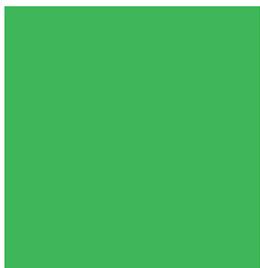
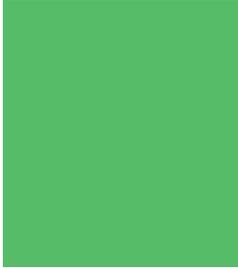
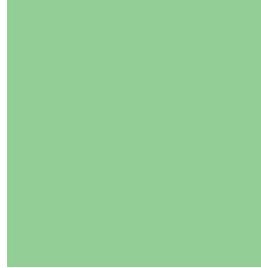
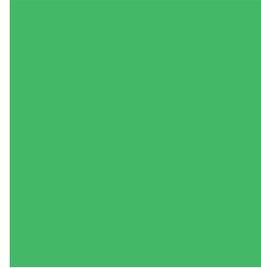


Local Development Plan DRAFT PREFERRED STRATEGY



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FOREWORD

We are at the early stages of producing a new Development Plan for Blaenau Gwent. It is the first opportunity for the community to have a direct input into establishing a new long-term Vision and Development Strategy for Blaenau Gwent.

Regeneration activity in the area over the past ten years has transformed the area and led to the slowing of population loss. Key transport links have been put in place and large areas of land have been, or are in the process of being regenerated – however there are still many regeneration issues to be resolved. There must be a new focus on delivering sustainable development and meeting the aspirations of local communities.

The early stages in the preparation of the new Plan are vital if we are to achieve our long-term goals and ambitions. We need to establish a strong, long term vision and strategy to guide the future development of the area.

The Local Development Plan is one of only four strategies the Council is required to produce and is key to delivering the land use requirements of the Community Plan.

Please get involved in this process by responding to this document. We need your input to help us shape our future and build a place where we would all want to live.



Councillor Don Wilcox
Executive Member for Regeneration

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Local Development Plan is a statutory document and must be prepared by following prescribed procedures. We are now at the first formal consultation stage in the process. The draft Preferred Strategy draws together our work to date, the evidence gathered on key issues and the outcome of early consultation work. During the summer and autumn of 2007, the Council undertook a number of community engagement events at which a range of local stakeholders had the opportunity to consider, in the first instance, the key issues and then latterly the potential options for dealing with those issues over the next 15 years.

We need your views and comments on the content of this document. We also need your input to help us to know if our early consultation and participation work, and our interpretation of it, is in line with your thinking. The following questions may help you formulate your response.

Question 1

Do you agree with the Spatial Profile and challenges identified in Chapter 2? If not please identify changes required.

Question 2

Do you agree that the policy framework set out in Chapter 3 is correct? If not please identify changes required.

Question 3

Do you broadly agree with the choice of the Preferred Strategy (option 2)?

Is the level of population growth identified in paragraph 4.25 appropriate? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new figure.

Is the proposed approach to employment the right one? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new approach.

Is the proposed approach to the Town Centres the right one? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new approach.

Question 4

Do you agree with the long-term vision? If not please identify changes required.

Question 5

Do you agree that the objectives for the LDP set out in Chapter 5 will deliver the vision in a sustainable manner?

Question 6

Do you broadly agree with the detail of the Preferred Strategy? If not which aspects do you disagree with and what changes would you like to see?

Question 7

Do the Strategic Policies reflect the Preferred Strategy? If not what changes would you like to see?

Question 8

Do you agree with the Monitoring Framework suggested? If not please explain and state changes required.

Please fill in the response form available with this document.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

All responses returned within the six week consultation period, running from 7th November to 19th December 2008, will be considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the vision, objectives, strategic policies and strategy to be included in the deposit Local Development Plan. This document will include more detailed policies and land allocations and will be subject to a further public consultation exercise next autumn (2009) before being subject to independent examination.

If you require any further information on the LDP or have any comments or queries related to this please call the Planning Policy Team on 01495 354740/355544/355538 or e mail planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2004 the Government introduced new legislation, which changed the way in which Councils plan for the future development needs of communities. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005, place a statutory duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their administrative area. Blaenau Gwent must produce a Local Development Plan for the County Borough, excluding that part of the Borough covered by the Brecon Beacons National Park. The Blaenau Gwent LDP will ultimately replace the Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
- 1.2 The purpose of LDPs are to:
- Reflect longer-term local aspirations, based on a vision agreed to by the community and stakeholders;
 - Provide a plan-led strategy, specific to the area covered, to act as a basis for rational and consistent decisions about the use and development of land;
 - Guide growth and change while protecting local diversity, character and sensitive environments;
 - Identify inter dependencies and relationships between places both within and across administrative boundaries; and
 - Contain clear and concise statements of how and where places will change over the next 10 to 15 years (the plan period).
- 1.3 Local Development Plans are intended to be clear, transparent, concise, accessible to the public and easy to review in the future. The Plan will not repeat national planning policy but will focus on the issues which are specifically relevant to the Blaenau Gwent Plan area.

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of Draft Preferred Strategy, including Vision, Objectives and Strategic Policies and Strategic Options

- 1.4 Central to the preparation of the LDP is the principle of sustainable development, which is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and thereby ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. To ensure that the Plan contributes towards addressing sustainability issues the Council has undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), of the Draft Preferred Strategy. The Sustainable Appraisal Report has assessed the economic, social and environmental impacts of the Objectives, the Spatial Options and the Strategic Policies to make sure they contribute to delivering sustainable development.
- 1.5 This appraisal is contained within the Initial Sustainability Appraisal report of the Draft Preferred Strategy, which can be viewed at www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Appropriate Assessment

- 1.6 Appropriate Assessment is required to ascertain the effect of the LDP on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 is a European network of protected sites, which represent areas of highest value for national habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community. The Natura 2000 network includes two types of designation, Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), which protect plants and animals and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which protect birds. In accordance with the Habitats Directive, the Council has undertaken a screening report of the likely significant effects of the Draft Preferred Strategy and has concluded that a precautionary approach is taken and an Appropriate Assessment is undertaken of the Deposit Plan. The Habitat Regulation Screening Report is available alongside the consultation on the Draft Preferred Strategy.

Purpose of the Draft Preferred Strategy

- 1.7 As already stated, consultation on this document is the first opportunity for the general public to have a direct input into establishing a new long-term vision and development strategy for the County Borough. The aim is to build consensus at an early stage when there are real opportunities to influence the content and direction of the Plan and secure early resolution of disagreements.



2.0 SPATIAL PROFILE OF THE BOROUGH

SPATIAL PROFILE OF BLAENAU GWENT

- 2.1 To enable the LDP to correctly translate local community and other stakeholder aspirations into an appropriate form of development on the ground, it must have an accurate picture and understanding of the type of place Blaenau Gwent currently is.
- 2.2 Information on the attributes of the area such as; population, employment, and the range and distribution of existing services and facilities e.g. education, health, shops, has been collated, and will continue to be collated, to enable the context for future development to be established. This information is presented below as the spatial profile of Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.3 Firstly, however, it is important to recognise the wider context in which the Borough sits.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

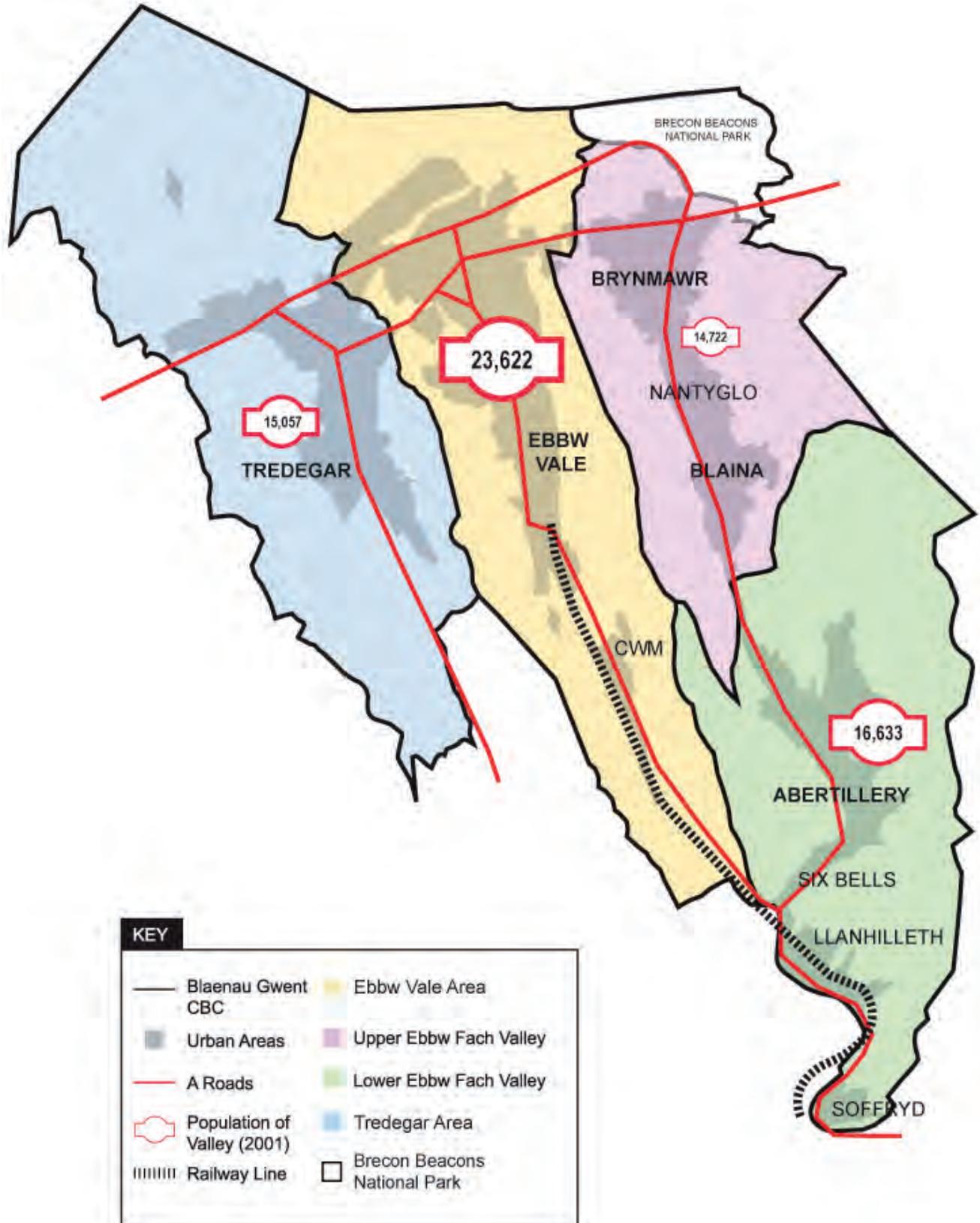
- 2.4 Blaenau Gwent is located in South East Wales, 20 miles north of Newport and 30 miles north east of Cardiff, and comprises of the Sirhowy, Ebbw Fach and Fawr Valleys. It extends from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north to Soffryd in the south. Blaenau Gwent is well placed to access the Brecon Beacons National Park and World Heritage Site at Blaenavon.
- 2.5 Blaenau Gwent covers an area of approximately 10,900 hectares with an estimated population of 69,300 (2006). It has one of the highest population densities in Wales (6.4 per hectare) as most of the population is concentrated in 23% of the area; in the towns of Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Nantyglo and Blaina.
- 2.6 Blaenau Gwent is an area of contrasting landscapes dominated by rugged mountains looming peacefully over the three valleys and their respective communities. The steeply sloping valley sides with their high ridges and moorland vegetation define the character of the area and provide a striking backdrop to the settlements which either nestle in the valley floors or cling to the valley sides.
- 2.7 The A465 Heads of the Valleys Road runs through the north of the County Borough. It offers good links westwards to Merthyr, Swansea, West Wales and Ireland, and eastwards to Abergavenny and the Midlands. The newly opened Ebbw Vale passenger railway line offers regular services to Cardiff and links to the national rail network.

SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

- 2.8 Blaenau Gwent consists of three valleys, the Sirhowy, the Ebbw Fawr and the Ebbw Fach. These valleys provide obvious physical divisions between areas, however, a functional analysis of the County Borough indicates that it can be divided into four areas. These are based on the three valleys plus the division of the Ebbw Fach valley in two to form the upper and lower. The functional analysis provided an understanding of how the area functions through identifying the roles and functions of the main settlements and how they interact with other areas.
- 2.9 Within the County Borough there are few settlements that are capable of being self sufficient in terms of comprising an adequate range and mix of land uses. As a consequence most

settlements enjoy a close relationship with a cluster of other villages and towns in order to provide the range of services that are needed to sustain them.

Figure 1: Settlement Context



ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Incomes and Economic Activity

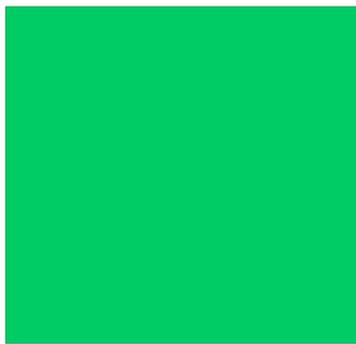
- 2.10 In terms of employment sectors, statistics indicate a tendency towards employment within the manufacturing sectors as representing a higher proportion of employment than the regional and national averages. The relative value of employment in this sector is reflected in wage levels, which are below regional averages: in 2006 the average gross weekly income for Blaenau Gwent was £346, compared to the regional average gross weekly income of £474.
- 2.11 The number of people economically inactive in 2005/06 was 12,400. This equates to 30% of the workforce, which is significantly above the Welsh average of 25%. As a result of the high number of economically inactive and below average wages the mean income for Blaenau Gwent is the lowest in Wales at £25,473 compared with £30,231 for Wales (Source CACI 2007).

Entrepreneurial Dynamism

- 2.12 The key indicator used to assess economic enterprise is total VAT registrations – at the end of 2005 there were 940 businesses registered in Blaenau Gwent. In contrast, there were 80 deregistrations (1.2 per 1000 population) in Blaenau Gwent in 2005 (-9.6%) in comparison with -6.8% for Wales. A comparison at the regional level reveals that Blaenau Gwent has consistently experienced the second least number of new registrations over the past five years after Merthyr Tydfil and, in most recent years, registrations in Blaenau Gwent have been over 150 less than in any other Local Authority area in the region (with the exception of Merthyr Tydfil, which is performing below Blaenau Gwent).

Retail

- 2.13 The main shopping areas in Blaenau Gwent are Abertillery, Blaina, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Tredegar and the Festival Park Outlet Centre.
- 2.14 High vacancy rates currently exist within many of the town centres. However, the Council is endeavouring to address Town Centre Regeneration through the preparation and implementation of Town Centre Strategies and by the administration of grants programmes e.g. Commercial Improvement Area Grants.
- 2.15 Blaenau Gwent experiences low car ownership rates, (35% of households with no car or van, compared to 26% in Wales) in conjunction with high levels of deprivation; meaning that accessibility to town centres may be difficult for some members of the community.



SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Population

- 2.16** The population of Blaenau Gwent has been falling since its peak of 127,611 in 1921. The loss of population has been caused by the decline of the coal and steel industries, leading to people moving out of the County Borough to find employment elsewhere. The latest major closure to hit Blaenau Gwent was in 2002 when the Ebbw Vale Tinplate Works closed.
- 2.17** One of the problems with net outward migration is that it tends to be biased towards those more mobile and economically active such as those falling into the younger age groups. The effect of losing these groups is that it leaves an older and less mobile population, which in turn has created a high dependency rate.
- 2.18** More recent population figures indicate that the rate of population loss appears to be slowing compared to longer term trends. Between 2001 and 2006 the population fell from 70,064 to 69,300.
- 2.19** The population of Blaenau Gwent is much less diverse than the Welsh average – 90% of Blaenau Gwent residents were born in Wales and only 0.8% of the population are from a non-white ethnic group.



Housing

- 2.20** In 2001, 55% of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock consisted of terraced properties built pre 1919. According to the Welsh Housing Condition Survey 1998, 8% were unfit for human habitation with the main reason being dampness and disrepair. A further 12% were classified as being in need of substantial repair. According to health experts there is an associated link between dampness and illness in children and high levels of death of older people in winter and a range of illnesses.
- 2.21** Since 2004, house prices in Blaenau Gwent have risen dramatically and whilst prices are below the average for South East Wales there is now an affordability problem in the area.
- 2.22** Although the area has seen an upturn in property prices, values continue to be low in certain areas making investment in repairs less attractive.

- 2.23 A lower proportion of residents in Blaenau Gwent own their own homes than across Wales or England – a total of 62.5% of Blaenau Gwent homes are in private ownership compared with 71% in Wales and 69% in England.

