

Blaenau Gwent County Borough  
Council

Local Development Plan  
Deposit Plan and Focussed Changes  
Sustainability Appraisal Report  
**Main Report**

January 2012

# Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Deposit Plan and Focussed Changes

## Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

### Sustainability Appraisal Report

## Main Report

**January 2012**

#### Notice

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#### Document History

JOB NUMBER: 5053880			DOCUMENT REF: BG_SAR_Main report_Jan2012_Final.docx			
5	SAR including Focussed Changes	SM	CW	CW	CW	31.01.12
4	Final Updated SAR	SM	CW	CW	CW	27.04.11
3	Final SAR	SM	AG	CW	CW	22.10.10
2	Draft SAR for client review	SM/LP	AG	CW	CW	18.12.09
1	ISAR for client comments	SM	MH	CW	CW	25.08.09
Rev	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date

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# Abbreviations/Glossary

Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
AA	Appropriate Assessment
Adoption	The final confirmation of the LDP
Affordable Housing	Housing provided to those whose needs are not met by the open market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households, including availability at low enough cost for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and include provision for the home to remain affordable for future eligible households, or if a home ceases to be affordable or stair casing to full ownership takes place, any subsidy should generally be recycled to provide replacement affordable housing. <i>Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2 – Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)</i>
Allocation	Land which will be proposed for development, which will be identified on a Proposals Map in the deposit and the adopted version of the LDP
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report This will assess the extent to which policies in the LDP are being successfully implemented
Anaerobic Digestion	Anaerobic digestion (AD) is a treatment that composts biodegradable waste in the absence of oxygen, producing a biogas that can be used to generate electricity and heat.
ASTSWF	Areas Susceptible to Surface Water Management
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
Baseline Data	Baseline data is basic information gathered before a programme begins. It is used later to provide a comparison for assessing programme impact.
BGCBC	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
BPEO	Best Practicable Environmental Option Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) assessment is a method for identifying the option that provides the “most environmental benefit” or “least environmental damage”. It assesses the “performance” of different options in a range of criteria such as environmental impact, safety risk, technical feasibility and cost. It uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessments of the performance in each criterion, and a weighting of the relative influence or importance of the criteria, to derive an overall score or ranking of the options. <a href="http://www.iema.net/event-reports?aid=18710">http://www.iema.net/event-reports?aid=18710</a>
Brownfield Site/Land	Previously developed (or brownfield) land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage of the development is included, as are defence buildings, and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures. <i>Planning Policy Wales (Edition 3, July 2010)</i>
Cadw	Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
CIS	Community Involvement Scheme

Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
	Sets out the project plan and policies of the Local Planning Authority for involving local communities, including businesses, in the preparation of LDPs. The CIS is submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government for agreement as part of the Delivery Agreement.
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 the Local Planning Authority's timetable for the preparation of the LDP together with its CIS, submitted to the Assembly Government for agreement Deposit Plan A formal stage during which organisations and individuals can make representations on the detailed policies and proposals.
EfW	Energy from Waste
Employment Land/Site	Land that typically forms part of an industrial estate or business park, which is occupied by one or more of the following: offices, manufacturing, research and development, storage and distribution.
Environmental Consultation Bodies	An authority, which has environmental responsibilities and is concerned by the effects of implementing plans and programmes and, must be consulted at specified stages of the SEA. The Consultation Bodies designated in the SEA Regulations in Wales are Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments), Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales.
FCA	Flood Consequences Assessment <i>Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)</i>
Greenfield Sites	These are sites which have never been previously developed or used for an urban use, or are on land that has been brought into active or beneficial use for agriculture or forestry i.e. fully restored derelict land
Green Infrastructure	<i>A network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities.</i> CLG, PPS12, 2008
Housing Need	Assessed by examining the suitability of present housing and the ability of households to afford market priced housing
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
Implementation	Implementation is the carrying out, execution, or practice of a plan, a method, or any design for doing something. As such, implementation is the action that must follow any preliminary thinking in order for something to actually happen.
Indicator	An indicator is something that helps you understand where you are, which way you are going and how far you are from where you want to be. A good indicator alerts you to a problem before it gets too bad and helps you recognise what needs to be done to fix the problem
Infrastructure	Water supply and sewerage facilities, roads and transportation, local community, shopping and other facilities required as framework for development
LDP	Local Development Plan The required statutory development plan for each local planning authority area in Wales under Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have to set out their objectives in relation to development and use of land in their area and set out the general policies for the implementation of those objectives within their LDPs. As well as having regard to national planning policy, the LPA have to take into account of regional planning policy and the authority's community strategy and the social, economic and environmental factors relating to the local area and global environment, by undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the LDP.
LNR	Local Nature Reserve Declared by local authorities to protect sites of local importance for nature conservation, education and amenity. The local authority must either own or have a legal interest in the land before a LNR can be declared. Although LNRs have no direct



Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
	statutory protection, management rules or bye-laws can be used to control damaging activities.
LSOA	Lower-Layer Super Output Area Lower layer Super Output Areas are geographical units used for the purposes of statistical analysis. For the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008, the LSOAs contain a minimum population of 1,000 and a mean population of 1,500. These typically contain between 4 and 6 Census Output Areas, and are constrained by the boundaries of the Standard Table (ST) wards used for the 2001 Census. In Wales there are 1,896 LSOAs.
Mitigation	Measures that avoid, reduce, remediate or compensate for the negative impacts of a strategic action
Monitoring	Monitoring means gathering evidence to show what progress has been made towards strategic priorities and targets and the implementation of policies.
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
NNR	National Nature Reserve
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Objectives	Objectives state what is to be achieved and cover the range of desired outcomes to achieve a goal.
Objective 1 Funding	A regional policy of the European Union (EU) that aims to improve the economic well being of regions in the EU. The Structural Funds assign regional aid according to three objectives. Objective 1 Funding helps regions whose development is lagging behind, where the Gross Domestic Product per head is less than 75% of the EU average. Attention is focused on providing basic infrastructures, developing human resources, investing in research and innovation, and promoting the information society.
PPP	Plans, Programmes and Policies
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological Site
PROWs	Public Rights of Way
SA	Sustainability Appraisal A form of assessment used in the UK, particularly for regional and local planning, since the 1990s. It considers social and economic effects as well as environmental ones, and appraises them in relation to the aims of sustainable development. Sustainability Appraisal, which fully incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive, is required for Local Development Documents/ Regional Spatial Strategies in England and Local Development Plans in Wales under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is a systematic and iterative process undertaken during the preparation (and review) of a plan which identifies and reports on the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the environmental, social and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined and identifies opportunities for improving plan performance in relation to these.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SA Report	Sustainability Appraisal Report A document required to be produced as part of the sustainability appraisal process to describe and appraise the likely significant effects on sustainability of implementing the LDP, which also meets the requirements for the Environmental Report under the SEA Regulations. S62 (6) of the 2004 Act requires each local planning authority to prepare a report of the findings of the sustainability appraisal of the LDP.
Scoping	The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of an SEA, including the environmental effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report under



Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
	the SEA Directive.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment Generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The SEA Regulations require a formal “environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use”.
Secured by Design	Secured by Design is a police initiative to encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of developments to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating a safer and more secure environment. <a href="http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf">http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf</a>
SFCA	Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment <i>Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)</i>
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive	The SEA directive is officially called the Directive on the Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (and is known as Directive 2001/42/EC). The main objective of the SEA directive is to ‘provide for a high level of environmental protection and to contribute to the integration of environmental protection and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes...’(Article 1 of the SEA Directive)
SINC	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Areas of land and wetland of local importance for the conservation of semi-natural habitats including mosaics of heathland, unimproved grassland, scrubland and plantation and/or habitats which support rare local wildlife species. They are not of sufficient extent or quality to qualify for national recognition as a SSSI.
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance Supplementary information in respect of the policies in an LDP. SPG does not form part of the development plan and is not subject to independent examination but must be consistent with the plan and with national policy.
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest A conservation designation denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom. SSSIs are the basic ‘building block’ of nature conservation designations, including National Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, and Special Areas of Conservation.
Soundness	Concept against which an LDP is examined under section 64(5)(b) of the 2004 Act.
Stakeholders	Interests directly affected by the LDP (and/or SEA) –involvement generally through representative bodies.
Strategy	A strategy is a long term plan or method designed to achieve a particular goal or objective.
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development is defined as “Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” in the Bruntland Report to the World Commission on Environment and Development held in 1987. The UK government has set out four aims for sustainable development in its strategy <i>A Better Quality of Life, a Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK</i> . The four aims, to be achieved simultaneously, are: -social progress which recognizes

Abbreviation/ Term	Definition
	the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
TAN	Technical Advice Note
TPO	Tree Protection Orders
UDP	Unitary Development Plan The required statutory development plan for each local planning authority area in Wales under the Town and County Planning Act 1990
WAG/WG	Welsh Assembly Government (now Welsh Government)

# Non-Technical Summary

## Overview of Process and Purpose of Sustainability Appraisal

The Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted on 6th July 2006. The Council is now preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP), which will replace the UDP upon adoption. The LDP will set out the Council's objectives and priorities for the development and use of land within the County Borough for the period 2006-2021. Atkins was commissioned in April 2007 by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Blaenau Gwent LDP.

The purpose of this SA Report is to outline how the statutory requirements for SA (incorporating SEA) have informed the development of the Blaenau Gwent Deposit LDP. It records all of the SA work undertaken in predicting and evaluating the effects of strategic options and preferred policies, as well as the selection of preferred sites for the delivery of development.

## The Process Followed

Throughout the report, the term SA is used to describe the combined processes of SA/SEA, which involves four main stages. Stages A, B, C and D as described below, have been completed thus far.

### Stage A

- Identifying other plans, programmes and sustainability objectives that inform and influence the development of the LDP;
- Establishing an understanding of the social, environmental and economic conditions of Blaenau Gwent (referred to as 'the baseline');
- Identifying key sustainability issues in the County Borough;
- Outlining SA objectives against which to later evaluate the LDP policies, which will be grouped into components for assessment purposes; and
- Gathering consultation feedback on the proposed breadth of coverage and level of detail for the SA.

### Stage B

- Assessing a series of spatial strategic options;
- Assessing strategic sites for the development of employment, housing, retail, community facilities, minerals and waste;
- Completing an assessment to appraise the strategic policies against the SA objectives;
- Completing an assessment to appraise the development management and allocations and designations policies against the SA objectives;
- Identifying the cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects likely to arise as a result of the implementation of the LDP strategy and policies;
- Identifying appropriate mitigation to avoid predicted negative effects and making recommendations to further enhance predicted beneficial effects, where appropriate; and
- Identifying a suitable monitoring strategy.

### Stage C

- Preparation of Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany the Pre-Deposit LDP for consultation.

### Stage D

- Preparation of Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany Deposit LDP for consultation.
- Preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany the Focussed Changes Report for consultation (following changes made as a result of consultation on the Deposit LDP).

## SA and Consultation

The aim of the consultation on the SA Report is to involve and engage with statutory consultees and other key stakeholders on the results of the appraisal. This is the SA Report to accompany the LDP Deposit Plan.

The period of consultation on the LDP Focussed Changes and Sustainability Appraisal Report is for 6 weeks, from 19 January 2012 to 1 March 2012.

The following reports have been consulted upon as part of this SA process:

- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, November/December 2007;
- Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (to accompany the LDP Pre-Deposit Consultation), November-December 2008; and
- Sustainability Appraisal Report (to accompany the LDP Deposit Consultation), May 2011.

For the consultation on the Pre-Deposit LDP and Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report as well as the Deposit LDP and Sustainability Appraisal Report, the following social, environmental and economic consultees were consulted: Countryside Council for Wales (CCW); Environment Agency (Wales); Cadw (Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government); and other stakeholders with an interest in the development of Blaenau Gwent.

The statutory and non-statutory bodies and organisations that have responded to consultation to date are presented in Appendices A (Scoping Report and Initial SA Report) and L (Deposit SA Report).

### SA Working Group Meetings

In addition to the statutory consultation processes, the iterative process of the assessment of the LDP has also involved two workshops, in April 2008 and May 2010, bringing together the Sustainability Working Group that comprised representatives from across the Council as well as the statutory consultees.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been prepared independently from the SA in support of the LDP. The findings of the HRA were integrated into the LDP Deposit Plan policies, which were assessed in the April 2011 iteration. Therefore it is considered that the findings of the HRA are reflected within this report.

## Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (Deposit Plan April 2011)

The LDP vision is:

*'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.'*

In order to achieve this vision, a series of objectives were identified. These are reproduced below:

### ***"Theme 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities."***

1. *By 2021, Ebbw Vale will be the main service and retail hub for the County Borough supported by a network of vibrant district/local hubs that provide a range of local services and facilities for their local communities. The district hubs will be well linked to the main hub of Ebbw Vale through sustainable modes of transport. (See Strategic Policies 1, 2, 3 & 6)*
2. *By 2021, the population will have increased from 69,300 to 71,100 as a result of natural change and other people being attracted to the area. The overall population structure will be generally in line with that of Wales. (See Strategic Policies 4 & 5)*
3. *By 2021, 3,666 new houses will have been built, approximately 800 of which will be affordable. New housing sites, alongside improvements to existing houses, will have helped create sustainable communities. (See Strategic Policies 4 & 5)*

4. *By 2021, the use of sustainable modes of transport, particularly public transport, walking and cycling, will have increased and the quality and frequency of the public transport system improved. (See Strategic Policy 6)*
5. *All developments have been built in accordance with design guidance, are sustainable, safe by design, and appropriate to their context and have helped improve the quality of the physical and natural environment. (See Strategic Policy 7)*
6. *New development has minimised further climate change contributions and, where appropriate, mitigated or adapted to its predicted effects. This has been achieved by:*
  - *Maximising the use of land;*
  - *Promoting the re-use and restoration of derelict land and buildings;*
  - *By focusing development away from areas vulnerable to flooding;*
  - *By reducing energy consumption through improved design and locating development close to hubs and public transport routes; and*
  - *By increasing the supply of renewable energy. (See Strategic Policy 7)*

***Theme 2: Create Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Promote Learning and Skills***

7. *By 2021, the regeneration plans for 'The Works', Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor and other key regeneration sites have been delivered benefitting the residents of the County Borough through the delivery of jobs, houses and community infrastructure. (See Strategic Policies 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9)*
8. *By 2021, employment and economic activity rates will have increased and unemployment decreased with levels nearer national averages. This has been achieved by diversifying the economic base into construction, business services, health and social care, tourism and leisure and environmental industries, whilst supporting the manufacturing sector. (See Strategic Policy 1 and 8)*
9. *By 2021, between 50 hectares of employment land and a range of premises have been delivered which meet the needs of local businesses and offers employment opportunities for local people. (See Strategic Policy 8)*
10. *By 2021, the delivery of the Learning Zone, new schools and integrated education services, including life-long learning have facilitated improvements and broadened opportunities for education levels and skills. (See Strategic Policy 8)*

***Theme 3: Create Safe, Healthy, and Vibrant Communities and Protect and Enhance the Unique Natural and Built Environment.***

11. *By 2021, an accessible network of green open spaces and high quality leisure infrastructure has helped increase participation in sport and active recreation and, contributes to improvements in health and well-being. (See Strategic Policy 9)*
12. *The unique landscape and natural heritage, has helped foster sustainable tourism and promoted community pride. (See Strategic Policy 10)*
13. *By 2021, the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent has been protected and enhanced and the connectivity of ecological networks has been improved from 2006 levels. (See Strategic Policy 10)*
14. *Blaenau Gwent's historical and cultural environment has been protected and enhanced and has contributed to the regeneration of the area. (See Strategic Policy 11)*

***Theme 4: Create opportunities to secure an Adequate Supply of Minerals and Reduce Waste.***

15. *By 2021, the 3 million tonnes of mineral resources required to be provided in Blaenau Gwent by the Regional Plan has been worked and resources of local, regional and national importance safeguarded. (See Strategic Policy 12)*
16. *A sustainable, integrated approach to waste management has minimised the production of waste and its impact on the environment, and maximised the use of unavoidable waste as a resource. By 2021,*

*national recycling and composting targets outlined in the Draft Wales Waste Strategy: 'Towards Zero Waste' have been met. (See Strategic Policy 13)."*

## Sustainability Baseline and Key Issues/Opportunities

The main sustainability issues identified for Blaenau Gwent, from an assessment of the relevant baseline, are listed below:

- High levels of economic inactivity and high benefit dependence;
- Limited employment opportunities and low household income;
- Potential for the expansion of the tourism industry;
- High Vacancy Rates in Town centres;
- High level of varying housing needs including: poor housing quality and mismatch of housing size/tenure with needs and demand; need for additional gypsy/traveller accommodation; housing affordability problems;
- Low educational attainment;
- Transport access constraints to the area;
- Poor health levels;
- Strong social networks;
- High overall crime rate;
- High car usage and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- Under appreciation and protection of natural resources, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity value;
- Under appreciation and protection of heritage resources;
- Limited supply of developable land;
- Contaminated sites due to industrial legacy; and
- Increasing household waste arisings.

## Sustainability Appraisal Framework

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is a key tool in completing the SA as it allows the assessment of the effects arising from the LDP proposals in key areas to be undertaken in a systematic way. The LDP SA objectives were developed through the Stage A work. These were consulted on through the SA Scoping Report. The final objectives are shown below:

1. To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the economy
2. To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities
3. To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent complementary to the regional offer
4. To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres
5. To meet identified housing need
6. To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock
7. To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing
8. To improve educational attainment and increase skill levels
9. To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community
10. To promote community health, social care and well being
11. To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime
12. To protect and enhance the welsh culture

13. To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport
14. To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent
15. To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings
16. To make the best of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, whether this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity
17. To conserve soil resources and their quality
18. To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide
19. To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling
20. To maintain air quality
21. To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding
22. To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources
23. To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough
24. To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality
25. Protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary

## Compatibility between LDP and SA Objectives

Initial work on the LDP identified a set of objectives to achieve the overall vision for the area. Each of these objectives was evaluated in terms of its compatibility with each of the 25 SA objectives listed above. The SA recommended a number of changes to the LDP objectives, which were considered and, where appropriate, integrated into the final LDP objectives. The generation of the LDP objectives was also informed by workshops held with stakeholders and elected members.

## Strategic Issues and Options

In July 2007 BGCBC consulted on an Issues Paper, as *'the first step in preparing the 'Preferred Strategy' for the Local Development Plan.'* It was intended as *'a discussion document intended to promote debate focused on the issues of strategic significance'.*

The first workshop task involved attendees discussing different topic areas, to agree and then prioritise issues. The 'Vision' workshop involved building consensus on where consultees wanted Blaenau Gwent to be by 2021. These findings were taken into account when BGCBC prepared draft Strategy Options for discussion at workshops in November 2007.

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 and National and Local Policy, a set of three options were identified by the BGCBC Planning Policy Team. These were entitled:

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

The first option maintains the current strategy contained in the Blaenau Gwent Adopted UDP. 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.

### Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

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.



### Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

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

The SA process is designed to identify the most sustainable option overall, explore the relative merits of the three strategy options in terms of promoting the different dimensions of sustainability (social, environment, and economic).

The appraisal of the strategic options found that Option 2 was predicted to be the most sustainable. The option is envisaged to potentially create a diverse economic base, improving employment opportunities as well as delivering access to a range of services and facilities.

In terms of environmental effects, however, the options performed similarly and were predicted to have unsustainable effects. Recommendations were made in the SA to improve the approach taken in Option 2.

As can be seen in the LDP Deposit Plan (April 2011), the strategy clearly demonstrates the integration of the principles recommended by the SA at the Strategic Options stage.

## Development of Strategic Sites

Strategic sites identified in the LDP Deposit Plan have been subject to various levels of assessment, which have been undertaken by the Council, in order to determine their performance across a range of issues, including social, environmental and economic factors. The methodology used by BGCBC to identify strategic sites incorporates those elements of the SA objectives that are relevant to individual sites. The rationale used for the sites assessment and the assessment results are included in the SA Report. Detailed information about the sites will be provided in the Site Descriptions Document accompanying the LDP.

The following stages of assessment were undertaken by the Council:

- Stage 1: Initial Planning Assessment
- Stage 2: Expert Assessments
- Stage 3: Consultation with Appropriate Bodies
- Stage 4: Assessment against the LDP Preferred Strategy
- Stage 5: Assessment of the Sites against SA Objectives

The results of the sites assessment undertaken by BGCBC have been integrated into the assessments of policies relating to the allocation and designation of specific sites for development or conservation, included in the discussion below.

## Assessment of Significant Effects of the Strategic Policies

The LDP Deposit Plan contains Strategic Policies; Development Management Policies; and policies relating to the allocation and designation of specific sites for development or conservation.

Following confirmation of the strategy direction, a draft set of Strategic Policies was developed in order to deliver the objectives of the LDP. These 17 Strategic Policies were assessed as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal (in ISAR November 2008). The purpose of the assessment was to derive the sustainability implications in terms of implementing the policies and to identify areas for improvement that will mitigate predicted negative significant effects. Overall, the Draft Preferred Strategy appeared to generate more benefits from an economic perspective, with the least benefits being generated for the environment. It was suggested that the strategy should be further refined to create a greater focus on environmental improvements alongside economic and social regeneration initiatives. Most notably, three of the sustainability objectives within the 'environment' dimension of sustainability conflicted with the strategic policies. These were: to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide; to reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling; and to maintain current air quality.

The Strategic Policies from 2008 were revised and subject to SA (April 2011) for this Final SA Report based on the changes made by BGCBC. These changes have been based on a number of factors including the SA recommendations; HRA recommendations; changes to the national policy context; and improvements to the

evidence base. Changes made between 2008 and May 2010, were not subject to an additional iteration of assessment, as the changes made in this period were largely based on SA recommendations. This is set out in Appendix J. The 13 Deposit LDP Strategic Policies subject to the final SA iteration in April 2011 were:

- SP1 Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration
- SP2 Southern Strategy Area – Regeneration
- SP3 The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of the Town Centres
- SP4 Delivering Quality Housing
- SP5 Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites
- SP6 Ensuring Accessibility
- SP7 Climate Change
- SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth
- SP9 Active and Healthy Communities
- SP10 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- SP11 Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment
- SP12 Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals
- SP13 Delivering Sustainable Waste Management

The assessment findings showed an improvement in the balance of predicted effects of most of the Strategic Policies against the SA objectives, compared to earlier iterations of the LDP. This has included an improvement in the predicted effects of the policies on the environment.

Overall, the Strategic Policies performed well against the SA objectives, particularly SA objectives covering economic, social and environmental sustainability issues ranging from economic growth and employment, housing, skills, accessibility, health, transport, biodiversity, heritage, land and soil quality, sustainable resources and renewable energy. A mix of both positive and negative effects has been predicted against objectives relating to greenhouse gas emissions; waste; air quality; flood risk; water quality; and landscape quality. Where a mix of positive and negative effects is predicted, mitigation may be possible. This is explained in the text below.

## Assessment of Significant Effects of Development Management, Allocations and Designations Policies

Along with the Strategic Policies referred to in the previous section, the LDP Deposit Plan comprises a total of 21 Development Management Policies and 31 Allocations and Designations Policies. In May 2010, the policies were subject to assessment by the SA team, leading to a series of SA recommendations that were used to inform the BGCBC SA working group meeting (21.05.2010). The LDP policies were then revised to reflect the combined recommendations, with the resulting policies now forming the LDP Deposit Plan. The policies have since been further revised, to reflect the changing national policy context and the HRA AA results. These are assessed in this Final SAR (April 2011).

In order to undertake the assessment, the Development Management Policies and Allocations and Designations Policies were grouped under similar themes and matched with their associated Strategic Policy. Each grouping or 'theme' was then assessed separately – this approach was devised to facilitate the effectiveness of appraisal and reduce the potential for repetition or contradiction.

The Development Management and Allocations and Designations policies assessed for this report, grouped by theme, are:

### Theme 1 – Retail and Town Centre Vitality and Viability

- DM6 Use Class Restrictions in Principal and District Town Centres
- DM7 Use Class Restriction in Blaina Local Town Centre
- AA1 Action Area

- R1 Retail Allocations

## **Theme 2 – Housing**

- DM8 Affordable Housing
- DM9 Rural Exception Sites
- DM10 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers
- H1 Housing Allocations
- HC1 Housing Commitments
- GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

## **Theme 3 - Accessibility**

- T1 Cycle Routes
- T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements
- T3 Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure
- T4 Improvements to Bus Services
- T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development
- T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements

## **Theme 4 – Sustainable Design**

- DM1 New Development
- DM2 Design and Placemaking
- DM5 Low and Zero Carbon Energy

## **Theme 5 – Economy and Employment**

- DM11 Use Class Restrictions – Employment
- EMP1 Employment Allocations
- EMP2 Employment Area Protection
- ED 1 Education Provision
- TM1 Tourism and Leisure

## **Theme 6 – Communities**

- DM4 Infrastructure Provision
- DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities
- DM13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities
- DM14 Protection of Open Space
- CF1 Community Centre
- L1 Formal Leisure Facilities

## **Theme 7 – Natural Environment**

- DM3 Air and Water Pollution
- DM15 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement
- DM16 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure
- DM17 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection
- ENV1 Green Wedges
- ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas
- ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes
- ENV5 Cemeteries

### Theme 8 – Built Environment

- DM18 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance
- SB1 Settlement Boundaries

### Theme 9 – Minerals

- DM19 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications
- DM20 Mineral Safeguarding
- M1 Safeguarding of Minerals
- M2 Mineral Buffer Zones
- M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable
- M4 Preferred Areas

### Theme 10 – Waste

- DM21 Waste
- W1 Land for Waste Management

The final iteration of assessments led to the prediction of a mix of both positive and negative significant effects, although the overall balance of effects was predicted to be positive. Positive effects for improving the potential for sustainable development in Blaenau Gwent are predicted for the following contributing factors:

- Economic growth, diversification and employment;
- Housing needs and housing quality;
- Educational attainment and skills;
- Equitable accessibility to community services;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Conservation of heritage assets;
- Use of sustainably sourced resources;
- Energy efficiency; and
- Conservation of water quality.

A mix of both positive and negative effects were predicted for factors including sustainable transport; biodiversity; use of previously developed land and greenfield land; soil quality; greenhouse gas emissions; waste generation; air quality; flood risk; and landscape quality. However, it is likely that these effects can be mitigated, as explained in the text below.

The assessment findings showed an improvement in the potential for the Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies to contribute to sustainable development, compared to earlier iterations of the LDP.

## Focussed Changes, November 2011

In May 2011, the Deposit LDP, alongside the SA Report (April 2011) was consulted on for six weeks. A further six week LDP consultation was undertaken in July 2011 in response to sites submitted during the first consultation. The Focussed Changes document details how the consultation comments have been taken into account in the LDP.

The Focussed Changes (including minor changes) were reviewed against the SA of the latest iteration of the LDP policies. This was ordered by theme, in the same way that the policy appraisal was undertaken. The review included an evaluation of whether or not the focussed change was likely to lead to a change in the predicted effects of the LDP through SA, and whether the change would contribute to improved sustainable development more generally. Minor changes made to the LDP were also considered as part of the review process. However, some of the changes were not considered sufficiently important to warrant consideration in this report.

The results of the review of the Focussed Changes of the LDP are presented in Table 9.1. Overall, it has been concluded that no further SA is required as a result of the changes made to the LDP. All of the changes considered are likely to improve the potential of the LDP to contribute to more sustainable development.

## Cumulative, Synergistic and Indirect Effects

As required by the SEA Directive, cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects have also been recorded and analysed during the appraisal iterations. These can be summarised as follows:

### Positive

- Cumulative effect on economic prosperity;
- Cumulative effect on efficient use of land;
- Synergistic and cumulative effect on accessibility to community facilities and improvement in community health and well being including reducing crime and the fear of crime;
- Cumulative effect to enact a shift to more sustainable modes of transport and to improve local air quality and health;
- Cumulative effect on meeting housing needs;
- Cumulative effects for protecting heritage assets; and
- Cumulative effects on the increase in energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy.

### Adverse

- Local air quality and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Cumulative effect on landscape quality; and
- Cumulative effect of increasing development has the potential to increase flood risk.

## Mitigation

Mitigation measures for each policy were identified throughout the SA process and are highlighted in the policy specific recommendations. It is considered that the recommended mitigation for the LDP has been incorporated where necessary as a result of the SA. Additional measures as a result of the HRA AA have also been integrated into the LDP. It is considered that these inclusions, alongside national planning policy and other documents accompanying the LDP such as the SFCA Stage 2; Site Descriptions Document; and site specific mitigation strategies for biodiversity, should lead to the avoidance of significant negative effects.

## Monitoring

SA monitoring will cover predicted significant social and economic effects, as well as predicted significant environmental effects. The monitoring process involves measuring indicators that will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) being monitored. In line with the SEA Directive, these significant positive and negative effects should be monitored with the implementation of the LDP.

In order to reach a final framework of indicators for the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the LDP, BGCBC will need to consider the additional indicators proposed in the SA to identify those that can be most effectively used to monitor the sustainability effects of the LDP as a whole.

## Conclusions

It is considered that the policies in the LDP Deposit Plan including the Focussed Changes for Blaenau Gwent, taken together and alongside national planning policies, will help to lead to sustainable development over the plan period. On balance, the LDP Deposit Plan, including the Focussed Changes has the potential to lead to the creation of sustainable communities, with the proportion of significant positive sustainability effects being considered to outweigh the predicted negative effects.

The LDP overall is likely to have significant benefits for sustainable development, particularly relating to the following contributors:

- Economic growth and diversification of the local economy;
- Increased levels of local employment and equitable distribution of opportunities;
- Improved tourism economy complementary to the regional offer;
- Enhanced vitality and viability of town centres;
- Improved ability to meet housing needs including the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities;
- Increased levels of skills and education;
- Improved accessibility to essential services and facilities;
- Improved levels of health and wellbeing including a reduction in crime and the fear of crime and an enhanced sense of local distinctiveness;
- Increased potential for a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport;
- Increased potential for enabling enhanced biodiversity;
- Conservation of heritage assets;
- Making the best use of natural resources including prioritising the use of previously developed sites and promoting the use of sustainably sourced materials;
- Increased energy efficiency in new development and encouraging the generation of energy from low and zero carbon sources; and
- Improved protection of landscape quality where possible.

It is considered that the mitigation of the predicted negative effects of the LDP, such as effects on local air quality, biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, soil quality and flood risk, can be achieved through the effective implementation of measures included within supporting documents to the LDP. Supporting documents that contain further policy guidance and mitigation include the Site Descriptions Document; national planning policies; site specific biodiversity mitigation strategies; and the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment Stage 2. It is considered that recommendations from the April 2011 iteration of assessments, which have not been integrated into the Deposit LDP, are concerned with the improvement of positive effects rather than with the mitigation of negative effects. Therefore their implementation is not critical to the sustainability performance of the LDP as a whole.

The HRA AA Report concludes that “...before the consideration of mitigation measures, there was a risk that delivery of 8 out of the 13 Deposit LDP strategic policies could potentially have adverse effects on the integrity of the sites concerned. However, after the introduction of mitigation measures these risks were removed... The Appropriate Assessment has identified that, before the consideration of mitigation measures, four European sites could potentially be affected by the delivery of the LDP when considered on its own. However, after the introduction of mitigation measures the AA did not identify any of the European sites which could potentially be affected by the delivery of the LDP.” It is considered that the LDP integrates the recommendations of the HRA report. These changes are reflected in the April 2011 Deposit Plan policies assessed in this SAR. No further HRA was undertaken in November 2011 on the Focussed Changes to the Deposit Plan as the nature of the changes weren't considered to be relevant to the European Designations.

The process of Sustainability Appraisal throughout the LDP's preparation has been thorough and comprehensive. Various methods of consultation have been utilised, both formal and informal, which have informed the development of both the LDP and the SA. Several iterations of assessment have been employed, with continuous dialogue between the BGCBC planning team and the SA team.

The evolving, iterative nature of the SA process employed for the development of the LDP has enabled the integration of the core principles of sustainable development into the LDP Deposit Plan. The value of this process, particularly in the refining of the Strategic Policies and the Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies, is explained more thoroughly in sections 7, 8 and 9. These sections clearly demonstrate the improvements in performance of the LDP against the SA objectives between iterations. Improvements in performance have been attributable to factors such as: increased detail set out in policies and supporting text; improvements in the overall approach and LDP strategy; a shift of focus to

encourage more sustainable forms of economic growth; and an increase in the supporting documentation to the LDP including mitigation strategies for particular predicted effects.



# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 This document is the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) (Deposit Plan Focussed Changes). Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is mandatory for all Local Development Plans (LDPs). An environmental assessment is also required under European Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment' (the 'SEA Directive'). The SA and SEA processes are combined to inform the preparation of the LDP.
- 1.2 The Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted on 6th July 2006. The Council is now preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP), which will replace the UDP upon adoption. The LDP will set out the Council's objectives and priorities for the development and use of land within the County Borough for the period 2006-2021.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal Report is to outline how the statutory requirements for SA have informed the development of the Preferred LDP. It records all the sustainability appraisal work undertaken predicting and evaluating the effects of strategic options and preferred policies as well as the selection of preferred sites for the delivery of development.
- 1.4 Atkins was commissioned in April 2007 by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to undertake SA incorporating SEA of the Blaenau Gwent LDP.

## The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan

- 1.5 Blaenau Gwent is situated in the north east of Industrial South Wales. The area includes some land that falls within the boundary of the Brecon Beacons National Park (Figure 1.1) for which the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is responsible for development control activities as the planning authority.
- 1.6 Blaenau Gwent has witnessed steady population loss over recent years. The most recent figures suggest a continual population decline. Mid-year population estimates for 2008<sup>1</sup> show the population at 69,100. This compares to 69,200 in 2007, 69,300 in 2006, 70,064 in 2001 and 72,254 in 1991 (Censuses).
- 1.7 The key centres of population are focused on the main settlements of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Nantyglo, Blaina and Abertillery. The local authority area comprises one of the ten local authorities that together form the Capital Region as it is described in the Wales Spatial Plan Update<sup>2</sup>. The Capital Region is shown in Figure 1.2. Blaenau Gwent is required to have regard to the broad policies and principles set out at the regional and national level. The vision for the Capital Region as set out by the Spatial Plan 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."*

<sup>1</sup> 2008 Mid-year Estimates of Population August 2009, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090827sb492009en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Assembly Government July 2008, People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008, <http://wales.gov.uk/dpsp/wspatialplan/documents/wsp2008update/wsp2008updateee.pdf;jsessionid=YR2nKJ7Wt9TdjryQFS3jdWYwf2dXjCWvQp7L2YR7FzkPL2zM3rSQ!-1386067949?lang=en>

- 1.8 Blaenau Gwent is included within a sub-area of the Capital Region, requiring a 'different approach'. The area is entitled 'Heads of the Valleys Plus', described as:

*"An area set in superb natural surroundings, comprising the upper valleys of the Capital Region facing very considerable social challenges created by economic restructuring of the late 20th century...The Heads of the Valleys programme is providing targeted support to regenerate the least well-off areas of the Capital Region."*

- 1.9 The LDP Strategy itself is based around the four themes identified in the Vision. The four themes are:

- Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities;
- Create Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Promote Learning and Skills;
- Create Safe, Healthy and Vibrant Communities and Protect and Enhance the Unique Natural and Built Environment; and
- Create Opportunities to Secure an Adequate Supply of Minerals and Reduce Waste.

Figure 1.1 - Study Area in Context

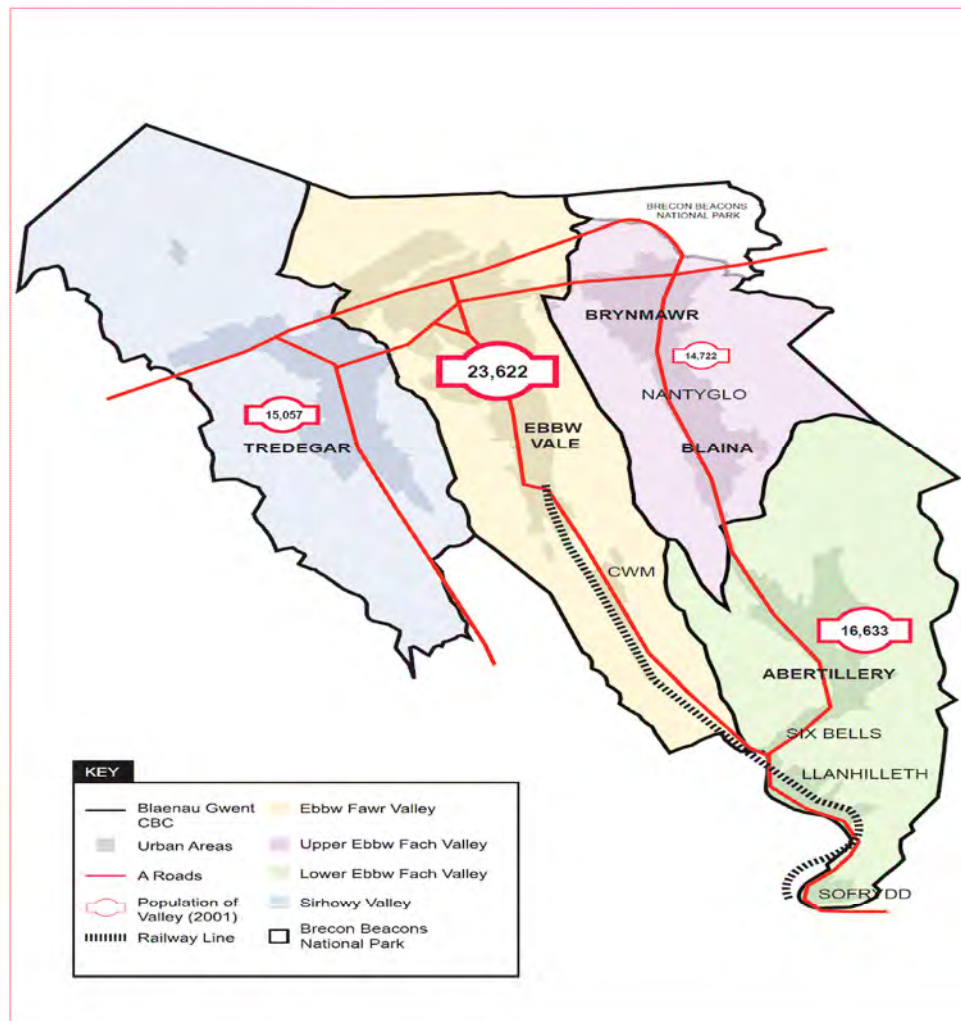
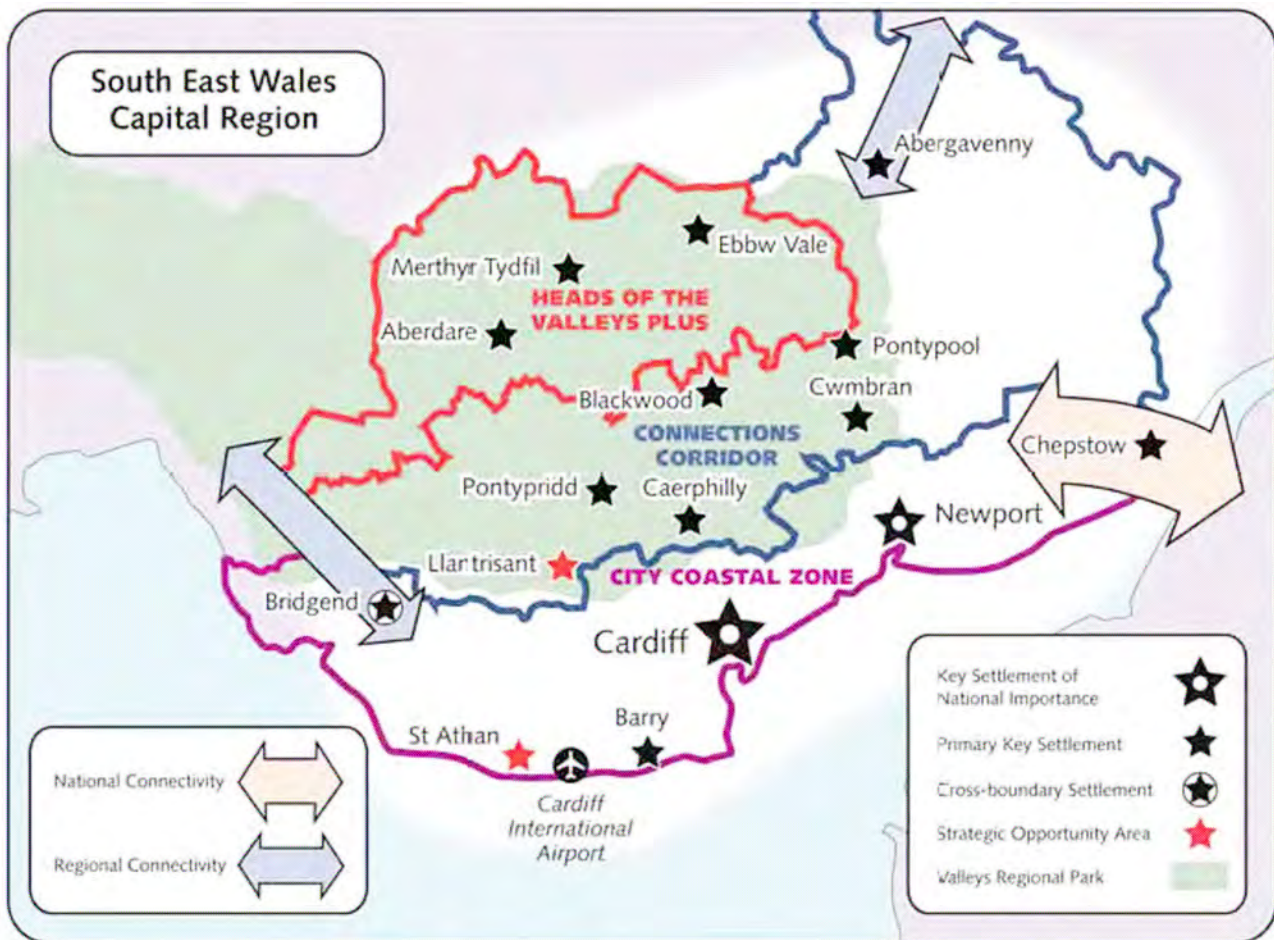


Figure 1.2 - Wales Spatial Plan Update Capital Region



## Sustainable Development

- 1.10 Sustainable development seeks to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations. There is now an international commitment to achieving sustainable development. One of the means by which it can be achieved is through the land use planning process and particularly through the production of the Local Development Plans (LDPs).
- 1.11 There are many definitions of sustainable development however the most common and widely accepted is that adopted by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987:
- “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*
- 1.12 The UK Strategy ‘Securing the Future: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy’ (DEFRA, 2005) sets out five key principles for sustainable development:
- Living within environmental limits;
  - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - Achieving a sustainable economy;
  - Promoting good governance; and
  - Using sound science responsibly.



