding of c£5mill from Objective One, Local Regeneration Fund, WDA and the private sector.
- Development of an integrated transport facility at the railway station as well as seeking to improve train services to Cardiff.
- Opening of two new community schools at Abercanaid in 2002 and Twynhrolyn in 2004, an Integrated Children's Centre in 2005, with proposals for a further 5 new schools by 2010.
- Housing Renewal Area Schemes in Merthyr Vale & Dowlais with a total budget of just over £4 million providing a range of environmental works as well as 10 Group Repair Schemes.
- Redevelopment of the Gurnos Shopping Centre.
- A new Trago Mills development (150,000 sq ft) under construction which is a unique leisure/retail concept currently only located in South West England.
- Currently within the planning process are 3 major schemes, two of which are potentially of huge significance to the future development of Merthyr Tydfil - Merthyr Village, Ffos y Fran and Riverside Development on the Merthyr Vale Colliery Site.

Building a Confident Future:

- The development of a new sports centre and swimming pool at Rhydyccar as well as other private sector led leisure facilities, eg cinema, hotels, etc.
- Taking forward proposals to develop cultural facilities for the area.
- Seeking funding to improve Cyfarthfa Park and Castle as well as the Furnaces site to enhance the tourism offer.
- Development of walking & cycling trails including the Trevithick Trail.
- Events programmes such as Children in Need (2003) the Trevithick Celebrations (2004), Centenary Celebrations (2005).

Delivering Change

- Play an active part in the Heads of the Valleys Programme Team and Programme Board to ensure effective delivery of the programme.
- Develop joint-working initiatives with Blaenau Gwent CBC, other local authorities and partners.
- Initial Projects supported through the ‘Heads-We Win...’ programme include the development of the community portal - Shape-it.org, a community transport pilot, illumination of the Ynysfach Engine House as part of the Trail of Light Project and the Bedlinog & Trelewis Gateways scheme.

Merthyr Tydfil CBC