Health and Well being

- 2.24 Life expectancy in Blaenau Gwent is the lowest in Wales at 77.5 years. In comparison the Welsh average is 79.3 years (source WAG projections 2008).
- 2.25 The proportion of people with limiting long-term illness is above the South East Wales and national averages: 28.3% compared to 23.4% in South East Wales and 23.3% in Wales.
- 2.26 Blaenau Gwent records the worst physical health score, the second worst mental health score, and the third worst score for the number of persons with limiting long term illness. Blaenau Gwent also has the second highest proportion of permanently sick and disabled people in Wales (Digest of Welsh Statistics 2003).

Crime and Fear of Crime

- 2.27 In general terms Blaenau Gwent has relatively low levels of crime, totalling 4,116 crimes in 2006/07 (including violence against the person, burglary, vehicle related thefts, other household thefts, theft from the person, common assault, wounding and robbery). This is a 22% reduction over the period 2005-2007. The areas where crime rates are above average include theft from motor vehicles, theft of motor vehicles, and violence against the person. However, theft of motor vehicles and violence against the person are declining.

Education, Skills and Qualifications

- 2.28 Data relating to education, skills and qualifications in the area indicates a considerable disparity between Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales and Wales. In Blaenau Gwent, the proportion of people holding NVQ level 2, or above in 2003 was 41% compared to 43% for South East Wales and 60% for Wales. The situation is far worse in terms of the proportion of people holding the higher level 4 qualification or above: 10% for Blaenau Gwent compared to 17% and 23% for South East Wales and Wales respectively.
- 2.29 There is also a lower percentage of the population achieving a level 4/5 qualification (such as degree, HNC, HND) with only 14% in Blaenau Gwent compared to the Welsh average of 17%. Latest statistics also show that there was a lower proportion of 19 year olds with 5 GCSE's (A*-C), with 43% achieving this compared to the Welsh average of 56%. These educational attainment statistics have implications for the manner in which the local economy will be able to expand over the Plan period.
- 2.30 In 2001, 45% of the Blaenau Gwent population held no qualifications, compared to 34% and 33% for South East Wales and Wales respectively. By 2003, this had considerably improved to approximately 13,000 persons, which represented 30% of the population at the time.



Welsh Language and Culture

- 2.31** Despite the rich industrial heritage of the locality, there are very few members of the population that identify themselves as Welsh, rather than British (12% according to 2001 Census). The use of the Welsh language in Blaenau Gwent is relatively low, when compared to Wales as a whole and other individual authorities.
- 2.32** However, there is a distinctive ‘valleys’ culture apparent in the Blaenau Gwent area – this has developed from a strong sense of community and social networks that are not linked to the Welsh language.

Transport

- 2.33** In terms of travel distances to work, in Blaenau Gwent the majority of the population travels less than 5km commuting distance. 31% of the County Borough’s population relies on the private car for their work journey, with only 7% of the population walking or cycling to work. In terms of car ownership, 45% of the resident population owns one car only, with 35% of Blaenau Gwent’s residents neither owning nor having access to a car or van. In comparison to regional and national statistics, in general terms car ownership levels are considerably below average in Blaenau Gwent and a considerably greater proportion of the population is without access to a car.
- 2.34** A new rail link to Cardiff has recently opened providing an hourly service to Cardiff with two rail stations serving Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Parkway & Llanhilleth). The line provides access to and from Cardiff, which is linked with the Great Western line giving links eastward to London and westward to Swansea, Fishguard and the Republic of Ireland.
- 2.35** Bus links connect the main towns with Newport and Cardiff and local bus services connect Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Abertillery and Tredegar. These bus links provide a good level of service during weekdays and on Saturdays. Conversely, Sunday service is limited and some lateral connections between valleys are poor.
- 2.36** The dominant feature of the highway network in Blaenau Gwent is the Heads of the Valleys Trunk Road (A465) located at the northern end of the County Borough. The proposal to upgrade the road between Hirwaun and Abergavenny to dual carriageway standards has commenced. On completion of this work the A465/A40 route between Neath and Monmouth will be to a standard commensurate with its strategic nature. The completion of the section

within Blaenau Gwent is expected to commence by 2010. This road combined with the A470 connects Blaenau Gwent to the Midlands, the South East, South West of England and the rest of Wales.

- 2.37 The nearest airports to Blaenau Gwent are Cardiff International, Bristol and Birmingham. Locals are largely reliant on private transport or car hire to access the airports, as public transport links are limited.
- 2.38 The public rights of way network in the County Borough is nearly 300km in length - 68% of this network is available to walkers. However, the distribution of the network is not even across the County Borough, and there are several factors arising from a lack of maintenance that have led to restricted usability of this facility. Three factors have been identified namely:
 - more circular routes – signed and advertised as such;
 - the need to link paths together – defragmentation; and
 - more long distance routes.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

- 2.39 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. It includes all forms of life from wild habitats, plants and animals to people. Maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent is important as it contributes to our quality of life, a healthier environment, attracts tourism and benefits the local economy. There are a variety of statutory (local, national and international) designations and non-statutory that cover nature conservation in Blaenau Gwent. The weight to be attached to nature conservation interests is dependent on the relative significance of the designation.
- 2.40 There no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (Statutory International Sites) within the Blaenau Gwent Planning Authority boundary. There are however, two SACs within the Brecon Beacons National Park area of Blaenau Gwent: Usk Bat Sites and Cwm Clydach Woodlands, each designated under the EC Habitats and Species Directives. Usk Bat Site is one of the best areas in the United Kingdom for the lesser horseshoe bat.

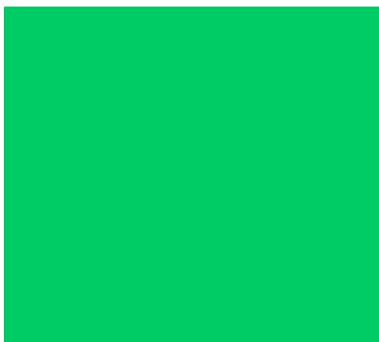
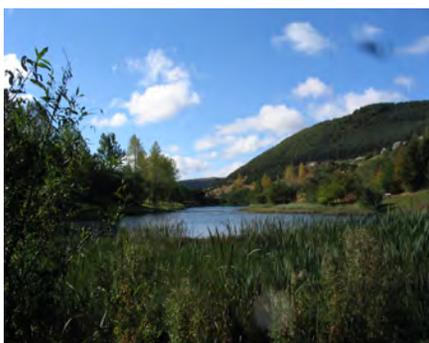
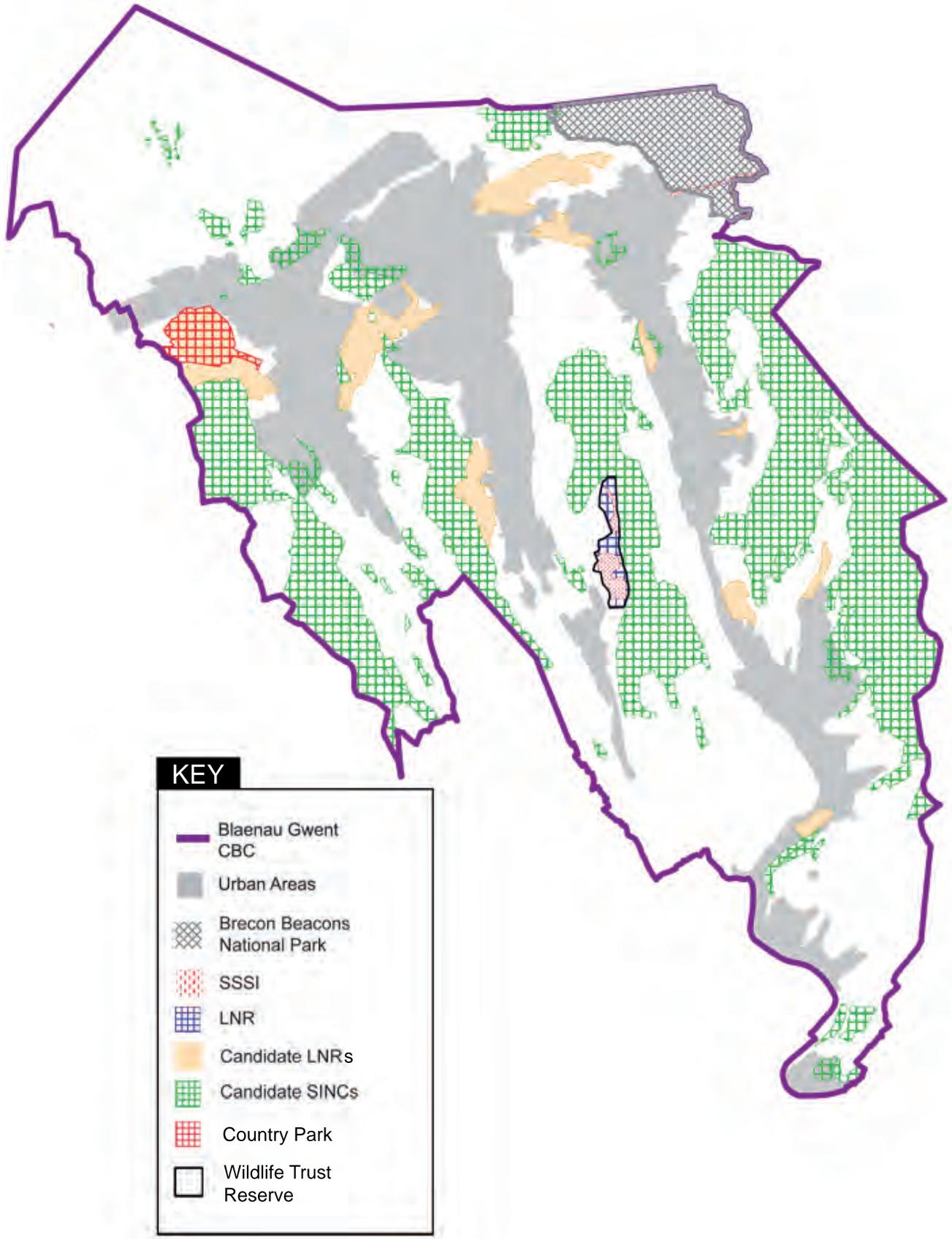


Figure 2: Environmental Designations



- 2.41 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Statutory National) within the Planning authority boundary:
- Cwm Merddog Woodlands / Coed Ty'n y Gelli
 - Brynmawr Sections (geological site)
- There is also a SSSI in the Brecon Beacons National Park area of Blaenau Gwent:
- Mynydd Llangatwg
- 2.42 There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR) (Statutory National) within the Blaenau Gwent Planning Authority boundary though there is one in the Brecon Beacons National Park area called Cwm Clydach.
- 2.43 Blaenau Gwent has one Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (Statutory Local) – the Silent Valley LNR, which includes Cwm Merddog / Coed Ty'n y Gelli SSSI and covers a total area of 51.62 ha. The parts of the LNR that include the SSSI have been designated as such as a result of the presence of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. A number of candidate LNRs have been proposed for the County Borough area, these are: Parc Bryn Bach (Tredegar); Sirhowy Woodlands (Tredegar/Ebbw Vale); Garden City (Ebbw Vale); Beaufort Hills (Beaufort); Parc Nant y Waun (Brynmawr); Trevor Rowson Heritage site (Nantyglo); Roseheyworth Community Woodlands (Abertillery); Cwmcelyn Pond (Blaina); Cwmtillery Lakes (Abertillery); and Six Bells Colliery Site (Six Bells).
- 2.44 There are 14 Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) sites and three Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) (Non-Statutory).
- 2.45 Work on identifying Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) (Non-Statutory) is well underway. The first tranche of designations will include 64 SINCs and are expected to gain approval in 2008. A further set of SINC's are planned over the next year, but it is unknown how many will be included at this stage.

Cultural Heritage

- 2.46 Blaenau Gwent has 53 listed buildings, recognised for their special historical and architectural importance. The majority are Grade II listed, although of the total, ten fall into the higher category of Grade II*. There are eleven listed buildings in the County Borough that appear on Cadw's register of listed buildings 'at risk'.
- 2.47 Currently there is one Conservation Area in Blaenau Gwent, Bedwellty House and Park. Additional conservation area designations under review include: Garden City, Ebbw Vale; St. Michael's Church area in Abertillery; St. Illtyds Church area in Brynithel; Castle Street and the Circle, Tredegar.
- 2.48 The South East Wales region, which comprises 10 Local Authority areas, contains approximately 56 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Of these, only one falls within the boundary of Blaenau Gwent – the Bedwellty Park (also designated as a Conservation Area). This site is included in Cadw's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales'.
- 2.49 Blaenau Gwent also has a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), which include: St Illtyd Castle Mound; Incline Haulage Winding Engine; Mynydd Bedwellty; Sirhowy

Ironworks; Marine Colliery Pumping Engine; Clydach Railroad Bridge, Brynmawr; Clydach Coal Levels; Tredegar Ironworks; and Tredegar Cholera Cemetery.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 2.50 There are currently no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the Blaenau Gwent area. However, at the regional level there are AQMAs in place in Cardiff and Newport as a result of significant traffic flows and peak hour congestion.
- 2.51 Data relating to estimated carbon dioxide emissions in 2004 indicate that the County Borough per capita, compares favourably against the South East Wales average, producing 6.5 tonnes per capita as opposed to 9.8 tonnes per capita.

Water and Flood Risk

- 2.52 The main water courses in Blaenau Gwent are the rivers Ebbw Fach, Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy. Generally chemical water quality is very good and biological quality fairly good. Between 1999 and 2005 biological water quality has tended to improve from good to very good. Chemical water quality has tended to stay the same or deteriorated slightly.
- 2.53 Water supply and sewerage services in Blaenau Gwent are the responsibility of Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru. Wales has a relatively high rainfall compared to the rest of the UK, with an average of 1400mm per year compared to 700mm in the south east of England. Companies in Wales are predicting increases in household demand for water over coming years, not just because of rising numbers of households but also because of greater individual consumption.
- 2.54 In terms of sewerage infrastructure there are no major issues in the Blaenau Gwent area only isolated incidents of flooding, which are being addressed through local improvements. As a result there are no major improvements planned in the area.
- 2.55 Welsh Assembly Government's Technical Advice Note 15 indicates that the principal areas of risk in the County Borough are associated with the river corridors that follow the north-south topography of the valleys through Blaenau Gwent. There are a relatively small number of properties which lie within the 'flood plain', categories C1 and C2.

Waste

- 2.56 In 2007/08, the total municipal waste (MSW) arisings in Blaenau Gwent were 40,431 tonnes, of which 17.2% was recycled or composted. In terms of commercial and industrial wastes the figure for 2003 identified 56,971 tonnes, of which 69% was recycled. In order for Blaenau Gwent to meet their Landfill Allowance Scheme targets and 40% recycling and composting target by 2009/10 significant alterations to current waste production and management practices in the County Borough will be required.

Energy

- 2.57 Blaenau Gwent consumed 4.6% of the South East Wales industrial and commercial energy use in 2003. The same percentage in respect of domestic energy consumption was 6.4%,

with the statistic for transport based energy consumption being just 1%. It should be noted, that Blaenau Gwent has 4.8% of the South East Wales population.

- 2.58 Figures on national, regional and local gas consumption (Kwh) indicate that Blaenau Gwent uses a higher share of gas domestically when compared to the regional averages, but less industrially than neighbouring Authorities. This may potentially be a reflection of Blaenau Gwent's housing conditions - there is a considerable amount of older housing stock in the Local Authority area that, due to its age, may be less energy efficient. Another factor is the altitude which results in a relatively cooler climate than some neighbouring Authorities.
- 2.59 There is no specific data relating to electricity generated from renewable sources within the Blaenau Gwent area alone. However, in 2003 it was estimated that 2.6% of electricity in Wales was generated from renewables, representing a slight increase from 2.4% in 2002. The UK has set a target of producing 10% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010.

Landscape, Land Use and Soil

- 2.60 The largest land use designation in the County Borough is open countryside (45%) and the defined urban area is only 23%. The remainder comprises a combination of other designations including rural settlements and forestry.
- 2.61 Blaenau Gwent has a history of potentially contaminated land uses that may have introduced soil contamination to the area. The 2003 Contaminated Land Strategy Review identified 1,607 potentially contaminated sites in Blaenau Gwent of which there were 51 High Risk sites (previous or current uses include gas works, landfill sites, petrol stations and military land); 880 Medium Risk sites; and 676 Low Risk Sites. Sites with a history of contaminative usage that have been remediated include the former British Coal Workshops at Tredegar and the Dunlop Semtex site at Brynmawr.