- 1.13 Sustainable Development is seen as the “*central organising principle for Government and the wider public sector in Wales*” under the sustainable development scheme prepared by the Welsh Ministers as part of the responsibilities conveyed through the Government of Wales Act 2006, section 79. One Wales, One Planet, the new Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales<sup>3</sup> has interpreted sustainable development as:

*“In Wales, sustainable development means enhancing the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities, achieving a better quality of life for our own and future generations:*

- *In ways which promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and*
- *In ways which enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits - using only our fair share of the earth’s resources and sustaining our cultural legacy.*

*Sustainable development is the process by which we reach the goal of sustainability.”*

- 1.14 To achieve forms of development that are more sustainable than previous projects, proposals must strike an acceptable balance between maximising resource and energy efficiency; minimising environmental impacts; delivering social benefits; and supporting a healthy economy. This is reflected in One Wales: One Planet (May 2009) which states within the Vision that:

*“Within the lifetime of a generation [the Welsh Assembly Government] want to see Wales using only its fair share of the earth’s resources, and where our ecological footprint is reduced to the global average availability of resources – 1.88 global hectares per person, with each Spatial Plan Area making its full contribution...To achieve this goal over a generation, we will need to reduce by two thirds the total resources we currently use to sustain our lifestyles.”*

- 1.15 The land use planning process therefore offers the opportunity to deliver substantial progress towards achieving the Welsh Assembly Government Sustainable Development priorities. In order to achieve this goal, the Sustainable Development Scheme sets the following targets:

- 80-90% reduction in use of carbon-based energy to build on existing 3% per annum reduction target in Wales and ambitions to make all new buildings zero carbon buildings and to move to producing as much electricity from renewable sources by 2025 as consumed;
- Move towards becoming a zero waste nation. This will build on the stated goal of achieving 70% recycling across all sectors, and diverting waste from landfill by 2025;
- Travel less by car and create a stronger connection with local economies and communities;
- Have a resilient and sustainable economy that is able to develop whilst stabilising, then reducing its use of natural resources, reusing sites and buildings and reducing its contribution to climate change;
- Source more of our food locally and in season; and
- Do all this in ways which make us a fairer society, reducing the gap between rich and poor, building on our commitments to tackling child and fuel poverty.

- 1.16 More recently, the Welsh Assembly Government has published Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 4, February 2011)<sup>4</sup> and the Climate Change Strategy for Wales (October 2010)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> One Wales: One Planet: The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government, May 2009

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/onewalesoneplanet/?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup>Welsh Assembly Government, Planning Policy Wales, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, February 2011, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>

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PPW includes the following principles, underpinning the Welsh Assembly Government's approach to planning policy for sustainable development:

- *“Putting people, and their quality of life now and in the future, at the centre of decision-making;*
- *Ensuring that everyone has the chance to obtain information, see how decisions are made and take part in decision-making;*
- *Taking a long term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations, whilst at the same time meeting needs of people today;*
- *Respect for environmental limits, so that resources are not irrecoverably depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, mitigating climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising harmful emissions, and promoting sustainable use of natural resources;*
- *Tackling climate change by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change and ensuring that places are resilient to the consequences of climate change;*
- *Applying the precautionary principle. Cost-effective measures to prevent possibly serious environmental damage should not be postponed just because of scientific uncertainty about how serious the risk is;*
- *Using scientific knowledge to aid decision-making, and trying to work out in advance what knowledge will be needed so that appropriate research can be undertaken;*
- *While preventing pollution as far as possible, ensuring that the polluter pays for damage resulting from pollution. In general the Assembly Government will seek to ensure that costs are met by those whose actions incur them;*
- *Applying the proximity principle, especially in managing waste and pollution. This means solving problems locally rather than passing them on to other places or to future generations; and*
- *Taking account of the full range of costs and benefits over the lifetime of a development, including those which cannot be easily valued in money terms when making plans and decisions and taking account of timing, risks and uncertainties. This also includes recognition of the climate a development is likely to experience over its intended lifetime.”*

- 1.17 Other Welsh Assembly Government Guidance that has been considered and adhered to as part of this SA is referenced with the sustainability objectives that have been developed for the SA Framework in section 3.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.18 The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on assessment of effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') came into force in the UK on 20 July 2004 through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The Directive applies to a variety of plans and programmes including those for town and country planning and land use and applies to LDPs as they a) set the framework for future development consent and b) are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.19 The overarching objective of the SEA Directive is:

<sup>5</sup>Welsh Assembly Government, Climate Change Strategy for Wales, October 2010, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/101006ccstratfinalen.pdf>  
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*“To provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans... with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans... which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.” (Article 1)*

- 1.20 SEA is an iterative assessment process which plans and programmes are now required to undergo as they are being developed to ensure that potential significant environmental effects arising from the plan/programme are identified, assessed, mitigated and communicated to plan-makers. SEA also requires the monitoring of significant effects once the plan/programme is implemented.
- 1.21 The SEA Directive and associated UK Regulations state that the SEA must consider the following topic areas:
- Biodiversity;
  - Population;
  - Human Health;
  - Flora and Fauna;
  - Soil;
  - Water;
  - Air;
  - Climatic factors;
  - Material assets;
  - Cultural heritage, including archaeological and architectural heritage;
  - Landscape; and
  - The interrelationship between these factors.
- 1.22 Under the regulations implementing the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a SA is required for all LDPs in Wales<sup>6</sup>. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans. The Regulations<sup>7</sup> stipulate that SAs of LDPs should meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.

## The SA Process

- 1.23 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are thus distinct, but the Welsh Government (WG) guidance for LDPs concurs with Communities and Local Government (CLG) SA guidance<sup>8</sup> in stating that it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process (commonly designated as SA<sup>9</sup>) and provides methodologies and guidance for doing so. This methodology goes further than the SEA methodology (which is primarily focused on environmental effects) requiring the examination of all the sustainability-related effects,

<sup>6</sup> Planning Policy Wales (2011) states that: “Section 39 of the 2004 Act requires authorities to prepare LDPs with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Section 62(6) of the 2004 Act requires an authority to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the LDP and to prepare a report of the findings as an integral part of the process of plan preparation. Sustainability appraisal may be defined as: “a systematic and iterative process undertaken during the preparation (and review) of a plan which identifies and reports on the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the environment, social and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined and identifies opportunities for improving plan performance in relation to these.”

<sup>7</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1656 (W/170)) (“the Wales Regulations”).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=152450>

<sup>9</sup> The term SA is used to denote the combined SA process in this Scoping Report.

whether they are social, economic or environmental. However, those undertaking the SA should ensure that in doing so they meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. This report will therefore integrate both the SA and SEA requirements, and subsequent reference to SA in this document will be taken to mean SA incorporating SEA.

- 1.24 The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations in the preparation of plans.
- 1.25 SA ensures that social, environmental and economic concerns are addressed and fully integrated into the production of a planning document and that integration of these issues is achieved as far as possible.
- 1.26 SA is an iterative process that takes place alongside the preparation of a planning document. This is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are integrated into the plan-making process, thus ensuring that the resulting policies and proposals produce sustainable development when implemented. Through consultation and the involvement of stakeholders and specialist experts in the process the resulting appraisal should be both robust and fully integrated.
- 1.27 By undertaking a SA it is possible to look at a range of plans/policies contained within various documents and examine how they contribute towards sustainable development by looking at their social, environmental and economic effects. By identifying potential issues at an early stage it is then possible to amend the policies/plans to ensure that they are as sustainable as possible.
- 1.28 Figure 1.3 sets out the various stages, tasks and relationships with the plan preparation contained in the WG/ODPM guidance, which are being applied to the SA of the LDP.

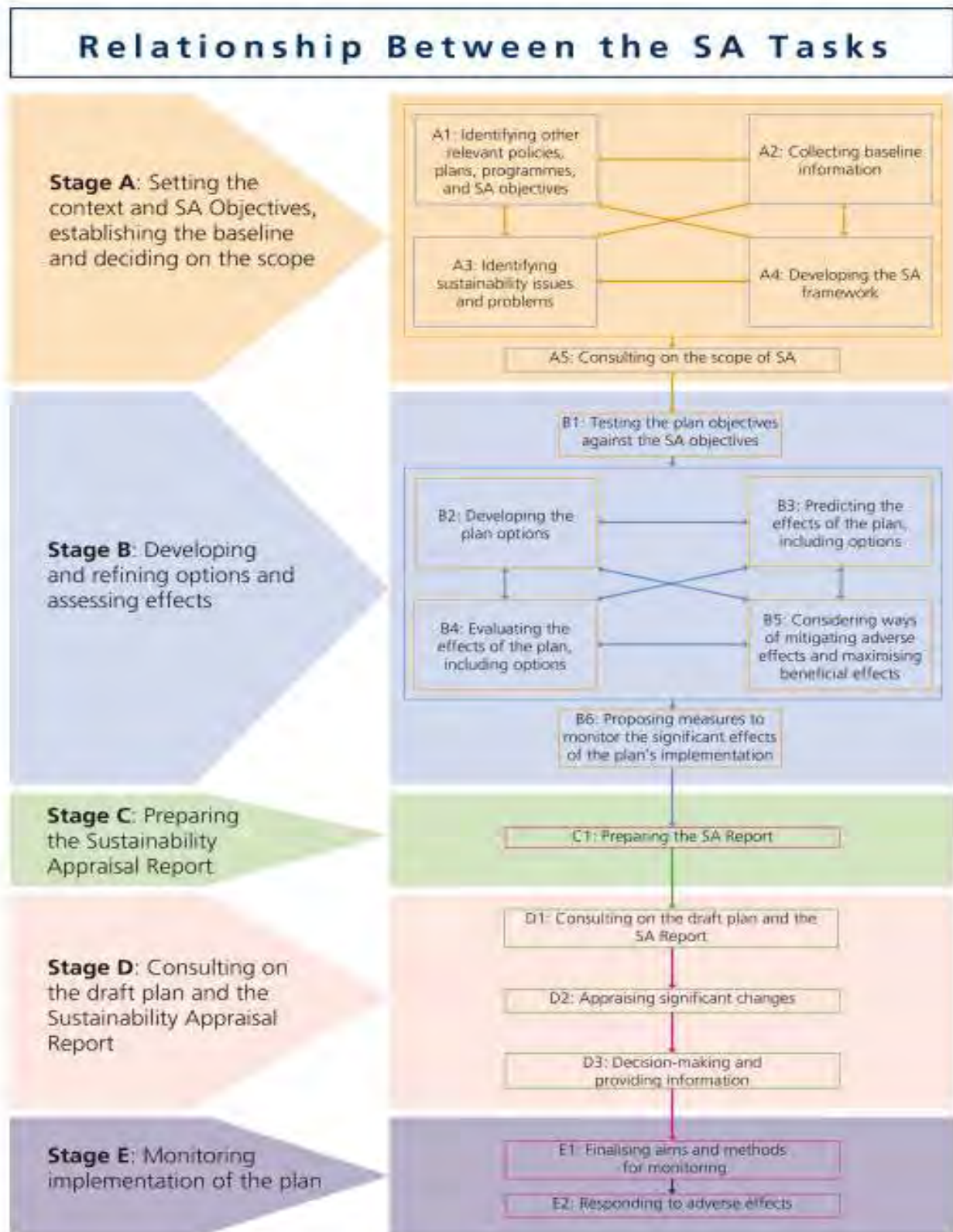
**Figure 1.3 - Incorporating SA within the LDP Process – Stages and Tasks**

Planning Stage	SA Stage	Components
Pre-Deposit Participation	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	Identify related plans/programmes
		Identify environmental protection objectives
		Baseline data and likely future trends
		Identify sustainability issues
		Develop sustainability objectives, indicators and targets (i.e. create the SEA Framework)
		Prepare Scoping Report
		Consult on the scope of the SA (the Scoping Report Consultation)
Pre-Deposit Participation	Developing and refining options	Consider Scoping Report Consultation comments
		Assess LDP objectives against the SA Framework
		Develop strategic options
		Evaluate/select preferred options
		Prepare Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report
Pre-Deposit Consultation	Consultation on Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report	
Preparation for	Appraising the	Consider Pre-Deposit consultation comments



Planning Stage	SA Stage	Components
Deposit of the LDP	effects of the LDP Preferred Option(s)	Predict and assess sustainability effects of options taken forward
		Propose mitigation measures
		Propose monitoring programme
		Prepare Sustainability Appraisal Report
Deposit Consultation	Consultation on Sustainability Appraisal Report	
Revise LDP following representations made at the Deposit Stage	Revise Sustainability Appraisal Report as appropriate	
Submission of LDP to Welsh Assembly Government	Sustainability Appraisal Report accompanies LDP on submission	
Independent examination of LDP	Preparation or giving evidence	
Adoption of LDP	Prepare statement summarising how SA results were taken into account	
LDP Implementation	Monitor the sustainability effects of the LDP	Prepare an annual monitoring report

Figure 1.4 - Relationship between the SA Tasks



- 1.29 The current guidance also sets out a requirement for the preparation of the following reports:
- Scoping Report (summarising Stage A work) which should be used for consultation on the scope of the SA;
  - Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (documenting Stages A , B and C) work which should be used in the public consultation on the pre-deposit LDP;
  - Sustainability Appraisal Report (documenting Stages A, B, C and D work) which should accompany the Deposit LDP.
- 1.30 To date, Stage A, B, C and D of the SA process have been undertaken and this is fully documented under the Methodology section 2. This is the Sustainability Appraisal Report documenting all SA work undertaken to inform the preparation of the Deposit LDP.

## Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 1.31 The SA Report is a key output of the appraisal process presenting information on the effects of the planning document for public consultation. It incorporates and subsumes the Environmental Report that is required under the European Directive.
- 1.32 The overarching purpose of the SA Report is to document the outcome of the appraisal process, and demonstrate the influence it has had on the development of the LDP policies. It maps the development of options and the supporting policies by reference to their significant effects or their mitigation of any adverse effects.
- 1.33 This SA Report reports on the work undertaken during the initial stages of the SA process and takes the process further by reporting on option selection and the significant social, environmental and economic effects of the preferred policies, proposed mitigation measures and proposals for monitoring significant sustainability effects.

## SA and Consultation

- 1.34 The aim of the consultation on the SA Report is to involve and engage with statutory consultees and other key stakeholders on the results of the appraisal.
- 1.35 The requirements for consultation during a Sustainability Appraisal are as follows:
- Authorities which, because of their environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the effects of implementing the plan or programme, must be consulted on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report. These are termed the statutory Consultation Bodies, and in Wales comprise the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Environment Agency (Wales) and Cadw (Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government). It is considered good practice to consult with other appropriate social and economic consultees who would have a significant influence upon, or would be influenced by the LDP; and
  - The public and Consultation Bodies must be consulted on LDP and the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 1.36 The following reports have been consulted upon as part of this Sustainability Appraisal process:
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, November/December 2007;
  - Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (to accompany the LDP Pre-Deposit Consultation), November-December 2008;
  - Sustainability Appraisal Report (to accompany the LDP Deposit Plan), May- June 2011; and

- Sustainability Appraisal Report (to accompany the LDP Focussed Changes) – this report, January-March 2012.

- 1.37 For the consultation on the Pre-Deposit LDP and Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report, the following social, environmental and economic consultees were consulted: Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Environment Agency (Wales) and Cadw (Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government) and other stakeholders with an interest in the development of Blaenau Gwent.
- 1.38 The statutory and non-statutory bodies and organisations that have responded to consultation to date (Scoping Report and Initial SA Report) are presented in Appendix A.
- 1.39 Consultation responses received on the Sustainability Report that accompanied the Deposit LDP have been addressed within this report where appropriate. A full list of the consultation comments and how they have been addressed is presented in Appendix L.

### SA Working Group Meetings

- 1.40 In addition to the statutory consultation processes, the iterative process of the assessment of the LDP has also involved two workshops, bringing together the SA Working Group that comprises representatives from across the Council as well as the statutory consultees.

#### Meeting 1: 24th April 2008

- 1.41 The initial meeting of the SA Working Group was to discuss the findings of Stage A of the SEA process. Discussions were had surrounding the key issues facing the County Borough, which led to the revision of the baseline. Revisions were also made to the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, both as a direct result of discussions surrounding the objectives as well as revisions to the baseline and key issues.

#### Meeting 2: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010

- 1.42 The purpose of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SA Working Group meeting was to discuss progress on the SA to date, as well as to discuss the Council's responses to the SA assessment of the May 2010 version of the LDP policies. This enabled a transparent process in the accepting or rejecting of the SA findings and the development of appropriate revision to the LDP to enable the refinement of the Deposit Plan.

### This Report

- 1.43 This is the Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany the LDP Focussed Changes, which follow from the consultation on the Deposit LDP between May and June 2011.
- 1.44 The period of consultation on the LDP Focussed Changes and Sustainability Appraisal Report, is for 6 weeks, from 19 January 2012 to 1 March 2012.

### Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 1.45 Alongside the SA process it is also necessary, to assess whether the Blaenau Gwent LDP is likely to have a significant effect upon a European Site under the Habitats Regulations.
- 1.46 Welsh Assembly Government Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning)<sup>10</sup> states that:
- 1.47 *"Before a local development plan may be adopted by a planning authority under section 67 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and before a unitary development plan may be adopted by a local planning authority under section 15(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(17), the planning authority must determine whether the plan is likely to*

<sup>10</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/policy/090916tan5en.pdf>  
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*have significant effects on a European site in Great Britain or on a European offshore marine site.”*

- 1.48 The LDP was subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) screening exercise to establish the need for Appropriate Assessment (AA).
- 1.49 The HRA Screening Report states that there are no European sites within the Local Planning Authority boundary of Blaenau Gwent.
- 1.50 The HRA Screening Report<sup>11</sup> identified the potential for the Deposit Local Development Plan to have a negative impact on 5 European sites within 15km of Blaenau Gwent namely:
  - Cwm Clydach Woodlands;
  - Usk Bat Sites;
  - Aberbargoed Grasslands;
  - Sugar Loaf Woodlands; and
  - River Usk (on advice of CCW).
- 1.51 By applying the precautionary principle, the HRA screening assessment identified that the European sites identified could potentially be affected by the delivery of the Deposit LDP in combination with other projects and plans in SE Wales.
- 1.52 As potential negative effects were predicted through screening, an AA (as required by Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and regulation 85B of the draft Regulations), has been undertaken<sup>12</sup> to examine the impacts of the LDP against the conservation objectives of the European Sites. The Assessment determines whether the LDP would adversely affect the integrity of a site in terms of its nature conservation objectives.

## Relationship to SA

- 1.53 The WAG LDP Manual<sup>13</sup> intends that *‘appropriate assessment will be integrated with development plan Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating SEA.’*
- 1.54 The SA takes the results of the HRA AA into consideration to ensure that the LDP implements appropriate mitigation and protection measures. The guidance states that:
 

*“As part of the HRA on any European site(s), the LPA may need to amend the development plan to eliminate or reduce potentially damaging effects; and/or consider alternative solutions that would have a lesser effect on the relevant site(s); and/or consider if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest sufficient to justify the potential effects on the European site(s) affected.”*
- 1.55 The HRA Appropriate Assessment includes a number of recommendations to ensure that the final version of the LDP avoids and/or minimises impacts on the European sites identified during the study. It also indicates that further appropriate assessment work will be required to assess the effects of the LDP including ways of managing and mitigating specific impacts.
- 1.56 The findings of the HRA have been integrated into this SA where appropriate.

<sup>11</sup> Capita Symonds April 2011

<sup>12</sup> Capita Symonds April 2011

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Assembly Government 2006, *Local Development Plan Manual*  
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## 2. Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

### Meeting the Requirements of the SEA Directive

- 2.1 As mentioned in Section 1 there is a fundamental difference between the SA and SEA methodologies. SEA is primarily focused on environmental effects and the methodology addresses a number of topic areas as listed in section 1 and Table 2.1 below (f). SA, however, widens the scope of the appraisal to include social and economic topics as well as environmental as it is intended to assess the impact of a plan from an environmental, social and economic perspective.
- 2.2 This Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken so as to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive for environmental assessment of plans. Table 2.1 sets out the way the specific SEA requirements have been met in this report.

Table 2.1 - Schedule of SEA Requirements

Requirements of the Directive	Where Covered in Report
<b>Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is:</b>	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Section 3
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 3
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 3
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	Section 3
e) The environmental protection objectives established at international, community or national level which are relevant to the programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Section 3
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including: short, medium and long term; permanent and temporary; positive and negative; secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects on issues such as: biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Sections 4-10
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Section 11
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Sections 4-9



i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring (in accordance with regulation 17)	Section 12
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Before section 1

## Appraisal Process and Methodology

- 2.3 WG guidance emphasises that SA is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan and the extent to which the implementation of the plan will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. The intention is that SA is fully integrated into the plan-making process from the earliest stages, both informing and being informed by it.

- 2.4 The methodology adopted involved the completion of the SA stages A, B, C and D and associated tasks as outlined in Figure 1.4.

### Stage A: Setting the Context and Objectives, Establishing the Baseline and Deciding on Scope

#### A1: Other Relevant Plans and Programmes

- 2.5 A wide range of plans programmes and policies (PPPs) relevant to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area have been identified. These documents have been categorised by the geographical scale to which they relate and listed in Table 3.1.
- 2.6 The constraints or challenges the plans pose for the LDP were considered and summarised by setting out how the plan might take account of them. Broad SA objectives generated from the review have been grouped under the three main topic headings namely environmental, social and economic, encompassing the three dimensions of sustainable development. Each objective has been assigned to the dimension of sustainable development to which it is most strongly associated although this will not constrain the assessment, and the interrelationship between objectives is taken into consideration.

#### A2: Baseline Data

- 2.7 To predict accurately how potential plan policies will affect the environment, it is first important to understand the current state of the environment and then examine the likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of the plan.
- 2.8 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring environmental effects and helps to identify environmental problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline data tables have been prepared where data have been split by the four overarching objectives of sustainable development. These tables record:
- General indicators of relevance to the plan;
  - Quantified latest data;
  - Comparators (regional or national level data against which Blaenau Gwent status can be compared);
  - Targets for the indicators where they exist;
  - Trends for the indicators; and
  - Problems and constraints which arise.
- 2.9 Data was collated from a wide range of existing sources. For each indicator, quantified baseline data was collected which was readily accessible and in a format applicable to the



issues to be assessed by the SA and at a relevant geographical level. The main sources used were official websites on the internet, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council reports and data, and the Census 2001.

- 2.10 Some new data collection was undertaken as part of the iterative process of SA. Where significant gaps exist, these are identified and recommendations for filling the gaps will be included in the proposals for monitoring the implementation of the plan. Data availability is a key problem. It varies between indicators and at different tiers of government; for example, statistics at national level do not always have a comparator, or are not necessarily relevant at the local level.
- 2.11 Not all detail is readily presentable or sufficiently detailed in table format.

### **A3: Sustainability Issues**

- 2.12 Key sustainability issues within Blaenau Gwent were identified through existing issues already known to the Authority, and problems identified through the collection of baseline data. These were set out in a table under the three sustainable development dimensions (economic, social and environmental) and covered the most relevant topics.

### **A4: Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

- 2.13 A set of draft objectives and indicators, against which the policies and proposals in the LDP can be assessed, was drawn up under the three sustainable development dimensions: social, economic and environmental.
- 2.14 They were identified by reviewing relevant policy documents at the European, national, regional, county and district level, those put forward in the SEA Guidance, the review of the baseline data and key sustainability issues. The draft objectives have been refined through subsequent consultation on the original Scoping Report.
- 2.15 For each objective, one or more indicators have been set that provide for the status of the objective to be tested against targets, now or in the future, and that are appropriate to the County Borough. They have been adapted from those in the SEA Guidance and consultation on the Scoping Report.
- 2.16 Table 3.4 has been prepared setting out the SA Framework and identifying how relevant SEA Directive topic(s) have been covered.

### **A5: Consulting on the Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal**

- 2.17 Tasks A1 to A4 were undertaken between June and October 2007 to help ensure that the SA covered the key sustainability issues which are relevant to Blaenau Gwent County Borough. The Scoping report documenting the results of the above tasks was the subject of a five week consultation in November 2007. In accordance with Government guidance the local planning authority consulted three statutory environmental consultation bodies:

- Countryside Council for Wales (CCW);
- Environment Agency (Wales); and
- Cadw (Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government).

- 2.18 A number of other key organisations were also specifically targeted. The responses to this consultation and subsequent actions are summarised in Appendix A of this report.





## **Stage B: Developing and Refining Options**

### **B1: Testing the LDP Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

- 2.19 The LDP objectives were tested for compatibility with the SA objectives. This helped to consider to what degree they are in accordance with sustainability principles, with a view to

developing and refining the LDP objectives through an iterative process. When testing compatibility the following scale was used:

**Table 2.2 - Compatibility of Objectives Key**

	Potentially Compatible
	Not Compatible
	Not relevant
	Dependent on the nature of delivery

2.20 Further details of the assessment can be found in section 4.

### **B2: Developing the LDP Options**

2.21 In order to predict the sustainability implications of the options for the LDP, each option was assessed against a framework of SA objectives. For further details see section 4 of this report. A judgement was made against the SA objectives to predict the likely sustainability implications which might arise should the option be implemented. In order to arrive at a conclusion about how the LDP would affect the achievement of the SA objectives, each assessment combines qualitative and quantitative techniques, taking account of:

- What the SA objective is trying to achieve;
- The status of the relevant baseline, and how it has changed over time; and
- Current knowledge of the various relationships between the content of the LDP and sustainability objectives.

2.22 At this early stage of assessment a broad approach to appraisal was taken to provide an initial indication of the relative sustainability of each of the options. Prediction involved using a scale from '+++' (strong positive effect) to '---' (strong negative effects) (Table 2.3), with the associated commentary indicating any further details to note.

**Table 2.3 - Options Assessment Key**

<b>Assessment Scale</b>	<b>Assessment Category</b>
+++	Strongly positive
++	Moderately positive
+	Slightly positive
0	Neutral or no obvious effect
-	Slightly negative
--	Moderately negative
---	Strongly negative
?	Effect uncertain

- 2.23 Objectivity and consistency in making judgements is assisted by reference to the assessment rationale (Table 3.6). This provides a focus for the appraiser in terms of understanding what the SA objective is trying to achieve and what impact the proposed action may have. Matrices were used to record likely sustainability effects of each option against each objective in the SA framework.
- 2.24 Full details of the assessments can be found in Appendix E and summaries of the assessments can be found in section 5.
- 2.25 The appraisal findings together with responses to the Options consultation were taken into account in the development and choice of the Preferred Strategy.

## **B2: Development of Strategic Sites**

- 2.26 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 the 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.
- 2.27 The next step in the LDP was 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.
- 2.28 The assessment of sites was undertaken in accordance with the Council's candidate site methodology, which consists of a 6-stage process as listed below. The methodology used in each stage is further explained in section 7.
- Stage 1: Initial Planning Assessment
  - Stage 2: Expert Assessments
  - Stage 3: Consultation with Appropriate Bodies
  - Stage 4: Assessment against the LDP Preferred Strategy
  - Stage 5: Assessment of the site against SA objectives
  - Stage 6 – Finalisation of sites for Deposit LDP and submission of supporting information
- 2.29 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.

## **B3: Predicting the Effects of the Preferred Plan**

- 2.30 The methodology that has been adopted for this assessment is generally broad-brush and qualitative which is generally accepted as good practice by the SA guidance.

- 2.31 The assessment of the preferred plan has been broken down into 'evaluation' of effects and 'mitigation' of effects.
- 2.32 The prediction of effects was undertaken for each proposal being implemented through the LDP against the SA Framework.

#### **B4: Evaluating the Effects of the Preferred Plan**

- 2.33 The next stage of the assessment involved the evaluation of the significant effects. The evaluation involved forming a judgement on whether or not the predicted effects will be environmentally significant. The technique that has primarily been used to assess the significance of effects in this assessment is a qualitative assessment based on expert judgement. Other techniques included consultation with stakeholders involved in the SA process, geographical information systems and reference to key legislation, primarily the Strategic Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999.
- 2.34 As with the prediction of the effects, the criteria of assessing the significance of a specific effect used in this assessment, as outlined in Annex II of the SEA Directive, has been based on the following parameters to determine the significance:
- Scale;
  - Permanence;
  - Nature and sensitivity;
  - Cumulative effects.
- 2.35 In the current practice of sustainability appraisals, the broad-brush qualitative prediction and evaluation of effects is based on a qualitative seven point scale in easily understood terms. In general, this assessment has adopted the scale set in Table 2.4 to assess the significance of effects of the LDP proposals.

**Table 2.4 - Criteria for Assessing Significance of Effects**

Assessment Scale	Assessment Category	Significance of Effect
+++	Strongly positive	Significant
++	Moderately positive	Significant
+	Slightly positive	Not Significant
0	Neutral or no obvious effect	
-	Slightly negative	
--	Moderately negative	Significant
---	Strongly negative	Significant
?	Effect uncertain	

- 2.36 Moderately and strongly positive and negative effects have been considered of significance whereas neutral and slightly positive and negative effects have been considered non-significant.

#### **Secondary and Cumulative Effects Assessments**

- 2.37 Annex I of the SEA Directive requires that the assessment of effects include secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

- 2.38 Secondary or indirect effects are effects that are not a direct result of the plan, but occur away from the original effect or as a result of the complex pathway e.g. a development that changes a water table and thus affects the ecology of a nearby wetland. These effects are not cumulative and have been identified and assessed primarily through the examination of the relationship between various objectives during the assessment of environmental effects.
- 2.39 Cumulative effects arise where several proposals individually may or may not have a significant effect, but in-combination have a significant effect due to spatial crowding or temporal overlap between plans, proposals and actions and repeated removal or addition of resources due to proposals and actions. Cumulative effects can be:
- Additive- the simple sum of all the effects;
  - Neutralising- where effects counteract each other to reduce the overall effect; and
  - Synergistic– is the effect of two or more effects acting together which is greater than the simple sum of the effects when acting alone. For instance, a wildlife habitat can become progressively fragmented with limited effects on a particular species until the last fragmentation makes the areas too small to support the species at all.
- 2.40 Many environmental problems result from cumulative effects. These effects are very hard to deal with on a project by project basis through Environmental Impact Assessment. It is at the SA level that they are most effectively identified and addressed.
- 2.41 Cumulative effects assessment is a systematic procedure for identifying and evaluating the significance of effects from multiple activities. The analysis of the causes, pathways and consequences of these effects is an essential part of the process.
- 2.42 Cumulative (including additive, neutralising and synergistic) effects have been considered throughout the entire SA process, as described below:
- As part of the review of relevant strategies, plans and programmes and the derivation of draft SA objectives, key receptors have been identified which may be subject to cumulative effects;
  - In the process of collecting baseline information cumulative effects have been considered by identifying key receptors (e.g. specific wildlife habitats) and information on how these have changed with time, and how they are likely to change without the implementation of the LDP. Targets have been identified (where possible), that identify how close to capacity the key receptor is, which is a key determining factor in assessing the likelihood of cumulative and synergistic effects occurring, and their degree of significance;
  - Through the analysis of environmental issues and problems, receptors have been identified that are particularly sensitive, in decline or near to their threshold (where such information is available);
  - The development of SA objectives, indicators and targets has been influenced by cumulative effects identified through the process above and SA objectives that consider cumulative effects have been identified;
  - The likely cumulative effects of the strategic alternatives have been identified which highlighted potential cumulative effects that should be considered later in the SA process; and
  - The likely cumulative effects of the LDP policies have been identified.

#### **B5: Considering Ways of Mitigating Adverse Effects and Maximising Beneficial Effects**

- 2.43 Mitigation measures have been identified during the evaluation process to reduce the scale/importance of significant negative effects.

**B6: Proposing Measures to Monitor the Significant Effects of Implementing the LDP**

- 2.44 SA monitoring involves measuring indicators which will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant effect (positive or negative) being monitored. It thus helps to ensure that any adverse effects which arise during implementation, whether or not they were foreseen, can be identified and that action can be taken by BGCBC to deal with them.

**Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report**

- 2.45 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report was the outcome of Stage C in the SA Process and was be used to inform the LDP Pre-Deposit consultation.

**Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report**

- 2.46 This Sustainability Appraisal Report is the output of Stage D of the SA process and accompanies the Deposit LDP for consultation.



### 3. Developing the SA Framework

#### Introduction

- 3.1 The development of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework is a key component in completing the SA by synthesising objectives relevant to the SA, the baseline information and sustainability issues into a systematic and easily understood tool that allows the prediction and assessment of effects arising from the LDP.

#### A1: Review of Relevant Plans and Programmes

- 3.2 The first task of a SA is the identification of other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. An LDP may be influenced in many ways by other plans and programmes and by external sustainability objectives, such as those laid down in policies and legislation. The SEA Directive states that the Environmental Report should provide information on:

*‘the plan’s ‘relationship with other relevant plans and programmes’ and ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan...and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation’.* (Annex 1 (a), (e)).

- 3.3 Relevant international, national, regional and local plans and programmes that might influence the plan were identified. Broad SA objectives generated from the review have been grouped under the three main topic headings namely, Environmental, Social and Economic, encompassing the three dimensions of sustainable development. Each objective has been assigned to the dimension of sustainable development to which it is most strongly associated. The table also sets out the source documents (specified plans and programmes) from which the broad SA objectives have been derived, together with their relationship to SEA topic areas, which must be considered to fulfil the requirements of the SEA directive. The results of this exercise are given in Appendix B.
- 3.4 As set out previously, this table draws together sustainability themes that have emerged as being common to the various policies and plans reviewed as part of the SA development process. In essence, in order to conform to international, national, regional and local policies, plans and programmes, the SA objectives developed in Section 5 must reflect each of the broad sustainability themes drawn out and tabulated.

Table 3.1 - Broad Sustainability Themes

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
ECONOMIC				
Ensure high and stable levels of local employment	The European Employment Strategy	A Winning Wales, The National Economic Strategy of WAG, Five Counties Regeneration Framework; Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020; Heads We Win – A Strategic Framework for the Heads of the Valleys; South East Wales Development Strategy – Enter the Dragon	Blaenau Gwent Development Plan for the Strategy for Older People In Wales, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent Heritage Strategy	Population
Promote economic growth and business competitiveness	The European Employment Strategy	A Winning Wales, The National Economic Strategy of WAG, South East Wales Economic Development strategy, Wales Spatial Plan; South East Wales Development Strategy, PPW, Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020; Heads We Win – A Strategic Framework for the Heads of the Valleys; Five Counties Regeneration Framework	Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan; Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy	Population, Material Assets
Ensure a supply of local employment sites and premises which meet the needs of a diverse changing economy		South East Wales Economic Development Strategy, South East Wales Development Strategy – Enter the Dragon, Five counties Regeneration Framework	Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan; Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy	Population, Material Assets
To promote/develop a knowledge based economy		TAN 19 Telecommunications 2002,A Winning Wales, South East Wales Economic Development strategy; Five counties Regeneration Framework; Wales a Better Country	Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07	Population, Material Assets
Establish a strong tourist economy, sensitively capitalising on environmental, heritage, and leisure assets		PPW, TAN13 – Tourism, Sports Tourism in Wales: A framework for Action, Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales; Wales Spatial Plan; A Revised Tourism Strategy for South East Wales; Review of the Historic Environment in Wales;	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Heritage Strategy; Blaenau Gwent Cultural Strategy Update;	Population Cultural Heritage, Landscape
Improve the vitality and viability of towns and neighbourhood centres		PPW, TAN4 – Retailing and Town Centres; Wales Spatial Plan, Strategic Planning Guidance for South East Wales	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Strategy 2005 - 2008, Blaenau Gwent	Population Material Assets

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
			County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	
Promote the regeneration of disadvantaged wards and support the revitalisation of such areas	EU Objective 1,2 and 3 Programmes	PPW, Wales Spatial Plan, UK Sustainable Development Strategy, Wales - A Better Country. Communities First Programme; Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020; Heads We Win – A Strategic Framework for the Heads of the Valleys	Blaenau Gwent UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07; Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy	Population, Human Health, Material Assets
Improve the Quality of Life in Rural Areas and Diversification of the Rural Economy		Draft Rural Development Framework 2007-2013		Population, Human Health, Material Assets
ENVIRONMENTAL				
Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and locally designated sites, protected species and species and habitat types identified as priorities for biological conservation	Convention on Biological Diversity, The EU Biodiversity Strategy, Convention on Biological Diversity, The EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, The EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan	PPW, TAN5 – Nature Conservation and Planning, UK Biodiversity Action Plan, Woodlands for Wales; Wales Spatial Plan; Environment Strategy for Wales	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009,Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan; Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna, Landscape
Maximise Opportunities to Carry out Habitat Restoration at a Landscape Scale	Convention on Biological Diversity	PPW; TAN 5; the UK Biodiversity Action Plan; the Wakes Environment Strategy and Action Plan; the CROW Act; the NERC Act; The Wales Spatial Plan: The Wales Spatial Plan Area Work "Southeast Wales; a Networked City Region"	The Blaenau Gwent LBAP	Biodiversity
Minimise the effects of noise pollution	The EU Noise Directive, The EU Sixth Environmental	PPW, TAN11 – Noise, Environment Strategy for Wales, Transport Framework for Wales	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Human Health, Population,

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
	Action Plan			Fauna
Reduce air pollution and ensure improvements in air quality	The EU Air Quality Framework Directive, The EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan	PPW, Environment Strategy for Wales, Air Quality Strategy for the UK, Transport Framework for Wales, TAN 18: Transport; Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA), Meeting the Energy Challenge – A White Paper on Energy 2007; Sustrans Valleys Cycle Network Programme	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement, Blaenau Gwent Waste Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Human Health, Population, Flora, Fauna
Reduce the risk of flooding by assessing developments against the precautionary principle, and promote protection of floodplains from inappropriate development	The EU Water Framework Directive	PPW, TAN15 - Development and Flood Risk, Water Resources for the Future: Strategy for England and Wales.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP , Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009	Water, Human Health, Population, Biodiversity, Soil, Landscape
Carry out measures which mitigate for climate change, such as sustainable floodplain management and upland management	The EU Sixth Environment Action Plan; The UN Framework on Climate Change	PPW; TAN 5; TAN 15; the UK Biodiversity Action Plan; the Wales Environment Strategy and Action Plan; the CROW Act; the NERC Act; The Wales Spatial Plan: The Wales Spatial Plan Area Work "Southeast Wales; a Networked City Region"	The Blaenau Gwent Community Strategy; The Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement	Water, landscape
Protect and enhance the valued historic environment and its setting	The EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment	PPW, Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales; Wales Spatial Plan; Review of the Historic Environment in Wales	Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP; Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP; The Blaenau Gwent Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007	Cultural Heritage, Landscape
Encourage sustainable use, enjoyment and management of the countryside	The EU Rural Development Policy, The Common Agriculture Policy (Reform 2003)	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, The Blaenau Gwent Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007, The Sustainable Development Action Plan 2004- 2007, Action Plan for the Countryside Experience, Well Being in Wales, Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales, A Working Countryside for Wales, TAN6 – Agriculture and Rural Development; Sustrans Valleys Cycle Network Programme	Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan; Blaenau Gwent Community Strategy 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009; Blaenau Gwent Tourism Strategy, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population Landscape
Protect the quality and character of the landscape, including the countryside, the	The EU Directive on Environmental	TAN 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning; Woodlands for Wales; UK Biodiversity Action Plan, Action Plan for the Countryside Experience, Environmental Strategy for	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009,	Cultural Heritage,

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
<i>river valleys, upland areas and other green spaces, and enhance where necessary</i>	Impact Assessment	Wales; European Landscape Convention; Review of the Historic Environment in Wales	Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan , Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Landscape Biodiversity Flora, Fauna
<i>Reduce pollution of water courses, groundwater and improve poor water quality</i>	The EU Nitrates Directive, The EU Water Framework Directive	Water resources for the future: Strategy for England and Wales, UK Sustainable Development Strategy; The Ebbw and Lwyd CAMS; and Rhymney CAMS	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Water, Human Health, Soil
<i>Encourage the redevelopment of appropriate previously developed land before considering development of greenfield sites, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity</i>		TAN1 – Joint Housing Land Availability Study, PPW; Wales Spatial Plan	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Human Health
<i>Encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport, reducing the need to travel by car</i>	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change; EU Air Quality Framework Directive	The Transport Framework for Wales, PPW, TAN18 - Transport, Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales; Wales Spatial Plan; Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA); The Blaenau Gwent Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Sustrans Valleys Cycle Network Programme	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Human Health
<i>Reduce traffic congestion to protect the environment and human health</i>		The Transport Framework for Wales, PPW, TAN18, Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales; Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA)	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent UDP Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Air, Climatic Factors, Human Health
<i>Address the causes of climate change and promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions</i>	The EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, European Climate Change Programme,	UK Sustainable Development Strategy, Environment Strategy for Wales, Air Quality Strategy for the UK; Wales Spatial Plan, Transport Framework for Wales, Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA), TAN8 – Renewable Energy	Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Community Strategy 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent Healthier Future Strategy, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Air, Climatic Factors

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
	EU Air Quality Framework Directive, EU Noise Directive			
Promote the reduction of waste generation and landfill , and increase levels of recycling to achieve more sustainable waste management	The EU Landfill of Waste Directive, EU Waste Framework Directive	Environment Strategy for Wales, Wise about Waste: The National Strategy for Wales, The UK's shared framework for Sustainable Development, TAN21 – Waste, PPW, South East Wales Regional Waste Plan, Wales Spatial Plan, Wales - A better Country, Wales Spatial Plan	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement, Blaenau Gwent Waste Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Air, Climatic Factors, Landscape
Increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy production and use	Intelligent Energy Europe, EU Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings, Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change	UK Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the future, WSP, Wales a better country, PPW, TAN8 – Renewable Energy, Our energy future – Energy White Paper; Wales Spatial Plan	Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Air, Climatic Factors
Safeguard non renewable resources and use all resources wisely	Renewable Energy Coalition, Intelligent Energy Europe, Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, EU Waste Framework Directive, EU Landfill of Waste Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future, Wise about Waste: The National Strategy for Wales, Wales Spatial Plan, PPW, South East Wales Regional Waste Plan, Minerals Planning Policy Wales, MTAN1 - Aggregates	Blaenau Gwent Energy Policy Statement, Blaenau Gwent Waste Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Material Assets
To conserve soil resources and maintain their quality	EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan	Environment Strategy for Wales, Wales Spatial Plan; TAN 6: Agriculture and Rural Development; Farming for the Future	Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Soil, Landscape, Water, Climatic Factors



	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
Promote good design in all new development to contribute to a higher quality built and natural environment		PPW, TAN12 – Design, WAVE, National Housing Strategy – Better Homes for People in Wales, Building a Future for Wales: A Sustainable Housing Strategy	Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy; Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan, Blaenau Gwent Tourism Strategy; Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Landscape, Cultural Heritage
SOCIAL				
Improve the health, social care and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health and improving accessibility to health services	EU Air Quality Framework Directive, EU Noise Directive, EU 6th Environmental Action Plan	Wales Spatial Plan, Government's Transport Sustainable Development Objectives, TAN 13 - Tourism, TAN 18 – Transport, Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA), Well Being in Wales, Climbing Higher – WAG Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity, TAN16 – Sport and Recreation; The Blaenau Gwent Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007; Designed for Life; Fulfilled Lives Supportive Communities'; Living Independently in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Blaenau Gwent Development Plan for the Strategy for Older People In Wales, Blaenau Gwent Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division Contaminated Land Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Health and Social Needs in Blaenau Gwent, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Jan 2002, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Blaenau Gwent Healthier Future Strategy, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP; Needs Assessment for Blaenau Gwent 2007	Population, Human Health
Improve accessibility and transport links to key services through improved travel choices		Wales Spatial Plan, Wales - A Better Country, TAN18 - Transport; The Transport Framework for Wales, Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales, Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (SEWTA); The Blaenau Gwent Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Waste Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Blaenau Gwent Healthier Future Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Human Health
Raise educational attainment levels and develop opportunities for everyone to equip themselves with the necessary skills to find and remain in work		South East Wales Economic Development Strategy; WAVE; Wales - A Better Country	Blaenau Gwent Development Plan for the Strategy for Older People In Wales, Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Blaenau Gwent Adopted School Organisational Plan; Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Single Education Plan, Blaenau Gwent Heritage Strategy	Population
Improve the quality, variety and affordability of housing to ensure that everyone has the		TAN2 – Planning and Affordable Housing; Wales Spatial Plan; National Housing Strategy – Better Homes for	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis,	Population, Human

	Source			
Sustainability Theme	International	National/Regional	Local	SEA Topics
<i>opportunity to live in a decent affordable home</i>		People in Wales; PPW; Environment Strategy for Wales	Abertillery Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07; Blaenau Gwent Housing Market Assessment; Blaenau Gwent Housing Strategy, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Health
<i>Reduce levels of crime and fear of crime and promote safer neighbourhoods</i>		TAN 12 - Design; Wales – A Better Country, Achieving our Potential 2006-2013 – Strategic Action Plan; Wales Programme for Employment – Dec 2005	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Strategy 2005 - 2008, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Healthier Future Strategy, Environmental Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent UDP	Population, Human Health
<i>Reduce poverty and social exclusion and improve equality of opportunities amongst all social groups</i>		TAN2 – Planning and Affordable Housing, TAN13 – Transport, Wales – A Better Country,; Achieving our Potential 2006-2013 – Strategic Action Plan, Wales Programme for Employment – Dec 2005; Living Independently in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Blaenau Gwent Development Plan for the Strategy for Older People In Wales , Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Ebbw Vale Urban Function Analysis, Brynmawr Urban Function Analysis, Tredegar Urban Function Analysis, Blaenau Gwent Economic Development Strategy 2004 Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Strategy 2005 - 2008, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Improvement Plan 06/07, Blaenau Gwent Heritage Strategy	Population, Human Health
<i>Protect and provide local social, recreational and leisure opportunities to increase participation in sport and physical activity to maximise their contribution to health and well-being</i>		TAN16 – Sport and Recreation; Sports Tourism in Wales: A framework for action; Climbing Higher – WAG Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity; Well Being in Wales; Walking and Cycling Strategy; Blaenau Gwent Local Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Review of the Historic Environment in Wales	Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 'proud past, bright future' 2005-2009, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Tourism Strategy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council UDP, Blaenau Gwent Healthier Future Strategy, Blaenau Gwent Heritage Strategy; Sport and Active Living Strategy	Population, Human Health

## A2: Baseline Information

- 3.5 The next task in the SA covers the collection of baseline information. The review of other plans and programmes undertaken previously has also provided a considerable amount of baseline information and this information has been complemented by collection of data on key indicators relating to the SEA topic areas, as well as additional social and economic indicators for the Area.
- 3.6 The SEA Directive says that the Environmental Report should provide information on:  
*“relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan” and the “environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected”* (Annex I (b) (c)) and  
*“any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)”* (Annex I (c))
- 3.7 The baseline data provides an overview of the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the LDP area and how these compare to the region, the rest of the Principality and the UK are presented in Appendices C and D. The most efficient way to collect relevant baseline data is through the use of indicators. This ensures that the data collection carried out is both focused and effective. The identification of relevant indicators has taken place alongside the assessment of other relevant plans policies and programmes (Task A1), the identification of sustainability issues (Task A3) and developing the sustainability appraisal framework (Task A4).
- 3.8 Data have been collated and analysed for the following indicators:

### Economic Data

- Incomes and Economic Activity;
- Entrepreneurial Dynamism;
- Retail;
- Car Ownership;

### Social Characteristics

- Housing;
- Population;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Crime and Fear of Crime;
- Education, Skills and Qualifications;
- Recreation;

### Environmental Characteristics

- Special Areas of Conservation;
- Special Landscape Areas;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- National Nature Reserves;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- National Parks;

- Protected Species;
- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Air Quality;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Chemical and Biological Water Quality;
- Flood Risk;
- Ground and Surface Water Availability;
- Waste;
- Energy;
- Landscape;
- Soil;
- Geodiversity;
- Public Rights of Way; and
- Travel to Work.

3.9 The information provided aims to demonstrate the key issues and problems to be tackled by the LDP, in addition to wider sustainability issues that may arise as a result of implementing the LDP. These are summarised in Table 3.3.

3.10 Due to the fact that SA is an iterative process subsequent stages in its preparation and assessment might identify other issues and priorities that require data collection and monitoring. This makes the SA process flexible, adaptable and responsive to changes in the baseline conditions and enables trends to be analysed over time.

3.11 Information describing the baseline provides the basis for the prediction and monitoring of the effects of the implementation of the LDP and its constituent documents. It can be used as a way of identifying problems as they occur so that relevant policy changes can be made to address such matters.

### **LDP Deposit Plan: April 2011 assessments**

3.12 The April 2011 assessments have considered new information and planning policy guidance that has come into being since the original baseline was established. Sources of new information used in the appraisal of the LDP Deposit Plan are listed in section 7.

## **Cumulative Effects**

3.13 Cumulative effects can occur from the following situations:

- Combined effects of a plan with effects of another plan, affecting the same receptor, for example, proposals from land use and transport plans could affect a nature reserve;
- Interaction of policies within a plan in the same receptor: for example, a policy to encourage development which promote jobs and a housing policy to provide more housing to meet the borough's target could result in a cumulative loss of open space; and

- Interaction of effects from proposals within a plan affecting the same receptor: for example, proposals to build roads, commercial premises and housing in a particular area within a short period of time could result in cumulative noise, dust and visual effects on the residents nearby.

3.14 A preliminary analysis has identified an initial set of likely cumulative effects, their receptors and likely causes, as shown in Table 3.2. This initial assessment of likely cumulative effects will be further examined in section 6.

**Table 3.2 - Potential Cumulative Effects and their causes**

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Causes
1. Habitat loss and fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSSI, SPA, SAC</li> <li>- BAP - Areas of local conservation significance</li> <li>- Reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, breeding birds, bats, dormice, otters and potentially badgers<sup>14</sup></li> <li>- Sites of non-designated significance for nature conservation including wildlife corridors</li> </ul>	Use of land for new infrastructure, dwellings and employment uses.
2. Climate change	- Worldwide	Increase in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions through increased motorised transport usage and increased emissions from residential and commercial developments
3. Increase in ambient noise levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People living adjacent to major roads</li> <li>- Species</li> </ul>	Increase in traffic flows, increased congestion, new transport infrastructure
4. Increase in air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People living and working in identified and possibly extended Air Quality Management Areas</li> <li>- Wildlife habitats and species described in 1 above.</li> </ul>	Increase in traffic flows, increased congestion, new transport infrastructure
5. Fragmentation/ loss of public open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents</li> <li>- Existing public open space</li> <li>- Wildlife habitats and habitats and species described in 1 above.</li> </ul>	Use of land for new infrastructure, dwellings and employment uses.
6. Degradation of water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents</li> <li>- Wildlife habitats and species described in 1 above.</li> </ul>	Use of land for new infrastructure and increased runoff from impermeable surfaces contaminating waterways.
7. Loss of local townscape character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listed Buildings</li> <li>- Areas of Special Character</li> </ul>	Unsympathetic design of new development negatively affecting the setting of listed buildings. Disturbance to character of areas through

<sup>14</sup> This is a representative selection of potential receptors

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Causes
		increased traffic flows.
8. Increase in flood risk	- Residents - Wildlife habitats and species described in 1 above. - Coastal habitats.	Use of land for new infrastructure, dwellings and employment uses and associated increase in impermeable surfaces.
9. Improvement in overall levels of health	- Residents	Increase in walking and cycling from infrastructure improvements. Improvements in levels of air quality.
10. Increase in accessibility to essential services	- Residents	Improved provision of public transport, walking and cycling, and car linkages to essential services. Direct provision of new community facilities.
11. Reducing road traffic and congestion	- Residents - Wildlife habitats and species described in 1 above.	Various measures and proposals aimed at reducing road traffic and congestion and encouraging alternatives to the car.
12. Attracting inwards investment and increasing economic diversity	- Residents	Various proposals aimed at improving the image of the area to residents and businesses, which may attract additional private sector investment in the area.

### A3: Key Sustainability Issues

- 3.15 The next task in the SA, carried out at the scoping stage, is the identification of sustainability issues. The identification of sustainability issues of particular significance in Blaenau Gwent County Borough provides an opportunity to define key issues for the LDP, to enable improvement of the plan objectives and options. The analysis of sustainability issues at scoping stage influenced the baseline and the SA framework, in particular in identifying and selecting indicators and targets. This section describes the current situation and highlights the key issues faced within Blaenau Gwent. It does not attempt to cover all the issues but identifies those that are considered to be a priority in terms of the sustainability of the plan area.
- 3.16 The requirement to identify sustainability problems and issues arises from the SEA Directive, where the Environmental Report required under the Directive should include:
- “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC(Birds) and 92/43/EEC(Habitats)”(Annex I (d))*
- 3.17 The key sustainability issues for Blaenau Gwent County Borough have been derived by analysing the baseline data and contextual information from other plans and assessing what the likely significant issues will be over the longer term i.e. 10 years +. The key sustainability issues relevant to the LDP were identified in the following ways:
- Review of plans, policies and programmes;
  - Review of baseline data;



- Initial discussions with key stakeholders;
- Advice and participation with other departments within the Council; and
- Consultation responses to the Scoping Report.

3.18 The analysis of sustainability issues has been iterative and is ongoing. As the SA develops with further stakeholder involvement the analysis of key issues is likely to evolve.

3.19 The key sustainability issues are set out below in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 - Key Sustainability Issues/Opportunities

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<b>Economic</b>			
<p><b>High levels of economic inactivity and high benefit dependence</b></p> <p>29.5% of the working age population are economically inactive in the County Borough, which is over 5% more than the Wales average. Of that percentage, 9.1% of people consider themselves as 'wanting a job', which may indicate that there is a shortage of opportunities in the area. However, 20.4% are recorded as 'not wanting a job' – this statistic is also higher than the Wales average of 17.9% and could be interpreted as an indication of low aspirations or ambitions amongst the resident population. Reducing the numbers of economically inactive in the borough should be a key aim.</p> <p>In 2000 the unemployment rate was 9.6% which decreased to 7.5% by 2003/04. This has subsequently risen again to 9.2% (2008). This is high compared to the rest of Wales and GB averages (6.3% and 5.7% respectively (2008)) despite an overall rise in unemployment nationally. It is also important to note that a substantial proportion of the population of working age suffers from limiting long term illness and/or disability – 28.26% at the last census compared to 23.4% in the South East region and 23.3% across Wales as a whole. Whilst this does not necessarily preclude economic activity, it is likely that some sufferers appear in the statistics relating to economic inactivity.</p> <p>The wards of Ebbw Vale North and South, Brynmawr and Nantyglo have particularly high rates of unemployment in the context of the County Borough as a whole.</p> <p>The proportion of the population of working age claiming job seekers allowance (JSA) is considerably above the regional and national averages – 7.9% in Blaenau Gwent compared to 4.3% nationally (Wales) (July 2009). In addition to this, the latest available statistics indicate that the rate has increased in recent years – it was 4.3% in December 2006 and 4.9% in April 2007. This means that the working and earning population of the County Borough is being forced to support an increasing amount of unemployed adults. As unemployment rises, this becomes an increasing</p>	<p>The plan needs to encourage the development of new job opportunities, and ensure that the distribution of new opportunities supports regeneration across the County Borough, particularly in the most deprived wards. Environmental enhancements could also be supported through the LDP, which would offer a greater incentive for new businesses to invest in the County Borough.</p> <p>The statistics suggest that there is some reluctance among certain sectors of the population to actively seek employment and thus the LDP should seek to raise aspirations – this could be achieved through a combination of regeneration activities including environmental and accessibility improvements and increased availability of training and education.</p>	Population Human Health	Objective 1

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>problem.</p> <p>The statistics also indicate that in many of the County Borough's wards, over one third of all households receive Council Tax Benefit – the highest is Nantyglo, where 39.1% of all households receive this benefit. In addition, in many of the Blaenau Gwent wards almost one quarter of all households are in receipt of housing benefit of some type. This is also reflected in statistics relating to housing by tenure – in general terms owner occupation levels are low (62.2%, which is 10% lower than the regional average) and around one quarter of the population rely upon local authority owned housing or rent from registered social landlords.</p> <p>There is a proven link between employment and better health, not only for financial and physical benefits, but also from more subtle mental benefits conferred by being economically active.</p> <p>Recent research has found the health effects of worklessness to be comparable in severity to those from heavy smoking.</p> <p>Lack of appropriate qualifications is now generally agreed to be a bigger factor in worklessness than poor health throughout the 'heads of the valleys' region, but nevertheless many people who are economically inactive (and quite a lot who are in or seeking work) do have significant health problems.</p> <p>70% of the County Borough is classified as rural, discussions with stakeholders have highlighted the need for diversification of the rural economy in order to improve sustainable rural development.</p>			
<p><b>Limited employment opportunities and low household income</b></p> <p>Manufacturing accounts for 30.2% of all employment in Blaenau Gwent, which is 10% higher than the Welsh average (2008). Professional occupations in the County Borough account for 6.8% of all employment, whereas in GB they account for 13.0%.</p>	<p>There is a need for the LDP to seek to encourage increased economic activity rates. This will require the provision of versatile and varied employment premises across the plan area. Particular emphasis will need to be placed on supporting both small and medium sized start up enterprises to foster a sense of entrepreneurial spirit, as well as providing high quality accommodation to support higher skilled professions and services.</p>	<p>Population Human Health</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>An examination of employment by sector reveals that the local economy is predominantly based around manufacturing and service sectors. These sectors are traditionally lower skilled and lower paid than professional employment. The dominance of these sectors has therefore also influenced income and productivity levels – the gross value added (GVA) per head in Blaenau Gwent places the area in the bottom 5 authorities in its statistical area (NUTS 3); and the average incomes are significantly lower than the average for South East Wales and the Principality as a whole.</p> <p>From 2002 to 2005, average weekly household income in Blaenau Gwent has been less than that of the rest of the South East region and for the whole of Wales. Of particular note are the wards of Llanhillieth, Nantyglo, Cwmtillery and Tredegar where there is a very significant proportion of households with incomes of less than £5,000 per annum. All the wards in the County Borough show high proportions of households on earnings of less than £12.25k per annum. These low income figures are a reflection of the predominance of low skilled, low wage employment opportunities and the general low level of economic participation.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent has a significantly lower amount of VAT registrations in all of the size band categories than the average for the South East authorities and Wales as a whole. In particular, it has very few larger registrations (employing over 10 staff). A comparison at the regional level reveals that Blaenau Gwent has consistently experienced the second least number of new registrations over the past 5 years after Merthyr Tydfil and in most recent years, registrations in Blaenau Gwent have been over 150 less than any other authority in the region (with the exception of Merthyr Tydfil). This appears to suggest that there is a lack of entrepreneurial culture in the County Borough.</p>	<p>There is also a need to encourage people of working age to settle in the area, thus it will be increasingly important to ensure that job opportunities are matched by access to housing that is suitable and affordable.</p>		
<p><b>Tourism potential</b></p> <p>The landscape and heritage of Blaenau Gwent constitute a small mosaic of the many features of Wales with an intrinsic tourism value. However, due to the size and diversity of the County Borough, there is no dominant brand that defines the area as a tourist destination. Of particular note is the fact that only 3% of the land utilisation is for recreational purposes, which is a very small proportion compared to the 45% of the County Borough's area that is open countryside. Furthermore, many of the attractions are mainly for local people and there would be a need to review the</p>	<p>As part of the wider effort to seek to diversify the local economy, the LDP should seek to support developments aimed at encouraging an increase in the recreational function of suitably accessible parts of open countryside. This will include specific consideration of the way in which tourism development is addressed and promoted through the LDP. When increases in recreational function are considered, the impact upon the countryside, particularly visual, must be taken into</p>	<p>Population Landscape Cultural Heritage Biodiversity Human Health</p>	<p>Objective 3 Objective 10</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>current offer in order to create sites, attractions and/or products that appeal to an increased number and broader cross-section of visitors.</p> <p>In addition to the quality, range and type of attractions in the area, the development of the tourism economy would require considerable investment in upgrading all accommodation and food sectors.</p> <p><b>Angling</b></p> <p>There is a shortage of angling facilities in the County Borough. Developing angling facilities can have a positive impact on encouraging tourism and contributing to community health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The promotion of angling can bring in tourists from outside the area, which will provide extra customers for hotels, shops, restaurants and other local businesses.</p> <p>It should be recognised that the participation in angling has been shown to reduce local crime (especially amongst youths) and truancy. The levels of education amongst the new, young anglers have been found to improve, as the anglers are keen to learn about their environment and what they can do to conserve local public amenities. Furthermore, these facilities are less likely to be vandalised and damaged, as the local anglers take pride and ownership of these facilities, and wish to maintain them in good order. Fishing has also been shown to improve people's health, as it encourages gentle exercise, getting out into the fresh air, and reduces stress levels.</p>	<p>account. This also applies to land designated for its ecological value.</p> <p>There are huge opportunities in how the LDP may assist in delivering the aim to 'establish a strong tourist economy, sensitively capitalising on environmental, heritage and leisure assets', through developing eco tourism through the management of open spaces and heritage sites and improvement of facilities that will bring considerable investment into the area.</p> <p>The LDP should seek to develop and promote angling in Blaenau Gwent.</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>Material Assets</p> <p>Biodiversity</p>	
<p><b>High Vacancy Rates in Town centres</b></p> <p>According to the Adopted UDP July 2006, high town centre vacancy rates exist throughout Blaenau Gwent and there is a risk that town centres could decline in the face of competition from nearby retail centres outside the County Borough.</p>	<p>The LDP should enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, through regeneration policies, and improve the retail offer within the County Borough.</p>	<p>Population</p>	<p>Objective 4</p>
<b>Social</b>			
<p><b>Changing demographics and housing needs</b></p> <p>Since its heyday in 1921 when the population was 127,611, Blaenau Gwent has experienced continued population decline. Between 1982 and 2002 it experienced a</p>	<p>Demographics are a key influencing factor for a wide range of different development types – housing, education provision, open space and recreational opportunities, healthcare and community service. The LDP will need to take changing local demographics into</p>	<p>Population</p> <p>Human Health</p>	<p>Objective 5</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>7.2% drop. The population in 1991 was 73,250 and the population in 2003 was 68,900, which is over 100 less than two years previous. 2007 saw a slight population increase to 69,200. The projections for 2011 anticipate a reversal of this decline, but only estimate the population to be 500 more than the 1991 levels. However, the South East region and Wales as a whole have experienced population increases over the same period, and are projected to continue to increase substantially to 2011. These figures suggest Blaenau Gwent is a less desirable place to live and people are being drawn to places perceived to offer more opportunities. Allied to this, population decrease or stagnation can also act as a deterrent to prospective business investors, who tend to prefer to locate in areas that are perceived to be growing.</p> <p>An examination of the County Borough's 2001 demographics indicates that the 16 – 19 year old age bracket comprises the smallest proportion of the population, below regional averages. Conversely, the 45 – 64 and 65+ age groups comprise a larger population than the South East average, suggesting that there is an ageing population. In addition, the percentage of 0 – 4 year olds is also lower than the South East average by almost 1% and thus there is likely to be a developing trend of death rates outstripping birth rates over the coming years.</p> <p>Furthermore, strategy documentation relating to the County Borough suggests that there is a relatively high level of youth out-migration. This affects a variety of areas – a reduced population of childbearing age is unlikely to support an increase in population through increased birth rates; the loss of the younger population will affect social structure; and it is likely to be the more skilled persons that leave the area in search of better paid and more varied work opportunities, which has negative implications for the development of certain aspects of the local economy.</p> <p><b>Gypsy Accommodation</b></p> <p>The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy-Traveller Study has identified the need for further land for new gypsy travellers at Cwmcraehen.</p>	<p>consideration and offer an opportunity to seek the delivery of a more balanced and self-sufficient community. Housing choice will need to reflect the needs of and seek to attract people of households of different ages, sizes and life stages, including the provision of sheltered accommodation; community provision (healthcare/ community centres/nursing homes/social services support etc.) will need to accommodate the requirements of all ages; and open space provision will need to include both formal provision for play space, as well as more informal provision better suited to older age groups.</p>		
<p><b>Poor housing quality and mismatch of housing size/tenure with needs and demand</b></p> <p>55% of the current housing stock in Blaenau Gwent comprises terraces constructed before 1919. Overall in Blaenau Gwent 8% of the housing stock is considered unfit</p>	<p>The quality and range of housing in Blaenau Gwent will be a critical element of the development of the County Borough – there is a need to ensure that poorer quality stock is improved and that new stock is designed to suit a range of needs and budgets.</p>	Population	Objective 6



Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>for habitation, and a further 12% is classified as being in need of substantial repair. In addition to this, 5.7% of houses are recorded as being vacant – in some parts of the country this would be due to second home purchases; however, in Blaenau Gwent this is a combination of uninhabitable properties and inevitable vacancies associated with the activity of the property market.</p> <p>The 2001 census indicated that there were still a number of houses without central heating and/or the sole use of bath/shower and toilet. From the census classifications, ‘without central heating but with the sole use of a bath/shower and toilet’ is the predominant statistic with a count of 712 houses for the County Borough as a whole – this is a reflection that there may be issues of poverty and deprivation in certain locations.</p> <p>24 July 2009: Blaenau Gwent’s council tenants have voted yes to transfer their housing stock to a new not-for-profit housing organisation called Tai Calon Community Homes. The result allows council properties to be improved up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, set by the Welsh Assembly Government, under a repairs and improvements programme totalling £111m in the first five years and £543m over 30 years.</p> <p>Discussions with the council also indicate a demand for 4-bed detached dwellings, of which there is a shortage in the authority. This may mean that those who can afford this type of property will move elsewhere, which may have implications for the social mix in the community.</p>	<p>There is also a need to upgrade housing stock, including the provision of high quality larger homes more suited to attracting professionally qualified people to the area to take up residence and jobs.</p> <p>The improvement of existing stock will also benefit from improvement in accordance with holistic plans for regeneration to ensure that changes are an improvement to the area. Allied to this, the provision of housing may need to respond to the planned improvements to the rail infrastructure, particularly in terms of accommodating a potential increase in demand linked to rail commuting.</p>		
<p><b>Housing affordability problems</b></p> <p>The average house price for Blaenau Gwent in 2007 was £95,000. With the Median average gross pay for a Full Time Employee in the County Borough at £18,343, there is a considerable affordability gap of 28%.</p> <p>The Blaenau Gwent Local Housing Assessment (2006) identified a need for 86 additional affordable units in Blaenau Gwent per year over the next five years. This need is made up of 40 intermediate and 46 social rented. In terms of overall percentages the requirement is for 66% market housing, 18% social rented and 16% intermediate.</p>	<p>In order to enable those wishing to buy as opposed to rent to access market housing, there will be a need to ensure that the choice of units is affordable and appealing in the context of local market conditions.</p>	Population	Objective 7

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>This can be interpreted as an indication that Blaenau Gwent is perceived as a less desirable location in which to live than other neighbouring settlements, which could be a consequence of a number of factors including accessibility, perceived employment opportunities, quality of housing stock, environmental quality and lack of suitable accommodation. However, the opening of the new railway station in Ebbw Vale may catalyse a trend of workers from Cardiff, who will be attracted by the relatively low house prices in Blaenau Gwent, moving to the area. This will result in increased demand from buyers outside the area pushing the prices up. This may have implications for the affordability of housing for local people.</p>			
<p><b>Low educational attainment</b></p> <p>The percentage of people with at least NVQ level 2 qualifications is below the national average of 65.5%, at 57.1% (2008). However, since 2001, this figure has increased from 30.92%. Of the County Borough's total population, 17% hold qualifications to NQV level 4 or above, a rise from 9.3% in 2001, This compares to a national average of 26.5%.</p> <p>Tredegar and Ebbw Vale North have particularly high percentages of non attendance in primary and secondary schools, likely to lead to low educational attainment.</p> <p>Only 6.3% of the total population of the County Borough was enrolled in higher education in 2003, which is a relatively low proportion.</p> <p>The first British Gas run 'green skills training centre' will open later in 2009 (quoted 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009) in Tredegar. If a success, this could be replicated across the UK. The objective is to install green technologies in the local authority housing stock as well as creating a significant number of jobs through smart-metering qualifications.</p> <p><i>"Once opened, the site will join up with 18 local authorities in the area to train more than 1,300 people a year as part of the government's £140 million Heads of the Valleys regeneration programme. This will include provision to enable local, long-term unemployed people to find work in the emerging green economy. Training in</i></p>	<p>There is a high proportion of the population with few or no qualifications; provision should be made for encouraging an increase in the percentage of people continuing into higher education – this must start at the primary level and follow through schooling at all levels.</p> <p>The LDP should consider how it can enable the promotion of the green economy through its policies.</p>	Population	Objective 8

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<i>green skills will be needed if the environmental jobs the government claims will be created – one million at the last count – are to be filled.”<sup>15</sup></i>			
<p><b>Transport access constraints to the area</b></p> <p>By air, the nearest airports are Cardiff International, Bristol and Birmingham. There are a number of low cost options to access these airports, from the City Centres themselves, but there are limited public transport links from Blaenau Gwent to these cities, which make it difficult to promote the area as a short-break destination.</p> <p>Rail links are available, although these tend to follow the valley topography, focusing on longitudinal routes towards Cardiff. The nearest stations fall just outside the County Borough boundary and comprise the Valleys line station at Rhymney, with access to the West coast mainline being more distant at Abergavenny. The new extension of the Ebbw Valley railway to a new halt in Ebbw Vale provides a connection to the Valley line Cardiff service within the County Borough boundary. The Ebbw Valley Railway was (Thursday 5 February 2009) commended in Royal Town Planning Institute's annual UK awards – this after the project recently won the RTPi Cymru's supreme award as “one of the most significant infrastructure projects in the South East Wales Valleys for some years”. The northern area of the County Borough, however, still lacks an easily accessible rail service.</p> <p>The principal road system provides A-road access to the motorway network (the M4, M5 and M50) combined with the A470 and A465. Widening work is being done to improve the access; however, there is a danger that this may increase the traffic flow passing through the area rather than bringing more visitors to it.</p> <p>The local bus service provides a reasonable level of service during weekday working hours and a range of services on Saturday; however, evening and Sunday service coverage is poor, as are some lateral connections between valleys resulting in heavy reliance on taxi services. This is a key issue, particularly given that the levels of car ownership (35.1% of households do not have access to a car or van, compared to 28.5% regionally and 26% nationally) and household income are relatively low in the</p>	<p>The LDP should support provision of more public transport connections from the main centres such as Cardiff.</p> <p>Improvements to public transport provision in and around Blaenau Gwent will be important in enabling weekend trips with return on Sunday, and access to employment for people living in the County Borough outside of the urban areas. The LTP should be taken into regard throughout the LDP.</p> <p>It is important to also ensure that by attracting people to Blaenau Gwent the environment and infrastructure is able to cope with increased car usage.</p> <p>The LDP should encourage, as a priority, improvements to the Rights of Way network, which will have benefits for tourism, health, heritage assets, air quality, and access to facilities for the population.</p>	Population, human health, air, cultural heritage, climatic factors, material assets	Objective 9

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/pm/articles/2009/08/training-centre-for-green-skills-to-open.htm>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>County Borough, with particular areas of social and economic disadvantage. There is also a perceived lack of safe parking facilities for HGVs in the area and safe access for HGVs to industrial estates is also an issue in some cases.</p> <p>The Public Rights of Way network currently suffers from fragmentation and poor maintenance, restricting its use by walkers, horse riders and cyclists as an alternative mode of transport. 30% of this network consists of bridleways or carriageways mainly used as bridleways, where there is right of way on foot, riding or leading a horse, and cycling. Not all of these routes may be in a useable condition. Also, 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 lead to restricted usability of this facility. Three factors identified that need improving are: more circular routes- signed and advertised as such; the need to link paths together- defragmentation; and more long distance routes.</p> <p>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 6.6% of the population walking or cycling to work. In terms of car ownership, 45.1% of the resident population owns one car only, with 35.1% 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.</p> <p>Discussions with BGCBC have highlighted the need to create a settlement hierarchy within the County Borough, acknowledging Ebbw Vale as a main centre, with Tredegar, Abertillery and Brynmawr as district centres to be linked by public transport to Ebbw Vale</p>			
<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>Life expectancies for both males and females across the County Borough are below national averages. The proportion of people with limiting long term illness is above the South East and national averages: 28.26% compared to 23.4% in the South East and 23.3% in Wales. In addition, people who self-assessed their general health as</p>	<p>The LDP can indirectly assist through the provision of better access to healthcare and recreation opportunities and through economic development opportunities.</p> <p>The LDP should ensure that environmental factors that</p>	<p>Population Health Air</p>	<p>Objective 10</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>'good' (2001 Census) represented a lower proportion of the population than the South East and national averages: 59.38% in Blaenau Gwent compared to 64.48% in the South East and 60.06% in Wales.</p> <p>The 2004/05 Welsh Health Survey indicates that 12% of adults in Blaenau Gwent report being treated for a mental illness, which is well above the Welsh average of 9%. Mental health and illness have been linked to deprivation, with both MCS scores and rates of anxiety and depression decreasing and increasing respectively with increases in deprivation. Environmental factors such as poorly equipped town centres and limited transport links in some areas can also contribute to poor mental health.</p>	<p>may contribute to poor mental health are minimised.</p> <p>The LDP should seek to improve the natural environment including green infrastructure, which can provide numerous physical and mental health benefits including that from improved air quality; increased potential for formal and informal physical activity; and increased potential for community interaction.</p>		
<p><b>Welsh language and culture</b></p> <p>Despite the rich industrial heritage of the locality, there are very few members of the population that actively make use of the Welsh language – over 90% of the population are either unable to speak Welsh or have no Welsh speaking communications.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>In seeking to develop the distinctive identify of the County Borough, it will be important to determine what role the Welsh Language and Culture should have. The LDP can influence this through factors such as the provision of sites for Welsh medium schools and interpretation of heritage and social assets. In addition, the design of housing and community facilities and services should seek to actively support and further strengthen existing social networks, preserving the distinctive character of the Valleys communities.</p>	<p>Population Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Objective 11</p>
<p><b>Crime and social deprivation</b></p> <p>In general terms, crime rates in Blaenau Gwent are broadly comparable and, if anything, slightly lower than the prevailing rate per 1000 for the whole of the South East region. Notwithstanding this, however, the overall rate is relatively high.</p> <p>Violence against the person seems to be significantly higher than the other crime rates. Potentially, this could be linked in part to poor urban design and a lack of planning for safe communities resulting in a number of areas in the County Borough where criminal activity is more likely to go undetected because, for example, visibility is hindered or there are no surveillance techniques in design. Consultation with the SA Stakeholder group has highlighted the link between alcohol consumption and</p>	<p>There will be a need for the Local Development Plan to minimise opportunities for criminal activity. This will primarily relate to design measures such as the mixing of house types and sizes, the location of public and private open space and the network of routeways, particularly for non-motorised users. In addition, careful consideration will need to be given to the siting of any commercial activities and security of vulnerable land-uses.</p> <p>The siting of public houses and late night takeaway facilities should be considered in relation to their potential affect on the generation of anti social behaviour.</p>	<p>Population Human Health Material Assets</p>	<p>Objective 12</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>violence against the person.</p> <p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation (2008) is shown in map form in Appendix C. This shows that 21% of LSOAs fall within the 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales, and 83% of its LSOAs fall within the 50% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Tredegar Central and West; Sirhowy; and Ebbw Vale North are the three most deprived wards in the County Borough.</p> <p>When comparing the spread of Deprivation across the indicators, The median rank was noticeably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• more deprived than the median rank for Wales for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Income</li><li>- Employment</li><li>- Health</li><li>- Education</li><li>- Community</li></ul></li><li>• less deprived than the median rank for Wales for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Housing</li><li>- Access</li></ul></li></ul> <p>In terms of social deprivation, there are a variety of health related statistics that are commonly used as indications of social deprivation and/or disadvantage. In Blaenau Gwent, the analysis of the baseline has revealed the following:</p> <p>The rate of teenage conceptions is considerably above the regional average – 60.4 per 1000 compared to 45.7 per 1000;</p> <p>The proportion of pregnancies resulting in low birth weight babies is above regional and national averages. In particular Sirhowy, Ebbw Vale, South Abertillery and Nantyglo have high rates, particularly Sirhowy, which is 13.3%;</p> <p>The proportion of the population stating their health as 'good' is only 59.38%. The regional average is 64.48% and the national average is 65.06%;</p> <p>28.26% of the working age population suffer from limiting long term illness, which is</p>	<p>Providing a range of leisure facilities for residents to participate in may reduce crime rates by providing other activities for people to participate in and provide opportunities for social integration. Accompanied with encouraging and facilitating higher education achievement and raising aspirations, particularly amongst the younger members of the community, this may also help to reduce teenage pregnancies</p> <p>It will also be necessary to ensure that housing standards are improved throughout the borough, either through grants or providing more job opportunities to increase household income.</p> <p>To a certain extent, some of the health statistics may be linked to the fact that Blaenau Gwent tends towards a more elderly population. However, the LDP may also offer an opportunity to help contribute to improved health through providing space and facilities for increased recreational and sporting pursuits; adopting an approach to design that seeks to safeguard air and water quality; and encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling.</p> <p>There are issues with car accessibility in the area; by seeking provision for increased access to health care, the health conditions of the people in the county borough may also improve.</p> <p>Land use, and planning of housing, town centres, transport routes etc can play an important role in promoting social cohesion and interaction, and ultimately better community mental health.</p>		



Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>above the regional (23.4%) and national (23.3%) averages;</p> <p>The proportion of the population that smokes is above the national average – 34% compared to 31%.</p> <p>Life expectancy at birth is considerably below the national average – 73.80 for males and 78.4 for females in Blaenau Gwent compared to 75.8 for males and 80.3 for females across Wales;</p> <p>The death rate was higher than the South East regional average by over 2% in 2001. Deaths from circulatory disease were 40.9 per 1,000 and deaths from cancer were 26.1 per 1,000;</p> <p>The proportion of adults (aged 16+) who are obese is 59%, which is 5% higher than the South East average.</p> <p>There is a significant number of Christian residents (44,973) in the borough and only very small minorities of other religions, Muslim being the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest religion with 152. There are also a large number of people who stated having no religion or did not state any religion; the sheer difference in numbers of religious groups could mean that problems relating to social exclusion and integration may occur in the borough.</p>			
Environment			
<p><b>High car usage and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b></p> <p>There are significantly less people using public transport in Blaenau Gwent than the average statistics for the rest of the South East region and Wales as a whole – 5.4% of all commuting trips compared to 7.8% nationally. Use of car for commuting trips by the County Borough’s residents is slightly higher than the national average – 79.7% compared to 77.8%. However, a greater proportion of Blaenau Gwent’s residents commute to work on foot than nationally (12.5% compared to 10.4%).</p> <p>The share of road transport related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Blaenau Gwent is lower than the Wales average – 16% and 23% respectively. This may be a reflection of the socio-economic statistics, which indicate low car ownership rates in the County</p>	<p>The LDP should seek improved public transport and walking and cycling provision with new development to provide alternative transport modes in light of the potential future increase in car users in the area.</p> <p>The LDP should actively discourage car use; for example, by limiting car parking space in shopping centres that are well served by public transport, also by promoting park and ride sites where appropriate.</p> <p>The LDP should seek to improve the energy efficiency of housing to reduce costs, use of natural resources and greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>Air</p> <p>Climatic Factors</p> <p>Population</p> <p>Human Health</p> <p>Material Assets</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>Objectives 13 and 18</p>

<sup>16</sup> <http://walespublicsector.envirowise.gov.uk/cms/welsh-ecological-footprint-grows-as-we-prosper/>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>Borough. Fewer car trips for leisure, social, shopping and healthcare purposes may also be a factor.</p> <p>The County Borough contains a high percentage of houses that are not energy efficient, and therefore use a high level of gas.</p> <p>Although the ecological footprint in Blaenau Gwent is the smallest in any part of Britain, its footprint is still beyond what is considered to be a fair earth share by this measure.<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>Despite having a relatively low ecological footprint compared to the rest of Britain, Blaenau Gwent should seek to lower its ecological footprint further, in line with the One Wales, One Planet targets set out nationally.</p>		
<p><b>Under appreciation and protection of natural resources, landscape and biodiversity value</b></p> <p>Blaenau Gwent has a limited number of sites designated on the basis of their ecological importance. Despite this, the local Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a very broad range of species and habitats considered worthy of protection from damage, coupled with detailed listings of the range of pressures that face these habitats (e.g. overgrazing; lack of traditional countryside management practices; presence of invasive species; under valuing of moorland habitats; chemicals; domestic pets, etc.). Consequently, the current lack of designations could be considered as a failure to fully recognise the presence of valuable resources in the area, which have an important potential role in the wider economic regeneration and tourism agendas. This is a particular issue given that the County Borough boundary encompasses part of the Brecon Beacons National Park.</p> <p>However, the County Borough is adjacent to parts of the Usk Bat Sites and Cwm Clydach Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC), both of which are European Sites for nature conservation. The SACs support internationally important plant and animal communities. Based on the information gathered for the screening process and considering the Habitats Regulations requirements for a precautionary approach, it is determined that further Appropriate Assessment work is required for these two SACs.</p> <p>The total number of SINCs (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) is unknown. The first tranche of designations will include 60 SINC. Subsequent</p>	<p>Local authorities have a Duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act which came into force on 1 October 2006 to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.</p> <p>The LDP will need to reflect both the principles and the results of the process of ecological site assessment – latest research suggests that at least 60 SINC and at least 5 new LNRs should be designated without further delay. This will reduce the risk of their removal by development.</p> <p>The protection and management of designated sites is imperative in terms of protecting the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent. This resource is vulnerable to new developments and land management practices which could result in habitat loss and fragmentation. Up to date information on the condition of all sites is not currently available. It is important that these areas are carefully mapped, monitored and protected from development</p> <p>Biodiversity cannot just be protected through the protection of statutory and non-statutory designated</p>	<p>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Soil Landscape Water</p>	<p>Objective 14</p>

<sup>17</sup> Proposals for Designation of Special Landscape Areas in Blaenau Gwent, Bronwen Thomas Landscape Architect, March 2009

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<p>tranches are planned.</p> <p>5 new LNRs (Local Nature Reserves) are planned. These are aimed at increasing the awareness of and regulatory powers to protect the area’s valuable natural assets.</p> <p>The County Borough includes the Cwm Merddog Woodlands SSSI near Cwm, which are fine examples of ancient semi-natural woodlands and a small part of the Cwm Clydach SSSI.</p> <p>The use of ‘off-road’ vehicles is causing damage to valuable ecological resources.</p> <p>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. Only 5% of households in Blaenau Gwent have a metered water supply. Infrastructure provision for both sewerage and water supply needs to be considered.</p> <p>Existing SLAs have served to assist in protecting against inappropriate development and conserving the landscape quality with particular regard to the visual qualities. BGCBC has recently proposed the designation of revised Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)<sup>17</sup> in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• St Illtyd Plateau &amp; Ebbw Eastern Sides;</li><li>• Eastern Ridge &amp; Mynydd James;</li><li>• Cwm Tyleri &amp; Cwm Celyn.</li><li>• Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn &amp; Cefn yr Arail;</li><li>• Mynydd Bedwellty, Rhymney Hill &amp; Sirhowy Sides;</li><li>• Cefn Manmoel;</li><li>• Trefil &amp; Garnlydan Surrounds; and</li><li>• Beaufort Common.</li></ul>	<p>wildlife sites alone. The LDP process should deliver the protection, enhancement and expansion of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan important habitats and species in the wider countryside alongside protection of designated sites.</p> <p>Creation of habitat within new developments where it has previously been lost should be promoted. This could include landscaped areas to benefit wildlife and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) incorporating habitat creation (e.g. green/brown roofs, wetlands)</p> <p>Development and biodiversity do not have to be mutually exclusive in all cases. Dependent on the existing ecological conditions of an area, the level of possible development intensity should also be considered on a site by site basis. Correct determination of development intensity (and ultimately design) will enable the retention and potentially increased robust ecosystem and provide for high quality developments for the local community.</p> <p>In addition to the need to protect existing landscape of good quality, there is an opportunity to create a valued landscape area for Blaenau Gwent which will help enhance its attraction as a place to live, work and visit. There are also opportunities to strengthen links between Blaenau Gwent and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Policy should seek to protect SLAs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protecting against inappropriate development where it is likely that there will be particular pressures for development or change;</li><li>• Conserving and enhancing existing distinctive and valued qualities and features of the landscape to</li></ul>		

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
<i>"In most cases the proposed SLAs adjoin the mapped urban boundaries. These urban boundaries have yet to be walked to verify their accuracy, as part of the LDP process. The use of the urban boundaries means that the urban fringes are included in the proposed SLAs, whereas previously these had been excluded from SLA designation."</i> (Bronwen Thomas 2009)	<p>avoid unacceptable deterioration, change or development;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Raising awareness of these distinctive landscapes and thereby raising standards of design to bring about positive change. (Bronwen Thomas 2009)</li></ul> <p>Protection should also be afforded to the ancient woodlands within the area, supported by increased woodland cover if appropriate.</p>		
<p><b>Under appreciation and protection of heritage resources</b></p> <p>The South East Wales region has approximately 56 registered historic parks and Gardens. Out of the 10 regional authorities, Blaenau Gwent only has one registration – Bedwellty House and Park – which is a very low proportion. It was also suggested in the consultation on the Scoping Report that this historic park and garden was in need of improvement. The Heritage Strategy recognises that the range and significance of archaeological monuments and sites within the County Borough is not well known and nor is it sufficiently recognised and appreciated.</p> <p>The Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales identifies two types of historic landscape. Part of the Blaenavon Special Landscape of Historic Interest lies within Blaenau Gwent and part of the Clydach Gorge Landscape of Historic Interest also lies within Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>In addition to the above, despite the fact that the area has a considerable heritage resource (e.g. the Garden City, Sy Illtyd's Church, Castle Street and the Circle) and, as set out in the Heritage Strategy, the majority of the County Borough's buildings are over 100 years old, there is only one designated conservation area within the County Borough and 53 listed buildings, none of which are Grade 1. This means that heritage assets may face considerable development pressure, potentially to the detriment of their quality and potential integration into the establishment of tourism and visitor products and attractions.</p> <p>The above points are reinforced by the fact that nearly 20% of all of the listed buildings in the area are at risk. Degradation of the historic character of certain parts</p>	<p>It will be important for the heritage assets of the County Borough to be thoroughly reviewed, restored and protected from detrimental development as appropriate. Enhancement of assets that are known to be at risk should also be supported through the LDP.</p> <p>The Heritage Strategy sets out aspirations to improve the educational value of existing heritage interpretation facilities/museums, together with a desire to develop the Nantyglo roundhouse couples as a high quality heritage centre and educational resources for both locals and visitors. The Plan will need to consider how these aims and objectives may best be achieved through planning policy.</p>	<p>Cultural Heritage Landscape Material Assets Soil Flora and Fauna</p>	<p>Objective 15</p>

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
of the County Borough may also reduce the desire live and work in the area.			
<b>Limited supply of developable land</b>  The area is predominantly open countryside (45%), with only 23% of the total land area falling within the defined urban area and a further 9% designated as urban fringe. However, not all of the open countryside is developable, due to the limiting topography of the area. This is likely to present constraints to development on the basis of landscape and biodiversity value, which will either increase demand for the limited supply of brownfield land in the County Borough; or alternatively act as a deterrent to developers who may seek to identify less constrained sites in neighbouring authority areas.	In order to integrate sustainability issues associated with all three dimensions (social, economic and environmental), it will be of critical importance that the identification of development sites in the LDP is effective in enabling the commercial reuse of brownfield land, including contaminated sites; and that the loss of valuable greenfield land to development is avoided wherever possible. Such land allocations will need to be informed by a robust understanding of the financial pressures of commercial development in order to ensure that all allocations have a realistic prospect of development in the LDP period.	Soil Biodiversity Fauna Flora Landscape	Objective 16
<b>Contaminated sites</b>  Given the industrial legacy of the County Borough, there is a considerable number of contaminated sites (1607 sites in 2003), which may present future development issues as the cost of remediation will need to be factored into site development costs and, in some cases, may prove to be prohibitive. Historic trends lend support to this issue - there are only two major contaminated sites in Blaenau Gwent that have been remediated in preparation for development.	The LDP will need to ensure that remediation of contaminated land takes place before its development to should seek to protect human health, biodiversity, and all controlled water, which includes groundwater, as well as watercourses.	Soil Landscape Human Health Material Assets Water	Objective 17
<b>Geodiversity</b>  Blaenau Gwent includes the Brynmawr Sections (geological site) SSSI. 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 mining was an important industry, and evidence of previous mining activity remains in the landscape in the form of spoil heaps, tips, mine shafts and areas of made ground. On valley slopes with ancient landslips, renewed instability has resulted from extraction of coal and ironstone.  The geological landscape is relatively robust; in upland plateau areas where the Condition is	The LDP should include a policy to ensure protection of soils and geodiversity.		

Key Issues/Opportunities	Implications for Plan	SEA Topics	Relationship to SA Objective (Table 3.4)
generally good. The trend, where subject mainly to natural weathering and degradation – as across wide areas of the upland plateau - is considered relatively Constant. In coal mining areas, extraction has largely ceased, and reclaimed or made ground in the valleys has been developed. The condition in such areas is more generally fair, but the trend remains Constant. Management priorities are long-term, as is appropriate to a Level 3 study.			
<p><b>Waste management</b></p> <p>Household waste arisings per household since 1998 have been increasing more rapidly in Blaenau Gwent than the South East local authority average. In 1998 Blaenau Gwent recorded 1,321 tonnes per household compared to 1,113 for the South East; by 2005 Blaenau Gwent's household arisings were 1,507 tonnes compared to a regional average of 1,284.</p> <p>In addition to household rates, waste arisings per person have also increased more rapidly in Blaenau Gwent than the regional average: in 1998 Blaenau Gwent residents produced an average of 511 tonnes of waste per person compared to 455 tonnes for the South East region as a whole; by 2005, the Blaenau Gwent average was 648 compared to 519 tonnes across the region.</p> <p>Higher than average and increasing household waste coupled with low participation in recycling schemes in the County Borough have important implications for housing renewal initiatives and the wider regeneration agenda.</p> <p>Recycling rates in the County Borough are poor. The 2007/8 Welsh overall recycling rate was 32%, up from 27.6% in 2006-07. Blaenau Gwent was the worst performer in Wales in terms of recycling rates, with a figure of half that of the Welsh average, which is a decline from 2006-7.<sup>18</sup></p>	<p>The LDP will need to promote a holistic approach to waste management. This includes the development of new waste management facilities, which should include waste treatment and recycling, as well as the management of waste water. The plan should ensure that where capacity does not exist, development should be considered as premature until the necessary improvement works have been undertaken.</p> <p>In addition, there will be a need to address waste production at source through improved sustainable design of buildings and the provision of domestic sorting and composting facilities.</p>	Material Assets	Objective 19

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.letsrecycle.com/do/ecco.py/view\\_item?listid=37&listcatid=217&listitemid=10148](http://www.letsrecycle.com/do/ecco.py/view_item?listid=37&listcatid=217&listitemid=10148)



## A4: Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 3.20 The next task in the sustainability appraisal is the development of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SA Framework). The SA Framework is a key component in completing the SA by synthesising the baseline information and sustainability issues into a systematic and easily understood tool that allows the prediction and assessment of effects arising from the implementation of the LDP. Though the SEA Directive does not specifically require the use of objectives or indicators in the SEA process, they are a recognised and useful way in which environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared at key stages of the LDP development.
- 3.21 The SA Framework of objectives, indicators and targets is shown in Table 3.4. The 25 SA objectives have been worded so that they reflect one single desired direction of change for the theme concerned and do not overlap with other objectives. They include both externally imposed social, environmental and economic objectives and others devised specifically in relation to the context of the LDP being prepared and they are distinct from the LDP objectives. SA objectives 1-19 have been derived taking specifically account of local circumstances and concerns feeding from the analysis of sustainability issues (see Table 3.3 for relationship of sustainability issues to SA objectives). SA objectives 20-25 are objectives mainly influenced by national environmental policy. Although there might not be a local issue associated with these objectives at present they must be pursued from a sustainability perspective in the Blaenau Gwent LDP.
- 3.22 A set of indicators has been derived to capture the change likely to arise from the LDP implementation and has played a role in the assessment itself. Where appropriate, locally relevant indicators have been proposed based on the review of local plans and programmes, the evolving baseline, and from developing the analysis of the key sustainability issues. However, indicators derived for wider sources, such as national and international policy guidance have also been used. As at this stage the indicators are used to direct the assessment, they should be reflective of the wider policy context where necessary to ensure sustainable development.
- 3.23 Where appropriate, existing data sources and indicators which are already monitored in the County Borough have been used. In some cases, specific new indicators will require monitoring by relevant bodies should significant effects relating to the SA objectives concerned be identified as part of the assessment of effects during SA Stage B. It is therefore likely that there will be a shortened list of indicators in the sustainability monitoring programme for the LDP. Developing a good balance of appropriate and reliable indicators across the set of SA objectives will be crucial in the development of an effective but also practical monitoring programme.

## A5: Results from Consultation on the SA Scoping Report

- 3.24 The results from the consultation on the Scoping Report are integrated into this report where appropriate, as outlined in the Appendix A.

Table 3.4 - SA Framework

**Key to Data Availability for Indicators**  
**Bold** = Known data for Blaenau Gwent  
*Italic* = Known data for South East Wales Region  
Underlined = Data for Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales Region currently unknown

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
Economic				
1	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	<b>Employment by sector</b>	Reduce reliance on manufacturing sector	Population
		<b>No. of business VAT registrations</b>	Increase	
		<u>% change in total number of business VAT registrations</u>	Increase in registrations	
		<u>% of serviced employment sites</u>	Increase	
		<u>% of new employment floorspace generated</u>	Increase	
		<u>Zone A rental values in town centres</u>	Increase	
		<b>GVA per capita</b>	Increase	
		<u>The creation and development of micro-enterprises</u>	Increase	
		<u>Tourism activities, including increased public access to historic and archaeological sites</u>	Increase	
2	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	<b>% of working age population that are economically inactive</b>	Decrease	Population Human Health
		<b>Proportion of population of working age claiming benefits</b>	Decrease	
		<b>% of the population of working age that are long term unemployed</b>	Decrease	
		<b>% increase in average earnings</b>	Increase	
		<b>Average household income</b>	Increase	
		<b>Proportion of population enrolled in adult education</b>	Increase	

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
3	To support the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	<u>Total number of visitors to attractions in Blaenau Gwent</u>	Increase	Population Material Assets Landscape
		<u>Number of visitor management plans seeking to reduce visitor pressure on the Brecon Beacons National Park</u>	Increase	
		<u>Expenditure by sector</u>	Increase	
		<u>Revenue by category of visitor</u>	Increase	
		<u>Tourist Days</u>	Increase	
		<u>The number of Rod Licences sold annually in Blaenau Gwent</u>	Increase	
4	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	<u>% change in vacancies in town centres</u>	Reduce vacancies	Population
		<u>National retailer representation</u>	Increase national retailer representation	
Social				
5	To meet identified housing needs	<b>Number of completed dwellings by type and tenure</b>	No target identified	Population
		<u>Breakdown of housing stock by size and tenure</u>	Achieve more equitable balance between types	
6	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	<u>Number of houses meeting Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)</u>	100%	Human Health Material Assets
		<b>Proportion of housing designated as unfit for habitation</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Proportion of housing designated as in need of significant repair</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Proportion of housing without central heating</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Proportion of housing without sole use of toilet/shower</b>	Reduce	
7	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	<i>% Affordable Housing</i>	10%	Population  Human Health Material
		<u>Average property price by size and tenure</u>	No target identified	
		<u>% of eligible residential planning permissions where affordable housing has been negotiated</u>	100%	

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
		<u>Average house price to income ratio</u>	No target identified	Assets
8	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	<b>Percentage of the adult population with no qualifications</b>	Decrease	Population
		<b>Proportion of adults with level 2 qualifications (5 GCSE A* - C or NVQ equivalent)</b>	Increase	
		<b>Proportion of adults with level 4 qualifications (degree and above)</b>	Increase	
		<b>Proportion of the population enrolled in adult education</b>	Increase	
9	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	<u>Accessibility /availability of community facilities</u>	Distances from residents properties to community facilities as listed in assessment rationale to comply with the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.	Population Human Health
		<u>Length, connectivity and accessibility to public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding</u>	Increase	
		<u>No. of closures of local services and facilities</u>	Reduce	
		<u>Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP and hospital</u>	Increase	
		<u>Proportion of local service centres served by a bus service with at least 30 min daytime frequency</u>	Increase	
		<u>Proportion of homes in urban areas within 400m walking distance of a bus stop</u>	Increase	
		<u>Proportion of rural settlements serviced by the DETR definition of an 'adequate' bus service (an hourly service within 10 minutes walk of homes)</u>	Increase	
		<u>Proportion of schools with travel plans</u>	Increase	
		<u>Proportion of employers with travel plans</u>	Increase	

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
10	To promote community health, social care and well-being	<b>Life expectancy</b>	To maintain/increase life expectancy Source: <a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk">www.statistics.gov.uk</a>	Population Human Health Air Climatic Factors
		<b>Death rate per 100,000 by Chronic Heart Disease</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Death rate per 100,000 by cancer</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Death rate per 100,000 by suicide</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Death rate per 100,000 by road traffic accidents</b>	Reduce	
		<b>Community Satisfaction / perceptions surveys – Housing Estate Surveys</b>	To decrease % of people who describe their health as poor	
		<b>Indices of deprivation</b>	To decrease % of population living in most deprived areas	
		<b>Proportion of households not living within 400m of their nearest natural greenspace.</b>	20%	
		<b>Proportion of households within 800m walking distance of key health services</b>	100%	
		<u>Building design that contributes to a ‘healthier’ environment</u>	Increase	
		<b>Percentage of population with 1km of National Cycle Network (NCN)</b>	Increase	
		<u>Vulnerable people maintaining independence in their own homes</u>	Increase	
		<u>30 minutes of moderate exercise five times per week</u>	Increase	
		<b>Increase Number of U11 children participating in sport.</b>	Above national average of 58% for junior participation in sport	
11	To reduce crime,	<b>Average crime rate per 1000 population</b>	No target identified	Population

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
	social disorder and fear of crime	Number of anti-social behaviour notices served	0	Human Health
		Violent crimes against the person per 1000 population	Reduce	
		<u>Fear of crime in Blaenau Gwent during the day and night</u>	Reduce	
		<u>Percentage of new housing that meets the 'secured by design' certification criteria</u>	Increase	
12	To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	Proportion of Welsh speakers	Increase	Population
		Welsh medium schools as a proportion of all schools	Increase	
		Bi-lingual published material	Increase	
Environmental				
13	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	Annual average traffic flow per 1,000km of principal roads	Target not appropriate	Population Air Climatic Factors Human Health
		Proportion of households without access to a car/van	Stabilise	
		<u>Levels of public transport usage</u>	Increase	
		<u>No. and value of S106 agreements secured for improvements in public transport, walking and cycling</u>	Increase	
		<u>No. of safe routes to school schemes</u>	Increase – target should be 100%	
		<u>No. of green travel plans</u>	Increase – target should be 100% of employers	
		Modal split - % of population travelling to work by sustainable modes	Increase	
		<u>Number of travel smart programmes</u>	Increase	
		Length of additional cycle and walking network as a % of total length	Increase	



No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
14	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	<b>Loss and condition of international, European, national, regional and locally designated sites of biodiversity interest</b>	To achieve favourable condition for all international, national and local designated sites by 2026	Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Landscape
		<b>Number of protected habitats and species identified, managed and protected</b>	Increase	
		<b>Number of actions within the LBAP that have been completed</b>	Increase	
		<u>% of LBAP species that are stable or increasing</u>	Increase	
		<u>% of greenspace important for wildlife corridors identified and safeguarded from or enhanced as part of development</u>	Increase	
		<u>% of planning permissions incorporating a condition which is to establish a buffer zone (relating to development adjacent to a watercourse)</u>	Increase	
		<u>Sites important for biodiversity enhanced, or recovered</u>	Increase	
		<u>Unavoidable loss of biodiversity compensated for</u>	Increase	
15	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	<b>Number and area of conservation areas</b>	Increase	Cultural Heritage Landscape Material Assets
		<b>Number of listed buildings on the ‘at risk’ register</b>	Reduce	
		<b>The number of scheduled ancient monuments having undergone positive management works</b>	Increase	
		<u>Number of conservation area appraisals and conservation area management plans undertaken/ implemented</u>	Increase	
		Number of historic assets that have an approved monument management plan in place	Increase	
		<u>Condition of registered parks and gardens of historic interest</u>	Improve	
16	To make the best use of previously developed land	<u>% new development on previously developed land</u>	60% of all new dwellings p.a.	Landscape Biodiversity Flora and
		<u>% of residential sites developed at densities of over 30 dph</u>	100%	

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
	and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity	<u>Area of contaminated land remediated for development</u>	Increase	Fauna
		<b>Proportion of residential premises that are vacant, unfit for habitation or in need of substantial repairs</b>	Decrease	
17	To conserve soil resources and their quality	<b>No. and area of contaminated land sites</b>	Decrease through remediation	Soil Material Assets, Human Health, Landscape
		<u>Area of agricultural land by grade</u>	Maintain quality and productivity	
		<u>Area of greenfield land lost to development</u>	Less than 20% of all development to be on greenfield land	
		<u>Number of development projects implementing soil creation and conservation techniques<sup>19</sup></u>	Net loss of soil resources to be zero	
18	To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	<u>Greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) by sector and per capita (tonnes per year)</u>	A 3% year on year reduction in average overall carbon emissions across all sectors <i>Source: One Wales, One Planet</i>	Climatic factors
19	To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse	<b>Total municipal waste arisings</b>	Decrease	Population Water
		<u>Number of fly-tipping incidents per year</u>	Decrease	

<sup>19</sup> Soil conservation is a set of management strategies for prevention of soil being eroded from the earth’s surface or becoming chemically altered by overuse, salinization, acidification, or other chemical soil contamination. The principal approaches these strategies take are: choice of vegetative cover; erosion prevention; salinity management; acidity control; encouraging health of beneficial soil organisms; prevention and remediation of soil contamination; and mineralization. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soil\\_conservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soil_conservation)

Soil creation: Humans reproduce the natural process of creating soil through a method called composting, a safe and organic way of transforming separate components into living soil, rich in nutrients and capable of correcting many problems that plants encounter. Read more: [http://desertgardens.suite101.com/article.cfm/soil\\_earths\\_living\\_layer#ixzz0PCTGhDV1](http://desertgardens.suite101.com/article.cfm/soil_earths_living_layer#ixzz0PCTGhDV1)

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
	and recycling	% of municipal waste recycled and composted	To recycle or compost at least 58% of municipal waste by 2015/16 (TBC in new Welsh Strategy, Oct 2007) Source: Wise About Waste 2000 (Welsh Strategy)	Soil Material Assets
		No. of sustainable waste management facilities per 1,000 households <sup>20</sup>	1 bring site per 1,000 households	
		% of commercial waste recycled	Increase	
		% of municipal waste used to recover heat or energy	Increase	
		No. of waste management facilities in the County Borough	Increase	
20	To maintain current air quality	Estimated background air pollution data	To be below national targets for pollutants	Air, Climatic Factors Human Health
		No. of exceedences of the 100ug/m3 8 hour mean objective	No more than 10 exceedences of the 100ug/m3 8 hour mean	
21	To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	% of planning permissions (minor development) approved contrary to Environment Agency sustained objectives on flood risk' and 2) '% of planning permissions (major development) approved contrary to Environment Agency sustained objections on flood risk.	Zero	Population Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Human Health Water
		% relevant permissions with SUDS schemes; incorporating reedbeds where appropriate	Increase	
		Number of properties at risk from flooding	Stabilise	

<sup>20</sup> One of the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) for waste management utilised by DEFRA is the provision of kerbside recycling schemes and / or recycling facilities (i.e. bring sites, household waste recycling centres and civic amenity sites) within 1km of dwellings. The typical density of bring sites<sup>15</sup> within the UK is 1 site for every 10,000 households. However, the recommended density for such facilities where kerbside recycling is provided is one site per 1,000 households, with the Audit Commission and Policy R5F of the Regional Waste Strategy setting best practice densities of 1 site per 750 households (<http://roam.rotherham.gov.uk/PDF/PlanningPDF/WasteStrategyReport.pdf>)

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
		<u>New development generating surface water flows greater than 10 litres/second/hectare being discharged to any watercourse</u>	Decrease	
22	To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	<u>% of new build and retrofit meeting Code for Sustainable Home Code Level 3 and above</u>	100%	Air Climatic Factors Human Health Population Material Assets Water
		<u>% of commercial buildings meeting BREEAM Very Good standard or above</u>	100%	
		<u>Greywater recycling systems and water savings devices installed in new developments</u>	100%	
		<u>Water consumption per household</u>	Decrease	
23	To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	<b>No. of buildings incorporating renewable energy production</b>	New build dwellings to be carbon neutral by 2016 <i>Source: Gordon Brown (UK Govt.)</i>	Climatic factors, Landscape
		<b>Energy consumption per capita</b>	Decrease	
		<u>Electricity generated from renewable sources</u>	Produce as much electricity from renewable sources by 2025 as consumed <i>Source: One Wales, One Planet</i>	
		<u>No. of planning permissions for renewable energy schemes</u>	Increase	
24	To conserve and enhance surface and groundwater quality	<u>Percentage surface water<sup>21</sup> of Good Ecological Status<sup>22</sup> (natural water bodies)</u>	Achieve Good Status for surface water and groundwater by 2015 (WFD)	Water, Climatic Factors, Soil
		<u>Percentage of surface water of Good Ecological Potential (heavily modified water bodies)</u>	Achieve Good Status for surface water and groundwater by 2015 (WFD)	

<sup>21</sup> Rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters  
<sup>22</sup> Standards and thresholds can be found in the UK Technical Advisory Group on the Water Framework Directive UK ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS (PHASE 1) Final Report April 2008  
[http://www.wfduk.org/UK\\_Environmental\\_Standards/LibraryPublicDocs/UKTAG%20ReportAug%202006UKEnvironmentalStandardsandConditionsFinalReport](http://www.wfduk.org/UK_Environmental_Standards/LibraryPublicDocs/UKTAG%20ReportAug%202006UKEnvironmentalStandardsandConditionsFinalReport)

No	SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SEA Topics
		Percentage surface water of Good Chemical Status	Achieve Good Status for surface water and groundwater by 2015 (WFD)	Resources
		Percentage groundwater of Good Status (quality and levels)	Achieve Good Status for surface water and groundwater by 2015 (WFD)	
		% of planning applications granted in sewered areas where there is no capacity and no planned upgrades	Zero	
25	To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	Proportion of valued landscape lost to development	Decrease	Landscape
		Effect of development which negatively affects the Brecon Beacons National Park (visual and physical effects)	Zero	
		Amount or proportion of landscape subject to enhancement associated with development	Increase	
		Proportion of landscape characterised and managed	Increase	

## SA Baseline Data and Trends

- 3.25 The SA Framework is the key tool used in the assessment of effects. The prediction of effects, in terms of their magnitude, frequency, duration and spatial extent, is conducted via detailed analysis of the baseline data. It is thus important to ensure that critical aspects of the baseline can be directly related to the objectives and indicators of the SA Framework. Determining the significance of predicted effects is perhaps the most critical task in the SA. The picture that the baseline presents in terms of the SA Framework is the starting point for this.
- 3.26 Table 3.5 presents a preliminary analysis of the fundamental characteristics of the baseline (current conditions, current and future trends, and sensitivity to change) against the draft SA objectives using a simple three-point normative scale against a series of variables as follows:
- Current Conditions - good/moderate/poor;
  - Current Trends - improving/stable/declining;
  - Future Trends (without plan implementation) - improving/stable/declining; and
  - Sensitivity to Change - high/medium/low.
- 3.27 Sensitivity to change in the context of SA represents the extent to which, for instance, ecological thresholds may be close to being breached or carrying capacity exceeded, such that relatively small changes might be likely to induce disproportionately large effects, which in some instances might have wide-ranging and/or unexpected consequences. An example might be the decline of a particular wildlife population below the level at which it is viable in a particular habitat.. Another threshold example might be high concentrations of air pollution, beyond a certain point which can no longer be absorbed by vegetation locally and therefore will lead to damaging effects on the health of the local population, the local environment as well as, cumulatively with other areas, on the global environment and population.

### Existing Baseline Conditions and Current Trends

- 3.28 The existing social, economic and environmental baseline for the Blaenau Gwent is summarised in Section 2 and contained in the baseline data sets in Appendix A.
- 3.29 The quality of the baseline data gives an indication of the certainty with which the other four parameters are known, and this is presented in Table 3.5 using a similar colour-coded three-point scale (high/medium/low).

### Predicted Future Trends

- 3.30 The SEA Directive requires the consideration of the likely evolution of the state of the environment without the implementation of the LDP. During the lifetime of the LDP it is predicted that there will be a number of external influences and variables which could affect Blaenau Gwent.
- 3.31 From Table 3.5 it is clear that without the implementation of the LDP, the future trends show decline with regards to a number of SA objectives, primarily relating to landscape quality, waste and heritage assets.
- 3.32 Although the predicted evolution of the baseline without the implementation of the LDP is projected to result in a number of stable conditions in respect of the SA objectives, there are seven objectives that are predicted to be improving. These are objectives 4, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18 and 24. These objectives are all subject to external influences in addition to the influence of the LDP.

### The Works

- 3.33 The redevelopment of the former steelworks site provides the opportunity to establish Ebbw Vale as a benchmark for sustainable development. It will produce long term benefits for

Ebbw Vale and the broader community of Blaenau Gwent, creating an exciting place to live, learn, work and play.

- 3.34 A Masterplan has been prepared as part of the planning and approvals process for the site. The Masterplan proposes a mix of uses including the Learning Zone; local general hospital; leisure centre and sports pitches; a theatre; high quality offices; and around 500 homes.
- 3.35 Site earthworks have commenced including clean up of old industrial uses. Redevelopment of the site will be phased over a number of years. This is likely to have implications for the land use development of the area, and may provide multiplier effects for the rest of the plan area.

## Data Limitations

- 3.36 There are notable data gaps relating to the SA objectives concerned with:
- Renewable energy generation and use; and
  - The use of sustainable resources.
- 3.37 However, objectives relating to these areas can be found in the related plans and programmes and, as such, are considered to be relevant for inclusion in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.



Table 3.5 - SA Baseline Data and Trends Summary

Key: Current Conditions: Good/Moderate/Poor  
Current Trends: Improving/Stable/Declining  
Future Trends (without the plan): Improving/Stable/Declining  
Sensitivity to Change: High/Medium/Low  
Data Quality: High/Medium/Low

		Local Baseline		Trends			Comments/Explanation
SA Objective		Condition	Sensitivity to Change	Current	Future (without the LDP)	Existing data quality	
Economic							
1	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	Poor	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	Low levels of VAT registrations suggest current poor conditions for diversification of the local economy.
2	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	Poor	Medium	Improving	Stable	Medium	High levels of economic inactivity and unemployment rates characterise the County Borough, although unemployment rates have improved recently.
3	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Stable	Low	Blaenau Gwent presents a range of tourism opportunities including the Brecon Beacons. The sustainable tourism economy is likely to remain unchanged without implementation of the LDP.
4	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	Poor	Medium	Improving	Improving	Low	Many town centres within Blaenau Gwent have high rates of vacancy. However, improvements through mechanisms such as Commercial Improvement Grants and Town Centre Strategies are likely to continue into the future.
Social							
5	To meet identified housing needs	Poor	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	Poor housing quality and mismatch of housing size/tenure with needs and demand are current issues facing the variety and quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock.
6	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	Poor	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	
7	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	The average house price for Blaenau Gwent in 2006 was nearly £50,000 less than that of the Welsh Average. However, average prices are predicted to increase substantially as better rail links are provided to Cardiff.
8	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	Poor	Medium	Improving	Improving	High	Although current levels of education achievement are poor, improvements have been observed and these are likely to continue into the future without the implementation of the LDP and continuation with current UDP policies.

		Local Baseline		Trends			Comments/Explanation
SA Objective		Condition	Sensitivity to Change	Current	Future (without the LDP)	Existing data quality	
9	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	Levels of accessibility are likely to remain consistent without implementation of the LDP and continuation with current UDP policies.
10	To promote community health, social care and well-being	Poor	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	The majority of health statistics illustrate that poor health is an ongoing issue in the County Borough. High levels of poor health are likely to be a feature of the area for at least the next generation; and are unlikely to improve without serious changes in lifestyles and opportunities for healthier lifestyles, particularly for children and young people.
11	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	Moderate	Low	Improving	Improving	Medium	In general terms, crime rates are broadly comparable and, if anything, slightly lower than rates for the South East region.
12	To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	Moderate	Low	Stable	Stable	Low	Over 90% of the population are unable to speak Welsh or have no Welsh speaking communications.
Environmental							
13	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	The extension of rail services to Ebbw Vale is likely to improve the patronage of sustainable modes of transport, which may counterbalance the effects of an increase in car ownership.
14	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	Moderate	High	Stable	Stable	Medium	At the present time many important habitats are not protected and face a range of pressures. There are plans for 82 new ecological designations, comprising 72 new Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and 10 Local Nature Reserves.
15	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	Poor	High	Declining	Declining	High	Heritage assets may face considerable development pressure in the future due to the lack of heritage designations; despite the fact the area has a considerable heritage resource.
16	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity.	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Stable	Medium	Settlements in Blaenau Gwent have very high density figures and low amounts of urban land are designated as Greenfield.

		Local Baseline		Trends			Comments/Explanation
SA Objective		Condition	Sensitivity to Change	Current	Future (without the LDP)	Existing data quality	
17	To conserve soil resources and their quality	Poor	Medium	Stable	Improving	Medium	Blaenau Gwent has a large number of contaminated sites that will require remediation prior to development. Remediation of sites will be required without the implementation of the LDP.
18	To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	Moderate	High	Stable	Improving	Medium	Government led initiatives are likely to lead to improvements in greenhouse gas emissions in the future without the implementation of the LDP.
19	To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	Poor	Medium	Declining	Declining	High	Household waste raisings are increasing faster than the south east average and this trend is likely to continue.
20	To maintain current air quality	Good	Low	Stable	Stable	High	There are no Air Quality Management Area's currently designated in the County Borough.
21	To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	Good	High	Stable	Stable	High	The principle areas of flood risk are located along the river corridors which follow the north-south topography of the valleys through Blaenau Gwent.
22	To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	?	?	?	?	Low	State and trends currently unknown.
23	To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	?	?	?	?	Low	State and trends currently unknown.
24	To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	Moderate	Medium	Improving	Improving	Medium	Water quality improvements are likely to continue without implementation of the LDP.
25	To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	Moderate	Medium	Stable	Decline	Low	Developable landscape within the area is limited and these areas may therefore suffer from disproportionate pressure. The character of the landscape in terms of its historic and natural heritage is unlikely to be protected or enhanced without the LDP.