Geodiversity

- 2.62 The landscape/geomorphology of the Blaenau Gwent area is controlled by Upper Palaeozoic, Upper Carboniferous rocks of the Productive Coal Formation (Lower-Middle Coal Measures) and overlying South Wales Pennant and Grovesend formations (Pennant Measures/Upper Coal Measures). Coal and iron mining were important industries, and evidence of previous mining activity remains in the landscape in the form of spoil heaps, tips, mine shafts and patches. Renewed instability has resulted from extraction of coal and ironstone on valley slopes which have previously been subject to landslips.
- 2.63 There is one active aggregate site in the area at Trefil, which extracts limestone. Large-scale opencasting for coal has historically taken place in the north of the County Borough where outcrops are near the surface.

CONCLUSION

- 2.64 It is clear from this spatial profile that there are several challenges which need to be overcome to make the area a better place to live and work. These include:
- The high levels of economic inactivity and high benefit dependence;
 - Limited employment opportunities and low household income;
 - Tourism potential;
 - High vacancy rates in town centres;
 - Population demographics and housing needs;
 - Poor quality housing and mismatch of size and tenure;
 - Housing affordability problems;
 - Low educational attainment;
 - Accessibility;
 - Health – low life expectancy;
 - Welsh Language and Culture;
 - Fear of Crime;
 - Low use of public transport;
 - Protection and enhancement of ecological resources and biodiversity;
 - Under appreciation and protection of heritage;
 - Waste Management; and
 - Limited supply of developable land.

Question 1

Do you agree with the Spatial Profile and challenges identified in Chapter 2? If not please identify changes required.



3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 As a spatial planning document a range of relevant policies and programmes, at the national, regional and local levels informs the Draft Preferred Strategy.

NATIONAL

Sustainable Development

- 3.2 The *One Wales* progressive agenda for the Government of Wales states that:

“Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity. Everyone in Wales has a contribution to make in tackling it – individuals, households, business, public services and community groups.”

The Government of Wales Act (1998) places a duty on the National Assembly for Wales to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its function. This is translated into action through the Assembly’s Sustainable Development Scheme *Starting to Live Differently, adopted in 2004*.

- 3.3 The scheme stresses that working towards sustainability means pursuing 4 broad objectives simultaneously:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- Effective protection of the environment; and
- Prudent use of natural resources.

Wales Spatial Plan – People, Places, Futures (July 2008 Update)

- 3.4 The Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales, and integrates the spatial aspects of national strategies, including social inclusion, economic health, transport and environment policy. The purpose of the update was to reflect new drivers for change, including One Wales and to give status to Area work undertaken by each region. The Core themes remain Building Sustainable Communities; Promoting A Sustainable Economy; Valuing our Environment; Achieving Sustainable Accessibility; Respecting Distinctiveness and Working with Our Neighbours.

- 3.5 Blaenau Gwent along with the neighbouring authorities of Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Bridgend, Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan have been identified as part of the South East – Capital Network Zone. The vision for the area is:

‘An innovative skilled area offering a high quality of life – international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global visibility through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and with the UK and the rest of Europe, helping to spread prosperity within the area and benefiting other parts of Wales.’

- 3.6 The South East Development Framework proposes distinct approaches for three areas in South East Wales. Blaenau Gwent is within the Heads of the Valleys Plus: an area facing some of the greatest economic and social change challenges created by economic

restructuring of the late 20th Century. In terms of 'Building Sustainable Communities' Ebbw Vale is identified as being a key settlement that has a critical role to play in the success of the city region. It must be successful in its own right and, where appropriate, function as a service and employment hub for smaller settlements. It will provide the central framework around which high capacity sustainable transport links will be developed. Other settlements in the area need modern shopping, leisure, community and cultural facilities, more attractive and affordable housing, clean vibrant town centres, accessible open countryside and employment opportunities.

- 3.7 Three Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOA) have been identified in South East Wales and one of these is developments linked to the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road (A465). The idea of identifying SOA's is to allow greater coherence to be brought to their development, and public transport links to be strengthened.
- 3.8 In terms of 'Achieving Sustainable Accessibility' the overall priority is to make better use of the Area's existing transport infrastructure, to deliver more sustainable access to jobs and services. General principles guiding priorities include: stretching targets for improving journey times by bus and rail between the key settlements; bus priority measures should be implemented on key routes to ensure buses offer rapid travel between the key settlements; bus services and community transport should link other communities to these main public transport corridors; public transport should operate sufficiently frequently that passengers have the confidence to "turn up and go"; seating capacity should be sufficient to meet normal demand, reducing the need for passengers to stand; the priority for road transport is to ensure that the existing road capacity is used with maximum efficiency. Innovative approaches to demand management will need to be part of this. For example, road charging is one feasible solution to congestion that will need to be considered; and safe cycling and walking routes should be identified for commuters and communities.
- 3.9 In terms of 'Promoting a Sustainable Economy' the Area needs to develop a stronger presence in higher value services and the knowledge economy, and to seize opportunities to create jobs in tourism, creative industries, renewable energy, recycling and waste. Strategic interventions, focused on regeneration and investment in the most deprived areas of the Capital region, should be along sustainable transport corridors and support the key settlements. There is also scope for influencing the location of public sector employment to help to contribute to the sustainable pattern of development in the area. Reconfiguration of public services, including education and health, and back office functions in local government and the public sector also offer opportunities for integrated planning.
- 3.10 The Heads of the Valleys programme will support development of the economy, including the sustainable tourism and leisure sector, which has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent than is currently the case. Effective action to raise skills levels and equip people with the skills they need is seen as particularly important in the Heads of the Valleys area.
- 3.11 With regards to 'Valuing Our Environment' making South East Wales work as a networked environmental region is seen as central to addressing the challenges of past and future development, whilst delivering many of the 'Environment Strategy for Wales' objectives. The main elements will be:
- strategic wildlife corridors and river habitats to be important wildlife corridors; and

- action to strengthen the environmental networks will enhance the quality of life, and support tourism and leisure.

3.12 In terms of 'Respecting Distinctiveness' each town and city needs to foster its own distinct sense of identity, building on its heritage and culture to create a network of settlements with real character which complement each other and each add strength to the attractiveness of the region as a whole. Recognising the value of the Area's diversity of landscapes, built environments and distinctive communities will be key to building confidence and helping to market a regional offer for inward investment and for tourism.

Planning Policy Wales & Technical Advice Notes

3.13 In producing the LDP the Council must have regard to national planning policies. The Assembly Government's national land use planning policies are set out in Planning Policy Wales, Companion Guide, Minerals Planning Policy Wales, Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (MIPPS), Circulars and are supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Turning Heads...A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 (June 2006)

3.14 The Heads of the Valleys Strategy sets out a broad framework for change in the Heads of the Valleys area. The Strategy provides a framework for regenerating the area with a focus on 5 priority themes:

- An attractive and well-used natural, historic and built environment;
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities;
- A well-educated, skilled and healthier population;
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience; and
- Public confidence in a shared bright future.

3.15 The Heads of the Valleys Programme area covers the whole of Blaenau Gwent.

South East Wales Regional Transport Plan (Draft 2008)

3.16 The South East Wales Regional Transport Plan vision is:

"to provide a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system for South East Wales that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and protects the environment; where public transport, walking, cycling and sustainable freight provide real travel alternatives."

South East Wales Transport Alliance's (Sewta) priorities build on this vision, tackle problems and set the general direction of the Plan:

- To improve access to services, facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling;
- To provide a transport system that increases the use of sustainable modes of travel;
- To reduce the demand for travel;

- To develop an efficient and reliable transport system with reduced levels of congestion and improved transport links within the Sewta region and to the rest of Wales, the UK and Europe;
- To provide a transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, is safer and supports local communities;
- To reduce significantly the emission of greenhouse gases and air pollution from transport;
- To ensure that land use development in South East Wales is supported by sustainable transport measures;
- To make better use of existing transport system; and
- To play a full role in regenerating South East Wales.

The draft document sets out a number of planned projects, which need to be included in the Deposit Plan.

South East Regional Waste Plan

- 3.17 The South East Wales Regional Waste Plan aims to achieve Landfill Directive targets by 2013, principally through maximising recycling and composting and limiting the amount of waste going to landfill. A review of the Plan is currently being undertaken and should be adopted in autumn 2008. The Plan includes a requirement for LDPs to contribute towards reducing the region's waste arising, through the identification of appropriate locations for waste management facilities. The Plan suggests that a series of options will be appropriate and depending which option the Council agrees to pursue, the LDP will need to identify between 1.4 and 4 hectares of land. The Council are working with Torfaen to explore appropriate options for reducing waste going to landfill in order to meet the EU Land Directive and the Wise About Waste (Welsh Waste Strategy targets). The identified option will impact on the land required to be identified for Waste facilities.

South Wales Regional Aggregates Technical Statement

- 3.18 The South Wales Regional Aggregates Technical Statement (2008) sets out the strategy for the provision of aggregates in the region and strategic framework for future Local Development Plans. For the Blaenau Gwent LDP, this will require ensuring that a sufficient supply of minerals and aggregates are provided over the plan period to meet Blaenau Gwent's contribution to the regional supply. Blaenau Gwent is required to assess the potential to make a resource allocation of at least 3Mt in the Local Development Plan. Where feasible, this should be of limestone. Additional Carboniferous Limestone resources need to be examined and safeguarded; and alternative carboniferous sandstone resources should be investigated and selectively safeguarded for possible future use.

Regional Housing Apportionment

- 3.19 In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government's Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement, the Council, as part of the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) has undertaken the apportionment of the 2003-Based National and Sub-National projections.
- 3.20 In accordance with government guidance, the 10 constituent Local Planning Authorities and a broad range of stakeholder (including the Home Builders Federation, utility companies and

environmental organisations) have agreed the figures. Whilst the apportionment does not constitute a binding commitment on the Council, the agreement means that the Council has met its requirements in terms of the MIPPS. Part 2 of the SEWSPG Memorandum indicates an apportionment of 3,000 (2006-2021) houses to Blaenau Gwent.

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Local Authority Plan Rationalisation

- 3.21 As a result of local government plan rationalisation, the LDP will be one of four main strategies that the Council is required to produce, namely :
- The Community Plan
 - Health Social Care and Well-Being Strategy
 - Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan
 - Local Development Plan

Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009

- 3.22 The Community Plan sets out the vision of making Blaenau Gwent a better place to live, work and visit. The Plan aims to develop new ways of working by building partnerships with local communities, voluntary and business sectors, the local authority and other agencies, in order to change the area and meet community needs and ambitions.
- 3.23 The Community Plan identifies 7 key themes under which are aims, key projects and a monitoring body. The key themes are:
- Regeneration
 - Health, Social Care and Well-being
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Environment
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Culture and Sport
- 3.24 The Community Plan provides the overarching strategic framework for all other plans and strategies for the Local Authority. LDPs should express, in appropriate land use planning terms, those elements of the Community Plan that relate to the development and use of land, provided that they are in conformity with national and international policy obligations.
- 3.25 The LDP will play an important role in assisting the delivery of many of the projects contained in the Community Plan.

Health Social Care and Well-Being Strategy 'Healthier Future II' (Draft)

- 3.26 Healthier Future II is the second Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy for Blaenau Gwent, developed in partnership between Blaenau Gwent Health Board, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and its partners. The strategy sets out a continued commitment to working together to improve the health, social care and well-being of all people living and working in Blaenau Gwent.

- 3.27 The Strategy sets out 18 local priorities for action, many of which are based on working arrangements and implementing existing strategies in terms of older people, young people, maternity care, mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse, diabetes and coronary heart disease.

Draft Children and Young People’s Plan for Blaenau Gwent 2008-2011

- 3.28 The draft Children and Young People’s Plan is a 3-year plan, which sets out how all agencies in Blaenau Gwent working with children and young people will cooperate to achieve common goals, to improve outcomes for children and young people. The plan articulates the Partnership’s vision, and details the actions it will take, in order to bring about changes in children and young people’s lives. The vision for the Partnership is: *“Working together we will strive to ensure that all children and young people will be supported to achieve their full potential”*.
- 3.29 The Plan represents a new way of thinking about how local services need to change in order to ensure that all children and young people achieve the Welsh Assembly Government’s seven core aims by ensuring that young people:
- Have a flying start in life;
 - Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
 - Enjoy the best possible health and be free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
 - Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
 - Are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
 - Have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional well-being; and
 - Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy (Draft 2008)

- 3.30 The Regeneration Strategy identifies an overarching aim and six principles along with proposals to translate them into action. The overarching aim is to ‘Share Benefits of Regeneration Widely’ and this will be achieved by ensuring that the benefits of regeneration are shared by all those in Blaenau Gwent. The six principles are:-

Principle 1: Diversify the Economy and Develop Manufacturing

Build on the diversification of the local economy by promoting and supporting new areas of opportunity, and developing the strengths of Blaenau Gwent’s manufacturing industry.

Principle 2: Boost Business Support and Enterprise

Scale up targeted business support and promote enterprise and self-employment as a means of growing economic output and raising activity rates.

Principle 3: Promote Learning and Modern Skills

Create a lifelong learning culture with a commitment to improving basic and essential skills through to participation in higher education for all.

Principle 4: Focus Investment in key Communities

Focus investment in Blaenau Gwent’s key communities so that they are more desirable places to live, learn, and work.

Principle 5: Maximise the Ebbw Vale Opportunity County Wide

Maximise the value of the Ebbw Vale opportunity by linking the Corus site and the town centre and by ensuring that other towns and villages can benefit from the transformational opportunity.

Principle 6: Develop the Transport Infrastructure

Invest in key projects to enhance external connections and to support accessibility throughout the Borough.

Blaenau Gwent Local Housing Strategy – Quality Streets (2007-2012)

3.31 The overall aim of the Local Housing Strategy is to:-

“provide a strategic framework to ensure that everyone in Blaenau Gwent has the scope and choice to attain a home that is decent, affordable and is situated in a healthy and safe environment.”

The strategy sets key housing objectives across tenure for the period to 2012, together with an action planning framework for the achievement of those objectives. The objectives are based around:

- Tackling Inequality
- Land Use Planning Framework
- Affordable Housing
- Private Sector Renewal Policy
- Sustainable Development
- Energy Efficiency
- Homelessness
- Supporting people
- Housing Management
- Community Regeneration

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2001-2006)

3.32 The Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan translates national government targets on biodiversity into targets which can be delivered locally. It includes lists of nationally and locally important species and action plans on how to conserve them. Species for which action plans have been prepared include: Great Crested Newt; Skylark; Grey Partridge; Lapwing; Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly; Brown Hare; Otter; Pipistrelle Bat; and the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. Habitats for which action plans have been prepared include: Calcareous Grassland; Dwarf Shrub Heath; Blanket Bog; Mesotrophic Lakes; Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures; Upland Mixed Ashwoods; Upland Oakwood; and Wet Woodland.

Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Evidence Base

3.33 To provide evidence for the preparation of the Local Development Plan a number of studies have been commissioned or undertaken by the Authority. Some of these studies have provided evidence to support the Preferred Strategy and others will inform the development of the Deposit Plan. The studies are:

- Employment Land and Premises (July 2007)
- Retail - Heads of the Valleys Project (Jan 2008)
- Town Centre Surveys (Annual – August 2008)
- Housing Market Assessment (Jan 2007)
- Gypsy Traveller (June 2007)
- Landmap SLA designation (in preparation)
- Joint Housing Land Availability (Annual - April 2007)
- Heads of Valleys Greenspace Provision (Sept 2007)
- Recreation and Open Space (in preparation)
- Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor (in preparation)
- Aggregates Safeguarding (due to commence shortly)
- Waste Site selection (due to commence end 2008)

Question 2

Do you agree that the policy framework set out in Chapter 3 is correct? If not please identify changes required.



4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISSUES VISION AND OPTIONS

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISSUES, VISION AND OPTIONS

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISSUES

- 4.1 Issues were identified from a review of the baseline information and national, regional and local policies.
- 4.2 An Issues Paper was prepared as a discussion document intended to promote debate on the issues of strategic significance for the Authority. The document was placed on the Council's website and sent to Members, key officers, statutory consultees and interested parties. In total 176 individuals/organisations were consulted. Responses to this process have informed the preparation of this document (See Issues Paper Draft Report of Consultation September 2007).

PRIORITISATION OF ISSUES

- 4.3 In July 2007, a workshop was held to agree and then prioritise the list of issues the County Borough faces in terms of land use (See 4.3 – 4.4 below and the Issues & Vision Workshop Draft Report of Consultation August 2007). Following an opportunity to agree, amend or delete issues, attendees were asked to identify the two most significant issues for each of the topic areas. The results of this exercise are identified below.

Housing

- Create a more balanced population, stemming out-migration
- Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations including the need for affordable housing

Transport

- To improve access to services, facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling
- To provide a transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, is safer and supports local communities
- To improve the transport system to assist the regeneration of the area

Employment

- The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries
- Changing the dependence on particular industries and diversifying the economy

Town Centres

- To find a role/function for town centres
- Encourage multiple retailers and a mix of uses within the town centres – specialist shops, coffee shops and offices – creating a niche market

Recreation Leisure and Tourism

- To foster sustainable tourism and leisure in order to boost the local economy
- To foster sustainable tourism, re-engaging local communities with the natural and built environment

Environment

- To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
- Maximise the natural environment for health and well-being.