## Assessment Assumptions and Rationale

- 3.38 As already discussed in Section 2 on methodology, the assessment undertaken relies heavily on professional judgement, which necessarily has an element of subjectivity. It also relies on certain assumptions about changes to people's behaviour as a result of the policies being assessed, the way development will be implemented and the way it will be influenced by other DPDs to be prepared subsequently. The following assumption has been made in the appraisal of the LDP policies:
- It is assumed that short term is 0-5 years; medium term is 6-15 years and long term is 16+ years.
- 3.39 In addition to the assumptions above the assessment was undertaken taking into account the following considerations outlined in Table 3.6.
- 3.40 The assessment did not appraise the effects of policies in isolation and did address the interaction between policies in the LDP, where relevant, in terms of secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

Table 3.6 - Assessment Rationale

No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
Economic		
1	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	The LDP may contribute to economic growth in a variety of different ways- availability of different employment types; enhanced access to employment sites for all modes; enhancement of infrastructure to support the development of new areas; secondary, multiplier or 'seeding' effects of particular types of development' measures to attract and retain a more diverse workforce; and enhancement of the landscape, townscape and/or other aspects of local 'image' to support investment. Assessment of LDP policies will consider the characteristics of the employment provided including aspects such as employment sector, increases in business numbers and changes in growth in different sectors, including tourism.
2	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	In order to contribute to local employment levels, the LDP should seek to provide land and buildings for employment use, in locations that are accessible by sustainable modes. Assessment of LDP policies will consider the creation of new employment opportunities including aspects such as wage levels, economic activity, benefit claimants, incomes, adult education, and the contribution this will make to the long term sustainability of employment opportunities in the area.
3	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	In order to contribute to the achievement of this objective the LDP should include policies that seek to encourage other sustainability objectives within this framework. Improvements in accessibility to, as well as within the plan area, will also increase its appeal as a visitor attraction. Decreasing air pollution through a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, improving the recreational and leisure offer (including angling); enhancing the landscape and historic assets; and enhancing green spaces and biodiversity will also enhance environmental, heritage and leisure assets and their settings. Additionally, policies should seek to improve visitor specific facilities such as accommodation.
4	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	In order to contribute to this objective, the LDP should include policies to support the regeneration of the City Centre, through the allocation of sites for retail use as part of a mix that includes residential, leisure and employment uses, to encourage an increase in footfall throughout the day and evening.
Social		
5	To meet identified housing needs	The LDP should seek to provide policies that ensure a supply of housing that is appropriate to local needs, especially in relation to population growth and changing local demographics. The affordability, high quality and mix of housing to create more sustainable communities should be prioritised. Policies should consider whether residential development is in accessible location and supported by adequate infrastructure capacity, including transport, waste and water considerations. Additionally, the LDP should provide a policy to cater for the needs of gypsies and travellers within the plan area.
6	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	The LDP should seek to upgrade the quality of existing and new housing stock, in order to aide regeneration policies and attract and retain a more diverse population mix.
7	To secure the delivery	The LDP should ensure that those wishing to buy, as opposed to rent, to access market housing are able to through a choice of

No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
	and maintenance of quality affordable housing	affordable and high quality housing.
8	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	In order increase skills levels, LDP policies should contribute towards improvement in existing educational facilities or the creation of additional educational facilities, specifically tertiary and higher education centres. Non-academic education should also be encouraged as a complement to LDP policies. Secondary considerations within policies to augment passive education such as interpretation of the natural and historic environment and community involvement in development initiatives will also be included in assessments.
9	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	<p>LDP policies could include new or enhanced provision of facilities as well as improved access either directly through increased provision in areas of deficiency, or indirectly through improved transport links. The following services may be included as priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nursery/first school;</li><li>• Primary/middle school;</li><li>• Secondary school;</li><li>• Health centre;</li><li>• Local shop;</li><li>• Pub;</li><li>• Post office;</li><li>• Community centre;</li><li>• Local centre;</li><li>• Place of worship;</li><li>• Outdoor open access public area;</li><li>• Children’s play area;</li><li>• Pharmacy;</li><li>• Libraries;</li><li>• Residential homes for elderly people;</li><li>• Cemeteries;</li><li>• Open space;</li><li>• Sports facilities;</li></ul>

No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported accommodation; and</li> <li>Theatres and cinemas.</li> </ul>
10	To promote community health, social care and well-being	In order to improve the health, social care and wellbeing of the population through its policies, the LDP could seek to improve access to health facilities. Indirectly, health levels could be improved through secondary effects of policies to reduce air pollution; ensuring homes are of a decent standard and by decreasing noise pollution as well as traffic congestion. Improving walking and cycling facilities, including through PROWs, for both purposeful and recreational trips will both improve physical activity levels as well as decrease air pollution and traffic. Improving access to and provision of greenspace and improving both informal and formal physical activity levels, as well as create a general sense of wellbeing. This also links to the quality of housing in objective 6.
11	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	The LDP should include policies that engender a sense of safety and reduce crime and fear of crime through indirect measures such as incorporating design features in new development (such as additional lighting, CCTV, active street frontages, development reaching 'secured by design' standards). Policies could seek to discourage incidences of anti-social behaviour and opportunistic crime, often attributed to 'boredom' or a 'lack of things to do', through increasing the range and availability of community facilities, especially open and green space and leisure facilities.
12	To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	The LDP should seek to enable a policy direction that protects and enhances Welsh cultural identity. Policies may include encouragement of an increase in Welsh speakers, community groups, cultural events and activities, and Welsh medium education.
<b>Environmental</b>		
13	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	This objective should seek to prioritise the reduction in the need to travel, as the most sustainable solution. Subsequently, the residual travel requirements should be prioritised through the 'transport hierarchy' as identified in the Manual for Streets. Policies should prioritise the encouragement of walking and cycling as the first option to reduce current reliance on the private car, to decrease overall reliance on motorised transport. Policies should subsequently seek to encourage a modal shift to bus and train transport, by improving frequency, reliability and convenience of services, especially with regard to journeys to work and school. This will have positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as human health and local air quality.
14	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	The LDP policies should seek to have a positive effect on designated and non-designated habitats and species. This may be achieved through increasing connectivity and/or reducing disturbance. The policies should also seek to result in the conservation, enhancement or creation of habitats, including those in both land and aquatic environments. This is especially important in relation to the connectivity of habitats in order to enable migration of species and enhance biodiversity. Migration is especially important in relation to the predicted effects of climate change.
15	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their	The LDP should seek to have a positive effect on the County Borough's heritage assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, and archaeologically important sites. The LDP should encourage recognition of such sites and subsequent conservation and enhancement. Negative physical change or increased disturbance should be avoided. Policies should seek to encourage sympathetic integration of development with local character.



No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
	settings	<p>Alongside designated features, non-designated features of local historical and architectural interest and value should also be considered, since these can make an important contribution to creating a sense of place, local identity and distinctiveness in both rural and urban areas. Beyond site specific areas, consideration should be given to landscapes and townscapes, as well as the potential for unrecorded archaeological interest.</p> <p>Policies that reduce traffic levels will provide secondary benefits, as will other non-intrusive traffic management and exclusion measures. Policies to reduce the effects and contribution to climate change could help to reduce the impact on heritage sites from weather events.</p> <p>The impact of encroachment on greenfield sites, air pollutants, noise and vibration as well as consideration of the cumulative impact of incremental changes to the physical environment, particularly in the setting of sensitive sites/ buildings, will also be reflected in the assessment.</p>
16	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity.	<p>To enable the achievement of this sustainability objective, the LDP policies should seek to make the best use of land and buildings.</p> <p>This may be achieved through the encouragement of higher density development and the use of previously developed land as a priority. The siting of development in areas served by sustainable transport modes is also considered an efficient use of land. Through using previously developed land, consideration should be given to land with a low biodiversity value in the first instance. In relation to areas of land that are contaminated, policies should seek to reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality and quantity.</p>
17	To conserve soil resources and their quality	<p>Policies should seek to encourage the local sourcing of materials, in order to protect geodiversity and mineral resources, alongside soil resources. The use of reclaimed materials should also be prioritised. This will be in combination with the rationale for objective 16.</p>
18	To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	<p>The LDP should seek to achieve this objective through reducing emissions that arise from buildings, land use change, transport, agriculture, consumer goods, amongst others. Policies could encourage more sustainable layouts within development, as well as adherence to guidance such as the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM.</p> <p>A major consideration will be the extent to which policies encourage an improvement in sustainable transport for access to decrease traffic congestion and volume.</p>
19	To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	<p>In order for the LDP to achieve more sustainable waste management, it could include policies that directly reduce the generation of waste and increase the recycling of waste against standard levels expected for development, e.g. by providing recycling and composting facilities within and near to homes as well as public buildings and areas. Policies should also specifically refer to the need to reduce, re-use and recycle construction waste.</p> <p>The LDP should also include the allocation of sufficient land to enable as much self sufficiency in waste management and processing as possible.</p>

No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
20	To maintain current air quality	This sustainability objective should be sought to be achieved through the LDP policies, primarily through the reduction in the volume of motorised traffic through a modal shift to more sustainable modes and improved traffic flow and reduced congestion as populations and development increases in the plan area. Significant construction activities may reduce air quality during the period of works and the policies should promote mitigation of these effects. There should be a positive correlation between air quality, health improvements and the use of more sustainable modes of transport.
21	To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	Minimising the risk from flooding to people and property, as well minimising the frequency of flooding events should be a key policy consideration in the LDP as growth in population and development occurs. This is especially important with the increasing effects of climate change. Assessments will include the consideration of effects on flood risk from all sources either directly or indirectly through proximity/ location within areas of flood risk (for example through locating development in flood plains), or indirectly through exacerbation of effects downstream or increasing the proportion of impermeable surfaces. Policies should result in a decrease in flood risk, which may include policies to encourage Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. An increased risk from flooding to people and property may be reduced through policies to prevent increased density of development in flood risk areas. Other possible risk reduction measures that could be included within policy may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A change in land use to reduce the vulnerability of the proposed development;</li> <li>• A reduction in the building platform area;</li> <li>• The raising of internal floor levels and flood proofing (within existing buildings) to reduce potential flood damage;</li> <li>• The rearrangement of buildings within the site to remove obstructions to overland flow paths; and</li> <li>• The placement of buildings to higher areas within the site to limit the risk of flood damage and/or enable the provision of escape routes</li> </ul>
22	To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	The LDP should seek that all development ensures that materials used are sourced sustainably, that is they are locally sourced and contain low embodied energy. This will contribute to objectives 2,10,13,17,18, 20 and 23.
23	To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	The LDP should include policies that will directly reduce energy demand by encouraging energy efficiency. Policies may include the encouragement of improving the energy efficiency of dwellings through measures such as improved insulation; efficient heating and hot water systems; eco labelled white goods installed; and the use of low energy lighting. Assessment of the achievement of this sustainability objective will also consider indirect effects such as development located to reduce transport distances and design factors such as building orientation (linked to passive solar gain) and building form. The extent to which policies promote the use of low embodied energy materials from sustainable sources and material from local sources and suppliers in the construction of new developments will be assessed. Policies may also encourage the use of the Code for Sustainable Homes or BREEAM assessment methods to ensure high standards of development in energy efficiency. In order to promote renewable energy production and use through the LDP, policies could specify the need for all developments

No.	Objective	Assessment Rationale
		to assess the potential for microgeneration within their sites, implementing wherever possible as a condition of permission. Policies could also specify that a certain percentage of energy used on the site must come from renewable sources, generated either on site, or elsewhere where on site generation is not feasible.
24	To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	LDP policies should seek to have a positive effect on maintaining and enhancing the quality of surface and ground waters. This will include policies to control the following, amongst others: surface water run-off from impermeable surfaces; proximity of development and agriculture to watercourses; and intensity of development. Sewage discharges into watercourses should be prevented. The opening up of culverts into watercourses and increasing the length of watercourse restored/impacted on should be considered. In order to reduce water consumption through the LDP, its policies should seek to deliver measures to encourage a responsible approach to water use, re-use and conservation. Conservation methods may include grey water recycling, incorporation of dual water supplies, low water use appliances and water metering, to reduce pressure on potable water resources.
25	To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	Policies should seek to limit the effect of development on the landscape, including open land lost to built development, as well as the efficient use and appearance of development. Secondary beneficial effects will be associated with policies that will reduce traffic levels in the Council area, as well as other non-intrusive management and exclusion measures. The cumulative impact of encroachment on greenfield sites, air pollutants, noise and vibration as well as consideration of incremental changes to the physical environment will be considered in relation to their effect on the landscape as well as its users from a physical as well as visual amenity perspective.

## 4. Development of the Issues, Vision and Options

### B1: Testing the LDP Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

#### 4.1 The LDP vision is:

*'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.'*

#### 4.2 In order to achieve this vision, a series of objectives have been identified. The generation of these objectives was informed by workshops held with stakeholders and elected members.

#### 4.3 The LDP objectives that were tested against the SA objectives are:

1. Develop Ebbw Vale as the main service and retail hub for the County Borough;
2. Create a network of vibrant district 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 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 and ecological network of Blaenau Gwent;
13. Raise the standard of design to improve the quality of the physical environment; and protect and enhance Blaenau Gwent's historic and cultural environment; and
14. To mitigate against and adapt to climate change.

- 4.4 The LDP objectives were tested for compatibility with the SA objectives (see Figure 4.1). This helped to consider to what degree they are in accordance with sustainability principles, with a view to developing and refining the LDP objectives through an iterative process.

## Compatibility Assessment Findings

- 4.5 The LDP objectives were broadly compatible with the SA objectives, although many of the objectives could be compatible subject to the nature of their delivery. For example, objective 5 could be compatible with a number of the SA objectives. This would be dependent, however, on the location of the employment sites in relation to centres of population, how easily accessible the sites are and by what modes, as well as the land type on the sites themselves in terms of the potential impacts on landscape and soil quality. Similarly, objective 10 could be further improved to specify not only the need for open spaces, but to ensure that these areas include green spaces. This will help to ensure that a number of the environmental objectives are contributed to, including maintaining air quality and improving biodiversity. This objective could be linked to objective 12, through a single objective to provide a green infrastructure network, which would not only provide amenity and biodiversity value, but also contribute to sustainable urban drainage, which will help to achieve objective 14 through minimising the potential threat from flooding.
- 4.6 Objectives 1-7 and 9 are likely to be largely incompatible with objectives 18-21, as they seek to generate an increase in built development. These developments are likely to lead to an increase in traffic, which will lead to an increase in carbon dioxide amongst other gases, which will conflict with objectives 18 and 20. Additionally, further population will lead to an increase in the generation of waste. Further built development will also likely increase the risk of flooding, from an increase in hard surfacing throughout the plan area. In order to minimise these conflicts, objectives should seek to ensure that any new built development minimises its impact on the natural environment. This will include measures such as ensuring sites are easily accessible by their target populations, reducing the need to travel. The impacts of new buildings can be minimised through using guidance such as BREEAM or the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 4.7 It is suggested that objective 14 be reworded as the word mitigate is not correctly used. It is suggested that the objective read 'to minimise further climate change contributions and mitigate its predicted effects on the County Borough.'

Figure 4.1 - Compatibility between the LDP objectives and the SA objectives

		SA Objectives																								
Objectives		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1	Develop Ebbw Vale as the main service and retail hub for the County	✓	✓	?	✓	?			?	✓	✓	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
2	Create a network of vibrant district centres (secondary hubs), well linked to the main hub of Ebbw Vale, that provide a range of local services and	✓	✓	?	✓	?			?	✓	✓	?	?	✓	?	?	?	?	X	X	✓	X	?	?	?	?
3	Support and deliver the regeneration of the former Ebbw Vale Steelworks ensuring that the benefits are spread across the borough.	✓	✓	?	✓	?			?	✓	?	?	✓	?	X	✓	✓	?	X	X	X	X	?	✓	✓	✓
4	Increase economic activity through facilitating diversification of the economic base and support for the manufacturing sector by encouraging	✓	✓	?	✓	?			✓	✓	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
5	Provide a range of employment sites and premises to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes in manufacturing, the technological and service	✓	✓	?	?	?			?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
6	Stem out-migration and attract people to the area to create a more	?	?		✓	?	?	?		?	?	?	?	?	X	?	?	?	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
7	Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet local housing needs and attract people to the area.	✓			✓	✓	X	✓		X	✓	✓	X	?	X	X	?	X	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
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	✓	?	?	✓				✓	✓		?	?	?	?	?	?	?	X	X	X	X	?	?	?	?
10	Create an accessible network of open spaces and high quality leisure infrastructure to promote participation in sport and active recreation to	✓	?	✓	✓				?	✓	✓	✓	?	?	?	?	?	?	X	?	?	?	?	?	?	✓
11	Capitalise on the unique landscape and natural heritage, foster sustainable tourism and promote community pride.	✓	?	✓	✓				?	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Protect, enhance and manage the diversity and ecological network of	X		✓	?				?	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓
13	Raise the standard of design to improve the quality of the physical environment; and protect and enhance Blaenau Gwent's historic and	?		✓	✓		✓		?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
14	To mitigate against and adapt to climate change.	?	?	?	?		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓

 Broadly compatible

X

 Potential conflict Not relevant

?

 Dependent on nature of delivery

SA Objectives	
1 To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local	13 To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport
2 To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of	14 To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent
3 To support the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	15 To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings
4 To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	16 To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development,
5 To meet identified housing needs	17 To conserve soil resources and their quality
6 To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	18 To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide
7 To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	19 To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling
8 To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	20 To maintain current air quality
9 To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	21 To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding
10 To promote community health, social care and well-being	22 To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources
11 To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	23 To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough
12 To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	24 To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality
	25 To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary

## Integration of SA recommendations into the LDP

4.8 The LDP objectives revised as a result of the SA recommendations and included within the Pre-Deposit Consultation (accompanied by the ISAR (2008)) are listed below, and demonstrate where the SA recommendations have been implemented:

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 the local communities;
3. Support and deliver the regeneration of the former Ebbw Vale steelworks ensuring that the benefits are spread across the County 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 and 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; and
14. To minimise further climate change contributions and mitigate its predicted effects on the County Borough.

4.9 Following the consultation exercises on the LDP, the aims and objectives have been further developed; generating further improvements to the Deposit LDP's potential to contribute to sustainable development. These are listed below:

### **Theme 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities.**

1. By 2021, Ebbw Vale will be the main service and retail hub for the County Borough supported by a network of vibrant district/local hubs that provide a range of local services and facilities for their local communities. The district hubs will be well linked to the main hub of Ebbw Vale through sustainable modes of transport. (See Strategic Policies 1, 2, 3 & 6)



2. By 2021, the population will have increased from 69,300 to 71,100 as a result of natural change and other people being attracted to the area. The overall population structure will be generally in line with that of Wales. (See Strategic Policies 4 & 5)
3. By 2021, 3,666 new houses will have been built, approximately 800 of which will be affordable. New housing sites alongside improvements to existing houses will have helped create sustainable communities. (See Strategic Policies 4 & 5)
4. By 2021, the use of sustainable modes of transport, particularly public transport, walking and cycling, will have increased and the quality and frequency of the public transport system improved. (See Strategic Policy 6)
5. All developments have been built in accordance with design guidance, are sustainable, safe by design, and appropriate to their context and have helped improve the quality of the physical and natural environment. (See Strategic Policy 7)
6. New development has minimised further climate change contributions and, where appropriate, mitigated or adapted to its predicted effects. This has been achieved by:
  - Maximising the use of land;
  - Promoting the re-use and restoration of derelict land and buildings;
  - By focusing development away from areas vulnerable to flooding;
  - By reducing energy consumption through improved design and locating development close to hubs and public transport routes; and
  - By increasing the supply of renewable energy. (See Strategic Policy 7)

## **Theme 2: Create Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Promote Learning and Skills**

7. By 2021, the regeneration plans for 'The Works', Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor and other key regeneration sites have been delivered benefitting the residents of the County Borough through the delivery of jobs, houses and community infrastructure. (See Strategic Policies 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9)
8. By 2021, employment and economic activity rates will have increased and unemployment decreased with levels nearer national averages. This has been achieved by diversifying the economic base into construction, business services, health and social care, tourism and leisure and environmental industries, whilst supporting the manufacturing sector. (See Strategic Policy 1 and 8)
9. By 2021, between 50 hectares of employment land and a range of premises have been delivered which meet the needs of local businesses and offers employment opportunities for local people. (See Strategic Policy 8)
10. By 2021, the delivery of the Learning Zone, new schools and integrated education services, including life-long learning have facilitated improvements and broadened opportunities for education levels and skills. (See Strategic Policy 8)

## **Theme 3: Create Safe, Healthy, and Vibrant Communities and Protect and Enhance the Unique Natural and Built Environment.**

11. By 2021, an accessible network of green open spaces and high quality leisure infrastructure has helped increase participation in sport and active recreation and, contributes to improvements in health and well-being. (See Strategic Policy 9)
12. The unique landscape and natural heritage has helped foster sustainable tourism and promoted community pride. (See Strategic Policy 10)

13. By 2021, the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent has been protected and enhanced and the connectivity of ecological networks has been improved from 2006 levels. (See Strategic Policy 10)
14. Blaenau Gwent's historical and cultural environment has been protected and enhanced and has contributed to the regeneration of the area. (See Strategic Policy 11)

**Theme 4: Create opportunities to secure an Adequate Supply of Minerals and Reduce Waste.**

15. By 2021, the 3 million tonnes of mineral resources required to be provided in Blaenau Gwent by the Regional Plan has been worked and resources of local, regional and national importance safeguarded. (See Strategic Policy 12)
16. A sustainable, integrated approach to waste management has minimised the production of waste and its impact on the environment, and maximised the use of unavoidable waste as a resource. By 2021, national recycling and composting targets outlined in the Wales Waste Strategy: 'Towards Zero Waste' have been met. (See Strategic Policy 13)

## 5. Strategic Options

### Introduction

- 5.1 As outlined in section 3 of this report, stage B2 of the SA process involved the generation of plan options. This exercise was undertaken in part to fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive which requires that the Environmental Report should consider:

*'Reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme' and give 'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with' (Article 5.1 and Annex 1h).*

- 5.2 This was informed by informal consultation undertaken by the local planning authority as follows:

### Local Development Plan Issues Paper

- 5.3 In July 2007 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consulted on an Issues Paper, as 'the first step in preparing the 'Preferred Strategy' for the Local Development Plan.' It was intended as 'a discussion document intended to promote debate focused on the issues of strategic significance'. 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. Although the formal consultation period took place over a 4-week period between 6th July and 8th August 2007, late responses were accepted.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, these responses were then taken into consideration in the preparation of options which were discussed at Vision and Options workshops in November 2007.

### Issues and Visions Workshop

- 5.5 The 'stakeholder 'Issues and Vision' workshop, was held to build consensus on where BGCBC were (issues) and where they wanted to be (vision). The workshop was held on Friday 27th July 2007, at the VITCC, in Tredegar and involved 27 attendees representing the LDP Steering Group Sub-group members and LDP Forum members.
- 5.6 The first workshop task involved attendees discussing different topic areas, to agree and then priorities issues. The two most significant issues for each of the topic areas are as follows:

#### Housing

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

#### Town Centres

- To find a role/ function for town centres; and
- 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; and
- To foster sustainable tourism, re-engaging local communities with the national and built historic environment.

## Transport

- To improve access to services facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling.

5.7 Joint second were:

- To provide a transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, is safer and supports local communities; and
- To improve the transport system to assist in 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; and
- Changing dependence on particular industries and diversifying the economy.

## Environment

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

5.8 This was followed by a further task where attendees were required to prioritise the most significant issues for Blaenau Gwent. The two 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; and
- The need to find a role/ function for town centres.

5.9 With the following two housing issues were close behind:

- 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.

5.10 The 'Vision' workshop involved building consensus on where Blaenau Gwent wanted to be by 2021.

5.11 The workshop was useful for discussing and prioritising the issues and assisted in setting a vision for the Local Development Plan. These findings were taken into account when the Council prepared draft Strategy Options for discussion at workshops in November 2007.

## Development of Options

5.12 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 and National and Local Policy, a set of 3 options were identified by the Planning Policy Team. These were entitled:

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

5.13 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.

### Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

5.14 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.

### Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

- 5.15 This strategy attempts to address the issues identified and is based on ideology set out in the regional guidance document Turning Heads.
- 5.16 Further detail of the above options is provided in the Preferred Strategy document of the LDP (November 2008).

### Working Towards a Preferred Option

- 5.17 The role of SA is to help to identify the most sustainable option overall, or different options that promote the different dimensions of sustainability (social, environment, and economic) for the LDP. SA does not determine which option should be chosen overall.
- 5.18 Table 5.1 also provides a summary of the comparison of options under the three sustainability dimensions: social, environmental (including protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources) and economic. Details of the assessments are provided in Appendix E.
- 5.19 A simplified approach has been taken in order to give an indication of the most sustainable options. This approach assumes that all SA objectives are equally important and thus option(s) with the most positive effect overall are noted as being most sustainable and option(s) whilst those with less positive effects are noted as being less sustainable. As emphasised in the methodology outlined in Section 2, this assessment has been undertaken using expert and professional judgement.

**Table 5.1 - Identification of Most Sustainable Options**

Scale of Effect (SE): 0 no effect; +++ strongly positive; ++ moderately positive; + slightly positive; --- strongly negative; -- moderately negative; - slightly negative; ? effect unknown		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
SA Objective		SE	SE	SE
1.	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	--	++	+
2.	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	--	+	+
3.	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	--	++	++
4.	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	--	+	+
5.	To meet identified housing needs	--	+	--
6.	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	?	?	?
7.	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	--	++	--
8.	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	-	++	+
9.	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	--	+	-/+
10.	To promote community health, social care and well-being	--	+	-/+
11.	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	--	++	+
12.	Protect and enhance the Welsh culture	-	-/+	+
13.	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	?	-/+	+

Scale of Effect (SE): 0 no effect; +++ strongly positive; ++ moderately positive; + slightly positive; --- strongly negative; -- moderately negative; - slightly negative; ? effect unknown	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
SA Objective	SE	SE	SE
14. To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	-/+	--	-
15. To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	-/+	-/+	-/+
16. To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity.	-/+	-	-
17. To conserve soil resources and their quality	-/+	-/+	-/+
18. To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	-	--	-
19. To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	-/+	--	-
20. To maintain current air quality	?	--	-
21. To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	--	--	-
22. To promote use of sustainably sourced products and resources	?	?	?
23. To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	-	+	+
24. To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	--	--	-
25. Protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	-	--	-

## Identification of the Preferred Option

- 5.20 The appraisal of the strategic options found that Option 2 was predicted to be the most sustainable. The option is envisaged to potentially create a diverse economic base, improving employment opportunities as well as access to a range of services and facilities.
- 5.21 In terms of environmental effects, however, the options performed similarly and were predicted to have unsustainable effects. In order for option 2 to improve its sustainability credentials it is put that the spatial strategy should be developed to include the following:
- A green infrastructure network throughout the entire plan area to benefit: biodiversity, health, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, amenity, SUDS and energy efficiency.
  - Reduce the need to travel through locating residential, employment and service functions within accessible distances for all areas of the County Borough.
  - Prioritise the use of brownfield land over the use of greenfield wherever possible.
- 5.22 As can be seen in the LDP Deposit Plan (April 2011), the strategy clearly demonstrates the integration of the principles recommended by the SA at the Strategic Options stage. The objectives of the LDP Deposit Plan that most clearly show a reflection of the recommendations include LDP objectives: 1; 6; 11; and 13. A full list of the LDP Deposit Plan objectives is provided in section 4.

## 6. Development of Strategic Sites

### Introduction

- 6.1 Strategic sites identified in the Deposit Draft LDP have been subject to various levels of assessment, which has been undertaken by the Council, in order to determine their performance in various terms, including social, environmental and economic factors. The methodology used by BGCBC to identify strategic sites incorporates the SA objectives. The rationale used for the sites assessment, its results and a discussion of the relative merits and disadvantages of the strategic site options are set out below. Detailed information about the sites will be provided in the Site Descriptions document accompanying the LDP.
- 6.2 Existing SA guidance recognises that the most familiar form of SA prediction and evaluation is generally broad-brush and qualitative. It is recognised that quantitative predictions are not always practicable and broad-based and qualitative predictions can be equally valid and appropriate. Examples of the prediction and evaluation techniques for assessing significance of effects are expert judgement, dialogue with stakeholders and public participation, geographical information systems, reference to legislation and regulations and environmental capacity. Many of these techniques have been employed in this assessment.

### Stage 1: Initial Planning Assessment

- 6.3 The first stage of the Council's assessment process focused on identifying the development potential of all sites greater than or equal to 0.3 hectares, to identify both opportunities and constraints. Initial site visits were undertaken to ascertain the following factors, and a site proforma was completed for each submitted site. The site proforma contained the following information:
- The location of the site and the reference details;
  - A general overview of the site in terms of the current use and physical attributes;
  - Means of access to the site;
  - Local services and facilities;
  - The site's relationship to existing settlement;
  - Proximity to sites of national importance for biodiversity;
  - Compatibility with neighbouring uses;
  - Flood risk designation; and
  - Relevant planning history.
- 6.4 The initial planning assessment determined 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 were not considered further as part of this process.

### Results

- 6.5 Stage 1 considered 187 sites for assessment. 182 sites were subsequently carried forward to stage 2, as 5 had planning permission.



## Stage 2: Expert Assessments

- 6.6 All sites that satisfy the initial planning assessment in stage 1 underwent detailed expert assessments in stage 2, undertaken by a wide range of experts from the Council including ecologists, an 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.
- 6.7 Detailed assessment proformas were 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. These can be found in Appendix G.
- 6.8 The Council's planning assessment team considered the results of the expert assessments. A site appraisal framework was used to summarise the information gathered in the detailed expert assessment forms completed in this stage.

### Results

- 6.9 On the basis of the expert assessments, the Council's planning assessment team determined which sites were suitable for development, in full or in part, and 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 were considered in principle only. A significant amount of survey work 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.
- 6.10 As a result of this assessment stage, 91 sites were considered suitable for taking forward to stage 3.

## Stage 3: Consultation with Appropriate Bodies

- 6.11 At this stage the Council sought the views of and consulted with the appropriate consultation bodies in respect of those sites identified as suitable for future development in stage 2. The specific consultation bodies consulted were:
- 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; and
  - Western Power Distribution.

### Results

- 6.12 The consultation comments received by the Council were deemed not significant enough to discount any of the sites. However, the Environment Agency confirmed that 4 sites (A29, C19, C34 and B34) partly fell or fell within flood risk zone C2. In the case of sites C19 and B34, it was recommended that the boundaries of the site be amended so that the site fell

outside zone C2. In terms of A29 and C34, a strategic flood consequence assessment will be required.

## Stage 4: Assessment against the LDP Preferred Strategy

- 6.13 All sites that satisfied the Council's initial 3 stage assessment were then subject to compatibility assessment with the LDP Preferred Strategy. The assessment focused 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 scored positively in this assessment were assessed against the LDP sustainability objectives.

### Results

- 6.14 The assessment of sites against the LDP objectives is shown in Appendix G. The LDP objectives used for this assessment were subject to SA, as described in section 4 of this report. Consequently, the LDP objectives are considered to reflect sustainable development principles. 102 sites were carried forward to stage 5.

## Stage 5: Assessment of the Sites against SA Objectives

- 6.15 It is also important to analyse each site in sustainability terms and to assess how they perform against each of the Sustainability Objectives as part of the SA.
- 6.16 The predicted sustainability effects of the candidate sites and their proposed development are identified by a colour coding and scoring system (see Table 6.3). Where the candidate sites were found to conflict with the SA objective they were coded red, where there was potential for conflict the sites were coded orange and where no conflict with the SA objectives is identified the site was coded green. Each colour was also given a score. A total score for each site is provided in the end column of the table (see Table 6.5). The total score allowed the sites to be ranked in terms of the best scoring sites and thus their compatibility with the SA objectives. Sites highlighted according to site coding in Table 6.2 have been carried forward to the LDP Deposit Plan.
- 6.17 Where negative effects are predicted, mitigation may be required. The Site Descriptions document, produced by BGCBC to accompany the LDP, contains mitigation measures for sites that are carried forward in the form of survey requirements and management plans. The LDP also includes a list of survey requirements for housing, employment and retail sites that should enable the implementation of any necessary mitigation. Survey requirements in the LDP are included in a table, which also lists the site allocations. This table indicates which of the following survey requirements may be required for each site:
- Transport Assessment;
  - TAN 11 Noise Assessment;
  - BS4142 Noise Assessment;
  - Noise Assessment;
  - BS5387 Tree Survey;
  - Full ecological survey including trees and significant vegetation;
  - Biodiversity Constraints and Enhancement Plan;
  - Flood Consequences Assessment;
  - Preliminary Risk Assessment;
  - Archaeological Assessment and Management Plan (if applicable); and
  - Project Level Habitats Regulations Assessment.

- 6.18 The results of this assessment of sites informed the assessment of the policies containing site allocations (see Section 8).
- 6.19 It should be noted that sites R1.1, R1.2 and R1.3 do not appear in the table as they already have planning permission. Similarly, site ED1.1 has been built upon. In addition, sites AA1 and AA2 arise from the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Regeneration Framework that has been subject to a separate SA and do not appear in the table.

**Table 6.1 – Scoring for Site Appraisal Stage 5**

<b>+3 pts</b>	In conformity with the SA objective	<b>0 pts</b>	Not relevant to SA objective
<b>-1 pts</b>	Possibly in conflict with the SA objective / some constraints identified	<b>? -1 pts</b>	Insufficient information is available - a potential for conflict may exist
<b>-3 pts</b>	In conflict with the SA objective		

**Table 6.2 - Site Coding**

<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>Community Facility</b>
<b>Retail</b>	<b>Gypsy Traveller</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>Minerals and Waste</b>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>Tourism and Leisure</b>

Table 6.5 - Stage 5: Compatibility of Sites with Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
A18 CF1.1	Sirhowy Infants School	Community Facility																									
A19	Waundeg Housing Site	Community Facility																									
A40	Land adj to Bevans Avenue	Community Facility																									
C8	Hafod Dawel Site	Community facility																									
D11 ED1.2	Six Bells Colliery Site	Primary School																									
A32	Tafarnaubach (Central)	Employment																									
A31	Tafarnaubach (West)	Employment																									
A15b EMP1.9	Crown Business Park	Employment																									
A33	Tafarnaubach (North)	Employment																									
A30 EMP1.8	Crown Business Park	Employment																									
A14 EMP1.2	Tredeggar Workshops	Employment																									
A35	Tafarnaubach (South)	Employment																									
A34	Tafarnaubach (East)	Employment																									
A29	Crown Business Park	Employment																									
B33 EMP1.1	Garden Festival C	Employment																									
B30	Waun-y-Pound Central	Employment																									
B31 EMP1.6	Waun-y-Pound	Employment																									
B32	Garden Festival A	Employment																									
B27 EMP1.4	Rassau	Employment																									

No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
B34 EMP1.7	Marine Colliery	Employment																		?	?	?					
B29	Wau-y-Pound North	Employment																		?	?	?					
B26 EMP1.5	Rassau Extension East	Employment																		?	?	?					
B28	Rassau Platform H	Employment																		?	?	?					
B25	Rassau Extension West	Employment																		?	?	?					
C29	Cwmcrachen Lower	Employment																		?	?	?					
C16	Rising Sun Upper	Employment																		?	?	?					
C19 EMP1.3	North of Rising Sun Ind Estate	Employment																		?	?	?					
C28	Adj to Blaen y Cwm Sch	Employment																		?	?	?					
D22 EMP1.1	Rosehey-worth Business Park	Employment																		?	?	?					
A39 TM1.5	Bryn Bach Park	Tourism and Leisure																									
B55 TM1.3	Blue Lakes	Tourism and Leisure																									
B53 TM1.1	Eastern Valley Slopes	Tourism and Leisure																									
B54 TM1.2	Garden Festival	Tourism and Leisure																									
C49 TM1.6	Nantglo and Roundhouse Towers	Tourism and Leisure																									
C18	Ben Wards Field	Tourism																									
C50	Brynmawr Roundabout	Tourism and Leisure																									
C28	Adj to Blaen y Cwm School	Tourism and Leisure																									
D32 TM1.7	Cwmfillery Lakes	Tourism and Leisure																									

No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
D13b	Six Bells Colliery Site	Leisure and Recreation	Diagonal			Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal																		
A8 M4.1	Trefil Quarry Extension	Minerals			Red						Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Diagonal	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red				Red	Diagonal		Yellow	
B50 M4.3	Land at South East of Cwm	Minerals			Yellow						Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Diagonal	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red					Diagonal		Green	
D10 M4.2	Tirpentwys Cut	Minerals			Yellow						Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Diagonal	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red					Diagonal		Yellow	
A4	Former Gas Holder Station	Mixed Use – Retail & Residential			Diagonal		Red														?							
B14 MU2	'The Works'	Mixed Use												Diagonal														
MU1 B5, B7 & B8	Ebbw Vale North	Mixed Use												Diagonal			Yellow				?						Yellow	
C6 H1.7	Former Garnfach School Site	Mixed Use community facility and residential			Diagonal									Diagonal							?							
C22 & C32 MU3	NMC Factory Blaina Road	Mixed Use			Diagonal																?						Yellow	
B7	Bryn Serth	Nature Reserve	Diagonal	Diagonal									Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal				Diagonal				Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal			
B13	Rhyd-y-Blew	Nature Reserve	Diagonal	Diagonal									Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal				Diagonal									
B20	Highlands Road	Nature Reserve	Diagonal	Diagonal									Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal				Diagonal									
A48	Hill's Bus Depot	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal																								
A21	Corporation Yard, Ashvale	Residential			Diagonal									Diagonal	Diagonal													
A45 H1.4	Jesmondene Stadium	Residential			Diagonal									Diagonal	Diagonal												Yellow	
A18	Sirhowy	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal										Diagonal	Diagonal													
A19	Infants School	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal										Diagonal	Diagonal													
A25 H1.2	Cartref Aneurin Bevan	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal										Diagonal	Diagonal												Red	

			SA Objectives																								
No	Site Location	Proposed Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
A26 H1.3	Greenacres	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal												Red	
43 H1.5	Business Resource Centre	Residential	Yellow	Yellow						Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal												Yellow	
A4	Former Gas Holder Station	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Yellow											
A22	Land at Sirhowy	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Yellow											
A23	Land adjacent to Bryn Rhosyn	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Yellow											
A11	Tredegar Ambulance Station	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Yellow										Red	
A28	Land at rear of Cripps Avenue	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red			Red								
A12	North Side of Merthyr Road	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red			Red							Yellow	
A13	Land to the North of Bryn Rhosyn	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red			Red							Red	
A36 H1.6	Charlist Way	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red		Yellow	Red								Red
A46	Land South of Bevans Avenue	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red			Red	Red						Yellow	
A47	Park Hill	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal		Red			Red	Red							Red
B44 H1.1	Willowtown School	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal		Diagonal		Diagonal													
B21	Waulwyd School	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal					Diagonal	Yellow	Diagonal		Diagonal													



No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
B37	Froes-y-Barcl	Residential																									
B20	Highlands Road	Residential																									
B16	Lakeside Car Park	Residential																									
B19	Vacant site adj Respite Care Centre	Residential																									
B24	Land adj to the Castle, Rassau	Residential																									
B35	Nant-y-Croft	Residential																									
C25 H1.9	Brynmawr Infants Sch & Old Griffin Yard	Residential																									
C8 H1.10	Hafod Dawel Site	Residential																									
C39 H1.12	Land to the East of Blaina Road	Residential																									
C23 H1.8	Crawshay House	Residential																									
C26	Land at Pant View, Coed Cae	Residential																									
C12 H1.13	Land to the North of Winches-town	Residential																									
C14 H1.11	Land to the West of Recreation Ground	Residential																									
C24	Land rear of Waunheulog	Residential																									

No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
C15	Land north of Winches Row	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
C13	Land to the South-West of Waun Ebbw Road	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
C3	Land to the South of Rising Sun Ind Estate	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
C5	Southlands, Blaina	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D13a H1.14	Six Bells Colliery Site – Upper	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D23 H1.15	Warm Turn	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D25 H1.16	Rosehey-worth School	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D21 H1.17	Former Mount Pleasant Court	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D30 H1.19	Quarry adj to Cwm Farm Road	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D20 H1.18	Hillicrest View	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
D24 H1.20	Rear of Farm Road	Residential	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
C40 GT1 A49	Extension to Cwmcrachen Commercial Street	Gypsy Travellers Site Retail	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
B48 R1.4	Market Street	Retail	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal
B39	Gas Holder Site	Retail	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal	Diagonal

No	Site Location	Proposed Use	SA Objectives																								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
B49	Land at Rhyd-y-Blew	Retail																		?	?	?					
C39	Land to the east of Blaina Road	Retail																		?	?	?					
D31	Tesco, Abertillery	Retail																									
A30	Crown Business Park	Retail Warehousing & Hotel																									
B47 W1.2	Silent Valley	Waste																		?		?					
B31 W1.1	Waun y Pound	Waste																		?		?					
C41	Extension at Civic Amenity Site	Waste																		?		?					

## SA Objectives

1. To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the economy
2. To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities
3. To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent complementary to the regional offer
4. To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres
5. To meet identified housing need
6. To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock
7. To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing
8. To improve educational attainment and increase skill levels
9. To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community
10. To promote community health, social care and well being
11. To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime
12. To protect and enhance the welsh culture
13. To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport
14. To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent
15. To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings
16. To make the best of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, whether this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity
17. To conserve soil resources and their quality
18. To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide
19. To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling
20. To maintain air quality
21. To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding
22. To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources
23. To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough
24. To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality
25. Protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary

## 7. Assessment of Significant Effects of the Strategic Policies

### Introduction

- 7.1 The SEA Directive states that in the Environmental Report, *'the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme....and reasonable alternatives....are [to be] identified, described and evaluated'* (Article 5.1). The Environmental Report should include information that may *'reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme [and] its stage in the decision-making process'* (Article 5.2).
- 7.2 In addition, the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to outline measures to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme (Annex I (g)).
- 7.3 Existing SA guidance recognises that the most familiar form of SA prediction and evaluation is generally broad-brush and qualitative. It is recognised that quantitative predictions are not always practicable and qualitative predictions can be equally valid and appropriate. Examples of the prediction and evaluation techniques for assessing significance of effects are expert judgement, dialogue with stakeholders and public participation, geographical information systems, reference to legislation and regulations and environmental capacity.
- 7.4 This section outlines the LDP Preferred Policies that have been assessed and the methodology that has been used for the assessment of significant effects as part of Stage B of the SA process, and provides a qualitative assessment of each policy.
- 7.5 The LDP Deposit Plan contains Strategic Policies, Development Management Policies, and Policies relating to the allocation and designation of specific sites for development or conservation. This section details how the SA influenced the development of the Strategic Policies. The results of the appraisal of the Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies can be found in section 8 including how the policies and sites chosen for the delivery of various land uses are reflective of the principles of sustainable development.