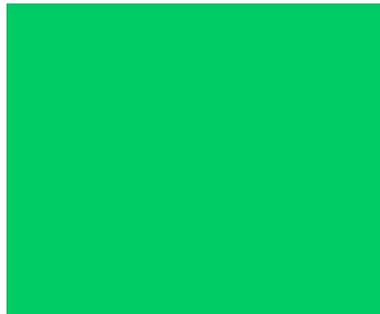
Education and Skills

- The need to improve education and skills

- 4.4 When attendees at the workshop were asked to prioritise the two most significant issues across all the topic areas the most significant issues were:
- The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries;
 - The need to find a role / function for town centres;
 - The need to create a more balanced population stemming out-migration; and
 - The need to provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations, including the need for affordable housing.

IDENTIFICATION OF A VISION

- 4.5 The next stage in the process was to identify a 'vision' for the area that is how Blaenau Gwent should look by 2021. At the Issues and Vision workshop, attendees considered whether or not the Community Plan vision could be used for the Local Development Plan or if a new vision was required. The view was that a new vision was required and each of the 3 groups drafted a vision. From these three visions the Planning Policy Team prepared one vision.
- 4.6 At the Vision and Option workshops, held in the autumn of 2007, participants were given the opportunity to amend the draft Vision prepared by the Planning Policy Team. From this work a final Vision was prepared and approved by the Steering Group (Executive, April 2008) and Local Development Plan Forum (Regeneration Partnership Board Meeting, April 2008). The Vision is set out in paragraph 5.1.



DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY OPTIONS

- 4.7 Building on the opinions and views expressed at the Issues and Vision Workshop; the findings of the consultation exercise on the Issues Paper; the evidence base; the Wales Spatial Plan, National Policy and Local Policy, a set of 3 options were identified by the Planning Policy Team. All three options were realistic.
- 4.8 The three options were based on the issues of significance identified at the Issues and Vision workshop, that is; different scenarios in terms of the level of growth, employment and retail. Each of these result in different spatial expressions and impacts on the future growth of the County Borough. Each option was considered to be deliverable.

Option 1: Regeneration (continuation of the Unitary Development Plan Strategy)

- population decline from the 2006 figure

- no new housing allocations (urban containment) and a house build rate of 117 per annum
- continuation of the existing employment allocations and strategy
- the main towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery would be the focus of shopping, commercial, cultural, social and leisure activity
- the main expansion of services in Ebbw Vale

4.9 The first option maintains the current strategy contained in the Blaenau Gwent Adopted Unitary Development Plan. This was a regeneration strategy that attempted to retain a substantial valley community in Blaenau Gwent to support an adequate range of community services and facilities.

Level of Growth

4.10 The level of growth contained in the UDP was for 117 houses per annum. If this figure were to be used in a dwelling led projection it would result in the continued loss of population from 69,300 in 2006 to a level of 68,000 in 2021. This is due to different assumptions about household size than was previously used. As there is already a sufficient supply of committed housing sites to meet this requirement there would be no need to release any more housing sites. The strategy would, as a result, be an urban containment strategy as there would be no need to expand the urban boundary. However, there would be very little opportunity to deliver affordable housing, play space or other community facilities as most of the sites gained planning permission before a policy framework to address the need for affordable housing and general planning obligations were put in place.

Employment

4.11 The employment strategy was based on achieving a thriving economy through regeneration. It was seen as essential that Blaenau Gwent benefited from the attraction of inward investment projects within the region, and it was seen as essential that a continuous supply of serviced industrial land and buildings was made available to accommodate future inward investment projects. It was also recognised that there was a need to support and develop indigenous businesses. The strategy results in the identification of 180 ha of employment land across the County Borough, mostly for B1, B2 and B8. The economic climate has changed markedly since this time and there is now much less opportunity for large inward investment projects. There is also a greater need to diversify the economy, particularly in the service sector. Through this strategy, only 11 ha were identified strictly for business use (B1).

Town Centres

4.12 The Strategy in the UDP was to create a framework of towns and local centres to protect and enhance the retail centres and to safeguard employment and the interests of less mobile shoppers. A continuing widening of the range of activities other than shop and services was encouraged to strengthen the attraction and use of town centres. Five town centres were identified at Abertillery, Blaina, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. Local Centres were not identified.

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

- stems out-migration leading to an increase in population to 71,000

- a house build rate of 200 per annum
- emphasis of growth and regeneration in the Heads of Valleys and a regeneration focus in the south of the County Borough
- a new hierarchy of towns with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre, with Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery becoming district shopping centres. Blaina would become a local shopping centre.
- specific roles would be provided for town centres, which are currently in decline, in an attempt to encourage their growth.
- new employment opportunities to broaden offer

4.13 This option is based around attempting to address the issues identified at the earlier workshop and is informed by National Guidance, particularly the Wales Spatial Plan and the Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy.

Level of Growth

4.14 In accordance with the Wales Spatial Plan aspirations of retaining and attracting residents to the area, the intention is to increase the population from 69,300 in 2006 to 71,000 by 2021. This will result in the need to provide 3,000 new houses over the Plan period. As there is already a significant supply of committed housing sites this will result in the need to identify sites for a further 800 houses in the area. From an assessment of Candidate Sites it is clear that most of the sites are in the Heads of the Valleys area. This would accord with market demand which tends to focus on the three towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr at each of the Heads of the Valleys. As a result of the release of sites for 800 more houses there should be a good opportunity to deliver more affordable houses.

Employment

4.15 The main aim is to diversify the economy and develop manufacturing. This will be achieved through building on the diversification of the local economy by promoting and supporting new areas of opportunity, and developing the strengths of Blaenau Gwent's manufacturing industry. This is to be achieved through the rationalisation of existing sites and the identification of more business sites at mixed-use quality sites nearer the main towns but with a concentration on Ebbw Vale. Other sectors into which diversification will take place will be Tourism, Leisure and Social Care.

Town Centres

4.16 This option identifies a retail hierarchy with Ebbw Vale as a sub-regional centre (main hub) and Abertillery, Brynmawr and Tredegar as district centres (district hubs). Ebbw Vale will be the main retail centre as well as the focus for the main services for the Borough, such as the Hospital, Learning Campus, Theatre and main Civic Centre. Abertillery, Brynmawr and Tredegar will be district centres (district hubs) providing for the retail needs of their districts. They will also look to new roles based around tourism and leisure and the provision of local services.

Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

- stems out-migration and stabilises population at 2006 levels.
- the house build rate would be 157 per annum.

- the emphasis is to spread growth according to the share of population which means it would be allocated in the Ebbw Fach Valley
- equalise employment through de-allocating some employment sites in the north and relocating them County Borough wide, close to towns
- no retail hierarchy but the number of town centres in the County Borough would be reduced from five to four (Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar) by excluding Blaina.
- new complementary roles for the town centres.

4.17 This strategy attempts to address the issues identified and is based on ideology set out in the regional guidance document Turning Heads.

Level of Growth

4.18 This option contains a more moderate level of growth and attempts to spread the growth more evenly across the County Borough. This option stabilises the population level at 69,300. This results in the need for 2,355 houses to be provided over the Plan period. This would require the identification of sites for 200 more houses than already have planning permission. These 200 houses would be identified in the Ebbw Fach Valley. As a result, the opportunities for securing affordable homes will be minimal.

Employment

4.19 This option recognises that the need for large manufacturing sites is no longer at the level that it was in the UDP and proposes the de-allocation of land identified for manufacturing in the north and seeks to re-place it with sites closer to the main towns of Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.

Town Centres

4.20 This option proposes that the towns of Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar will be the main retail centres and service centres for the County Borough. They will develop complementary roles around Tourism and Leisure.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

4.21 At the second set of workshops held in autumn 2007 on the Vision and Options, attendees were provided with the opportunity to discuss the three Strategy Options. In all three workshops were held, one for Members, and two for various stakeholders (See Draft Reports of Consultation March 2008).

4.22 In all, 8 groups had the opportunity to influence the choice of Preferred Strategy. Participants were asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options and also provided with the opportunity to identify a fourth option.

4.23 The advantages and disadvantages of the three Strategy Options are identified in Appendix 1 and more information is provided on the development and choice of Preferred Strategy in the Preferred Option Report (March 2008).

- 4.24 It was clear following the workshops that option 2 was the preferred option. However, the development industry considered the step change from 100 to 200 houses per annum was too ambitious. At the same time others considered that the option was not being ambitious enough and that it failed to meet the figure set by the Housing Market Assessment. It was therefore agreed to respond to these issues. The housing requirement figure was changed from 200 per annum to a range of 150 to 250, to be back loaded, that is 150 for the period 2006-2011, 200 for the period 2011-2016 and 250 for the period 2016-2021. A further change was made to the option in response to attendees who considered that the option 3 approach to having complementary roles for the town centres was more favourable. These changes were incorporated into option 2.
- 4.25 The LDP Forum and Steering Group supported option 2. However, the Steering Group made a further change to the Town Centres by including Blaina as a district/local shopping centre. In order to respond to the current economic climate flexibility has been built in to the housing and employment land requirements by the introduction of a range of between 2,250 – 3000 houses and between 50-80 Ha of employment land.

SA ASSESSMENT OF THE THREE OPTIONS AND DRAFT PREFERRED STRATEGY

- 4.26 It is important that the Preferred Strategy is sustainable in terms of achieving economic, environmental and social objectives. To enable this to happen, each of the three options has been scored as to whether it would have a positive or negative impact in achieving each of the sustainability objectives. In summary it was noted that option 2 was the most sustainable option.
- 4.27 A more detailed analysis of how the options, objectives and strategic policies related to each of the sustainability objectives is detailed in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISAR).

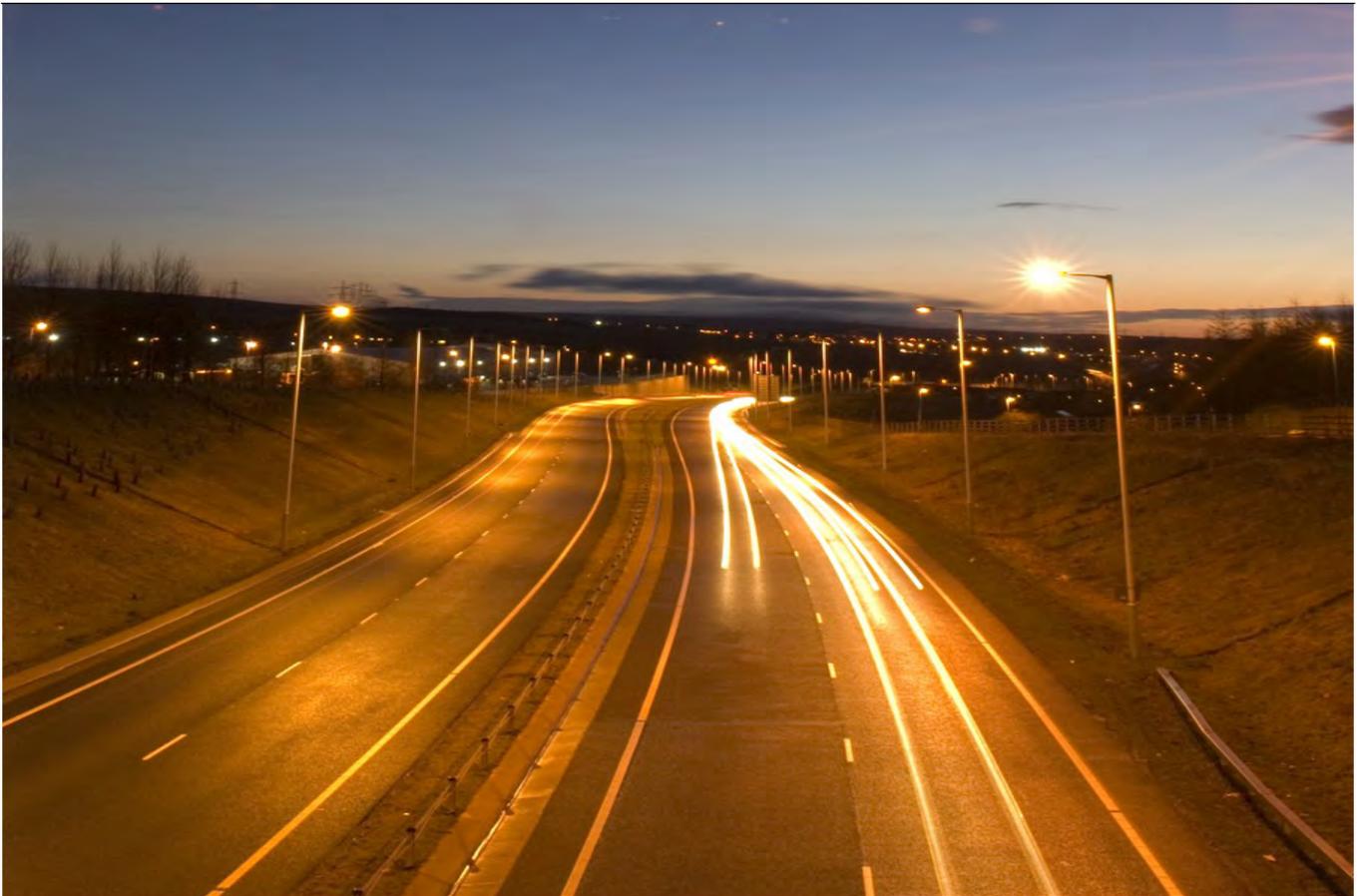
Question 3

Do you broadly agree with the choice of the Preferred Strategy (option 2)?

Is the level of population growth identified in paragraph 4.25 appropriate? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new figure.

Is the proposed approach to employment the right one? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new approach.

Is the proposed approach to the Town Centres the right one? If not identify which of the other options approach is preferred or identify a new approach.



5.0 THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.0 THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.1 A Vision of what the County Borough will look like in 2021 has been created in order to have a clear view of what kind of place Blaenau Gwent should become.

Through collaborative working, by 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities, where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life and residents will live in safe, healthy and thriving communities, with access to a range of good quality affordable homes and thriving town centres. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected and enhanced to create a place where people want to live, work and visit.

- 5.2 To achieve this vision a series of objectives have been identified for the Local Development Plan and will form the basis of future policy development. These objectives are based on delivering the preferred option identified by an assessment of: the evidence base (chapter 2); policy background (chapter 3); and the findings of the workshops and consultation on the Issues Paper (chapter 4). They are not listed in any order of priority.

- 1 Develop Ebbw Vale as the main service and retail hub for the County Borough.
- 2 Create a network of vibrant district/local centres (secondary hubs), well linked to the main hub of Ebbw Vale, that provide a range of local services and facilities for their local communities.
- 3 Support and deliver the regeneration of the former Ebbw Vale Steelworks ensuring that the benefits are spread across the borough.
- 4 Increase economic activity through facilitating diversification of the economic base and support for the manufacturing sector by encouraging specialisation.
- 5 Provide a range of employment sites and premises to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes in manufacturing, the technological and service sectors.
- 6 Stem out-migration and attract people to the area to create a more balanced population.
- 7 Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet local housing needs and attract people to the area.
- 8 Improve accessibility to services through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, particularly, public transport, walking and cycling.
- 9 Improve education levels and skills through supporting infrastructure development of the Learning Campus, new schools and integrated education services, including life-long learning.

- 10 Create an accessible network of green open spaces and high quality leisure infrastructure to promote participation in sport and active recreation to improve health and well-being.
- 11 Capitalise on the unique landscape and natural heritage, foster sustainable tourism and promote community pride.
- 12 Protect, enhance and manage the diversity of the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent through the identification of ecological corridors
- 13 Raise the standard of design to improve the quality of the physical and natural environment; and protect and enhance Blaenau Gwent's historic and cultural environment.
- 14 To minimise further climate change contributions and mitigate its predicted effects on the County Borough.

Question 4

Do you agree with the long-term vision? If not please identify changes required.

Question 5

Do you agree that the objectives for the LDP set out in Chapter 5 will deliver the vision in a sustainable manner?



6.0 THE PREFERRED STRATEGY OPTION AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS

6.0 THE PREFERRED STRATEGY OPTION

- 6.1 This section provides further details on the Preferred Strategy Option. It sets out summary points under key headings, identified through the development of the issues and strategy options. Strategic Policies are incorporated at the end of each subject area.