### Draft Strategic Policies Assessed: Initial Sustainability Appraisal (November 2008)

- 7.6 Following confirmation of the strategy direction a draft set of Strategic Policies were developed in order to deliver the objectives of the LDP. The 17 Strategic Policies assessed as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal (in ISAR November 2008), are included in the first column of Table F.2 in Appendix F. The purpose of the assessment was to derive the sustainability implications in terms of implementing the policies and to identify areas for improvement, either through the enhancement of predicted positive effects or mitigation of predicted negative significant effects.
- 7.7 Appendix F shows the findings of the draft preferred strategic options assessment. Overall, the Draft Preferred Strategy appeared to generate more benefits from an economic perspective, with the least benefits being generated for the environment. It was suggested that the strategy should seek to create a greater focus on environmental improvements alongside economic and social regeneration initiatives. Most notably, three of the sustainability objectives conflicted with the strategic policies. These were: to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide; to reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling; and to maintain current air quality.

## The Deposit Draft LDP Strategic Policies (May 2010)

- 7.8 Following the appraisal of the strategic policies, these were revised to take into account the SA recommendations in the Deposit Draft LDP. The revised Strategic Policies and how the SA process has influenced the development of the LDP Strategic Policies are shown in Appendix F.
- 7.9 Appendix F also indicates how a full appraisal of the revised Strategic Policies was not necessary at this stage as the revisions take into consideration the SA recommendations from the previous iteration.

## The LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policies (April 2011)

- 7.10 The LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policies include further revisions that have been developed as a result of comments from a range of statutory consultees and the further development of the evidence base. Revisions were also made to the policies to reflect the recommendations of the HRA Appropriate Assessment<sup>23</sup>.
- 7.11 Appendix J includes a table that shows the modifications to the Strategic Policies that occurred between 2008 and 2011. The final LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policies assessed are shown in Table 7.1. Table 7.2 shows the results of the assessment. The assessment findings also explain how the strategic policies of the LDP have improved between the initial assessment in 2008 and the 2010 LDP Deposit Plan in terms of their predicted potential to lead to sustainable development.
- 7.12 The April 2011 iteration of the assessments took into consideration the most recent planning policy and developing strategies within BGCBC. This included the following documents:
- BGCBC and Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU), March 2010, Report on the Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) for BGCBC;
  - BGCBC Equalities Impact Assessment of LDP 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009;
  - BGCBC, Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment, Stages 1 and 2, June and August 2010, Scott Wilson;
  - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Deposit LDP, Habitats Regulations Assessment- Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment- Appropriate Assessment, Capita Symonds, April 2011;
  - The Blaenau Gwent Renewable Energy Assessment (2011).

**Table 7.1- Final LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policies (April 2011)**

<b>LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)</b>	
<b>SP1 Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration</b>	
Proposals in the Northern Strategy Area will be required to deliver sustainable growth and regeneration that benefits the whole of Blaenau Gwent. This will be achieved by: -	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Supporting the creation of a network of sustainable hubs around the principal hub of Ebbw Vale.</li> <li>b. Promoting Ebbw Vale as the principal hub for Blaenau Gwent, where the majority of social and economic growth will be accommodated. The Town Centre will be the main centre for service provision where major retail expansion, administrative and cultural developments will take place.</li> <li>c. Delivering strategic sustainable regeneration flagship schemes at 'The Works' and 'Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor'.</li> <li>d. Supporting new roles for district and local town centres: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tredegar District Town Centre will expand its tourism offer through maximising the benefits of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<sup>23</sup> Capita Symonds, April 2011

### LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)

- local heritage;
- Brynmawr District Town Centre will explore opportunities to develop complementary roles around tourism; and
- Blaina Local Town Centre will build on and exploit its local heritage.
- e. Enabling diversification of the economic base through mixed-use development in the district hubs of Tredegar and Brynmawr where it supports and reinforces the roles of the town centres.
- f. Supporting a major destination attraction that would draw large numbers of people to the area and provide a significant number of jobs.

### SP2 Southern Strategy Area – Regeneration

Proposals in the Southern Strategy Area will be required to regenerate the area by:

- a. Ensuring that the district hub of Abertillery is well connected to Ebbw Vale and the wider region through safe, frequent and reliable public transport links;
- b. Supporting Abertillery District Town Centre in developing complementary roles around culture, leisure and tourism;
- c. Delivering 'Activity Tourism' opportunities in the area;
- d. Ensuring the removal of dereliction by promoting the reuse of under used and derelict land and buildings;
- e. Delivering regeneration schemes which provide residential development and infrastructure; and
- f. Building on the unique identity of the area by protecting the built heritage and the natural environment.

### SP3 The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of the Town Centres

1. In order to deliver thriving town centres and protect local shopping facilities a retail hierarchy is defined as follows:

#### Principal Town Centre

- a. Ebbw Vale will perform a sub regional retail role.

#### District Town Centres

- b. Abertillery, Tredegar and Brynmawr will act as district shopping centres principally to serve the needs of their districts. Brynmawr District Town Centre will be well related to the new retail provision at Lakeside Retail Park.

#### Local Town Centre

- c. Blaina will act as a local shopping centre that will be protected and enhanced to provide facilities for the local communities.

#### Neighbourhood Centres

- d. Local shops in neighbourhood centres will be protected to meet every day local shopping needs.

2. In order to improve the vitality and viability of the town centres:

- a. Shops, offices and other commercial premises, where appropriate, will be upgraded by means of refurbishment and redevelopment;
- b. Opportunities to improve the retail offer will be explored;
- c. The provision of better vehicular access and circulation arrangements, improved public transport facilities and provision of additional car parking spaces will be provided where necessary; and
- d. Disabled access and facilities will be improved.

### SP4 Delivering Quality Housing

1. To stem out migration and attract people to the area:
  - a. Provision will be made for the development of 3,666 new dwellings leading to an increase of population from 69,300 in 2006 to 71,100 in 2021;
  - b. Support will be given to proposals to regenerate areas of social housing;



**LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)**

- c. Private sector housing improvements will be supported; and
  - d. Proposals to bring empty properties back into use will be supported.
2. To ensure that local housing need is met and sustainable linked communities are created:
- a. A mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenure, including approximately 800 units of affordable and special needs housing will be delivered to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent's current and future population (327 of which will be delivered through S106 agreements); and
  - b. Provision will be made for 6 pitches for unmet gypsy and traveller accommodation.

**SP5 Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites**

- a. In order to create a network of sustainable linked hubs provision for new housing will be located in the following hub areas:
- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 | Approx          |
| Ebbw Vale       | 1,600 dwellings |
| Tredegar        | 900 dwellings   |
| Upper Ebbw Fach | 400 dwellings   |
| Lower Ebbw Fach | 350 dwellings   |
- b. An allowance for: completions to date, windfall contributions, small sites, conversions and demolitions totalling 826 dwellings is made across the County Borough
- c. The delivery of the dwellings will be increased in five-year periods recognising the step change required to reach the higher completion figures.
- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 2006-2011 | 820   |
| 2011-2016 | 1,320 |
| 2016-2021 | 1,526 |

**SP6 Ensuring Accessibility**

The Council will work with partner organisations, including the Welsh Assembly Government, South East Wales Transport Alliance, public transport operators, community transport providers, Network Rail and neighbouring Authorities to deliver a sustainable transport network which:

1. Increases connectivity through improving rail, bus and road links:
  - a. With other key settlements in the South East Wales Region, Wales, the UK and Europe;
  - b. Between the principal hub of Ebbw Vale and other identified district hubs (Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery);
2. Facilitates and supports economic growth, regeneration and development priorities; whilst minimising harm to the built and natural environment and local communities;
3. Promotes Ebbw Vale as a regional public transport hub which integrates cycling, walking, bus, and rail networks;
4. Facilitates an integrated and safe system of cycle and pedestrian routes connecting settlements with employment areas and town centres;
5. Facilitates the transportation of freight on the core network whilst encouraging the use of rail; and
6. Secures appropriate provision for people with special access and mobility requirements.

**LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)****SP7 Climate Change**

The Council will seek to address climate change and reduce energy demand to improve the sustainability of the valley communities in Blaenau Gwent by:

1. Addressing the causes of climate change through:
  - a. Encouraging more of the County Borough's electricity and heat requirements to be generated by renewable and low/zero carbon technologies
  - b. Supporting development proposals that incorporate decentralised heating, cooling and power networks powered by renewable energy sources, or that connect to existing communal/district heating networks;
  - c. Implementing the energy hierarchy as set out in national planning policy; and
  - d. Promoting efficient use of land through giving preference to brownfield land and development at higher densities on sites located close to transport corridors or town centres.
2. Adapting to direct and indirect impacts of climate change through:
  - a. Ensuring that developments accord with objectives of sustainability and good design as set out in national planning policy;
  - b. Directing new development away from those areas which are at high risk of flooding in line with Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15; and
  - c. Managing flood risk through incorporating measures in design and construction to reduce the effects of flooding.

**SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth**

In order to increase economic activity, diversify the economy and ensure that residents of Blaenau Gwent maximise their economic potential:

- a. 50ha of land for employment and business purposes will be allocated to meet economic development and employment needs;
- b. The employment roles of major industrial areas will be identified to assist in the diversification of employment and to support the sustainable development of manufacturing;
- c. Employment in Health and Social Care will be encouraged in town centres and in conjunction with the new hospital at 'The Works';
- d. Tourism, leisure and cultural initiatives will be encouraged in town centres;
- e. Rural enterprise and activity tourism will be promoted in the countryside;
- f. A first class learning infrastructure will be put in place to ensure that residents gain the skills they require;
- g. Local labour agreements will be negotiated with developers to enable local people to secure employment and skills development.

**SP9 Active and Healthy Communities**

To create active and healthy communities the Council will:

- a. Promote the Valleys Regional Park and leisure activities;
- b. Protect and improve existing open space, sport and leisure facilities; and
- c. Protect and enhance accessibility to natural greenspaces for all members of the community.

**SP10 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment**

Blaenau Gwent's unique, natural environment and designated landscape will be protected, preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. This will be achieved through:

- a. Protecting national, European and international nature conservation sites in line with national planning policy;
- b. Protecting those attributes and features which make a significant contribution to the character,

### LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)

- quality and amenity of the landscape;
- c. Giving appropriate consideration to European and nationally designated and other important species and habitats identified as priorities for nature conservation, in line with national planning policy;
- d. Maintaining and enhancing the Green Infrastructure including creating a network of local wildlife sites and wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones;
- e. Ensuring that development retains, protects and enhances features of ecological or geological interest, and provides for the appropriate management of these features; and
- f. Ensuring development seeks to produce a net gain in biodiversity by designing in wildlife, and ensuring any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for.

#### SP11 Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment

Blaenau Gwent's distinctive built environment will be protected, preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. This will be achieved through:

- a. Safeguarding nationally designated sites from inappropriate development in line with national planning policy and guidance and also protecting locally designated buildings of significant importance and conservation areas;
- b. Enhancing sites of historic or archaeological value; and
- c. The promotion of heritage tourism.

#### SP12 Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals

Blaenau Gwent will contribute to the local, regional and national aggregate supplies by:

- a. Maintaining a 10-year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national planning policy and addressing the 3Mt apportionment identified in the Regional Technical Statement;
- b. Safeguarding existing mineral reserves and potential resources from development that would preclude their future extraction or encouraging the pre-working of mineral resources, where appropriate;
- c. Ensuring that future mineral working accords with national planning policy in terms of protecting areas of importance of natural and built heritage and limiting the environmental impact of mineral extraction;
- d. Ensuring that high standards of restoration and aftercare measures are incorporated at sites;
- e. Ensuring that impacts upon residential areas from mineral and coal operations are limited to an acceptable proven safe limit through identification of buffer zones and areas where coal working will not be acceptable; and
- f. Promoting the efficient use of minerals and use of alternatives to naturally occurring minerals including the re-use of secondary aggregates.

#### SP13 Delivering Sustainable Waste Management

To help deliver sustainable waste management across Blaenau Gwent the Council will ensure that:

1. Sufficient land is identified to enable an integrated network of waste management facilities to be developed across the County Borough through:
  - a. Allocating land to meet the South East Wales Regional Waste Plan requirement of 0.4- 4 hectares (Policy W1);
  - b. Encouraging the provision of in-building treatment facilities on Primary and Secondary Employment Sites (Policy DM11); and
  - c. Allocating land to meet local needs
2. Support is provided for treatment facilities, measures and strategies that represent the best practicable environmental option, having regard to the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle (Policy DM21);
3. Provision is made for sustainable waste management storage and collection arrangements in all

LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policy (April 2011)
<p>appropriate developments; and</p> <p>4. Waste minimisation is encouraged during construction.</p>



## Assessment Summary

### General Overview

- 7.13 Overall, it is considered that the Strategic Policies perform well against the SA objectives, particularly SA objectives 1-17 and 22-23, where no significant negative effects have been predicted. These objectives cover economic, social and environmental sustainability issues ranging from economic growth and employment, housing, skills, accessibility, health, transport, biodiversity, heritage, land and soil quality, sustainable resources and renewable energy. A mix of both positive and negative effects has been predicted against SA objectives 18-21 and 24-25. Objectives 18 to 21 relate to greenhouse gas emissions; waste; air quality; and flood risk. Objectives 24 and 25 relate to water quality and landscape quality. However, it is likely that these effects can be mitigated, as explained in the text below.

### SP1 Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration

- 7.14 The policy is predicted to have a range of significant positive effects, with one significant negative effect predicted. SA objectives against which significant positive effects are predicted include: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 11 (crime and fear of crime); 12 (Welsh culture); 13 (sustainable transport); 14 (biodiversity); 15 (heritage assets); 16 (previously developed land); and 17 (soil resources and quality).
- 7.15 The policy supports a high level of investment in growth and seeks to ensure that employment increases in key accessible settlements, distributed across town, district and local centres. The development strategy seeks to build upon major regeneration opportunities that will have benefits for people across the plan area over time. By focusing investment in key centres and siting new development in locations that are accessible to these key centres, the policy offers considerable potential to encourage greater town centre vitality, which underpins viability. Enabling diversification of the economic base in district hubs as well as specifying the types of development targeted for expansion, could help to improve the implementation of the strategy over time.
- 7.16 The significant negative effect was predicted against SA objective 20 (air quality). The policy is concerned primarily with the location of development as opposed to the amount. However, insofar as it supports an increase in development, it will also result in an increase in density of emissions sources that are unlikely to be completely offset by the potential for a reduction in the need to travel and increased availability of public transport. As the policy refers to the development of a principal hub, effects in this area are likely to be significant.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP1)

- 7.17 Between the 2008 assessment of the Strategic Policies and the 2011 iteration, the predicted significant positive effects of policy SP1 have increased and reflect the SA recommendations made in the 2008 assessments. Improved scores were predicted against SA objectives 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 12 (Welsh culture); and 15 (heritage assets). The improvements to the predicted effects mainly arose through the improved integration of the need to protect and enhance the cultural heritage assets of the County Borough. The promotion of Ebbw Vale will include cultural developments that could have benefits for the tourism potential of the area. The policy makes specific reference to support for new roles for district and local

centres with a particular focus on the tourism offers of Tredegar, Brynmawr and Blaina, expanding on local heritage and tourism-supporting infrastructure.

- 7.18 Improvements to the scoring against SA objectives 18 and 19, although not significant, were as a result of the effects of improvements to other LDP policies, including sustainable design (SP7) and sustainable waste management (SP13), as well as the influence of new national policies<sup>24</sup>.

### Recommendations

- 7.19 No further recommendations.

## SP2 Southern Strategy Area –Regeneration

- 7.20 The policy is predicted to have a range of significant positive effects, with no overall significant negative effects predicted. SA objectives against which significant positive effects are predicted include: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 5 (housing needs); 6 (quality of housing); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 12 (Welsh culture); 13 (sustainable transport); 14 (biodiversity); 15 (heritage assets); and 16 (previously developed land).
- 7.21 Regeneration should, over the medium to longer term, be effective in improving local economic conditions and promoting growth within the south of the Borough, to complement the focus on the north in other policies. The policy specifically states that the regeneration activity should develop complementary roles to culture, leisure and tourism industries, creating further benefits. In combination with other policies, balancing the focus of growth with a strong regeneration focus in the south of the Borough should help to increase local employment and secure a more equitable distribution of opportunities across the Borough.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP2)

- 7.22 Between the 2008 assessment of the Strategic Policies and the 2011 iteration, the predicted significant positive effects of policy SP2 have increased and reflect the SA recommendations made in the 2008 assessments. Improved scores were predicted against SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 5 (housing needs); 6 (quality of housing); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 12 (Welsh culture); 13 (sustainable transport); 14 (biodiversity); 15 (heritage assets); and 16 (previously developed land). The improvements in the significance of effects have arisen from the inclusion within the policy of specific ways in which the regeneration of the southern area will be delivered. This is in terms of economic, social and environmental factors such as the industries to be grown, including 'activity' tourism, which could also have social and environmental benefits through the reduction in the need for land for development and a potential for improvements in health levels over time. The policy specifically seeks to build upon the unique identity of the area, through protecting the built heritage and the natural environment. This could increase the sense of place in the southern strategy area, enhancing a sense of local identity over time.
- 7.23 Improvements to the scoring against SA objectives 7 (affordable housing), 11 (crime and fear of crime); 18 (greenhouse gas emissions) and 21 (flooding), although not significant, were as a result of the effects of improvements to other LDP policies, including sustainable design (SP7- design to reduce energy demand; crime; and surface water runoff); reducing flood risk and the enhancement of GI through policies SP10 and DM16; and SP4 and DM8 (affordable housing), and the influence of new national policies.

<sup>24</sup> Planning Policy Wales, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition July 2010 includes national requirements for sustainable design.

### Recommendations

- 7.24 No further recommendations.

### SP3 - The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of Town Centres

- 7.25 The policy is predicted to have a number of significant positive effects, with three significant negative effects predicted. Significant benefits are predicted against SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 13 (sustainable transport); and 16 (previously developed land).
- 7.26 Retail is a critical component of the economy. In seeking to protect and enhance the offer and complementary activities across the County Borough, the policy has considerable potential to deliver beneficial effects. This could be a key source of increased local job opportunities at a range of levels. The policy seeks to bolster the choice of facilities and services in key settlements across the County Borough. This could help to increase the appeal of destinations already served by public transport. In focusing retail and associated development on existing settlements, the policy should deliver maximised development within the existing urban envelope. The policy specifically refers to the need for the upgrading of existing shops, offices and other commercial premises, which could have significant short-medium term benefits.
- 7.27 Significant negative effects are predicted against SA objectives 18 (greenhouse gas emissions) and 20 (air quality). The policy encourages increased levels of development, which could increase the sources of emissions of greenhouse gases as well as potentially encourage an increase in trip generation. It is likely that, in combination, these will have adverse effects against Objective 18. However, it is also recognised that sustainable design guidance required through the LDP and nationally could reduce emissions from buildings. Although the policy specifically seeks that improved public transport facilities will be provided, this is alongside the provision of better vehicular access and car parking. This could reduce the potential for a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes to occur. However, in line with policy DM1, priority will be given to more sustainable modes of transport ahead of the private car, which could reduce the significance of this effect in the long term. The policy should result in an increase in development densities within all key settlements – this may increase the potential for pollutants to enter the water system.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP4)

- 7.28 Between the 2008 assessment of the Strategic Policies and the 2011 iteration, the predicted significant positive effects of policy SP3 have increased and reflect the SA recommendations made in the 2008 assessments. Improvements in score were against objectives 13 (sustainable transport); 19 (waste) and 24 (water quality).
- 7.29 Improvements to the scoring against SA objectives 13 and 19 were made as a result of other modified policies in the LDP (in particular, DM1: New Development). The policy involves increased levels of development within the existing settlements. This is likely to increase emissions and development densities, both of which may result in localised degradation of air quality. Although the policy specifically seeks that improved public transport facilities will be provided, this is alongside the provision of better vehicular access and car parking. This latter element of the policy could reduce the potential for a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes to occur. However, in line with policy DM1, priority will be given to more sustainable modes of transport ahead of the private car, which could improve benefits against this objective in the long term. Policy SP13 is likely to reduce the significance of potential effects from an increase in waste from construction. Policy SP10 is likely to enable greater protection of the natural environment.



### Recommendations

- 7.30 No further recommendations.

### SP4 - Delivering Quality Housing

- 7.31 This strategic policy is predicted to have a range of significant positive sustainability effects, with 2 significant negative effects predicted. The SA objectives against which significant positive effects have been predicted include SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); and 16 (previously developed land).
- 7.32 The policy seeks to provide a mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes to include 800 units of affordable and special needs housing. Provision will also be made for 6 gypsy and traveller pitches. The supporting text to the policy explains that this provision is based on an evidence base for the LDP, which has identified local need and viability. However, the identified number of units (approximately 800) falls short of the identified need (1290) over the plan period. The shortfall is sought to be addressed through the bringing of underused stock back into use and through the social housing grant. This could lead to long term positive effects. An improvement in the provision of affordable housing could improve community well-being and longer terms benefits are predicted on the basis that provision is to be within sustainable linked communities. The regeneration of social housing areas and the support of housing renewal areas should lead to long term benefits for health and wellbeing. High levels of sustainable design should improve physical health directly in the long term. Along with the creation of an increase in community cohesion through mixing, this could lead to reduced levels of crime and the fear of crime over time. Policies that seek to increase walking and cycling as modes of transport could augment this effect.
- 7.33 Significant negative effects were predicted against SA objectives: 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); and 20 (air quality). The policy will result in the delivery of new dwellings, which could result in increased trip generation, all of which will add to the sources of air pollution and GHGs in the County Borough. However, this effect could be minimised through other LDP policies, including SP6, which seek to encourage increased accessibility by sustainable modes. This could minimise long term negative effects as infrastructure is developed.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP8)

- 7.34 Since the 2008 iteration of the policy, a considerable amount of detail has been added to the policy wording. Improvements to the significance of the SA assessments have been recorded against the following SA objectives: 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 5 (housing needs); 10 (health and well-being); 11 (crime and fear of crime); 12 (welsh culture); 13 (sustainable transport); 14 (biodiversity); 15 (heritage assets); 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); 19 (waste); 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources); 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation); and 25 (landscape).
- 7.35 The changes in significance are attributable to the additional detail set out in the policy, providing details of specific measures that are to be achieved through the LDP, as described above. Some improvements in the scores are due to improvements within other LDP policies that could reduce the significance of negative effects that may have been predicted in the previous assessment iteration. Policies that have influenced the assessment include: SP6 (accessibility by sustainable modes); SP13 (sustainable waste management); DM16 (flood risk); and DM5 (sustainable design).

### Recommendations

- 7.36 No further recommendations.



## SP5- Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites

- 7.37 This strategic policy is predicted to have significant positive effects against a number of the SA objectives including: 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 5 (housing needs); and 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities). No significant effects have been predicted at this stage. However, the policies relating to the Allocations and Designations incorporate site specific findings relating to the work undertaken by the Council and other sources such as the SFCA Stage 2. These assessments provide greater clarity as to the suitability of particular locations for housing.
- 7.38 There is the potential for the delivery of additional residential development to support a greater catchment, which in turn could support increased town centre vitality and viability, particularly for Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. Insofar as the policy seeks to direct new residential development to existing centres, there are likely to be some localised benefits in terms of improved co-locating of residential development and key services and facilities.
- 7.39 In areas of considerable increases in residential development densities, there is a risk that local air quality will be degraded considerably. Flood risk could also be exacerbated through an increase in development density. However, effects on air quality could be minimised through other LDP policies, including SP6, which seek to encourage increased accessibility by sustainable modes. Flood risk could be minimised through national policy and other policies within the LDP, including DM16.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP7)

- 7.40 The assessment of the previous policy led to the prediction of similar effects. Previous recommendations included a suggestion that the types of housing be specified, which is now reflected in policy SP4. National requirements for zero carbon housing have led to the reduction in significance of the adverse score predicted against SA objective 18 (greenhouse gas emissions). Revised LDP policy SP13, which encourages the sustainable management of waste in construction, has led to the reduction in the significance of the adverse effect predicted against SA Objective 19 (waste).

### Recommendations

- 7.41 See recommendations under Theme 2 in Section 8.

## SP6 - Ensuring Accessibility

- 7.42 Significant positive effects are predicted to arise against a number of the SA objectives as a result of the implementation of this policy. Significant positive effects are predicted against SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); and 13 (sustainable transport).
- 7.43 The policy seeks to encourage an improvement in accessibility by encouraging increased connectivity through the improvement in rail, bus and road links. The policy promotes Ebbw Vale as a public transport hub, as well as encouraging a walking and cycling network and the transportation of freight by rail. The focus of the policy on improving public transport modes could lead to significant benefits in the long term, although the concurrent improvement in road infrastructure could limit the realisation of the full potential for modal shift.
- 7.44 The availability of effective transport links is essential to underpinning economic growth. The facilitation of an integrated and safe system of cycle and pedestrian routes could increase usage levels for this mode of transport, thereby increasing health levels in the long term through increased physical activity as well as reduced air pollution through a reduction in the reliance on vehicular transport modes.
- 7.45 No significant negative effects have been predicted to arise as a result of the implementation of this policy.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy numbers: SP10 and SP11)

- 7.46 The policy is an amalgamation of policies SP10 and SP11 from the previous plan iteration, and so direct comparisons are not possible. However, it is considered that the approach in the LDP Deposit Plan reflects the previous SA recommendations, incorporating the need to improve accessibility through a range of sustainable transport modes on a local, as well as regional and national spatial scale.

### Recommendations

- 7.47 No further recommendations.

### SP7 - Climate Change

- 7.48 Significant positive effects have been predicted by the assessment of this strategic policy against the following SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 14 (biodiversity); 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 19 (waste); 20 (air quality); 21 (flooding); 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation); 24 (water quality); and 25 (landscape).
- 7.49 High quality built design and the protection of the natural environment may help to improve the attractiveness of the area, thus increasing the potential for visitors to the area as well as potential inward investment, which may enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. The policy sets out that the Council will specifically seek to address climate change and reduce energy demand to improve the sustainability of the valleys communities through considering proposals and allocating sites according to the objectives of sustainability and according with the energy hierarchy. The policy seeks specifically to take a positive approach to development through supporting development proposals that incorporate low and zero carbon energy generation and encouraging more of the local power overall to be generated to be from renewable and low/zero carbon technologies. This, alongside national guidance, should lead to significant positive effects in enabling a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, as national guidance seeks zero carbon development.
- 7.50 The policy specifically seeks to promote the efficient use of land, which should help to conserve soil resources. Focusing development in areas close to transport corridors and town centres could have social and economic benefits, as well as reduce the need to travel by car. The policy seeks to accord with the objectives of sustainability and good design as set out in national policy, which includes the need to conserve national and local nature conservation interests; conserve water quality; protect landscape and heritage assets; encourage sustainable waste management; and to promote efficiency in the use of land to include promoting higher density development in town centres and close to transport corridors, leading to sustainability benefits. The policy specifically requires that development avoids locating highly vulnerable development in areas of flood risk, as identified in TAN15 alongside promoting the incorporation of design measures that will reduce flood risk. This should help to maintain current low levels of vulnerability.
- 7.51 No significant negative effects have been predicted.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP13 (part))

- 7.52 Direct comparison with the 2008 policy iterations is not possible as this policy has been created since the 2008 version. However, the policy has arisen partly as a result of the SA recommendations from the 2008 assessment iteration. Further, the policy has been strengthened by the development of the Blaenau Gwent Renewable Energy Assessment (2011). As such, this is considered to be an improvement in terms of the potential for the LDP to achieve sustainable development.

### Recommendations

- 7.53 No further recommendations.

### SP8 - Sustainable Economic Growth

- 7.54 The assessment of the strategic policy has led to the prediction of significant positive effects against the following SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 8 (education and skills); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 15 (heritage assets); 16 (previously developed land); and 17 (soil resources and quality).
- 7.55 The policy seeks to diversify employment and support the sustainable development of specific industries, including manufacturing, which could lead to long term benefits. The policy specifically seeks to encourage tourism, leisure and heritage initiatives as part of economic growth, as well as promoting activity tourism in the countryside. This could help to promote a strong tourism offer, complementary to other strategic policies in adjoining authorities. The most significant benefits are likely in the long term, as proposals in this and other authorities are realised to create a regional tourism offer. The development of tourism, leisure and heritage initiatives in town centres should serve to increase the catchment population for town centre facilities and services as well as increase the use of previously developed land, with the potential for beneficial effects.
- 7.56 Diversification of the local employment and business opportunities should serve to increase the range and availability of opportunities for vocational and work-place based training and upskilling. The policy specifically includes that a first class learning infrastructure will be put in place to ensure that residents gain the skills they require, and that local labour agreements will be negotiated with developers to enable local people to secure employment and skills development. The approach to employment and skills development set out in the policy should assist in increasing the accessibility of employment opportunities. Direct benefits for health from the policy could arise from the encouragement of employment in health and social care in town centres and in conjunction with the new hospital at 'The Works'.
- 7.57 A significant negative effect was predicted against SA Objective 20 (air quality). The scale of development supported by the policy has the potential to give rise to increased emissions and localised degradation of air quality arising from a combination of built development, processes and transportation. However, effects on air quality could be minimised through other LDP policies, including SP6, which seek to encourage increased accessibility by sustainable modes.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP5)

- 7.58 The policy has led to the improvement in SA scores from the previous 2008 iteration to the following SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 8 (education and skills); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 15 (heritage assets); 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 19 (waste); 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources); 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation); and 24 (water quality).
- 7.59 SA recommendations from the 2008 iteration of assessment included a recommendation for improving the skills base of the local community, which is reflected in the policy. Other improvements to the scores have arisen through the inclusion of additional detail in the policy wording, such as the specification of the types of industries to be targeted through diversification, which could lead to more sustainable economic growth through ensuring that industries targeted will also have a positive effect on social and environmental indicators.

### Recommendations

- 7.60 No further recommendations.

## SP9 - Active and Healthy Communities

- 7.61 The assessment of the policy has led to the prediction of significant positive effects against SA objectives: 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being) and 14 (biodiversity).
- 7.62 The policy specifically seeks to protect and enhance accessibility to natural greenspace for all members of the community, as well as improve existing open space, sports and leisure facilities. This is likely to lead to significant positive effects over the plan period. Through improving the recreational and leisure opportunities, there is potential for the policy to deliver beneficial effects for health levels through an increase in physical activity. Further, increased accessibility to natural greenspace could improve physical activity and contribute to a sense of wellbeing through increased community interaction, as well as delivering improvements to air quality arising from the carbon scrubbing properties associated with enhanced greenery. Through promoting increased accessibility to natural greenspace, the policy offers opportunities to boost biodiversity, which could have significant benefits against objective number of the SA objectives.
- 7.63 The development of natural greenspace and a regional park is likely to provide support to the development of the tourism industry that could lead to significant beneficial effects for employment and economic diversification in the medium to long term. Focused investment in delivering recreational and leisure development across the County Borough should also assist in supporting and, to some extent, catalysing investment to improve town centre vitality and viability.
- 7.64 No significant negative effects have been predicted.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP6)

- 7.65 The policy has developed to set out a shift in focus from tourism to the creation of active and healthy communities. Therefore it is considered that the 2008 iteration is not directly comparable to the 2010 policy in terms of predicted effects. Tourism is now considered under SP8.

### Recommendations

- 7.66 No further recommendations.

## SP10 - Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

- 7.67 The assessment of the strategic policy has led to the prediction of significant positive effects against 8 of the SA objectives, namely: 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 14 (biodiversity); 15 (heritage assets); 17 (soil resources and quality); 21 (flooding); 24 (water quality); and 25 (landscape).
- 7.68 The protection of the natural environment may help to improve the attractiveness of the area, thus increasing the potential to attract visitors to the area as well as the likelihood of attracting inward investment, which could enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. Positive effects are also likely for resident communities. Significant beneficial effects are predicted for biodiversity and landscape indicators, as the policy seeks to protect, preserve and enhance sites and landscapes of national and local nature conservation interest. The policy seeks a net gain in biodiversity, which should lead to significant benefits in the medium to long term. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment should help ensure that the best solutions are identified (in particular, the policy requires the development potential of brownfield sites to be explored) in order to maximise development potential, which is likely to have positive effects on soil resources. The development of a green infrastructure network is likely to not only have beneficial effects for biodiversity, but could also have significant benefits for reducing flood risk and improving water quality through SUDS.

- 7.69 No significant negative effects are predicted.

**Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP13 (part))**

- 7.70 The policy has been developed from the splitting of the policy assessed in the 2008 iteration. Therefore the scores are not directly comparable.

**Recommendations**

- 7.71 No further recommendations.

**SP11 - Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment**

- 7.72 The appraisal of this policy has led to the prediction of significant positive effects against 6 of the SA objectives. These were SA objectives: 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 12 (Welsh culture); 15 (heritage assets); 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources); and 25 (landscape).

- 7.73 High quality built design may help to improve the attractiveness of the area, thus increasing the potential to attract visitors to the area. The policy specifically seeks to encourage the promotion of heritage tourism, which could create benefits in the medium to long term. The improved attractiveness of the area could also enhance the potential for investment, which could enhance vitality. In addition to promoting high quality new development, the policy also seeks to safeguard the distinctive built environment, which is an approach that has the potential to deliver a greater sense of identity. The enhancement of the built environment could also lead to the resurrection of local skills such as stonemasonry, potentially leading to significant medium and long term benefits for local distinctiveness and Welsh culture. This could also enhance the use of local and more sustainable materials in buildings to reflect local character.

**Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP13 (part))**

- 7.74 The policy has been developed from the splitting of the policy assessed in the 2008 iteration. Therefore the scores are not directly comparable.

**Recommendations**

- 7.75 No further recommendations.

**SP12 - Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals**

- 7.76 The assessment of the policy against the SA objectives has led to the prediction of two significant positive effects, against objectives 19 (waste); and 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources). One significant negative effect has also been predicted, against SA Objective 25 (landscape).

- 7.77 The significant positive effects were predicted as the policy seeks to encourage the re-use of secondary aggregates. The policy may have indirect negative effects against the landscape objective, as it supports mineral operations, which may impact on the quality of local landscape. Long term effects may be neutral through the requirement for high standards of landscape restoration following mineral extraction.

**Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP14)**

- 7.78 The previous iteration of the assessment predicted no significant positive effects, with the same significant negative effect predicted. It is regarded that the policy has been improved since the previous iteration, due to the consideration of the efficient use of material assets including the re-use of secondary aggregates.

**Recommendations**

- 7.79 No further recommendations.

### SP13 - Delivering Sustainable Waste Management

- 7.80 The SA of the strategic policy has predicted the potential for significant positive effects against 3 of the SA objectives, namely: 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 19 (waste); and 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources).
- 7.81 The policy may further the implementation of waste hierarchy principles through adequate provision of sustainable waste management facilities. However, the success of the policy may depend on the location of the waste management facilities, which will be determined through policy DM21. Notwithstanding this, the policy promotes the implementation of the waste hierarchy and encourages waste minimisation during construction, which should deliver benefits.
- 7.82 No significant negative effects have been predicted.

#### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (2008 policy number: SP15)

- 7.83 The previous iteration of the assessment predicted significant positive effects against SA objectives 19 and 22. The 2010 iteration includes a requirement for land to be allocated to meet local needs, which has led to the prediction of an additional significant positive effect against SA objective 9.

#### Recommendations

- 7.84 No further recommendations.

Table 7.2 - Summary of Assessment Findings of LDP Deposit Plan Strategic Policies

SA Objective		Strategic Policy												
		SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13
1	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	+++	+++	+++	++	0	++	++	+++	+	+	+	+	0
2	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	+++	++	+++	+	0	0	+	+++	++	+	+	+	0
3	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	+++	0	++	0	0	++	++	+++	++	++	+++	0	0
4	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	+++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	++	++	0	0
5	To meet identified housing needs	0	++	0	++	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	0	++	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0
7	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	0	+	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+++	+	0	+	0	0
9	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	+++	++	++	++	++	+++	0	+++	+++	0	0	0	++
10	To promote community health, social care and well-being	++	++	+	++	0	++	+	++	+++	+	+	-	-
11	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	++	+	+	++	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0
12	To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	++	++	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	0
13	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	+++	+++	++	+	+	++	+	+	0	0	0	+/-	+
14	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	+	++	+	+	+/-	+/-	++	+/-	++	+++	0	-	+
15	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	+++	++	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+	++	+	++	+++	+/-	+
16	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity.	+++	++	++	++	+/-	+/-	++	++	0	+	+	0	+
17	To conserve soil resources and their quality	++	+	0	+	+/-	+/-	++	++	+/-	++	0	+/-	+



SA Objective	Strategic Policy												
	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13
18 To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	+/-	-	--	--	-	-	+++	-	+/-	+	+	-	+
19 To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	-	-	-	-	-	-	++	-	0	0	0	++	++
20 To maintain current air quality	--	-	--	--	--	-	++	--	+/-	+	0	-	+
21 To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	-	-	-	-	--	0	++	-	+	++	0	0	+
22 To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	++	++	++
23 To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	0	0	0	+	+	0	+++	+	0	0	+	-	0
24 To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	-	-	-	-	-	0	++	+	+	++	0	-	-
25 To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	+	+	+	++	+/-	+/-	++	-	+	+++	+++	--	-

- SP1: Northern Strategy Area - Sustainable Growth and Regeneration
- SP2: Southern Strategy Area - Regeneration
- SP3: Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of Town Centres
- SP4: Delivering Quality Housing
- SP5 - Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites
- SP6 - Ensuring Accessibility
- SP7 - Creating Sustainable High Quality Development
- SP8 - Sustainable Economic Growth
- SP9 - Active and Healthy Communities
- SP10 - Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- SP11 - Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment
- SP12- Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals
- SP13 - Delivering Sustainable Waste Management

## 8. Assessment of Significant Effects of Development Management, Allocations and Designations Policies

### Introduction

- 8.1 Along with the Strategic Policies referred to in the previous section, the LDP Deposit Plan comprises a total of 21 Development Management Policies and 31 Allocations and Designations Policies. These are listed in Table 8.1.
- 8.2 In order to undertake the assessment, the Development Management Policies and Allocations and Designations Policies were grouped under similar themes and matched with their associated Strategic Policy. These groupings have been termed 'themes' and each grouping or 'theme' was then assessed separately – this approach has been devised to facilitate the effectiveness of appraisal and reduce the potential for repetition or contradiction. Table 8.2 shows how the Development Management and Allocations and Designations policies relate to each policy theme and parent Strategic Policy.

### May 2010 iteration

- 8.3 In May 2010, the policies were subject to assessment by the SA team, leading to a series of SA recommendations that were used to inform the BGCBC SA Working Group meeting (21.05.2010). The LDP policies were then revised to reflect the combined recommendations from both the assessments and the working group meeting, with the resulting policies forming the LDP Deposit Plan. Recommendations made as a result of the SA in May 2010 are included in the detailed assessment tables in Appendix H.

### April 2011 iteration

- 8.4 The policies have since been further revised, to reflect the changing national policy context. Revisions were also made to the policies to reflect the recommendations of the HRA Appropriate Assessment<sup>25</sup>. Appendix I shows how the May 2010 iteration of the SA, as well as the HRA AA and other influences, have led to the April 2011 Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies.
- 8.5 The April 2011 iteration of the assessments took into consideration the most recent planning policy and developing strategies within BGCBC. This included the following documents:
- BGCBC and Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU), March 2010, Report on the Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) for BGCBC;
  - BGCBC Equalities Impact Assessment of LDP 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009;
  - BGCBC, Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment, Stages 1 and 2, June and August 2010, URS/Scott Wilson;
  - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Deposit LDP, Habitats Regulations Assessment- Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment- Appropriate Assessment, Capita Symonds, April 2011; and
  - The Blaenau Gwent Renewable Energy Assessment (2011).

<sup>25</sup> Capita Symonds, April 2011

Table 8.1 - Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies: LDP Deposit Plan, April 2011

Note: A version showing the tracked changes of the policies' development between May 2010 and April 2011 is included in Appendix I.