OPTION 2: GROWTH AND REGENERATION

LOCATION OF GROWTH

- Emphasis of growth and regeneration in the Heads of Valleys and a regeneration focus in the south of the Borough; and
 - Ebbw Vale will be the focus for most of the growth.
- 6.2 This strategy focuses on the opportunities presented in the Heads of the Valleys area in terms of building on the brownfield land, particularly at the former Steelworks site, and the opportunities that the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys Road and the new rail link present. This strategy accords with market forces and opportunities presented through the Candidate Site process. The Wales Spatial Plan identifies Ebbw Vale as a key settlement that has a critical role to play in the success of the city region. Ebbw Vale is to function as a service and employment hub for smaller settlements. It will provide the central framework around which high capacity sustainable transport links will be developed.
- 6.3 The South of the area will be the focus for regeneration with opportunities for further housing renewal areas and the regeneration of the town centre of Abertillery. All regeneration activities will need to meet the sustainability requirements set out below.
- 6.4 The development and use of land throughout the County Borough will be determined by the need to ensure that all communities will have good access to Ebbw Vale. This will be achieved by ensuring that there is a network of hubs which have good public transport links with Ebbw Vale.

Heads of the Valleys Area – Growth and Regeneration

SP1 The Heads of the Valleys area will be the focus for the County Borough's spatial development. Ebbw Vale will accommodate the majority of new homes, jobs and services and will be promoted as the main hub for Blaenau Gwent. Tredegar, Brynmawr and Blaina will be the focus for new development serving the growing needs of their respective communities. New development will be located within these centres or in locations highly accessible to them.
(Objectives 1 & 2)

South of the Borough – Regeneration

SP2 The South of the Borough will see a focus on regeneration with appropriate forms of growth to serve local needs. Abertillery will be the focus of new development serving the needs of its respective communities.
(Objective 2)

Creating a network of sustainable linked communities to spread regeneration benefits

SP3 The development and use of land throughout the County Borough will be determined by the need to ensure that all communities will have good access to Ebbw Vale. This will be achieved by creating a network of hubs which have safe, frequent and reliable public transport links with Ebbw Vale.

(Objective 3)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Making efficient use of land;
- Minimising the need to travel, whilst increasing opportunities to walk, cycle or use public transport;
- Ensuring accessibility to jobs, shops, services by all sections of the community;
- Minimising impact on the environment e.g through energy efficiency, waste reduction, reduced water use, renewable energy production, energy efficient construction materials;
- Providing healthy, safe and attractive environments for the local community;
- Protecting and enhancing the quality of life and the natural and built environment; and
- Mitigating against climate change.

6.5 The underlying principle in national policy is to deliver sustainable development. Attractive, responsive and adaptable environments in which to live work and play, are essential to creating sustainable communities.

Sustainable Development

SP4 All new development should:

- Make efficient use of land;
- Offer sustainable transport choices that reduce the need to travel by car;
- Deliver development of an appropriate type, form, scale, mix and density in relation to its location;
- Reduce the use of natural resources through energy efficiency, waste reduction, reduced water use, renewable energy production and the use of sustainable products and resources in construction;
- Protect and enhance the quality of the natural and built environment; and
- Reduce its impact on and adapt to the effects of climate change.

(Objective 3)

RETAILING AND TOWN CENTRES

- a new hierarchy of towns with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre (sub-regional hub), with Tredegar, Brynmawr, Abertillery and Blaina becoming district/local shopping centres (district/local hubs);
- within these town centres there will be a focus on regeneration making them more desirable areas to live and visit;
- the hubs will also provide the opportunity for creating a network of linked communities to enable all communities to benefit from the regeneration opportunities in Ebbw Vale; and
- specific complementary roles would be identified for the district town centres based around Leisure, Tourism and Culture, building on the area's natural and historical assets.

- 6.6 The LDP will define a retail hierarchy and role and function for each town centre:-
- Ebbw Vale** (sub-regional hub)
Sub-Regional Shopping Centre (expansion of retail provision)
Main centre for service provision
 - Abertillery** (district/local hub)
District/local Shopping Centre (consolidate retail offer)
Explore opportunities around culture, leisure and tourism
Provide local service provision
 - Brynmaur** (district/local hub)
District/local Shopping Centre (consolidate and address link between the new retail provision and the town centre)
Explore tourism offer through capitalising on its location as a gateway to the Brecon Beacons and World Heritage Site
Provide local service provision
 - Tredeggar** (district/local hub)
District/local Shopping Centre (consolidate retail offer)
Explore tourism through planned investment in Bedwellty Park and exploitation of local heritage
Provide local service provision
 - Blaina** (district/local hub)
District/local Shopping Centre (consolidate retail offer)
Build on local heritage
- 6.7 With the exception of Blaina there are action plans in place which identify regeneration schemes for each of the town centres.
- 6.8 Connections between the district hubs and the sub-regional hub of Ebbw Vale should be a priority in order that everyone can access the regeneration benefits that will be delivered in Ebbw Vale.

Retail Hierarchy

SP5 Major retail, administrative and cultural developments will take place in the principal retail centre of Ebbw Vale. The District/Local centres of Tredeggar, Brynmaur, Blaina and Abertillery will be protected and enhanced to improve vitality and viability and ensure they meet the needs of their districts. They will also develop new complementary roles based around historical, recreational and tourism potential. Local shopping centres will be protected and enhanced to provide facilities for local communities.

(Objectives 1 & 2)

EMPLOYMENT

- new employment opportunities to help diversify the economy and develop manufacturing through specialisation;
- rationalisation of previous allocations and identification of new mixed-use sites close to town centres;
- create a successful tourism and leisure sector based around the natural and historical assets of the County Borough, the Valleys Regional Park concept and the gateway role Blaenau Gwent can play in terms of access to nearby regional attractions;

- develop health and social care opportunities through and around the development of the Local General Hospital;
- promote learning and modern skills; and
- secure local employment in the growing construction sector.

- 6.9 The Preferred Strategy is to create employment opportunities that will help diversify the economy and develop manufacturing through specialisation. This will result in the identification of 50-80 ha of land for employment purposes with a greater emphasis on mixed-use sites close to town centres. Sites will be identified in the Deposit Plan following completion of the Candidate Site Assessment process.
- 6.10 The creation of a successful tourism and leisure sector based around; the natural and historical assets of the County Borough, the Heads of the Valleys Regional Park concept; and nearby attractions such as the World Heritage Site in Blaenavon and the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains will play a contribution to the aim of diversifying the economy. The natural assets the valleys offer provides opportunities for mountain biking and this could be explored in particular on the eastern valley slopes in Ebbw Vale and around Abertillery. The historical legacy provides opportunities to build tourism opportunities around heritage trails, such as the chartists in Blaina /Nantyglo and Aneurin Bevan in Tredegar. The renovation of Bedwellty House and Park provides an opportunity for Tredegar to attract visitors and for the town to benefit by catering for the needs of the visitors. The location of Brynmawr, at a gateway to both the Brecon Beacons National Park and Blaenavon World Heritage Site provides an opportunity to service visitors either through providing a stop over facility (directing and informing travellers), or by encouraging people to stay in Brynmawr.
- 6.11 In developing tourism it will be important to ensure that it is sustainable, that is, it must make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment and conservation.
- 6.12 The proposed 107-bed Local General Hospital at the former Corus site will provide opportunities for expansion in the growing social care sector.
- 6.13 The creation of a learning campus at the Corus site bringing together Coleg Gwent and all sixth forms across the County Borough in a state of the art learning facility provides the opportunity to improve educational attainment and vocational skills at every level from basic skills right up to higher education. The new learning campus will also offer opportunities for employment diversification in this sector.
- 6.14 Planning Obligations or a Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to secure local employment in the growing construction sector.

Employment and Diversification of the Economy

SP6 The employment and economic development needs of Blaenau Gwent will be met by the identification of 50-80 ha of land for employment and business purposes during the plan period. The employment roles of major industrial areas will be identified to assist in the diversification of employment and support the specialisation of manufacturing. Mixed-use sites will be identified close to town centres to enhance town centre based employment in the service sector.
(Objectives 4 & 5)

Development of the Tourism and Leisure sectors

SP7 Foster sustainable tourism and leisure sectors which re-engage local communities with the natural and historic environment and boost the local economy.
(Objective 11)

HOUSING

- new housing will be provided at a level which will stem out-migration and attract people to the area; leading to an increase in population from 69,300 in 2006 to 71,000 in 2021;
- a house build rate of 100-250 per annum (back-loaded);
- the LDP will provide sites for 800 new homes;
- at least 600 homes will be affordable;
- achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard will transform large areas of housing in Blaenau Gwent; and
- the identification of a further Renewal Area will help regenerate a further settlement in the south of the County Borough

6.15 The aim of the Strategy is to stem out-migration and attract people to the area. This accords with the Wales Spatial Plan aims for the area and will ensure that the area is not left with a high-dependency population. The aim is to increase the level of population from 69,300 to 71,000 by 2021. To achieve this will require the building of 3,000 new homes in the plan period (See Population Background Paper for further information). In identifying these sites there will be a preference for the use of brownfield land within existing settlements recognising the role that such sites can play in regenerating communities.

6.16 The 3,000 total figure will be made up from:

- 1,450 dwellings on sites permitted or under construction;
- 800 dwellings through new site allocations; and
- 750 on small sites (under 10)

These houses will be delivered in the following housing market areas:

Area	Share of total 3,000	New allocations
Tredegar Area	800	200
Ebbw Vale Area	1,500	350
Ebbw Fach Upper (Brynmaur, Nantyglo and Blaina)	400	150

Ebbw Fach Lower (Abertillery)	300	100
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- 6.17 A large number of housing sites have been identified through the Candidate Site process but none of these are strategic sites which merit identification in the Preferred Strategy. A register of Candidate Sites is available to view at the Council website and from all libraries. New housing sites will be identified through assessment against the Candidate Site Methodology set out in Chapter 8.

Affordable Housing

- 6.18 Since 2004 house prices have risen dramatically and have created affordability issues in Blaenau Gwent. The Local Housing Market Assessment (2006) indicates that there is a need for 254 houses per annum of which 34% need to be affordable (87). Whilst the aim of the Plan is to raise the housing completion figure to 250 by the end of the Plan period it is not considered feasible to raise the figure from an average of 103 to 250 in the early years of the Plan. In light of the number of committed sites that do not have requirements for the provision of affordable housing, neither is it considered feasible to expect the planning system to deliver all of the required affordable housing units. An estimate of the number of affordable houses likely to be developed in the Plan period is between 600 and 800 which is 27% of the number of houses expected to be delivered. This will be achieved through a 25% requirement on all sites of over 10 units and through the delivery of a small number of 100% affordable sites, where appropriate.
- 6.19 The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy-Traveller Study identifies the need for a further 6 pitches. This can be accommodated at the existing Gypsy Travellers site at Cwmcrachen.
- 6.20 Improvements to the Council house stock to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard will result in the investment of over £100 million pounds over the next 5 years and £396 million over a thirty-year period. This will regenerate large areas of housing as social rented properties account for 26% (21% from Council 5% from Social Landlords) of all houses in Blaenau Gwent.

Housing Provision

SP8 Provision will be made for the development of between 2,250 and 3,000 dwellings during the plan period; broken into the following Housing Market Areas

Sirhowy Valley	800
Ebbw Fawr	1,500
Ebbw Fach Upper	400
Ebbw Fach Lower	300

Housing sites will include a mix of dwelling types and sizes and tenure to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent's current and future population.

The Delivery of the houses will be back loaded recognising the step change required to reach the higher figures.

2006-2011	500 -750
2011-2016	750 -1,000
2016-2021	1,000 -1,250

(Objectives 6 & 7)

Affordable Housing

SP9 On Sites of 10 or more dwellings at least 25% of the total number of dwellings should be affordable.

(Objective 7)

Gypsy Accommodation

SP10 6 pitches for unmet gypsy and traveller housing will be provided between 2006-2021 at Cwmcraehen.

(Objective 7)

TRANSPORT

- To improve access to services and facilities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; and
- To reduce the need to travel through locating new development in accessible locations

6.21 To ensure that everyone in Blaenau Gwent can benefit from the services and opportunities that will be provided at the former Steelworks site it is vital that each of the district hubs has good accessibility to the main hub of Ebbw Vale.

6.22 The LDP will define the strategic and core road hierarchy in Blaenau Gwent.

Transport Infrastructure Improvements

SP11 The Council will safeguard land for the following improvements to transport infrastructure:

- phase 2 of the rail link from Parkway to Ebbw Vale Town (including land for a new station);
- extension to the Parkway Park and Ride facility;
- extension of rail link to Abertillery;
- a network of walking and cycling routes;
- dualling of the Heads of the Valleys Road (A465);
- peripheral distributor road (PDR) through the former Steelworks site;
- online improvements between the PDR and the A465;
- online improvements to the A4048 south of Tredegar;
- online improvements to the A4046 south of Cwm through to Aberbeeg; and
- online improvements to the A467 south of Abertillery.

(Objective 8)

Transport Requirements for new Development

SP12 Development proposals will be assessed in relation to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Promotion of public transport, walking and cycling;
- Protection of the safety of the highway network;
- Accessibility to all users;
- Pedestrian safety; and
- Car parking standards set out in the Council's Car Parking Strategy.

(Objective 8)

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Education and Skills

- The need to improve education and skills

6.23 Improvement of education attainment and skills is a key objective for the Council and one that will be addressed mainly by the Children and Young People's Plan. The strategy can play a part in ensuring that land is identified for new infrastructure, such as new schools, the Learning Campus and the relocation of the training centre.

Leisure & Recreation

- To improve health and well-being by promoting leisure and recreational facilities; and
- The creation of a green infrastructure network to ensure that all settlements have access to green open space

6.24 A sufficient supply of suitable leisure and recreational facilities can play an important part in securing the health and well-being of Blaenau Gwent's population. As health and well-being is a serious issue in Blaenau Gwent it is important that the Plan ensures that sufficient space is available. An assessment of formal leisure facilities and the various typologies of open space is being undertaken. Following this an appropriate standard will be set and policies put in place to ensure that any deficiencies are overcome. Similarly policies will be put in place to ensure that deficiencies in access to green open space will be addressed.

Health

- Improve the health and well-being of residents

6.25 In addition to the provision of the 107-bed Hospital there are plans to deliver Primary Care Resource Centres in Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Tredegar and Abertillery in the Plan period.

6.26 Supplementary Planning Guidance will be produced to set out how new development will assist funding new facilities and associated requirements. This may either be through traditional Section 106 agreements or through a Community Infrastructure Levy.

Leisure & Recreation

SP 13 Sites will be safeguarded for a new leisure centre at Ebbw Vale, and to ensure that identified shortfalls in open space provision are met.

(Objective 10)

Health and Education

SP14 To improve health provision and skills, sites will be safeguarded for a new hospital, Primary Care Resource Centres, the Learning Campus, relocation of the training centre and new schools.

(Objective 9)

Planning Obligations

SP15 The Council will negotiate planning obligations where appropriate to secure improvements in infrastructure, facilities and services appropriate to the scale, type and location of the proposed development. These obligations may include the provision or improvement of the following:

- Affordable Housing;
- Traffic, Transport and Highway Initiatives particularly the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure;
- Education Facilities;
- Community Development and Recreational Facilities;
- Public Open Space;
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Skills and Labour Market;
- Community Safety; and
- Public Art.

(Objectives 9,10 & 12)

BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- To protect and enhance the local landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity;
- To protect ecological corridors;
- Protect and enhance the built heritage; and
- Maximise the natural environment for health and well-being.

6.27 The natural environment of Blaenau Gwent has seen considerable changes over the past 30 years. As the pressures put upon it by heavy industry have subsided, the visual and wildlife qualities that are unique to the area have significantly increased. The Strategy aims to protect and enhance the local landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity of the County Borough. This will be achieved through the identification, protection and enhancement of international, national and local sites. Where possible the LDP will look to identify, protect and link ecological corridors to enable wildlife to cope with climate change.

- 6.28 The built heritage provides an important cultural and historical identity for Blaenau Gwent that if protected and enhanced could provide tourism opportunities. The LDP will ensure that sites are preserved and enhanced and that a framework is put in place to promote tourism opportunities.
- 6.29 The mountains and valley sides provide opportunities for leisure and tourism activities and the quieter leisure activities such as walking that benefits health and well-being. Whilst most areas are suitable for walking other leisure and tourism activities will need to be located and managed more carefully.

Environmental Protection

- SP16** The County Borough's distinctive character, natural environment and designated landscape will be protected, preserved and enhanced. Of particular importance are:
- Those attributes and features which make a significant contribution to the character, quality and amenity of the landscape;
 - Ecology, wildlife, habitats and the linkages between them;
 - Geological and heritage interests; and
 - The quality of natural resources, including water, air and soil.
- (Objectives 12 and 13)

Built Environment

- SP17** The distinctive built environment of the County Borough will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals should:
- Respect local character and distinctiveness of the area; and
 - Enhance sites protected for their historic or archaeological value.
- (Objective 13)

Minerals

- 6.30 Mineral Planning Policy Wales advises local authorities to include policies for the maintenance of landbanks for non-energy minerals which are currently in demand. Landbanks are determined using the average production figures over the previous 3 years and dividing the reserves by the annual average production.
- 6.31 The LDP will address the requirements of the emerging Regional Technical Statement (nearing adoption) by ensuring that a landbank for aggregates is maintained. It will also seek to identify potential resource areas for sand and gravel, limestone and high quality hard rock. Coal resources will also be safeguarded where availability or reserves can be demonstrated. As most new development will be within the existing urban areas the strategy is not affected by the need to protect coal resources.