Policy Content
<p><b>DM1 New Development</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be permitted provided: -</i></p> <p><i>1. Sustainable Design</i></p> <p><i>a. Energy efficient design is achieved;</i></p> <p><i>b. The proposal makes efficient and effective use of resources by employing sustainable building techniques, incorporating energy and water conservation measures, and wherever possible, the use of renewable energy;</i></p> <p><i>c. Construction waste and pollution is minimised;</i></p> <p><i>d. Recycled or sustainable products and resources are used in construction; where practicable; and</i></p> <p><i>e. The proposal reduces surface water runoff through minimising an increase in impermeable surfaces and using Sustainable Drainage systems, where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>2. Amenity</i></p> <p><i>a. The development would be compatible with other uses in the locality;</i></p> <p><i>b. There would be no unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;</i></p> <p><i>c. In the case of residential development including extensions and sub-division of dwellings, dwellings must be of appropriate size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity;</i></p> <p><i>d. There would be no unacceptable risk of harm to health and/or local amenity from unacceptably high levels of noise, vibration, odour or light pollution;</i></p> <p><i>e. The land is made stable and capable of supporting the development without risk of damage to buildings on the site or adjoining land; and</i></p> <p><i>f. Practicable and effective measures are taken to treat, contain or control any contamination.</i></p> <p><i>3. Accessibility</i></p> <p><i>a. The proposal has regard for the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network;</i></p> <p><i>b. The proposal ensures that new access roads within developments are designed to an appropriate standard that prioritises the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before that of the private car;</i></p> <p><i>c. The proposal secures appropriate provision for people with special access and mobility requirements;</i></p> <p><i>d. Parking, appropriate servicing and operational space has been provided in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on</i></p>

Policy Content
<p><i>Access, Car Parking and Design; and</i></p> <p><i>e. Where a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan is required by national planning policy, they must demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on trip generation and travel demand.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The Planning and Energy Act 2008 and Planning Policy Wales sets standards to move towards more sustainable and zero carbon buildings in Wales. The Council will require new development to be built in accordance with sustainability standards set by WAG.</i></p> <p><i>Blaenau Gwent has plans for an extensive community network (shared cycle/walking routes). Whilst the proposed routes are identified on the proposals maps the full extent of the network is identified in Appendix 7. It is important that new developments are linked to this network.</i></p>
<p><b>DM2 Design and Placemaking</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be permitted provided: -</i></p> <p><i>a. They are appropriate to the local context in terms of type, form, scale, mix, and density;</i></p> <p><i>b. They are of good design which reinforces local character and distinctiveness of the area;</i></p> <p><i>c. The development has regard to ‘Secured by Design’ principles;</i></p> <p><i>d. In the case of extensions to buildings, they reflect, complement or enhance the form, siting, materials, architectural details and character of the original building, its curtilage and the wider area;</i></p> <p><i>e. In the case of proposals for new and replacement shopfronts, roller shutters and signage, they make a positive contribution to the street scene and conform to the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Shopfront Design; and</i></p> <p><i>f. In the case of the public realm and key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions, the character and quality of the built form is to a high standard of design and, where appropriate, includes public art; and</i></p> <p><i>g. Landscaping and planting, where appropriate, is integral to the scheme and enhances the site and the wider context</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Whilst all design should be of good quality it is imperative that buildings in key locations should provide a good impression of the area as this will raise the image of the area. This adds, not only to the quality of life for local residents, but also enhances the ability to attract potential investors and visitors to the area. Blaenau Gwent has a strong cultural heritage and the Council are keen to ensure that new developments continue to add to the cultural fabric of the area. In considering proposals for public art as part of development schemes, the Council will seek artist commissions that add cultural value to the architecture, landscape design and sense of place.</i></p> <p><i>The landscape and the natural environment are amongst the most important local resources and needs to be protected and enhanced. This does not mean that</i></p>

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<p><i>there should be no change but there is a requirement for high, quality design solutions that complement or contribute to landscape character. The key is to incorporate areas of established importance and ensure these are protected and enhanced, for example through their management and the incorporation of new features such as native trees and plants.</i></p>
<p><b>DM3 Air and Water Pollution</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be permitted where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. They do not have an adverse impact upon the water environment or pose an unacceptable risk to the quality of controlled waters (including groundwater and surface water); and</i></li><li><i>b. They do not result in airborne emissions which have an unacceptable effect on the health, amenity or natural environment of the surrounding area, taking into account cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity.</i></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) establishes a strategic approach to water management and a common means of protecting and setting environmental objectives for all ground waters and surface waters. It aims to protect and restore clean water and ensure its long-term sustainable use.</i></p> <p><i>Development will only be allowed where adequate provision is made for the necessary infrastructure to protect water quality and quantity. Consideration will be given to the quality and quantity of the water resource and how this impacts upon the wider environment in terms of preventing further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems associated habitats, fisheries, promoting the sustainable use of water and controlling water abstractions. Planning permission may be granted subject to conditions to secure the necessary measures, or developers may be required to enter into Planning Obligations. Applications that cannot provide adequate protection of watercourses, ground and surface water will be refused.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Authority’s ongoing review and assessment of the air quality within the County Borough has concluded that, based on the information available at present, it is unlikely that any of the air quality objectives that the Council are required to have regard to, are, or are likely to be exceeded in the immediate future. The Council is committed to ensuring the protection of the standard air quality within the Borough and also, where reasonably possible, the improvement of air quality. Development will not be permitted where it is considered that the resultant emissions to air will have an unacceptable impact on the existing and/or future air quality within the Borough or where there will be an unacceptable adverse impact on public health and/or the environment, taking into account the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity.</i></p>
<p><b>DM4 Infrastructure Provision</b></p> <p><i>Proposals for new development will be required to meet the infrastructure needs that it generates, including the improvement or provision of infrastructure, services and community facilities. Where on site provision cannot be achieved, off-site provision or a financial contribution will be required. Arrangements for the provision of infrastructure will be secured by the use of planning conditions attached to a planning permission or planning obligations in legal agreements or via the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Council will seek to ensure that, where appropriate, the impact of new development is mitigated to ensure that it contributes the regeneration of local communities in Blaenau Gwent.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p>

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<p><i>The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) makes it unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms</i></li><li><i>b. Directly related to the development; and</i></li><li><i>c. Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.</i></li></ul> <p><i>Any planning obligation that is entered into will be guided by these tests.</i></p> <p><i>The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new charge which local authorities in England and Wales are empowered, but not required, to levy on most types of new development in their areas. The proceeds of the levy will provide new local and sub-regional infrastructure to support the development of an area in line with local authorities' development plans. Blaenau Gwent has yet to determine if it is to adopt a CIL.</i></p> <p><i>Planning obligations generally apply to larger scale development where the provision of certain infrastructure required by the development is necessary to allow the development proposal to proceed. Infrastructure covers a range of services/facilities provided by public and private bodies. In certain cases improvements to or the provision of physical infrastructure may be required, such as: site access/egress and highway improvements beyond the site boundary, transport facilities and related infrastructure (footpaths, cycleways), water provision and treatment, sewerage, flood prevention and drainage, waste disposal, power generation and supply, including renewables, ICT and telecommunications. Where the development would place pressure on community facilities and services that are already near or at capacity, improvements to these services may be sought, such as: affordable housing, schools, recreation and sports facilities, open space, transport (including public transport), allotments, healthcare, community buildings, recycling facilities, public realm improvements to town centres, provision of public art for the benefit of the community. Local labour market agreements will be used to enable local people to secure employment and skills development in the growing construction sector. This is currently in operation at 'The Works' and will look to be extended across the County Borough. Where a development is related to green infrastructure, improvements might be sought for the replacement and/or improvement of features of ecological or geological value and increasing access to green spaces and corridors. This is not an exhaustive list but typical of the type of infrastructure improvements that may be required.</i></p> <p><i>Depending on the nature and scale of the development proposal, the provision of the required infrastructure could take the form of on-site provision, off-site provision or financial contributions to provide the infrastructure in full or in part.</i></p> <p><i>The LDP sites that are expected to generate planning obligations are those housing allocations of 10 or more units included in Policy H1, employment allocations included in Policy EMP1, and retail allocations contained in Policy R1. An indication of the particular requirements (what, how and when) is given in Chapter 9- Delivery and Implementation and cross-referenced to Policies DM8 Affordable Housing and DM13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities.</i></p> <p><i>On windfall sites the range of requirements sought in relation to development proposals will be determined on a case by case basis, taking into account the location and nature of the development and the local infrastructure on which it would impact.</i></p> <p><i>In all cases, when a development proposal that would otherwise be refused would be made acceptable by securing the necessary infrastructure improvements via a planning obligation, planning permission will only be granted once the planning obligation has been signed. If such an agreement cannot be achieved the development proposal will be refused.</i></p> <p><i>The Council has prepared SPG on Planning Obligations.</i></p>

Policy Content
<p><b>DM5 Low and Zero Carbon Energy</b></p> <p><i>Where planning permission is required, development proposals which promote the provision of renewable and low/zero carbon energy such as schemes for energy from onshore wind; landfill gas; energy crops; energy from waste; anaerobic digestion; sewage gas; hydropower; biomass; combined heat and power; and solar will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable effect upon the interests of nature conservation, character and appearance of the landscape, visual, biodiversity, cultural heritage, air quality, odour, noise and residential amenity.</i></p> <p><i>Development proposals should be designed to minimise resource use during construction, operation and maintenance.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>In September 2009, changes were made to the permitted development rights to make provision for the installation of certain types of microgeneration by householders without the need for planning permission, namely solar photovoltaic and solar thermal panels, ground source heat pumps and flues for biomass heating. There are further proposals to extend the permitted development rights in relation to microgeneration to cover the installation of technologies on non-domestic and domestic premises.</i></p> <p><i>The Blaenau Gwent Renewable Energy Assessment (2011) identifies that there is potential to generate electricity and heat from renewable and low/ zero carbon technologies. These technologies include: onshore wind; landfill gas; energy crops; energy from waste; anaerobic digestion; sewage gas; hydropower; biomass; and combined heat and power. Although not assessed in the study there may also be potential for solar photovoltaic technology. The need to harness energy from renewable sources will be carefully balanced, with the impact of nature conservation, character and appearance of the landscape, visual, biodiversity, cultural heritage, air quality, odour, noise and residential amenity. The Local Development Plan seeks to ensure that any adverse local effects are identified and mitigated for through the planning process.</i></p> <p>In determining proposals for the generation of hydro electricity, the issue of flooding will be an important consideration. With regard to anaerobic digestion, in order to protect residential amenity, proposals will only be permitted on sites identified for waste through policy W1 or employment sites that are allocated or identified as a primary or secondary site through policy DM11, EMP1 and EMP2. Small-scale digesters, for example on farms utilising their own waste, may be exempt from this requirement.</p> <p>TAN 8 identifies areas in Wales which are considered to be the most appropriate locations for large scale wind farm development; these areas are referred to as Strategic Search Areas (SSAs). There are no identified SSAs in Blaenau Gwent. Further advice on renewable energy related development will also be contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy and the Renewable Energy Study.</p>



Policy Content
<p><b>DM6 Use Class Restrictions in Principal and District Town Centres</b></p> <p>Development proposals incorporating a change of use of ground floor premises in Principal and District Town Centres will be subject to the following restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Only A1 uses will be permitted within the Primary Retail Area.</li><li>b) Within the town centres, in order to minimise the impact on vitality and viability no more than 3 Hot Food Takeaways and/ or Public Houses should be located in proximity. The number of Hot Food Takeaways, at street level, should be equal to or no greater than 7.0% and the number of public houses should be equal to or no greater than 4.0% of the total number of units.</li><li>c) Within the town centres, the change of use of the ground floor units to residential use will not be permitted.</li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>This Policy applies to the Principal Town Centre of Ebbw Vale and the District Town Centres of Brynmawr, Tredegar and Abertillery.</i></p> <p><i>The boundaries of the Primary Retail Areas are shown on the Proposals Map and are also shown on plans in Appendix 5.</i></p> <p><i>The clustering of A1 uses is considered beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centres. To avoid long term vacancies in ground floor units that would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the primary retail frontage, planning applications would need to be supported by evidence of a 12 month history of vacancy or a lack of response to genuine efforts to market the premises for the preferred use over a significant period.</i></p> <p><i>Outside the Primary Retail Area, a diversity of uses are encouraged. Mixed use developments combining retailing with entertainment and leisure uses should be encouraged to promote lively centres as well as reducing the need to travel to visit a range of facilities. Leisure uses can benefit the town centres, and with adequate attention to safeguarding amenities can contribute to a successful evening time economy.</i></p> <p><i>The significant increase in the number of hot food takeaways and public houses within the town centres has led to concern being expressed by local residents in the area on the vitality of the shopping areas and residential amenity. This Policy aims to protect the character and function of the town centres through firstly controlling the percentage of hot food takeaways at ground floor level and public houses, and secondly the number of hot food takeaways and public houses located in close proximity within the town centres. The Retailing Background Paper sets out the reasoned justification to these approaches. Detailed guidance on Hot Food Takeaway and Public Houses in Town Centres is contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance.</i></p> <p><b>DM7 Use Class Restrictions in Blaina Local Town Centre</b></p> <p><i>1. Development proposals incorporating a change of use of ground floor premises in Blaina Local Town Centre will be subject to the following restrictions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <i>In order to minimise the impact on vitality and viability no more than 3 Hot Food Takeaways and/ or Public Houses should be located in proximity.</i></li></ul>

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<p><i>The number of Hot Food Takeaways, at street level is equal to or no greater than 7.0% and the number of Public Houses is equal to or no greater than 4.0% of the total number of units.</i></p> <p><i>b. In the case of a change of use to residential, the unit must have been vacant for a minimum of 12 months and/or genuine efforts have been made to sell the premises.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>Blaina is expected to act as a Local Shopping Centre, principally serving the residents of Nantyglo and Blaina. The emphasis will be on convenience (food) shopping with an element of day-to-day comparison (non-food) shopping. A range of facilities and uses will be encouraged consistent with the scale and function of the Centre, to meet people's day-to-day needs.</p>
<p><b>DM8 Affordable Housing</b></p> <p><i>Where there is evidence of need, the Council will seek at least 10% affordable housing on all residential proposals that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>d) Contain 10 or more dwellings; or</i></li><li><i>e) Exceed 0.28 ha in gross site area; or</i></li><li><i>f) Exceed the threshold in (a) or (b) above for adjacent sites.</i></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Affordable housing for the purpose of the land use planning system is housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers (TAN2, 2006, paragraph 5.1). Affordable housing includes Social Rented Housing, which is provided by local authorities and registered social landlords, and Intermediate Housing, which is housing where prices or rents are above those of social rent but below market housing prices or rents.</i></p> <p><i>The Blaenau Gwent Local Housing Market Assessment (2006) identified a need for 86 additional affordable units in Blaenau Gwent per year over the next five years. This need is made up of 46 social rented units and 40 intermediate units. However, the Council will take a flexible approach to stipulating the type of housing to ensure the development meets the need of the local area (as set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment) and assists in the delivery of mixed and balanced communities.</i></p> <p><i>When adjacent sites taken together exceed [the above] thresholds affordable housing will be sought.</i></p> <p><i>The Council's Empty Property Strategy identifies over 200 properties that are long term vacant. These properties can have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of a settlement. In order to address this issue the Council will, in certain circumstances, seek financial contributions from developers to bring back empty properties into beneficial occupation as affordable dwellings. Further advice on affordable housing requirements is contained in Supplementary</i></p>

Policy Content
<i>Planning Guidance on Planning Contributions.</i>
<b>DM9 Rural Exception Sites</b>  <i>Affordable housing development for local needs will be supported as an exception to policy provided the development is acceptable in terms of relevant development management policies and provided that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Evidence exists in the form of a local housing needs survey that there is genuine demonstrable need in the settlement for such accommodation;</i></li><li><i>b. There are no allocated sites coming forward within the development boundary which could meet this need;</i></li><li><i>c. Satisfactory arrangements can be made to ensure that the dwellings are retained as affordable housing for local needs in perpetuity;</i></li><li><i>d. The proposal adjoins and forms a logical extension to the development boundary whilst avoiding ribbon and fragmented patterns of development;</i></li><li><i>e. The proposal would not form an intrusive feature in the landscape;</i></li><li><i>f. The siting, layout, scale, design, density and materials of the proposal are sympathetic and appropriate to the size and character of the settlement</i></li></ul> <i>In the interests of creating and maintaining sustainable mixed communities, proposals will only be considered for sites of 10 units or less.</i>  <u>Supporting Information</u> <i>Rural exception sites for affordable housing will only be appropriate where there is a genuine local need for affordable housing within the settlement in question and where the need cannot be met on an alternative site. Strict criteria have been identified to ensure that unsuitable developments that would detrimentally affect the environment will not be approved.</i>
<b>DM10 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers</b>  <i>New sites will be permitted where:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a) The site is well related to community facilities and services;</i></li><li><i>b) The site is already appropriately screened or capable of being adequately screened and landscaped;</i></li><li><i>c) The site is capable of being provided with foul and surface water drainage, including appropriate infrastructure and facilities to manage wastes;</i></li><li><i>d) The site can accommodate residential and home-based business uses without detriment to the amenity and character of the area;</i></li><li><i>e) The site has well defined boundaries; and</i></li><li><i>f) In the case of a transit or touring site, it has good access to the primary highway network.</i></li></ul>
<b>DM11 Use Class Restrictions – Employment</b>

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<p><i>In accordance with Policies EMP1 and EMP2, development proposals on major industrial areas will be subject to the following restrictions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. On sites allocated as Strategic Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Within use class B1 and B2.</i></li><li><i>b. To provide an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use.</i></li></ol></li><li><i>2. On sites allocated or identified as Business Parks, development will only be permitted if it is:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Within use class B1.</i></li><li><i>b. To provide an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use.</i></li></ol></li><li><i>3. On sites allocated or identified as Primary Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Within use classes B1, B2, B8.</i></li><li><i>b. An appropriate Sui Generis use.</i></li><li><i>c. To provide an ancillary facility or service to the existing and proposed employment use.</i></li></ol></li><li><i>4. On sites allocated or identified as Secondary Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Within use classes B1, B2 or B8.</i></li><li><i>b. An appropriate Sui Generis use.</i></li><li><i>c. To provide an ancillary facility or service to the existing and proposed employment use.</i></li><li><i>d. An acceptable commercial service.</i></li></ol></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The purpose of this Policy is to adopt a flexible approach to employment to best serve to fulfil the land requirements in terms of B1, B2 and B8 uses as well as facilitate continued economic growth within Blaenau Gwent in a diverse and sustainable fashion. The Policy also seeks to protect existing employment land and premises which are increasingly under pressure to be developed for non-employment uses.</i></p> <p><i>Proposals for a Sui Generis use, which exhibits the characteristics of B1, B2, B8 uses are considered acceptable on sites allocated or identified as Primary and Secondary sites. Examples of appropriate Sui Generis uses would include a builder's merchant, vehicle depots and taxi control offices.</i></p> <p><i>Ancillary uses which fall outside the B-class uses, which support the wider function of employment sites and do not affect the integrity of these sites may be</i></p>

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<p><i>permitted on sites allocated as Strategic Sites, Business Parks, Primary and Secondary Sites. Examples include cafes and crèches.</i></p> <p><i>Every industrial site that is allocated or identified as a primary or secondary site and is not within a flood risk area is considered suitable, in principle for the location of waste management facilities. This commitment is also referred to in Policy SP13, and both fulfil the requirements of the Regional Waste Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Examples of commercial services which might be considered acceptable on a site allocated or identified as a secondary site would include indoor health and fitness, play facilities, training facilities, day nurseries and a commercial and vehicle repair and maintenance businesses and other uses that are not considered appropriate in a town centre location.</i></p>
<p><b>DM 12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities</b></p> <p><i>Proposals that would result in the loss of a community and/or leisure facility will not be permitted unless:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. A comparable replacement facility is provided by the developer either on site or in an accessible location which is served by public transport or by foot or cycling; or</i></li><li><i>b. It can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements.</i></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>With regard to criterion b of this Policy, planning applications will need to be supported by appropriate evidence in order to demonstrate that the facility is surplus to requirements. A list of community facilities can be found in the Community Facilities Background Paper.</i></p>
<p><b>DM 13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities</b></p> <p><i>Where there is quantitative or qualitative deficiency in open space, recreation and leisure facilities, provision will be sought in conjunction with all new residential developments of 10 or more units, based on a minimum of 2.4 hectares of recreational open space per 1000 projected population.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>This Policy will help enhance the existing network of green spaces and provide increased opportunities for healthy recreation and leisure activities. A recent assessment of open space provision highlights a deficiency of outdoor sports and play space across Blaenau Gwent. Further information is available in the Leisure Background Paper.</i></p> <p><i>The Council has adopted the Fields in Trust standards and the appropriate amount of recreational open space is assessed against the standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population, endorsed by Fields in Trust. As a general rule, provision of a satisfactory level and standard of open space will be sought on all new residential developments. For those developments of 10 or more dwellings the amount of on-site open space provision is calculated from the projected population of the development and the application of the minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of recreational open space per 1,000 population.</i></p>

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<p><i>The exact requirements for each site will need to be agreed with the Council as local circumstances may require amendment to these standards, for example, the location and quality of existing provision. The Leisure Background Paper identifies the wards where there is a shortfall in provision and Chapter 9 – Delivery and Implementation gives an indication of the facilities that may be sought on allocated housing sites.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst it is preferable to provide open space facilities on-site, where this is not practicable the Council will expect the developer to provide a financial contribution for the provision of open space off-site that is appropriately located in relation to the development, or a contribution towards the upgrading of existing nearby open spaces. Similarly, contributions for the future maintenance of any open space provision may also be required to meet the needs arising from the development.</i></p>
<p><b>DM14 Protection of Open Space</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals which affect areas of Open Space will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. There is a surplus of such facilities in the locality, or;</i></li><li><i>b. The loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality; or</i></li><li><i>c. The development enhances the existing facility.</i></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Open Space includes all land that is available for use by the public for informal and formal recreational and leisure use. Open Space provision in Blaenau Gwent includes a range of urban and country parks, common land, community sport and recreation grounds and facilities and children’s play areas.</i></p>
<p><b>DM 15 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Development proposals within 10 km of the Usk Bat Sites SAC that would have an impact on connectivity corridors or cause direct or indirect disturbance to the features must be subject to a project level HRA.</i></li><li><i>2. Development proposals will only be permitted within, or in close proximity to sites designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), or that affect ecological corridors and Local Priority Habitats and Species , where either:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. It maintains or enhances the ecological or geological importance of the designation, or;</i></li><li><i>b. The need for the development outweighs the nature conservation importance of the site and it can be demonstrated that the development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere and compensatory provision will be made equivalent to that lost as a result of the development.</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Development proposals on land which although a considerable distance away (10km), could impact upon the Usk Bat Sites SAC. A key aspect of the lesser horseshoe bat is its mobility, which means that it could potentially travel many kilometres from Usk Bat Sites SAC. Therefore mitigation measures are necessary in respect of potential development in all areas with the exception of the very southern parts of the Borough. Consequently any potential development proposals that</i></p>

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<p>would have an impact on connectivity corridors or cause direct or indirect disturbance to the features (such as light, noise etc.) must be subject to a project level HRA</p> <p><i>This Policy applies to locally designated sites, for example, the 137 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) and 6 Local Nature Reserves. It also applies to sites which contain locally designated habitats and species as identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and landscape features which may provide ecological corridors or ‘stepping stones’ between habitats.</i></p> <p><i>The aim of the Policy is to maintain or enhance the biodiversity or geological interest of the respective site including its habitats and species. Whilst it is important to protect the biodiversity and geodiversity of these sites from inappropriate development it should be noted that in accordance with national policy and guidance the designation of non-statutory sites such as SINCs will not preclude appropriate socio-economic activities.</i></p> <p><i>Where development is proposed which may cause unacceptable harm information will be required to enable a full assessment of the proposal and its impact on biodiversity and geodiversity. Such assessments, including ecological surveys will need to be undertaken at the appropriate time of the year. If the need for the development outweighs the nature conservation importance of the site then the Council will seek to secure reasonable measures to offset any impacts or loss of habitat features or species present on a site that may occur as a result of the development. Such measures will be agreed prior to commencement of development and will be secured through appropriate planning conditions and/or planning obligations. The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Biodiversity and Geodiversity, includes further information and guidance to support this Policy.</i></p>
<p><b>DM16 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be permitted provided:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. There is no loss in connectivity within the Strategic Green Infrastructure network which comprises:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. River Corridors</i></li><li><i>b. Special Landscape Areas</i></li></ol></li><li><i>2. Where appropriate, they facilitate connections to Strategic and Local Green Infrastructure; and</i></li><li><i>3. Where appropriate, they create natural open space and features to enhance linkages between the Green Infrastructure</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Green Infrastructure (GI) is a network of connected, accessible, multi-functional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, and nature reserves) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and wildlife corridors) that can bring about multiple social, health, economic and environmental benefits to the area. The sites are multi-functional in that apart from their ecological value they can be used for various purposes, for example, leisure activities and promoting tourism with</i></p>



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<p><i>associated benefits in terms of health and the economy.</i></p> <p><i>The Strategic GI in Blaenau Gwent (see plan in Environment Background Paper) consists of the mountain ridges and river corridors. The mountain ridges are designated as Special Landscape Areas (SLA), and protected under Policy ENV2 whilst the river corridors are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and are afforded protection under Policy ENV3. Below this strategic level there is Local GI such as cycle paths, informal open space, parks, SINCs and nature reserves.</i></p> <p><i>The main purpose of this Policy is to ensure that development does not lead to loss of connectivity between the sites forming the Strategic Green Infrastructure because although these individual sites are important in their own right it is the resulting connectedness that brings considerable added value and enables a response to climate change.</i></p> <p><i>Another aim of this Policy is to increase connections to Strategic and Local GI to help maximise the benefits that the GI generates. The community cycle network and SINCs forms the basis of linkages between the Local and Strategic GI. Development proposals should, where possible, facilitate connections to the Local GI with the Strategic GI. A report prepared by consultants highlighted that at present 65% of the population in Blaenau Gwent live within 400m of their nearest green space but the Plan aims to increase this to 80%.</i></p> <p><i>The Green Infrastructure will also be enhanced by creating new open space and natural features as part of new development or through developer contributions. This whole approach integrates biodiversity interests, provides a response to climate change and enables more sustainable and healthy lifestyles by incorporating interests of cyclists and walkers. This infrastructure will be developed and enhanced in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Valleys Regional Park (VRP).</i></p>
<p><b>DM17 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be permitted provided there would not be unacceptable harm to trees, woodlands and hedgerows that have natural heritage value or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are a key part of the landscape, making a positive contribution to both the natural and built environment. In order to retain trees, woodlands and hedgerows of natural heritage and conservation value and minimize any adverse effects of development, applicants are required to assess all trees and woodlands, on and adjacent to their sites, using the recommendations of the current British Standard 5837 for trees in relation to construction in conjunction with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Trees and Development: A Guide to Incorporating Trees, Woodlands &amp; Hedgerows into Development Proposals'. The assessments should be used to inform the design, and will be used by the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations in respect of protecting trees and woodlands. In considering hedgerows, the Authority will have regard to their landscape, historic and nature conservation value, as well as their function as boundaries.</i></p>

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<p><b>DM18 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals affecting buildings or structures which make an important contribution to the character and/or interest of the local area will only be permitted where the building’s distinctive appearance, architectural integrity, and its setting would not be significantly adversely affected.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>There are a number of buildings within Blaenau Gwent that, although not statutorily listed by Cadw, are considered to be of significant local importance by virtue of their historic, cultural or architectural merit. Such buildings are at risk of being altered or even demolished with no regards for their local importance, since this has not been recognised. These buildings should be retained, and appropriate uses sought to maintain their essential character. A local list of such buildings will be compiled from visual surveys and consultation with local interest groups. SPG will set out methodology for such a list.</i></p>
<p><b>DM19 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications</b></p> <p><i>Proposals for mineral extraction and associated development, including the tipping of mineral waste and the reworking of tips, will be permitted where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. A proven need has been established for the material involved, either in a local, regional or national context;</i></li><li><i>b. An assessment has been made that demonstrates that it would not be feasible to supply the mineral from secondary sources;</i></li><li><i>c. Benefits to the local economy will result;</i></li><li><i>d. The impact of operations and associated works and activities together with the duration of development upon neighbouring communities and land uses can be mitigated to acceptable levels, including the effects of noise, light, dust and vibration;</i></li><li><i>e. The effects on surface water, groundwater resources and water supplies are acceptable;</i></li><li><i>f. Adverse impacts on sensitive landscapes can be minimised;</i></li><li><i>g. Measures can be taken to ensure that ecological and wildlife interests do not suffer significant adverse effects, particularly where designated and proposed areas of nature conservation interests or protected species may be affected;</i></li><li><i>h. Proposals are acceptable in terms of highway and transportation considerations, particularly the consequences of traffic movements and volume of traffic, with transportation by rail being favoured, where appropriate;</i></li><li><i>i. The proposal is unlikely to create or exacerbate problems associated with ground stability in the surrounding area;</i></li><li><i>j. Impacts on health are considered and found to be within acceptable limits;</i></li></ul>

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<p><i>k. Adverse impact on important features of the built environment and archaeologically sensitive areas, including conservation areas, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments can be mitigated;</i></p> <p><i>l. There is no adverse impact on nationally protected geological and geomorphological features;</i></p> <p><i>m. The visual impact of the proposal can be mitigated by landscaping; and</i></p> <p><i>n. Appropriate, acceptable proposals for restoration, after-use and after care are provided.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The above Policy sets out criteria against which all mineral applications will be assessed including the reworking of mineral tips for their mineral contents and complements Policy SP12. It does not preclude other policies being taken into account where relevant, and where criteria are not relevant for those not to be taken into account. More detailed guidance on the implementation of this Policy can be found in MTAN 1 and 2.</i></p> <p><i>In considering proposals for the winning and working of minerals it will be important to ensure that sensitive areas in terms of landscape, nature conservation, historic environment and local amenity are protected and that adequate restoration is carried out when operations have ceased. In order for planning permission to be granted it must be demonstrated that mineral extraction will not cause demonstrable harm and that any negative impacts can be addressed by planning conditions or agreements. Account must also be taken of the extent to which impacts can be mitigated and any positive environmental or economic benefits which may arise.</i></p> <p><i>In accordance with national planning policy a Health Impact Assessment will be required, where appropriate. This is likely to form part of any Environmental Statement submitted with the proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Restoration proposals should be phased to commence as early as possible. The authority will, where appropriate, encourage progressive restoration at the earliest opportunity. After-uses may include agriculture, forestry/woodland, public open space, recreation or other development. They should favour the creation of landscapes which are characteristic of the area and priority habitats identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.</i></p>
<p><b>DM20 Mineral Safeguarding</b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will not be permitted where they would permanently sterilise important mineral resources within Aggregate and Coal Safeguarding Areas identified on the Proposals map unless:-</i></p> <p><i>a. The mineral resource is recovered before development commences; or</i></p> <p><i>b. There is an overriding need for the development and prior extraction cannot reasonably be undertaken; or</i></p>

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<p>c. The developer satisfactorily demonstrates that the extraction of the mineral is impracticable, uneconomic or environmentally unacceptable; or</p> <p>d. The scale and location of the development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource: or</p> <p>e. It is temporary development and can be implemented and the site restored within the timescale the mineral is likely to be required.</p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>In accordance with national planning policy the LDP should safeguard aggregates and primary and secondary coal resources from permanent development that would sterilise the mineral resource. It should be noted that, according to MPPW, safeguarding “does not necessarily indicate an acceptance of working, but that the location and quality of the mineral is known, and that the environmental constraints associated with extraction have been considered”.</i></p> <p><i>In most instances, development may proceed within safeguarding areas as long as developers demonstrate the resource in question is either of poor quality/quantity and would not be economical to exploit, or the nature of the development in question would not prejudice exploitation of the resource. Details of how the safeguarding areas have been identified are contained in the Mineral Background Paper.</i></p>
<p><b>DM21 Waste</b></p> <p><i>Proposals for the development of a waste collection or treatment facility will be permitted where:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>There is a proven local or regional need for the facility; and</i></li> <li>2. <i>The proposed facility is the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO); and</i></li> <li>3. <i>The proposed application has undertaken a sequential site selection process looking at: -</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Allocated sites;</i></li> <li>b. <i>Employment sites allocated or identified as a primary or secondary site through policy DM11 (outside flood risk areas);</i></li> <li>c. <i>Other sites taking into consideration their suitability as identified through the Area of Search maps in the Regional Waste Plan;</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>4. <i>In the case of a civic amenity facility the site is located in terms of access to service a neighbourhood or settlement whilst avoiding unacceptable adverse impact on the character, environmental quality and amenities of the local area;</i></li> <li>5. <i>Where the proposal is in the countryside, it involves the reuse of existing buildings or is on land within or adjacent to existing building groups. Alternatively where it is demonstrated that new buildings/plant are needed these must have an acceptable visual and environmental impact; and</i></li> <li>6. <i>The following criteria are also met:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>In the case of regional scale facilities, its location relates closely to and benefits from an easy access to key transport corridors and, where</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>

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	<p><i>practicable makes use of alternative transport modes;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>b. Proposals involving the sorting and processing of waste, are carried out within a purpose built or appropriately modified existing building, unless it can be demonstrated that part or all of the proposed operation can only be carried out in the open;</i></li><li><i>c. The built development associated with the proposed methods of handling, storage, treatment and processing of waste is appropriate to the nature and hazards of the waste(s) concerned;</i></li><li><i>d. Proposals for the incineration of waste and other thermal processes, shall incorporate measures to maximise energy recovery both in the form of heat and electricity, taking account of prevailing technology, economics and characteristics of the waste stream involved;</i></li><li><i>e. Opportunities for co-locating and networking Energy for Waste (EfW) facilities with energy consuming land uses such as district heating systems or large industry energy users have been fully explored; and</i></li><li><i>f. It will not result in an unacceptable adverse environmental impact that cannot be appropriately controlled by mitigating measures.</i></li></ul> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Targets contained within Towards Zero Waste One Wales: One Planet (WAG 2010) require a significant shift away from landfill. Waste treatment facilities reuse, recycle and recover waste materials and can significantly reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with the latest national guidance and is the BPEO or a constituent part of the BPEO for a waste stream.</i></p> <p><i>Blaenau Gwent will seek to facilitate the increase in the number, type and range in size of treatment facilities in line with the requirements of the Regional Waste Plan 1st Review. The Plan allocates land to meet these requirements. National planning policy and guidance states that the majority of waste facilities are likely to be acceptable on existing industrial estates, with landfill and windrow composting likely to be suitable on farms as part of farm diversification. The Council considers that in some instances, facilities such as anaerobic digestion and in-vessel-composting may be acceptable on farms as part of farm diversification, particularly where it can be demonstrated that the output of the process is to be applied locally. In such cases, the RWP contains Areas of Search maps for use in identifying new sites for in-building and open-air waste management / resource recovery facilities. Developers are encouraged to use the recommendations to identify suitable site locations.</i></p> <p><i>For the purpose of this Policy waste treatment projects include waste separation, recycling, composting, the treatment and transfer of special waste, the thermal treatment of waste including incineration, pyrolosis, gasification and anaerobic digestion. Proposals for the extension of existing facilities and the recycling of construction and demolition waste are also considered under this Policy.</i></p>

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ALLOCATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS
<p><b>SB1 Settlement Boundaries</b></p> <p>In order to manage spatial growth a settlement boundary is identified to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Promote the full and effective use of urban land by defining the area within which development will normally be permitted; and</li><li>2. Prevent inappropriate development in the countryside.</li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>The boundaries are illustrated on the Proposals Map. <i>In accordance with national planning policy, sensitive infilling of small gaps within small groups of houses, or minor extensions to groups, may be acceptable, though much will depend upon the character of the surroundings and the number of such groups in the area. Planning applications for development in the countryside will be dealt with in accordance with national planning policy.</i></p>
<p><b>MU1 Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor</b></p> <p><i>In accordance with Policy SP1 land is allocated north of Ebbw Vale Town Centre for the construction of approximately 700 dwellings, a commercial leisure hub, road side services, employment and a strategic mixed use employment site.</i></p> <p><i>Development of the site will be guided by the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance document.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The site fans out from the town centre in a north westerly direction to the Heads of the Valleys Road forming a triangular area of land covering approximately 78 hectares. The site contains areas of existing built development along with areas of vacant land. A number of the existing developments within the corridor will be subject to change due to the relocation of existing facilities to ‘The Works’. Consequently, a clear strategy is required to ensure that best use is made of the vacant sites.</i></p> <p><i>The Council’s vision for the Northern Corridor is to create “a series of developments that complement and enhance the vibrancy of Ebbw Vale as a sustainable community. Key aspects of the corridor will be to support a vibrant retail led town centre with sustainable residential development and provide improved economic opportunity and leisure facilities centred to the north capitalising on the opportunities for improved access presented by the planned realignment of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road.</i></p> <p><i>It is intended that all the developments will achieve high sustainability and urban design standards. The developments will capitalise on the opportunities presented by the environmental setting of the area through high quality public realm and green infrastructure. A key focus will be to complement the educational opportunities presented at ‘The Works’ with suitable employment space and create additional opportunities in market sectors such as tourism. The Northern</i></p>

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<p><i>Corridor will support the continued evolution of Ebbw Vale town and town centre as a principal hub in Blaenau Gwent and the Heads of the Valleys area.”</i></p> <p><i>There are a number of constraints throughout the Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor which will need to be accounted for in the ongoing development, most notably:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation</i></li><li>• <i>Traffic Flow and highways improvements; and</i></li><li>• <i>Land ownership issues.</i></li></ul> <p>The Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework has assessed the development potential of the area and has identified the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Strategic Mixed-Use Employment site – on land at Rhyd-y-Blew (13.2ha);</li><li>• Employment and road side services at Bryn Serth (10.5ha);</li><li>• Commercial leisure hub - commercial leisure and associated uses (4ha); and</li><li>• Residential - 700 units including 10% affordable housing on three parcels of land (21ha).</li></ul>
<p><b>MU2 ‘The Works’</b></p> <p><i>In accordance with Policy SP1 land is allocated at the former steelworks site for mixed use including; the construction of a new hospital, learning zone , leisure centre, playing pitches, arts centre , approximately 520 houses, business hub, family history and genealogy visitor centre, environmental resource centre and wetland park.</i></p> <p><i>Development of the site will be guided by the latest Masterplan and supporting documentation.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>The site has the benefit of outline planning permission. The Masterplan Design and Access Statement sets out a 10-year programme for development, divided into 5 phases between 2008 and 2018. Key elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aneurin Bevan Hospital- A 96 bed Local General Hospital;</li><li>• The Central Valley &amp; Wetlands Park – A green corridor running through the site;</li><li>• Environmental Resource Centre – Provides and education facility for local children and the community to explore the heritage and ecology of the site;</li></ul>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employment- 5ha of commercial and business space primarily located adjacent to the hospital site;</li><li>• Residential- Approximately 520 houses at varying densities across the site built to higher than nationally required standards and including 20% affordable housing;</li><li>• Learning Zone - The Learning Zone includes the provision of education and training for 16-19 year olds; primary education; and integrated children's centre, special school education and secondary education.</li><li>• Leisure Centre and Sports Fields- A new Leisure centre and sports pitches will be developed to provide new leisure amenities for the community;</li><li>• Arts Centre - A new Arts Centre will be developed to provide a community and professional arts/cultural event programme;</li><li>• Basement Strategy - A range of uses are being considered for the basements including sports and leisure, exhibition space, summer markets for food &amp; craft including a café, education and recreation facilities;</li><li>• Retail- The retail element will only consist of local convenience facilities, including local shops and smaller commercial units;</li><li>• Energy Centre – A centralised energy hub;</li><li>• Family History &amp; Genealogy Visitor Centre – The former General Offices (Grade II Listed Building) is to become a visitor centre bringing industrial heritage to life and showcasing one of the largest archives in Wales; and</li><li>• Public Realm – Focus on a sequence of public squares running through the site.</li></ul>
<p><b>MU3 NMC Factory and Bus Depot</b></p> <p><i>In accordance with Policy SP1 land is allocated at the NMC Factory and Bus Depot for mixed use including; 60 houses and commercial/leisure/community facility opportunity to act as an active link between the Town Centre and Lakeside Retail Park.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residential – 60 houses including 10% affordable housing; and</li><li>• Commercial / Leisure/ Community Facility opportunity to act as an active link between Brynmawr District Town Centre and Lakeside Retail Park.</li></ul> <p>The leisure offer of Brynmawr is currently considered to be limited and the potential exists to develop a commercial / leisure / community facility, which would help to increase facilities for the community and attract more visitors to the town.</p>

Policy Content
<p><b>AA1 Action Area</b></p> <p>Action Areas are identified at the following locations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Southern Gateway, Ebbw Vale;</li><li>2. Market Square, Ebbw Vale</li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework has identified the following key factors for Ebbw Vale Principal Town Centre:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The need to develop the links from The Works regeneration area;</li><li>• Identified market demand for a Town Centre food retail outlet as an anchor store;</li><li>• The opportunity for improved public transport infrastructure and reduced through traffic as a result of the proposed Peripheral Distributor Road within the Works; and</li><li>• The opportunities to capitalise on town centre regeneration opportunities as a consequence of the relocation and redevelopment of some of the public sector buildings in the Northern Corridor.</li></ul> <p><i>The Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework has assessed the development potential of the town centre and has identified the following action areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Southern Gateway: A new southern gateway to Ebbw Vale Principal Town Centre is proposed incorporating a commercial hub, direct, safe and convenient pedestrian connection between the town centre and 'The Works' (Policy MU2). The Town Centre would benefit from more visitors as a result of a proposed office development and a new food store. The development offers the opportunity to make a significant landmark statement at a key point where the funicular will bring people up from 'The Works' site. In order to create this optimum link the A4046 needs to have a traffic calmed carriageway. There is also an opportunity to explore the development of land on the opposite side of the A4046 on the site of the current petrol filling station. This could provide a private sector developer with the chance to enhance the mix and quality of retail and commercial floor space in the town.</li><li>• Market Square: Redevelopment of Market Square, Ebbw Vale is to provide a key link with Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor site. The proposal involves the redesign of the junction arrangement with improved pedestrian movements. The proposal also involves development opportunities for retail and mixed-use development.</li></ul>

Policy Content				
<b>R 1 Retail Allocations</b>				
<i>Land is allocated for retail development at the following locations:</i>				
Policy Number	Site Name	Valley	Indicative Net Sales Area (sq m)	Proposal Type
<i>Commitments (planning permission at April 2009)</i>				
R1.1	Rhyd y Blew Retail Park	Ebbw Vale	6,000	Non Food Retail
R1.2	Extension to Festival Shopping Outlet Centre	Ebbw Vale	1,400	Comparison
R1.3	Extension to Tesco Stores, North West Approach	Ebbw Vale	1,700	Convenience and Comparison
<i>Proposals</i>				
AA1.1	Southern Gateway	Ebbw Vale	500	Convenience
AA1.2	Market Square	Ebbw Vale	1,300	Comparison
R1.4	Market Street	Ebbw Vale	600	Comparison
<u>Supporting Information</u>				
<i>Within Blaenau Gwent it is estimated that an additional 1,085 sq m (net) of convenience retail floorspace and 2,960 sq m (net) of comparison floorspace is required by 2021. Statistical analysis and the background to the retail floorspace requirements is contained in the Retailing Background Paper. Planning applications for edge of centre and out of town retail developments will be dealt with in accordance with national planning policy.</i>				
<i>Detailed descriptions of the proposed retail sites can be found in the site descriptions document.</i>				

Policy Content			
H1 Housing Allocations			
In accordance with Policy SP5 land is allocated for residential development in the following locations:			
Policy	Site Name	Area (Ha)	Units
Ebbw Vale			
H1.1	Willowtown	0.63	22
MU1	Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor	28	700
		Total	722
Tredegar			
H1.2	Cartref Aneurin Bevan	0.38	13
H1.3	Greenacres	0.50	18
H1.4	Jesmondene Stadium, Cefn Golau	5.26	184
H1.5	Business Resource Centre, Tafarnaubach	1.2	42
H1.6	Land adjacent to Chartist Way	2.89	101
		Total	358
Upper Ebbw Fach			
H1.7	Garnfach School, Nantyglo	0.81	28
H1.8	Crawshay House, Brynmawr	0.71	25
H1.9	Infants School and Old Griffin Yard, Brynmawr	1.04	36
H1.10	Hafod Dawel Site, Nantyglo#	0.74	44
H1.11	West of the Recreation Ground, Nantyglo	0.42	15
H1.12	Land to the East of Blaina Road, Brynmawr	0.72	25
H1.13	Land to the North of Winchestown, Nantyglo	0.43	15
MU3	NMC Factory and Bus Depot		60
		Total	248
Lower Ebbw Fach			
H1.14	Six Bells Colliery Site, Six Bells	1.47	40
H1.15	Warm Turn, Six Bells	0.93	32
H1.16	Roseheyworth Comprehensive, Abertillery	0.95	33
H1.17	Former Mount Pleasant Court, Brynithel#	0.52	18

Policy Content			
H1.17	Former Mount Pleasant Court, Brynithel#	0.52	18
H1.18	Hillcrest View, Cwmtillery#	0.83	22
H1.19	Quarry Adjacent to Cwm Farm Road, Six Bells	0.64	22
H1.20	Land at Farm Road Swffryd	3.72	130
		Total	297
TOTAL			1,625

# Land identified for 100% affordable housing

Supporting Information

In order to stimulate growth in the residential market, the LDP has allocated land for the construction of a further 1,625 dwellings. The number of units has been identified through the use of average densities of 35 per hectare. These figures are however indicative and higher or lower densities may be acceptable where the proposed development addressed other policy considerations including design and sustainability. The units have been allocated across a range of sites in order to offer choice and flexibility. This will contribute to the diversification of the housing stock and secure viable sustainable futures for settlements in the north of the County Borough. Settlements in the south of the County Borough will rely more heavily on small sites and windfall development.