Minerals

SP18 The Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of minerals by:

- Safeguarding known reserves of coal, sand and gravel, limestone and high quality hard rock taking into account relevant environmental, planning and transportation considerations; and
- Maintaining a 10-year land-bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national guidance.

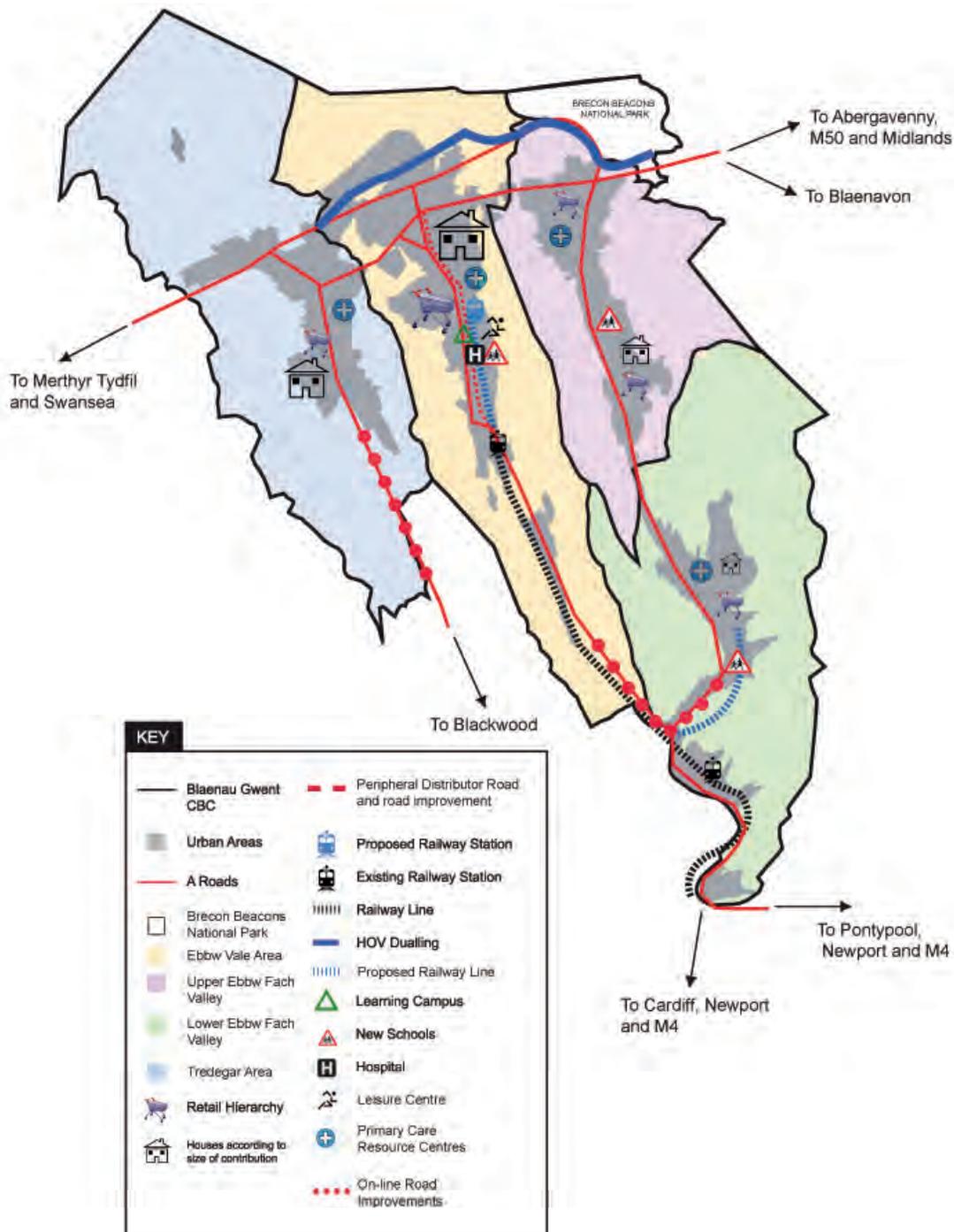
WASTE MANAGEMENT

6.32 The Regional Waste Plan includes a requirement for Local Development Plans to contribute towards reducing the region's waste arising through the identification of appropriate locations for waste management facilities. The Plan suggests that a series of options will be appropriate depending which option the Council agrees to pursue. As the Council have yet to pursue a particular option the development plan will identify 1.4 to 4 hectares of land for waste.

Waste

SP19 The Council will implement a sustainable, integrated approach to waste management which minimises the production of waste and its impact on the environment, and maximises the use of unavoidable waste as a resource. To assist this aim 1.4 to 4ha of allocated and protected B2 industrial sites and existing waste management sites will be identified for strategic waste management facilities through the use of regional search criteria.

Figure 3: Key Diagram



Question 6

Do you broadly agree with the detail of the Preferred Strategy? If not which aspects do you disagree with and what changes would you like to see?

Question 7

Do the Strategic Policies reflect the Preferred Strategy? If not what changes would you like to see?



7.0 MONITORING OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

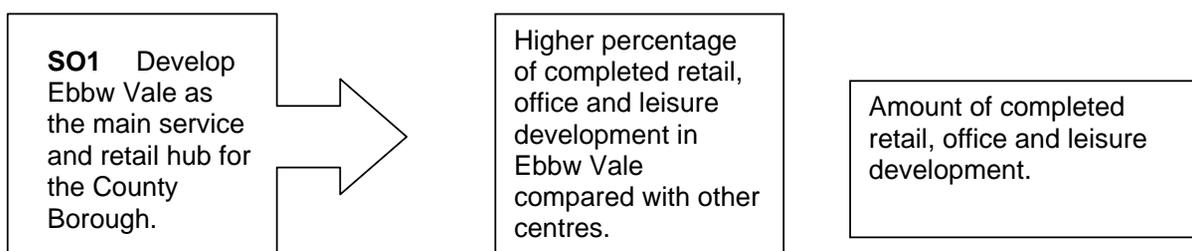
7.0 MONITORING OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) every year, providing an assessment of the effectiveness of the Local Development Plan. The AMR also identifies actions that need to be taken to rectify any issues raised through the monitoring process. This could include actions needed, either by the Local Authority or its partners, to improve delivery. Alternatively, it might identify a need for a partial or full review of the Plan.
- 7.2 The targets and indicators set out below will form the basis of assessing the effectiveness of the Strategic Objectives.

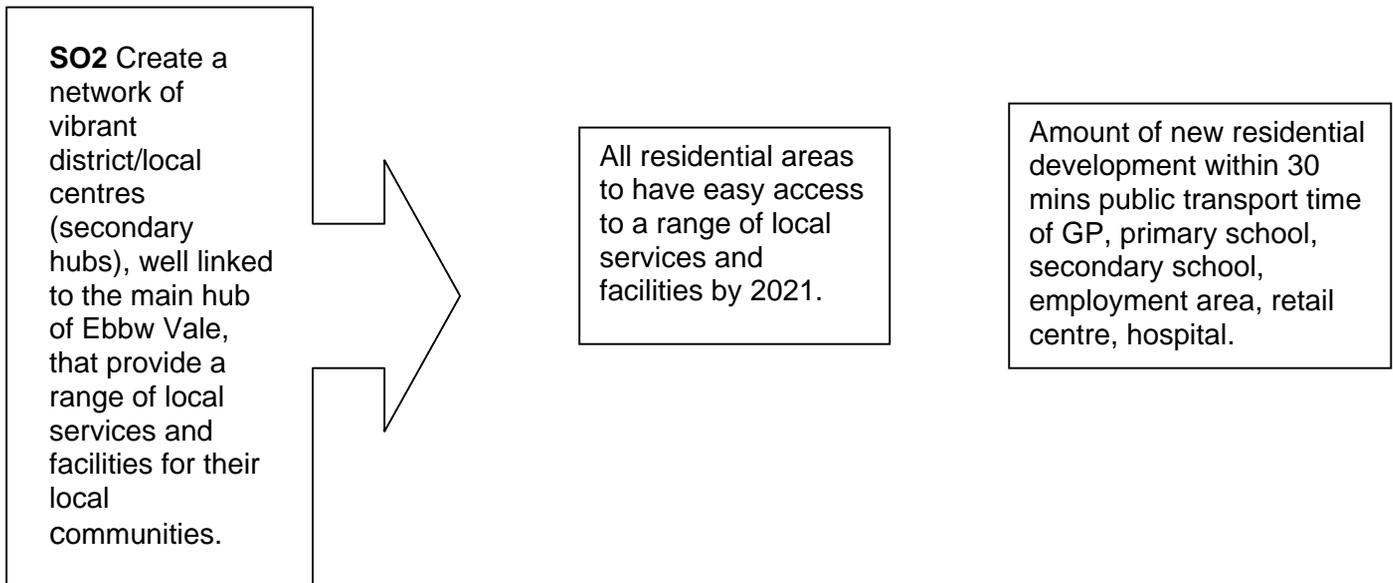
Strategic Objective



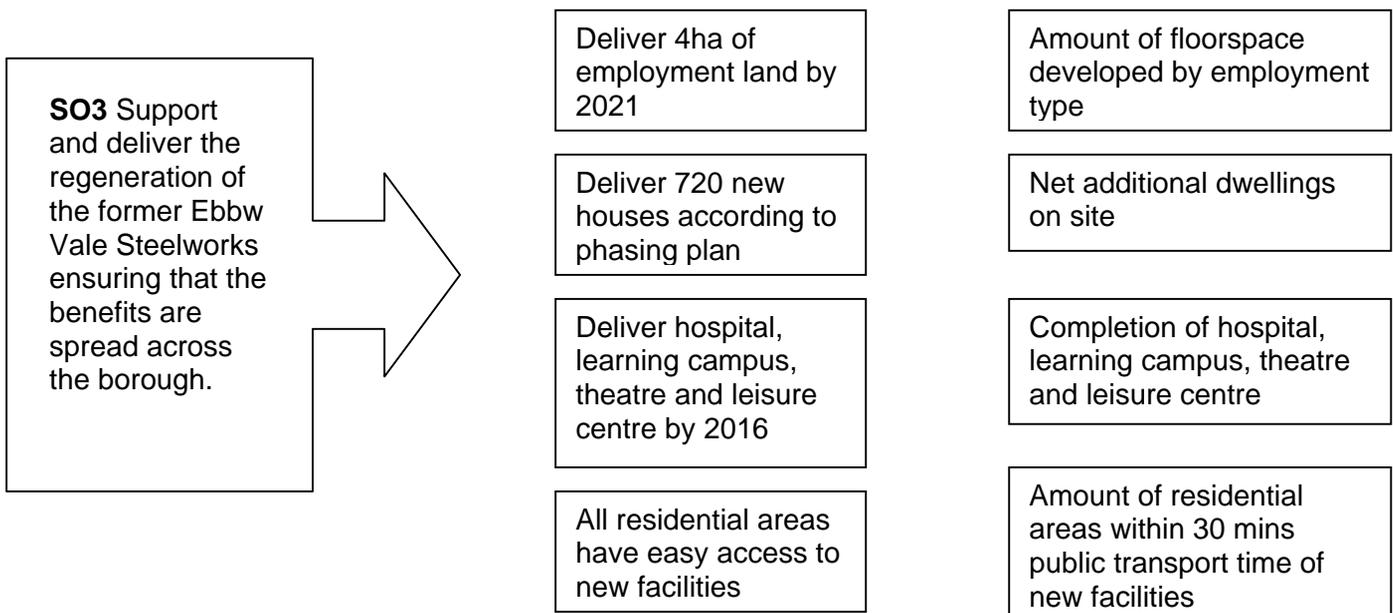
SO1 Delivering a hierarchy of sustainable linked communities



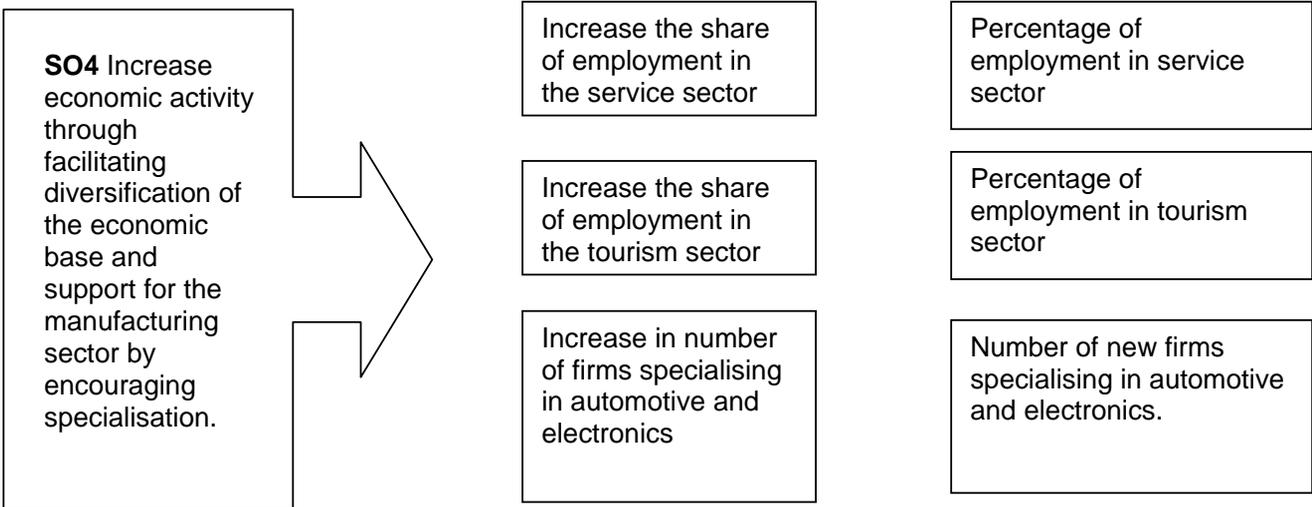
SO2 Create a network of vibrant district /local centres



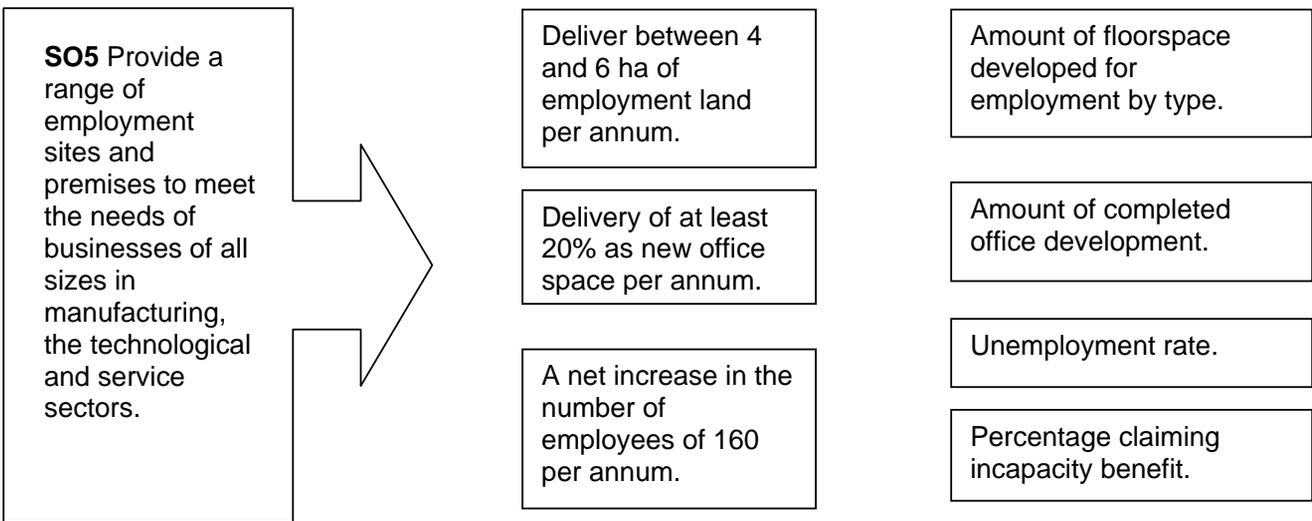
SO3 Spread the benefits of regeneration



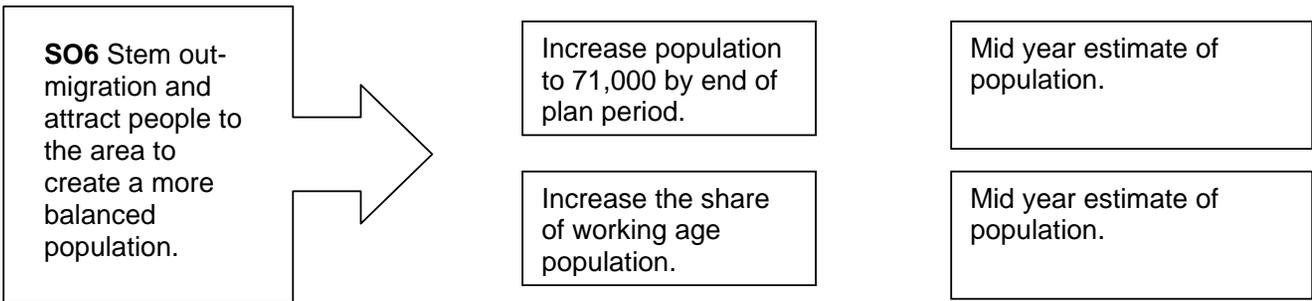
SO4 Diversify the economy



SO5 Provide employment sites

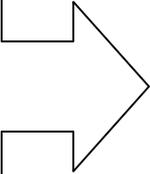


SO6 Increase population to create a more balanced population



SO7 Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes

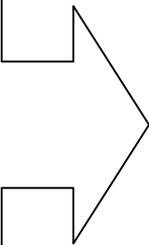
SO7 Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet local housing needs and attract people to the area.



Delivery of between 2,250 and 3,000 houses by 2021.	Net additional dwellings.
25% of new dwellings on qualifying sites to be affordable.	Affordable housing completions.
80% of new dwellings to be provided on previously developed land.	% of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.
At least 10 extra care beds to be provided per annum.	Number of extra care beds provided.
Provide 6 gypsy and traveller places.	No. of gypsy and traveller places provided.

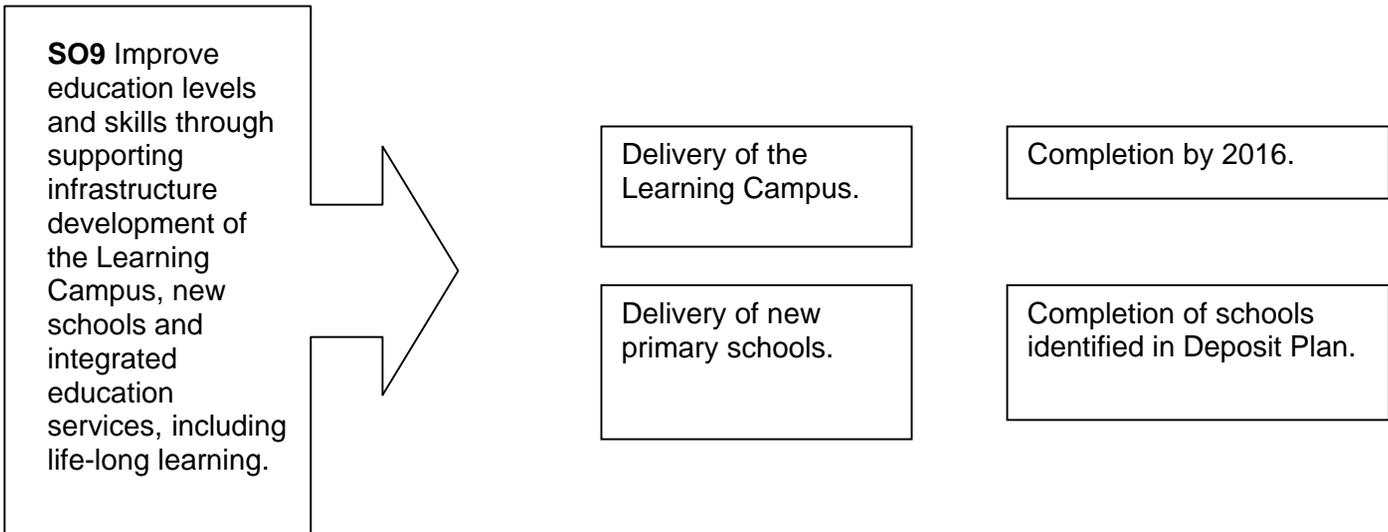
SO8 Improve accessibility

SO8 Improve accessibility to services through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, particularly, public transport, walking and cycling.

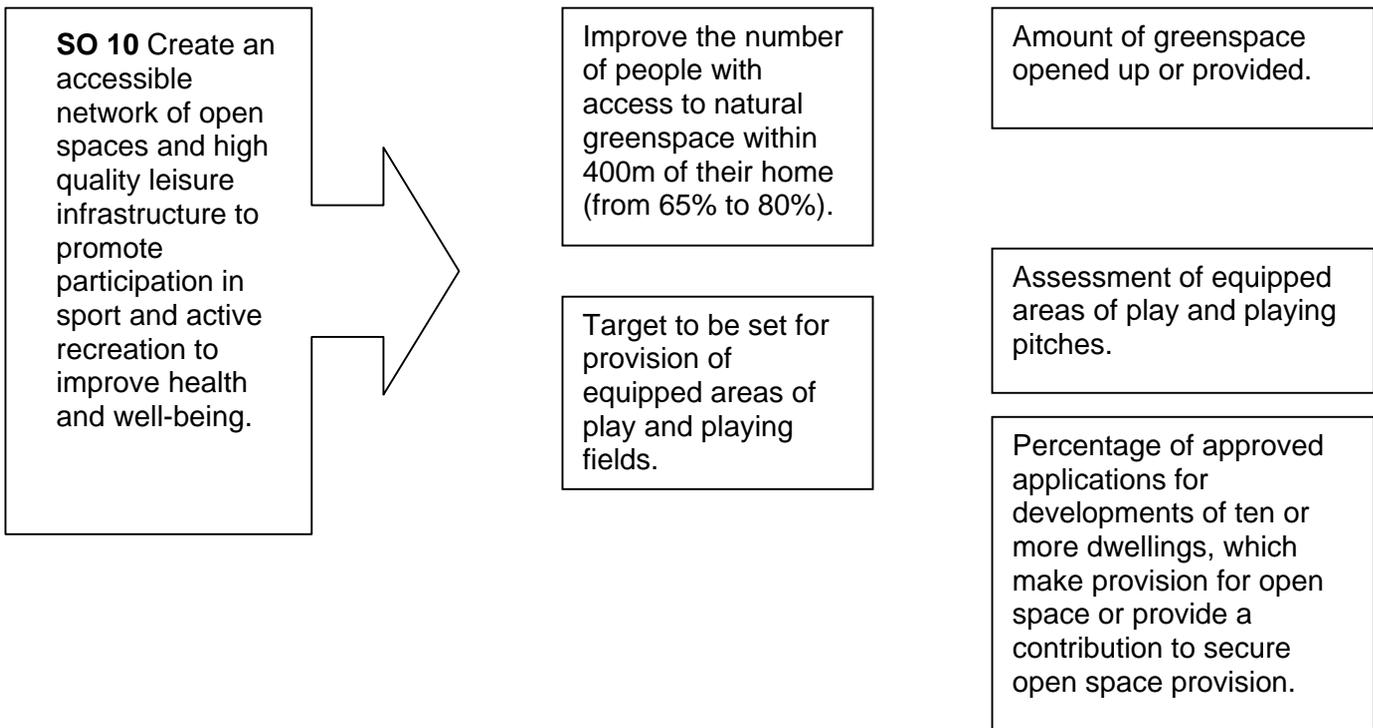


Increase public transport usage.	No. of bus journeys.
Increase the no. of households that are within 30 min travel time by public transport to the new hospital and learning campus.	Amount of new residential development within 30 mins travel time by public transport to the new hospital and learning campus.
Delivery of: A465 dualling (2012); Rail link to Ebbw Vale and new station (2012); Extension to Parkway Park and Ride facility; Peripheral Distributor Road through Corus site (2021); On line improvement between PDR and A465.	Completion of projects to set timescales.

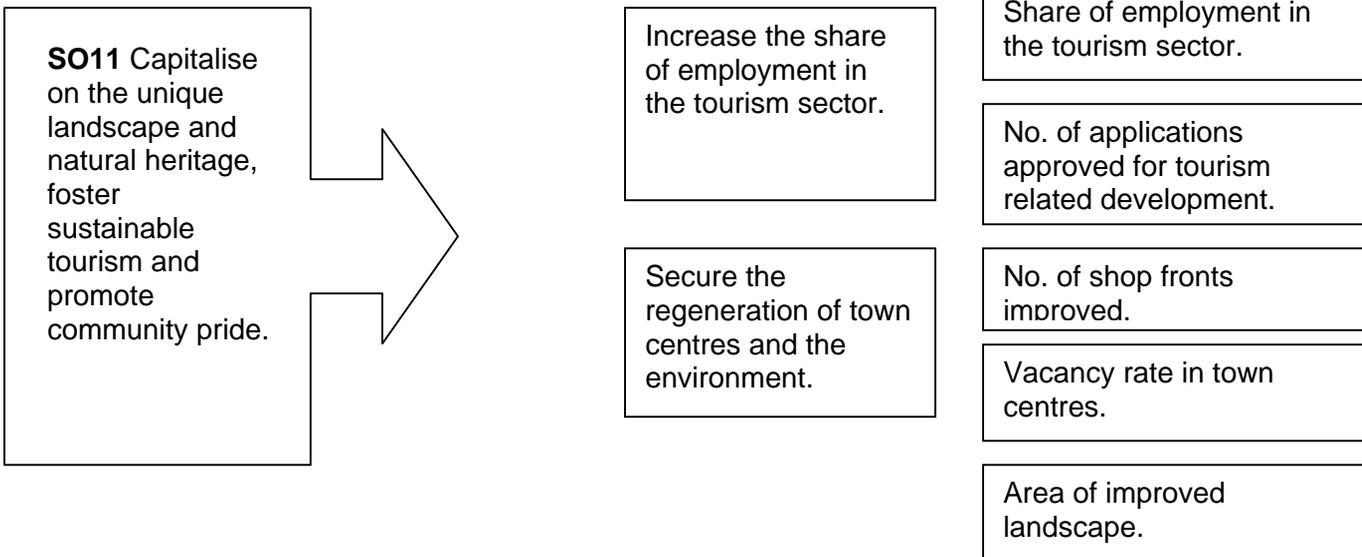
SO9 Improve education levels and skills



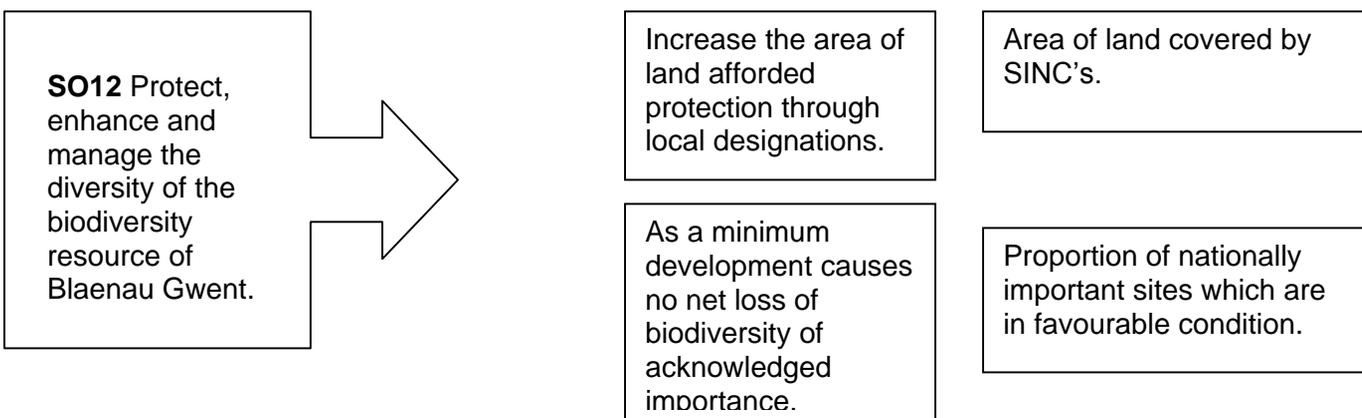
SO10 Create an accessible network of open spaces



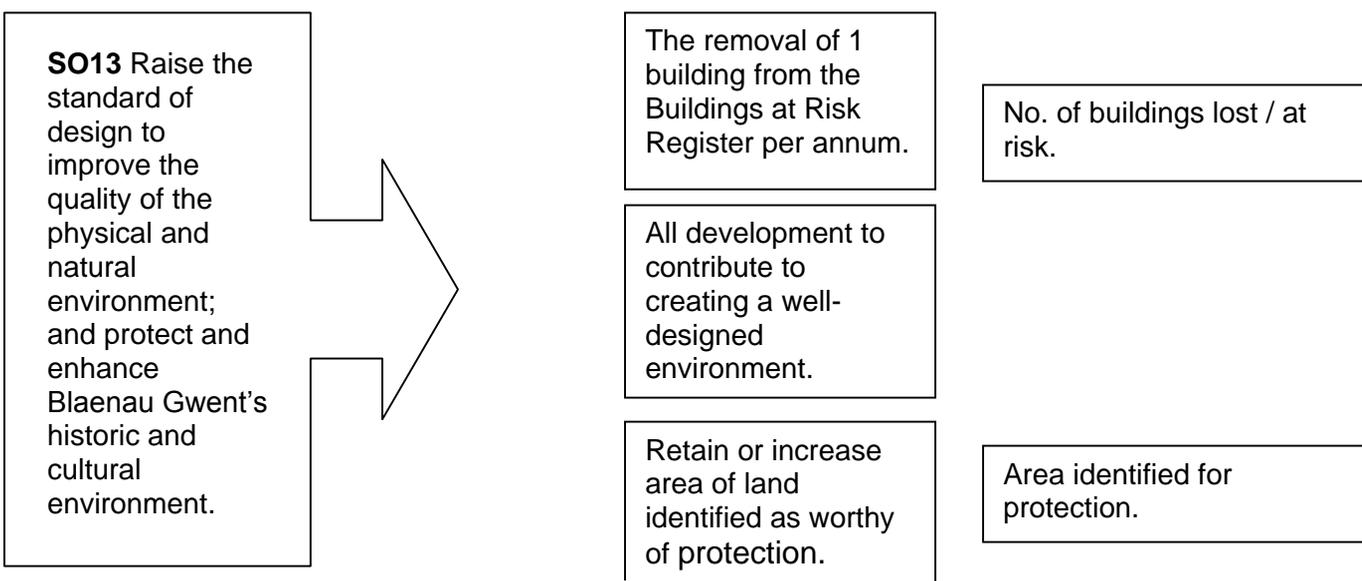
SO11 Foster sustainable tourism and build community pride



SO 12 Improve the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent.

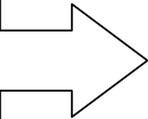


SO13 Delivering a quality environment.



SO14 Climate Change

SO14 To mitigate against and adapt to climate change



Ensure that no highly vulnerable development is built within C1 or C2 areas identified by TAN 15

Ensure that all major developments comply with national requirements on renewable energy production and carbon reduction targets

Ensure that ecological corridors are created and protected

No. of applications permitted in TAN 15 C1 & C2 areas

Renewable energy capacity installed by type

Area identified as ecological corridor

Question 8
Do you agree with the Monitoring Framework suggested? If not please state changes required.



8.0 NEXT STEPS

8.0 NEXT STEPS

CANDIDATE SITE METHODOLOGY

- 8.1 A key element in the development of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan is the identification of suitable sites that will deliver the strategy and strategic policies set out in this Draft Preferred Strategy. To assist in this process, the Council between April and June 2007 invited interested parties to submit sites for consideration for a range of uses such as employment, residential, retailing, transport, recreation, waste management, minerals and community facilities. From this process, the Council has received 159 submissions.
- 8.2 The next step in the LDP will be for the Council to determine the relative suitability of individual sites for future development, which will form the basis of site specific policies in the deposit draft Local Development Plan.
- 8.3 The assessment of sites will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's candidate site methodology, which consists of a 6-stage process.
- 8.4 Sites submitted to the Council for consideration that are smaller than 0.3 hectares, referred to as 'small sites', will be considered at a later stage of the plan preparation process. These will be considered in 2 ways:

- **Small sites outside the existing settlement boundaries**

These sites include land on the edge of the existing settlement boundaries and sites clearly outside these boundaries. As an integral part of plan preparation the Council will review all settlement boundaries within the County Borough to determine if they are appropriate in light of the Preferred Strategy of the Plan. Sites on the edge of existing settlement boundaries will be assessed as an integral part of this review process.

- **Small sites within existing settlements**

The development of small sites within existing settlements will be determined through the Development Control process. The development plan will provide criteria based policies for determining planning applications on small sites.

Stage 1: Initial Planning Assessment

- 8.5 The first stage of the assessment process will focus on assessing the developability of all sites greater than or equal to 0.3 hectares, to identify both the potential for and constraints to development. Initial site visits will be undertaken to ascertain the following factors, and a site proforma will be completed for each submitted site. The site proforma will contain the following information:
- Confirm the location of the site and the reference details
 - Provide a general overview of the site in terms of the current use and physical attributes
 - Identify the means of access to the site
 - Identify local services and facilities
 - Comment on the site's relationship to existing settlement
 - Note the proximity to sites of national importance for biodiversity
 - Comment on compatibility with neighbouring uses
 - Identify flood risk designation

- Note relevant planning history

8.6 The initial planning assessment determines whether a site is considered suitable in planning terms for the proposed use identified by the landowner, or whether an alternative use would be more appropriate. Candidate sites that have been granted planning permission will not be considered further as part of this process.

Stage 2: Expert Assessments

8.7 All sites that satisfy the initial planning assessment in stage 1 undergo detailed expert assessments in stage 2, undertaken by a wide range of experts including ecologists, arboricultural and woodlands officer, landscape architects, engineers, environmental health officers and heritage officers. These assessments are based on the preferred land use identified as a result of the initial planning assessment in stage 1.

8.8 Detailed assessment proformas have been prepared in respect of the following issues: Countryside and Landscape; Environmental Health; and Highways and Engineers which consider the site in terms of a wide range of criteria.

8.9 A planning assessment team comprising of Planning Policy officers, Planning Control, Countryside and Landscape, Highways and Engineers, Heritage Officer, Environmental Health, Estates, Housing and Economic Development consider the results of the expert assessments. For each site a site appraisal framework is completed which acts as a summary sheet for the expert assessments.

8.10 On the basis of the expert assessments, the team will determine whether a site is suitable for development in full or in part, and will determine whether or not the site should be given further consideration for inclusion within the LDP. It is important to note that at this stage these decisions are considered in principle only. A significant amount of survey works is usually required in order to finally determine the suitability or otherwise, of a site for development and thus for its inclusion in the LDP.

Stage 3: Consultation with appropriate bodies

8.11 At this stage the Council will seek the views of and consult with the appropriate specific consultation bodies in respect of those sites identified as suitable for future development in stage 2. The specific consultation bodies to be consulted will be:

- Countryside Council for Wales
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Environment Agency Wales
- Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water
- Glamorgan – Gwent Archaeological Trust
- CADW
- The Coal Authority
- Gwent Police
- South Wales Fire Service
- Health & Safety Executive
- Transco

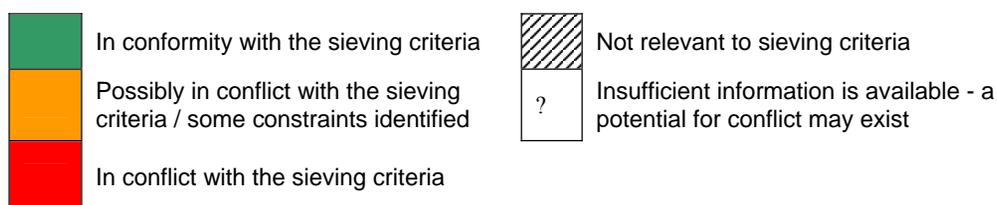
- Western Power Distribution

Stage 4 - Assessment against the LDP Preferred Strategy

- 8.12 All sites that satisfy the initial 3 stage assessment will then be subject to see if they are compatible with the LDP Preferred Strategy. The assessment will focus on whether the site has the potential to contribute to the strategic direction of the LDP including the level and distribution of growth set out in the Preferred Strategy. Sites that score positively in this assessment will be assessed against the LDP sustainability objectives.

Stage 5: Assessment of the site against LDP Sustainability Objectives

- 8.13 It is important to analyse each site in sustainability terms and to assess how they perform against each of the Sustainability Objectives as part of the Blaenau Gwent LDP Sustainability Appraisal (inc Strategic Environmental Assessment). The objectives form part of the SA framework which is a set of objectives, indicators and targets which will be used to assess the sustainability implications of the LDP. This was first issued in draft as part of the SA/SEA Scoping Report and following consultation the objectives have been revised and were approved by the Council.
- 8.14 The Council's Preferred Strategy and subsequent LDP will be subject to sustainability assessment and as such it is important that any potential development site is also subject to the same sustainability assessment. The sites will be scored to determine their performance against each of the sustainability objectives.
- 8.15 The impacts of the candidate site and its proposed development are identified by a colour coding system (see below). Where the candidate sites are found to conflict with the screening criteria they should be coded red, where there is potential for conflict the sites should be coded orange and where no conflict with the screening criteria is identified the site should be coded green.



- 8.16 Development needs may be accommodated if there are overall majority frequencies of green impacts. Candidate sites with predominantly orange and red will normally be excluded from further consideration. Mitigation measures should be implemented where possible, even for sites which are assessed as being generally sustainable as some effects might still require mitigation.

Stage 6 – Finalisation of sites for Deposit LDP and submission of supporting information

- 8.17 Sites that score positively in the assessment process will be identified as provisional sites for the deposit Local Development Plan. Any site contained in the list of the provisional sites will be required to supply any further information / survey work requested by the Planning Policy

Team. This will ensure that all sites included in the Deposit LDP will have been subject to a thorough assessment, with all necessary information available to support their inclusion in the Deposit Plan.

DEPOSIT PLAN FORMAT

- 8.18 In accordance with the Council's Delivery Agreement, consultation on the full Deposit Draft Local Development Plan will take place in Autumn 2009. The Deposit Draft Plan will include detailed policies and site allocations to support the implementation of the Preferred Strategy. The Council envisage that the format of the Deposit Draft Plan will be as follows:

Development Plan Process
 Spatial Profile
 Policy Context
 Vision and Objectives
 The Strategy including Key Diagram
 Strategic Policies
 Borough Wide Policies
 Area Specific Policies
 Implementation and Monitoring

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 8.19 The Supplementary Planning Guidance programme is detailed below. The programme continues to be developed and it may therefore be extended or revised at the Deposit Stage.

Specific Topic	Status
Shopfronts	Approved but will be revisited
Security Fixtures for shopfronts	Approved but will be replaced by revised Shopfronts SPG
Residential Extensions	Approved but will soon be replaced by Householder Guidance (Early 2009)
Advertisements	Approved but will be replaced by revised Shopfronts SPG
Telecommunications	Approved but will be revisited
Affordable Housing	Approved but will be revisited
Residential Development – A model design guide for Wales	Approved
Planning Obligations	Draft for consultation
Renewable Energy	In preparation
Hot food Takeaway and Public Houses	Adopted
Biodiversity and geodiversity	In preparation
Development Briefs and Masterplans	
The Works Masterplan	Approved
Northern Ebbw Vale Masterplan	In preparation
Development Briefs will be prepared for Local Development Plan sites	By end of 2011



9.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

9.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Blaenau Gwent Delivery Agreement
Issues Paper (July 2007)
Report of Consultation on the Issues Paper
Blaenau Gwent Draft SA/SEA Scoping Report
Report of Consultation on the Issues and Vision Workshop
Report of Consultation on Vision and Strategy Options (19th Oct 2007)
Report of Consultation on Vision and Strategy Options (22nd Nov 2007)
Report of Consultation on Vision and Strategy Options (30th Nov 2007)
Report on the development of the Vision
Report on the development of the Options
Candidate Site Register
Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report
Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

APPENDIX 1

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPTIONS IDENTIFIED IN VISION AND STRATEGY OPTIONS WORKSHOPS

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPTIONS IDENTIFIED IN VISION AND STRATEGY OPTIONS WORKSHOPS

OPTION 1: REGENERATION (CONTINUATION OF THE UDP STRATEGY) All Groups Combined (no. of votes received)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustain existing communities as all town centres are served (4) ▪ Less pressure on services as population loss (3) ▪ Encourage development of previously developed land (3) ▪ Less urban sprawl (1) ▪ More places to play (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further decline of town centres (7) ▪ Further decline of communities (1) ▪ Lack of job opportunities (1) ▪ Less affordable housing (1) ▪ Ageing housing stock so unable to attract people to area (3) ▪ Population loss and less money from WAG (6) ▪ Not market-led as funding split between 5 town centres (2) ▪ Ageing population/ population imbalance so more pressure on services (4) ▪ Lack of inward investment (4) ▪ Lack of flexibility in employment/no diversification of economy (2)

OPTION 2: GROWTH AND REGENERATION All Groups Combined (no. of votes received)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable transport (2) ▪ More planning gain including affordable housing (5) ▪ Decline in town centres halted (6) ▪ Worked with the market (5) ▪ Increased income from population increase (5) ▪ Improve economic base (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pressure on Greenfield sites (4) ▪ South could become alienated (4) ▪ Loss of status/decline for Blaina town centre (2) ▪ It will be a big challenge for town centres to adapt to a new role (3) ▪ Growth too inspirational (1) ▪ Growth not ambitious enough (1)

OPTION 3: GROWTH AND REGENERATION All Groups Combined (no. of votes received)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equal spread of growth (3) ▪ Less divisive (1) ▪ House build rates more realistic than Option 2 (2) ▪ Stop decline in town centres (2) ▪ Better use of employment land (2) ▪ Sustainable as employment close to town centres (3) ▪ Beneficial for town centres (1) ▪ Complementary roles of areas (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase pressure on infrastructure (3) ▪ Less sustainable in terms of transport (1) ▪ Limited growth (3) ▪ Impact on environment (3) ▪ Less opportunity for planning gain (2) ▪ Not in line with market forces (6) ▪ Loss of businesses (3)

APPENDIX 2

STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY

STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY

Procedural		
P1	<p>It has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme</p>	<p>The Delivery Agreement sets out the process for the production of the LDP and the preparation of the SA/SEA. This test will be judged by a check against the main procedures outlined in the DA:</p> <p>LDP</p> <p>Candidate Sites</p> <p>Invitation for Expressions of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25th April to 29th June 2007 <p>Register of candidate sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Published on Council website November 2008 <p>Pre-Deposit Participation</p> <p>Issues Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation in July /August 2007 ▪ Report of Consultation on Issues Paper to Steering Group and LDP Forum (October 2007) <p>Workshops</p> <p>Issues and Vision Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 27th July 2007 ▪ Vision and Strategy Option Workshops ▪ Members 19th October 2007 ▪ Stakeholders 22nd November 2007 ▪ Stakeholders 30th November 2007 <p>Report to LDP Steering Group (Executive) and LDP forum (Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Partnership Board) on draft Vision, Options and 'Preferred Option'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 2008 <p>Pre-deposit consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unable to complete as Local Forum was disbanded and not replaced. <p>Consultation on Preferred Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ November 2008 <p>SA/SEA</p> <p>Consultation on draft Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for 5 weeks from 9th November to 14th December 2007</p>

P2	The Plan and its policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment	An Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report will be prepared and published for consultation as part of the Council's pre-deposit proposals. The Report will contain an appraisal of the LDP strategic options, objectives and core strategic policies.
Consistency Tests		
C1	It is a land use plan which has regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or adjoining areas	<p>The Draft Preferred Strategy has been prepared within the context of all relevant national, regional and local policy guidance (section 3 of the Preferred Strategy refers). It also has regard to the cross boundary issues emanating from the emerging LDP strategies of adjoining Local Authorities and has taken into account regional work for example, on waste, minerals and housing.</p> <p>The LDP SA Draft Scoping Report also contains a review of plans, policies and programmes, which have been considered in the preparation of the LDP.</p>
C2	It has regard to national policy	Section 3 of the Draft Preferred Strategy has regard to national planning guidance. Similarly, the LDP SA Draft Scoping Report also contains a review of plans, policies and programmes, which have been considered in the preparation of the LDP.
C3	It has regard to the Wales Spatial Plan	Section 3 of the Draft Preferred Strategy Report directly refers to the Wales Spatial Plan and the Preferred Strategy reflects the Spatial Plan's vision, strategy, propositions and actions for Blaenau Gwent as part of the South East Wales area (the capital Network).
C4	It has regard to the Community Strategy	The Draft Preferred Strategy Report has been prepared in the context of Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009 (section 3 refers) and Vision and Objectives (Section 5) builds upon it.
Coherence and Efficiency Tests		
CE1	The plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations flow and, where cross boundary issues are relevant, it is compatible with the development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities	<p>The Council considers its Preferred Strategy to be coherent and to flow from the identified national, regional and local policy framework including the Wales Spatial Plan and the Community Strategy.</p> <p>It also takes into account work undertaken at the regional level, with neighbouring local authorities on apportioning projected household growth in South East Wales, the recommendations of the Regional Waste Plan, the emerging Regional Transport Plan and other regional working.</p>

		At this stage, the Preferred Strategy Report only identifies proposed strategic policies and broad locations for development. Detailed policies and allocations will be included in the full deposit plan.
CE2	The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust and credible evidence base	<p>The Draft Preferred Strategy is realistic and appropriate as it follows from a robust evidence base and consultation process.</p> <p>The following studies have been completed:</p> <p>Joint Housing Land Availability - (2007) Retail – HOV work Jan 2008 / annual survey (August 2008) Housing Market Assessment (January 2007) Gypsy Traveller (June 2007) Population Projection (July 2007) Employment Land and Premises (July 2007) Heads of the Valleys Greenspace Provision (September 2007)</p>
CE3	There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring	The Draft Preferred Strategy recognises the importance of monitoring and section 8 contains a monitoring framework which will provide the basis for the Annual Monitoring Report.
CE4	It is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances	The Preferred Strategy is considered sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances.

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms	
Adoption	Final stage of LDP preparation where the LDP becomes the statutory Development Plan for the purposes of the Act.
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	This will assess the extent to which policies in the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan are being implemented and the effectiveness of the LDP.
Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (UDP)	Adopted 6 th July 2006. The UDP is the current Statutory Development Plan for Blaenau Gwent.
Candidate Sites	The identification of land suitable for development by developers, land owners or the community.
Community Strategy	Local Authorities in association with partners are required to prepare these with the aim of improving the social, environmental and economic well being of their areas
Consensus Building	A process of dialogue with targeted interested groups to understand relevant viewpoints and to seek agreement where possible.
Consultation	A formal process in which comments are invited on a particular topic or set of topics, or a draft document.
Delivery Agreement	A document comprising Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's (as Local Planning Authority) timetable for the preparation of the LDP together with its Community Involvement Scheme.
Deposit	A formal six week stage in which individuals and organisations can make representations on the LDP Deposit Plan. Representations that relate to whether the plan is 'Sound' can then be examined by an Inspector.
Deposit LDP	The version of the LDP which is submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government for public examination.
Evidence Base	Interpretation of baseline or other information / data to provide the basis for plan policy.
Habitat Regulation Assessment	This is the assessment of the potential effects of a Development Plan on one or more European sites and comprising Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), candidate SACs and Special Protection Areas. The assessment should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in a Development Plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in question.
Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report	A term used to refer to the Sustainability Appraisal Report, produced at the Preferred Strategy stage. This assesses the LDP options against the Sustainability Appraisal framework. The report is then expanded at the Deposit LDP stage and finalised alongside the Adoption Statement.
Local Character	Design, building methods, materials and landscape which together are unique to the area.
Local Development Plan (LDP)	The required statutory plan for each Local Planning Authority area in Wales under Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

	A land use plan that is subject to independent examination, which will form the statutory development plan for a Local Authority area. It should include a vision, strategy, area wide policies for development types, land allocations, and where necessary policies and proposals for key areas of change and protection. Policies and allocations must be shown geographically on the Proposals map forming part of the plan.
Local Development Plan Wales (LDPW)	Planning policy guidance document from the Assembly Government on the preparation of the Local Development Plans.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	A Planning Authority responsible for the preparation of the LDP.
Objective	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends.
Mitigation	Measures to avoid, reduce or offset significant adverse effects.
Pre deposit proposals documents	These include the vision, strategic options, preferred strategy, key policies, and the Sustainability Appraisal report.
Pre deposit stage	The Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy stage of the LDP preparation.
Scoping SA	The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of a Sustainability Appraisal, including sustainability effects and options which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the SA Report.
Stakeholders	Interests directly affected by the LDP (and /or SEA) – involvement generally through representative bodies.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans, programmes. The SEA Regulations require a formal “environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.”
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Provides supplementary information in respect of the policies of the LDP. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination but must be consistent with it and national planning policy.
Wales Spatial Plan (WSP)	A plan prepared and approved by the national Assembly for Wales under S60 of the 2004 Act, which sets out a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions, whether or not these relate to formal land use planning control. Under S62(5) (b) of the Act a local planning authority must have regard to the WSP in preparing an LDP.

For further information please contact :

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