The 13 sites identified as likely to come forward for 100% affordable housing are as a result of planning consents or the availability of social housing grant and land ownership. In addition all sites will be expected to contribute towards addressing affordable housing need in accordance with policy DM10.

HC1 Housing Commitments

Policy	Site Name	Area (Ha)	Units
Ebbw Vale			
HC1.1	North of Cwmyrdderch Court Flats, Cwm	1.18	16
HC1.2	Letchworth Road	0.93	16
HC1.3	Old 45 Yard, Steelworks Road	3.49	82
HC1.4	Adjacent Pant-y- Fforest	1.63	21
HC1.5	Heol Elan #	1.2	43
HC1.6	Land at College Road#	1.04	41
HC1.7	Adj Sports Ground, Gwaun Helyg#	2.92	69
HC1.8	Higgs Yard	0.99	29
HC1.9	Mountain Road#	0.47	22

Policy Content			
HC1.9	Mountain Road#	0.47	22
HC1.10	Briery Hill#	0.94	33
MU2	'The Works'		520
		Total	892
Tredegar			
HC1.11	Derelict Bus Garage, Woodfield Road#	0.36	11
HC1.12	Former LCR Factory, Charles Street	0.25	14
HC1.13	Former Factory Site, Pochin	0.65	28
HC1.14	Land at Poultry Farm, Queen Victoria Street	0.84	3
HC1.15	Upper Ty Gwyn Farm, Nantylwch	1.44	38
HC1.16	Former LCR Factory, opposite Tredegar Comprehensive School#	0.62	47
HC1.17	Peacehaven	4.81	147
HC1.18	The Goldmine, Sirhowy	0.17	16
HC1.19	BKF Plastics, Ashvale	1.83	54
HC1.20	Sirhowy Infants School Site#	0.84	23
HC1.21	Corporation Yard	0.75	23
HC1.22	Park Hill	13.09	160
		Total	564
Upper Ebbw Fach			
HC1.23	Recticel and Gwalia Former Factory Site, Brynmawr#	0.96	45
HC1.24	Land at Clydach Street, Brynmawr	0.64	9
HC1.25	TSA Woodcraft, Noble Square Industrial Estate, Brynmawr	0.71	25
HC1.26	Roberto Neckwear, Limestone Road, Nantyglo	0.74	19
HC1.27	Cwm Farm, Blaina	9.01	78
HC1.28	Salem Chapel, Waun Ebbw Road and Pond Road Junction, Nantyglo	0.26	11
		Total	190
Lower Ebbw Fach			
HC1.29	At Cwm Farm Road	0.68	20
HC1.30	Former Swffryd Junior School#	0.41	18
HC1.31	Land at Penrhiw Estate, Brynithel	1.02	23
		Total	61
TOTAL			1,707

# Land identified for 100% affordable housing

Policy Content
<p>Land allocated under this Policy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>New sites that have been identified as suitable for residential development or for a mix of uses including housing as a result of a robust candidate site assessment process; and</i></li><li>• <i>Sites with planning consent for housing or for a mix of uses incorporating housing as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 (in some cases subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement).</i></li></ul> <p>In order to stimulate growth in the residential market, the LDP has allocated land for the construction of a further 1,625 dwellings above that which already has planning permission (1,707)</p> <p>The 13 sites identified as likely to come forward for 100% affordable housing are as a result of planning consents or the availability of social housing grant and land ownership. In addition all sites will be expected to contribute towards addressing affordable housing need in accordance with policy DM8.</p> <p>Detailed descriptions of these allocations can be found in the site descriptions document.</p>
<p><b>GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation</b></p> <p><i>Land is allocated south of the Cwmcraehen Gypsy and Traveller Site to accommodate 6 pitches.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy &amp; Traveller Housing Needs Assessment (June 2007) identifies the need for a further 6 pitches in Blaenau Gwent. It is proposed that this demand is met through an extension to the existing site at Cwmcraehen.</p>
<p><b>T1 Cycle Routes</b></p> <p><i>The existing network of cycle paths and community routes will be extended, improved and enhanced to include the following schemes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>HoV Route linking Nine Arches, Tredegar to Brynmawr</i></li><li>2. <i>Link from HoV to Rassau Industrial Estate</i></li><li>3. <i>HoV to Ebbw Vale and Cwm</i></li><li>4. <i>Cwm to Aberbeeg</i></li><li>5. <i>Link from HoV to Trefil</i></li></ol>



Policy Content	
<div><div>6.</div><div><i>Links from HoV to Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate</i></div></div> <div><div>7.</div><div><i>Bedwellty Pits, Tredegar to County Boundary</i></div></div> <div><div>8.</div><div><i>Hill Top to Ebbw Vale to Manmoel;</i></div></div> <div><div>9.</div><div><i>Byrnmawr to Blaenavon;</i></div></div> <div><div>10.</div><div><i>Extension of Ebbw Fach Trail from Abertillery to Aberbeeg and completion of missing section through Blaina;</i></div></div> <div><div>11.</div><div><i>Link to Cwmtillery Lakes;</i></div></div> <div><div>12.</div><div><i>Aberbeeg to Royal Oak; and</i></div></div> <div><div>13.</div><div><i>Royal Oak to Swffryd</i></div></div>	
<div><div>Supporting Information</div><div>The specific route alignments for the above improvements have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. Indicative route alignments are shown on the LDP Proposals Map and only represent the general direction of the route. The allocations on the Proposals Map, therefore, are not prescriptive.</div></div>	
<div><div>T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements</div><div><div>Land will be safeguarded for the following rail network improvements:</div><div><div>1.</div><div><i>Extension of rail link from Ebbw Vale Parkway to Ebbw Vale Town;</i></div></div><div><div>2.</div><div><i>Provision of new station and bus interchange at Ebbw Vale;</i></div></div><div><div>3.</div><div><i>Provision of new rail station at Cwm;</i></div></div><div><div>4.</div><div><i>Extension of rail link to Abertillery;</i></div></div><div><div>5.</div><div><i>Provision of new station and Park and Ride at Abertillery; and</i></div></div><div><div>6.</div><div><i>Rail freight provision at Marine Colliery.</i></div></div></div></div>	
<div><div>Supporting Information</div><div>The opening of the Ebbw Valley line for passenger services, provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage. There is currently one train per hour but there are plans to increase this to two per hour and provide a service to Newport. Other improvements that will increase use and encourage car users to change to rail are the extension of the rail link from Ebbw Vale Parkway to Ebbw Vale Town; with the provision of a new station and bus interchange and a new station at Cwm.</div></div>	

Policy Content
<p><i>The proposed extension to the Ebbw Valley line to Abertillery provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage in this area. The extension to the line will be complemented by the provision of a new station and park and ride facility.</i></p> <p><i>There is an opportunity at the Marine Colliery employment site to develop a rail freight station.</i></p>
<p><b>T3 Safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure</b></p> <p><i>Disused railway infrastructure east of Brynmawr will be protected from development that would compromise its future transport use..</i></p> <p><u>Supporting information</u></p> <p><i>There are a number of disused railway lines which could potentially be re-used for transport purposes. In line with national planning policy, this Policy seeks to safeguard from development disused railway land where there is a realistic prospect of its reuse for transport purposes in the future. Under the provision of this policy, the Council will support use of such land in the interim, for pedestrian, cycle and bridle routes including shared facilities.</i></p>
<p><b>T4 Improvements to Bus Services</b></p> <p><i>The following bus service improvements are identified:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Bus Priority Scheme along the Brynmawr to Newport Bus Corridor</i></li><li><i>Bus Interchange improvement at Brynmawr</i></li><li><i>Bus Interchange improvement at Ebbw Vale</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting information</u></p> <p><i>This Policy supports improvement to bus services in Blaenau Gwent. The Abertillery to Newport Bus Corridor is identified in the Regional Transport Plan for a bus priority scheme. It is intended that the corridor will be the focus of lane and junction priority measures. There are also plans to improve bus interchanges at Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale.</i></p>
<p><b>T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development</b></p> <p><i>The following highway schemes are identified to facilitate new development:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Construction of a Peripheral Distributor Road through 'The Works'; and</i></li><li><i>Online improvements between the Peripheral Distributor Road and the A465.</i></li></ol>

Policy Content
<p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Whilst most development sites can be accessed directly from the existing highway network, the two strategic sites will require the construction of a new road to facilitate their development. The construction of the Peripheral Distributor Road (PDR) through 'The Works' is required to enable access through 'The Works' regeneration site. Online improvements to the A4046 between the Heads of the Valleys Road and the PDR are required to alleviate the highway issues at Cemetery Road and to ensure the road can accommodate the extra traffic flow from 'The Works' and the 'Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor' Strategic Sites. Improvements will also take into account changes in traffic flows as a result of the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys Road.</i></p>
<p><b>T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements</b></p> <p>The following highway schemes are identified to facilitate the regeneration of the area</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dualling of the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road (Tredegar to Brynmawr)</li><li>2. Online improvements to the A4046 south of Cwm</li><li>3. Online improvements to the A4048 south of Tredegar</li><li>4. Online improvements to the A467 south of Abertillery</li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The A465 is identified as part of the Trans European Network (TENS) and is a key strategic link in the national trunk road network connecting West Wales with the Midlands and the North of England. It also forms a major sub regional artery along the Heads of the Valleys corridor from Swansea in the west to Abergavenny in the east. The planned dualling of 40km of road is significant, as indeed is the potential impact on communities situated along and adjacent to the Heads of the Valleys corridor. There is the expectation that the improvement will generate new and sustained economic activity and investment.</i></p> <p><i>One of the main transport problems facing the Heads of the Valleys area is the poor access to the south, especially south of Cwm. In order to facilitate regeneration, and to fully enable the creation of a network of linked hubs and links with other settlements in the region, improvements in this corridor need to be undertaken.</i></p> <p><i>Similarly, the completion of the Tredegar by-pass has improved accessibility northbound but problems still exist on the A4048 south of Tredegar. In order to facilitate links with other settlements in the region improvements to this corridor need to be undertaken.</i></p> <p><i>One of the main transport problems facing the southern strategy area is poor road access. Although road improvements have been undertaken on the A467 throughout its length, problems are encountered on the stretch south of Abertillery particularly at Warm Turn. There is a need for improvements to traffic flow and reduction in congestion. In order to facilitate regeneration, and to fully enable the creation of a network of linked hubs and links with other settlements in the region, improvements in this corridor need to be undertaken.</i></p>

Policy Content			
<b>EMP1 Employment Allocations</b>			
The following sites are allocated for employment uses, in line with their status in the employment hierarchy identified in policy DM11:			
Policy Number	Site Name	Hub	Indicative Developable Area (Ha)
Strategic Sites (B1 and B2 use classes and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use)			
MU1	Rhyd-y-Blew	Ebbw Vale	13.2
Business Parks (B1 use class and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use)			
MU2	‘The Works’ Business Hub	Ebbw Vale	3.5
EMP 1.1	Land at Festival Park	Ebbw Vale	0.7
EMP1.2	Land at Tredegar Business Park	Tredegar	2.1
EMP1.3	Land at Rising Sun Industrial Estate	Lower Ebbw Fach	1.62
Primary Sites (B1, B2, and B8 Use Classes, an appropriate Sui Generis use and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use)			
MU1	Bryn Serth	Ebbw Vale	10.0
EMP1.4	Rassau Platform A	Ebbw Vale	3.4
EMP1.5	Rassau Platform H B	Ebbw Vale	3.7
EMP1. 6	Land at Waun-y-Pound	Ebbw Vale	4.6
EMP1.7	Marine Colliery	Ebbw Vale	3.4
EMP1.8	Crown Business Park Platform A	Tredegar	0.7
EMP1.9	Crown Business Park Platform B	Tredegar	1.6
EMP1.10	Land at Roseheyworth Business Park	Upper Ebbw Fach	1.6
		Total Developable Area	50.0 ha

Policy Content																																						
<p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The Policy seeks to protect existing employment land and premises which are increasingly under pressure to be developed for non-employment uses.</i></p> <p><i>The Business Park allocation at ‘The Works’ Business Hub, Land at Festival Park , Land at Tredegar Business Park, Land at Roseheyworth Business Park and Land at Rising Sun Industrial Estate are designated solely for class B1 use which equates to office-based development. This is predominantly concerned with the service, commercial and financial sectors. The latter two particularly have an important role to play in terms of fostering entrepreneurialism and developing an enterprise and culture, factors which are of key importance if the local, and indeed regional, economy is to grow in a sustainable fashion.</i></p> <p><i>A detailed description of the site allocations can be found in the site descriptions document.</i></p>																																						
<p><b>EMP2 Employment Area Protection</b></p> <p><i>The following sites are protected for employment use, in line with their status in the employment hierarchy identified In Policy DM11:</i></p> <table><tr><th>Policy Number</th><th>Employment Area</th><th>Valley</th></tr><tr><td colspan="3"><i>Business Parks (B1 use class and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use)</i></td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.1</td><td>Tredegar Business Park</td><td>Tredegar</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td colspan="3"><i>Primary Sites (B1, B2 and B8 use classes, an appropriate sui generis use and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed</i></td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.2</td><td>Rassau Industrial Estate</td><td>Ebbw Vale</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.3</td><td>Waun-y-Pound Industrial Estate</td><td>Ebbw Vale</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.4</td><td>Festival Park</td><td>Ebbw Vale</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.5</td><td>Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate</td><td>Tredegar</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.6</td><td>Crown Business Park</td><td>Tredegar</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.7</td><td>Pond Road Workshops</td><td>Upper Ebbw Fach</td></tr><tr><td>EMP2.8</td><td>Blaenant Industrial Estate</td><td>Upper Ebbw Fach</td></tr></table>			Policy Number	Employment Area	Valley	<i>Business Parks (B1 use class and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use)</i>			EMP2.1	Tredegar Business Park	Tredegar				<i>Primary Sites (B1, B2 and B8 use classes, an appropriate sui generis use and an ancillary facility or service to the proposed</i>			EMP2.2	Rassau Industrial Estate	Ebbw Vale	EMP2.3	Waun-y-Pound Industrial Estate	Ebbw Vale	EMP2.4	Festival Park	Ebbw Vale	EMP2.5	Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate	Tredegar	EMP2.6	Crown Business Park	Tredegar	EMP2.7	Pond Road Workshops	Upper Ebbw Fach	EMP2.8	Blaenant Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
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Policy Content			
	EMP2.8	Blaenant Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.9	Barleyfield Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.10	Rising Sun (North) Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.11	Cwmtillery Industrial Estate	Lower Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.12	Roseheyworth Business Park	Lower Ebbw Fach
	Secondary Sites (B1, B2 and B8 use classes, an appropriate sui generic use, an ancillary facility or service to the proposed employment use and an acceptable commercial service)		
	EMP2.13	Cwm Draw Industrial Estate	Ebbw Vale
	EMP2.14	Marine Street Industrial Estate	Ebbw Vale
	EMP2.15	Sirhowy Hill Industrial Estate	Tredegar
	EMP2.16	Bridge Street Industrial Estate	Tredegar
	EMP2.17	Noble Square Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.18	Blaina Enterprise Centre	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.19	Cwmcraehen Industrial Estate	Upper Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.20	Glandwr Industrial Estate	Lower Ebbw Fach
	EMP2.21	Llanhilleth Industrial Estate	Lower Ebbw Fach
	<b>Supporting Information</b>		
	<i>This protection Policy is intended to operate in tandem with Policy DM11. In this regard, proposals for the development of the vacant land within these sites are also expected to accord with those uses.</i>		
	Tredegar Business Park, and Roseheyworth Business Park are ideally suited as a location for high quality, office based uses which are geared towards the diversification of the employment base and growth of innovation and enterprise within the local economy.		
	The designated Primary Sites currently house a mixture of Use Classes, and as such, are considered appropriate for Use Class within B1, B2, B8, namely offices, light and general industry, and warehousing uses.		

Policy Content
<p>The defined Secondary Sites allows the development of sui generis uses and commercial services appropriate to the development. These uses can play an important role in the economic development, although it is necessary to ensure that they complement and support each other and neighbouring uses, rather than act in competition or are detrimental to them.</p>
<p><b>ED 1 Education Provision</b></p> <p><i>The following sites are allocated for education:</i></p> <p>1. Ysgol Gymraeg, Brynmawr – New primary school</p> <p>2. Lower Plateau Six Bells Colliery Site – New primary school</p> <p>Supporting Information</p> <p><i>There will also be a need to address school provision in catchment areas where there is little or no existing capacity to accommodate the additional demand likely to arise from housing development. Where necessary, in such circumstance, financial contributions will be sought from developers towards the provision of new educational facilities, in accordance with DM6 4 Infrastructure Provision.</i></p>
<p><b>CF 1 Community Centre</b></p> <p>The following site is allocated for a community centre:</p> <p>1. Former Sirhowy Infants School, Tredegar</p> <p>Supporting Information</p> <p><i>The former Sirhowy Infants School site, Tredegar has been identified for a new community centre on the southeast part of the site (345 sq metres). The northern section of the site will be for 23 affordable homes.</i></p> <p><i>It is proposed that the community centre, or as it will be known “The Star Centre” will host a range of services comprising of early years provision, youth services, youth clubs and after school provision, learning, recreation, community safety, advice and information, community events and carnivals and venue hire.</i></p>



Policy Content
<p><b>TM1 Tourism and Leisure</b></p> <p>Sites are allocated for tourism related activities at the following sites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Eastern Valley Slopes</li><li>2. Garden Festival</li><li>3. Blue Lakes</li><li>4. Bedwellty House and Park</li><li>5. Parc Bryn Bach (including a hotel)</li><li>6. Nantyglo Roundhouse and Towers</li><li>7. Cwmtillery Lakes</li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><b>Eastern Valley Slopes</b></p> <p>The Eastern Valley Slopes and its juxtaposition with ‘The Works’ site, Ebbw Vale ensures that the site has tremendous potential for the development of tourism, leisure and education, via promotion of access to the countryside and improvement to the natural environment through woodland planting. Much of the land is managed for pasture, with significant areas open to public access for horse riding, cycling (particularly mountain biking) and walking.</p> <p>The site provides a physical link between the Environmental Resource Centre at ‘The Works’ site and Silent Valley Nature Reserve and has an interesting and valuable ecosystem of its own. The Council will work closely with interest groups to develop the sites potential for tourism, leisure and education.</p> <p><b>Garden Festival</b></p> <p>There are proposals to develop Festival Park into a major tourist destination. The improvement of the shopping offer, enhancement of the café, and provision of outdoor recreation facilities, will attract further visitors to the Festival Park. Other initiatives in keeping with attracting visitors to the park will be encouraged including parkland enhancement by creating woodland walks and linking the park to the shopping area.</p> <p><b>Blue Lakes</b></p> <p>The Blue Lakes lie adjacent to the Aneurin Bevan Stones, and form an important green space between Tredegar and Ebbw Vale. There is a proposed project to create a new park and establish a new visitor’s centre with a café restaurant. It is also proposed to construct an education and learning centre, create a recreation space for walking and provide an enhanced fishing venue for local people and visitors to the area.</p>

Policy Content
<p><b>Bedwellty House and Park</b></p> <p>Tourism could contribute significantly more to the economy of the County Borough. Attractions such as Bedwellty House and Park, which form part of a network of historic buildings and landscapes, are key to attracting people to the area. This will be achieved by restoration of Bedwellty House to provide a visitor experience, restaurant, garden and function area. There are plans to transform it into a high quality conference, wedding and visitor centre and make it a major tourist attraction.</p>
<p><b>Parc Bryn Bach</b></p> <p>Parc Bryn Bach is conveniently located just off the A465 in the heart of the South Wales Valleys and is a major tourist attraction with a lake and visitor centre. The Park offers a wide variety of facilities and activities including walking, cycling, golf, angling, model boating and flying. There is potential to further develop the tourism features at the Park, with opportunities for hotel development on the site and to develop the bunkhouse facilities. Parc Bryn Bach, which has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve, is likely to be one of the main park elements of the proposed Valleys Regional Park and could benefit from its close proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is intended to develop a network of recreational routes that will allow everyone to gain easy access to local green spaces and the wider countryside. The development of recreational routes such as the Sirhowy Valley Walk and the Ebbw Valley Walk supports this intention.</p>
<p><b>Nantyglo Roundhouse Towers</b></p> <p>Nantyglo Roundhouse Towers has potential as a heritage centre and educational resource for local people and an attraction for other visitors. However, its development is entirely reliant on the cooperation of the owners.</p>
<p><b>Cwmtillery Lakes</b></p> <p>This is a 9.8-hectare site, situated 6km south of the Brecon Beacons National Park and has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The site supports a rich mosaic of habitats including species rich grassland, dwarf shrub heath, woodland and open water, all of which are of local importance as LBAP habitats. Cwmtillery Lakes provides an educational and recreational resource for the local community and is used for walking, bird watching and fishing. A new community-led project, called CALON, is seeking to establish an Outdoor Gateway and Education Centre at the Jim Owen Pavilion as a base for locals and visitors to utilise the significant potential for outdoor activities within the surrounding environment of Cwmtillery. The proposed Calon Centre will also serve as a community centre and be the venue for both curricular and extra-curricular education.</p>

Policy Content
<p><b>L1 Formal Leisure Facilities</b></p> <p>Land is identified for leisure facilities at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chartist Way, Tredegar</li></ol>
<p><b>ENV1 Green Wedges</b></p> <p>Green Wedges have been identified at the following locations in order to prevent the coalescence between and within settlements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Beaufort and Brynmawr</li><li>Tredegar and Ebbw Vale</li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>The extent of these areas is shown on the LDP Proposals Map and within these areas development that prejudices the open nature of the land will not be permitted.</p> <p>The need to define and maintain open spaces between and within urban areas and settlements to prevent coalescence is considered important for the County Borough to protect the integrity of the built and natural environment.</p>
<p><b>ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas</b></p> <p>Special Landscape Areas are identified and will be protected at the following locations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides</li><li>Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James</li><li>Cwm Tyleri and Cwm Celyn</li><li>Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail</li><li>Mynydd Bedwellty, Rhymney Hill and Sirhowy Sides</li><li>Cefn Manmoel</li><li>Trefil and Garnlydan Surrounds</li><li>Beaufort Common.</li></ol> <p>Development within the defined Special Landscape Areas will be expected to conform to the highest standards of design, siting, layout and materials appropriate</p>

Policy Content

to the character of the area.

Supporting Information

In order to protect the visual qualities of each SLA, development proposals within these areas will be required to conform to the highest possible design standards. Details of the SLAs are contained in the Blaenau Gwent Special Landscape Areas Report (2009).

ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are identified at the following locations:

Policy Number	Site Name	Policy Number	Site Name
Ebbw Vale Area			
1.	Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland	21.	Waun-Lwyd species rich grassland
2.	Bryn Serth	22.	Waun y Pound
3.	Bwlch-y-Garn North	23.	Pond Group 1
4.	Bwlch-y-Garn South	24.	Pond Group 3
5.	Castell-coryn Grassland	25.	Pond Group 5
6.	Craig y Deri Pond	26.	Rassau Pond
7.	Eastville Road Meadow	27.	Rhyd y Blew
8.	Festival Lake	28.	Ebbw River
9.	Slopes of Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn (West) (1 of 2)	29.	Slopes of Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn (West) (2 of 2)
10.	Garden City	30.	Tarren y Trwyn Pond
11.	Garden City Pond	31.	Ty Llwyn Pond
12.	Garn-Cam-Isaf	32.	Land at Park View, Beaufort
13.	Garnlydan	33.	Land at Parkhill Crescent

Policy Content			
19.	Land to the rear of Glwyndr Road, Rassau	39.	East of Penrhiwgwingi
20.	Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn-yr-Arail Ebbw Vale & Upper Ebbw Fach	40.	Mynydd Manmoel, Ebbw Vale & Tredegar
Policy Number	Site Name	Policy Number	Site Name
Tredegar Area			
41.	Sirhowy Hill Woodlands & Cardiff Pond	61.	Tredegar Leisure Centre Grasslands
42.	Garn-ddu Meadow	62.	Bedwellty Pits Field
43.	Hirgan Fields Grassland	63.	Bryn-Bach School
44.	Industrial Estate Grasslands	64.	Cefyn Pyllau-duon Pond
45.	Lower Farm Field	65.	Nant Trefil Pond
46.	Lower Troedrhiwgwair	66.	Chapel House Field
47.	Parc Bryn Bach	67.	Darren Ddu
48.	Trefil Las Pond	68.	Trefil Ddu Pond (1 of 4)
49.	St. James Reservoir	69.	Trefil Ddu Pond 2 (2 of 4)
50.	Mynydd Bedwellte	70.	Trefil Ddu Pond 3 (3 of 4)
51.	Nine Arches Grassland	71.	Trefil Ddu Pond 4 (4 of 4)
52.	North Pen-y-Lan Grassland	72.	Trefil Village Grassland
53.	Milgatw Farm Grassland	73.	Pyllau-duon Pond
54.	Fairview Field	74.	Upper Troedrhiwgwair Grasslands
55.	Pine Tree House Grassland	75.	Scotch Peter's Pond
56.	River Sirhowy	76.	South of Troedygwair
57.	Sheepfold Grasslands	77.	Highlands Grassland
58.	Shon Sheffrey's Reservoir Banks	78.	The Ducky/ The Small Ducky
59.	South Pen-y-Lan Grassland	79.	Tredegar Patch Grassland
60.	The Fountain Inn Meadows		
Upper Ebbw Fach Area			
80.	Adjacent to Blaen-y-Cwm School	93.	Adjacent to Noble Square
81.	Blaenafon Road Pond 1	94.	Clydach River
82.	Blaenafon Road Pond 2	95.	Coalbrookvale
83.	Bourneville Slip	96.	Coed Troestre

Policy Content			
84.	Bryn Farm	97.	Cwmcelyn East
85.	Brynawelon Pond	98.	Brynmawr Pond
86.	Pen y Waun Pond	99.	Cwmcelyn West
87.	Semtex Pond	100.	Edge of the Mulfran
88.	River Ebbw Fach	101.	Embankment Grassland
89.	Parc Nant y Waun	102.	Golf Course Pond
90.	Troestre Pond	103.	Llwydcoed Pond
91.	Pond Group 2, Brynmawr/Beaufort Hill	104.	Land to the east of Pant View Houses, Coed Cae
92.	Nantyglo Meadow		
Lower Ebbw Fach			
105.	Arail Farm Slopes North	115.	Cefn Bach, Abertillery
106.	Arail Farm Slopes South	116.	Coed y Gilfach
107.	Arail Pond	117.	Craig Swffryd
108.	Blaentillery Farm North	118.	Tirpentwys Cut
109.	North of Hendre Gwyndwr	119.	Cwm Farm Pond
110.	River Tyleri	120.	Coedcae Coch
111.	Six Bells Colliery Site	121.	Land to the east of Bournville Road
112.	Swffryd Wood	122.	Cwmtillery Lakes
113.	Blaentillery Farm South	123.	East of Gwastad Farm
114.	Swffryd-fach	124.	Hafod-y-Dafal acid grassland
Policy Number	Site Name	Policy Number	Site Name
125.	Mulfran, Mynydd Coity, Mynydd James & Gwastad	132.	Greenmeadow Farm
126.	Cwm Big North	133.	Cwmtillery Reservoir
127.	Swffryd Ganol Pond	134.	Llanerch Padarn West
128.	Coetgae Pond	135.	Roseheyworth Community Woodlands
129.	West of Blaentillery Farm	136.	Llanerch Padarn East
130.	Cefn Bach	137.	Coed Argoed
131.	Quarry at Gilfach Wen Farm		

Policy Content
<p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The current provision of SSSIs and SACs alone is not sufficient to maintain the biodiversity of Blaenau Gwent. It is therefore important to identify other locally designated wildlife sites such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Blaenau Gwent currently has 137 SINCs which are shown on the Proposals Map. Work is in progress to designate a number of other SINCS. All designated sites meeting the Criteria for the Selection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the County Boroughs of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff (the 'Mid-Valleys Area'), 2008, will be covered by this Policy.</i></p>
<p><b>ENV 4 Land Reclamation Schemes</b></p> <p><i>Land reclamation schemes are proposed at the following locations:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Pennant Street, Ebbw Vale</i></li><li><i>2. Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar</i></li><li><i>3. Cwmcrachen, Brynmawr</i></li><li><i>4. Llanhilleth Pithead Baths, Llanhilleth</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p>As a consequence of the industrial history of Blaenau Gwent there are sites, which require treatment in order to improve the visual environment. However, not all derelict land requires reclamation as some have reverted to nature so it is in the public interest to leave such sites undisturbed. Many of the sites are in highly visual areas and land reclamation will enable the removal of eyesores such as spoil tips, which currently blight the landscape. It will also enable the restoration of areas to their natural appearance, thereby improving the visual environment.</p>
<p><b>ENV 5 Cemeteries</b></p> <p>Extensions to the existing cemeteries are identified at the following locations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cefn Golau Cemetery, Tredegar</li><li>Dukestown Cemetery, Tredegar</li><li>Blaina Cemetery, Blaina</li></ol>



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<p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council currently manages seven cemeteries. The Council has undertaken a review of the current Cemeteries capacity within Blaenau Gwent. The review identifies that extensions are required at three of the seven sites. The Plan allocates land for these extensions.</i></p>
<p><b>M1 Safeguarding of Minerals</b></p> <p>The following mineral resources <i>are identified on the Proposals Maps:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. The Limestone Resource</i></li><li><i>2. The Sandstone resource</i></li><li><i>3. The Primary and Secondary Coal resource</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>The identification of safeguarding areas for the above minerals does not carry any presumption that planning permission would be granted for their extraction. The purpose of safeguarding is to ensure that known resources are not needlessly sterilised by permanent development (Policy DM20).</i></p> <p>The limestone resource is confined to the northern extremity of Blaenau Gwent north of Trefil whereas the sandstone resource is generally located in the mid and southern parts.</p> <p>The Proposals Map identifies the primary and secondary coal resource areas (as identified by the British Geological Survey) as one safeguarding area, as they benefit from the same safeguarding considerations. The primary resource includes the thicker closely-spaced coals, with the secondary resource area having thinner, more widely spaced coals. These areas are generally located in the north of the County Borough and along the valley floors.</p>
<p><b>M2 Mineral Buffer Zones</b></p> <p><i>Within a Mineral Buffer Zone:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. Any proposed development that would prejudice the extraction of the mineral or operation of the site will be refused; and</i></li><li><i>b. No new mineral extraction will be permitted.</i></li></ol>

Policy Content
<p><i>The following Mineral Buffer Zones are identified on the Proposals Maps:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. The Limestone quarry at Trefil, Tredegar (200 metre buffer)</i></li><li><i>2. Six Bells and Vivian Tips, Six Bells (500 metre buffer)</i></li><li><i>3. Blaentillery Drift No.2, Blaenavon (500 metre buffer)</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>In accordance with national planning policy buffer zones are identified around permitted mineral sites to safeguard sites from new development that would prejudice future extraction of permitted reserves or the operation of the site. Mineral Buffer Zones have been identified around the limestone quarry at Trefil and the open cast coal recovery operation at Six Bells.</i></p>
<p><b>M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable</b></p> <p><i>Areas where coal working will not be acceptable are identified on the Proposals Map.</i></p> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p> <p><i>In accordance with national planning policy, the LDP identifies areas where coal working will not be acceptable, these are 500m from the settlement boundary and within International and National designations of environmental and cultural importance.</i></p>
<p><b>M 4 Preferred Areas</b></p> <p><i>Preferred Areas and associated buffer zones are identified at:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Adjacent Trefil Quarry, Tredegar (200 metre buffer)</i></li><li><i>2. Tir Pentwys Tip, Llanhilleth (500 metre buffer)</i></li><li><i>3. Land South East of Cwm, Ebbw Vale (200 metre buffer)</i></li></ol> <p><u>Supporting Information</u></p>

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<p><i>The Regional Technical Statement (RTS) on Aggregates identified the need to assess the potential to make a resource allocation of at least 3 million tonnes in the LDP. According to the RTS, ‘where feasible this is to be limestone’. A recent permission for the deepening of Trefil Quarry has resulted in an additional resource allocation of 2.254 million tonnes which means that Blaenau Gwent needs to identify a further 0.76 million tonnes.</i></p> <p><i>It has not been possible to allocate specific sites to meet the shortfall of this requirement. Instead three preferred areas have been identified. Preferred Areas are areas of known mineral resources with some commercial potential, and where planning permission might reasonably be expected. Any application for aggregate extraction will be considered against Policy DM19 and national planning policy.</i></p> <p><i>Land adjacent to the existing Trefil Quarry has been identified as an area of known mineral resource with commercial potential. The resource may provide for a continuous supply for use as building stone and in making concrete. Development of the site is dependent on the ability to address a number of environmental concerns.</i></p> <p><i>The Tir Pentwys Tip lies east of Llanhilleth within the Pennant Sandstone outcrop. It is a westward extension of the Tir Pentwys spoil reclamation proposal in neighbouring Torfaen County Borough Council. No sampling or testing information for the western part of this area has been seen but it is likely that it will contain High Specification Aggregate and lower quality general fill material. Development of the site is dependent on the Torfaen part of the site receiving planning permission.</i></p> <p><i>Land South East of Cwm has been identified in the ‘Former Gwent’ Aggregate Study as being suitable for identification as a Preferred Area. The area contains 60Mt of high Polished Stone Value (PSV) sandstone.</i></p>
<p><b>W1 Land for Waste Management</b></p> <p><i>The following site is identified to accommodate regional waste management facilities:</i></p> <p>1. Land south of Waun-y-Pound, Ebbw Vale</p> <p><i>The following site is identified to accommodate local waste management facilities:</i></p> <p>2. Silent Valley, Cwm</p> <p>Supporting Information</p> <p><i>Land south of the existing Waun-y-Pound Industrial Estate in Ebbw Vale is well located in terms of the Heads of the Valleys Road and the main hub of Ebbw Vale. Adjacent land is already used as a Civic Amenity Site for the recycling of waste and therefore there is an opportunity to co-locate facilities. The site is identified as being suitable for waste management facilities such as an Anaerobic Digestion or In Vessel Composting and may be suitable for other waste management</i></p>

Policy Content
<p><i>facilities.</i></p> <p><i>The existing Silent Valley waste facility is centrally located in the County Borough south of the principal hub of Ebbw Vale. The land identified is located to the north of the existing Silent Valley landfill site which continues to form the principal destination for much of the residual and unavoidable municipal waste generated in Blaenau Gwent. The site is identified as being suitable for a bulking / waste transfer facility.</i></p> <p><i>Detailed descriptions of the sites can be found in the site descriptions document</i></p>

**Table 8.2 - Grouping of Policies for the SA of LDP Deposit Plan Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies**

Note: Changes between the May 2010 and April 2011 policy groupings are shown in Appendix I with a commentary on the need for revisiting the SA by policy.

Strategic Policy	Development Management Policy	Allocations and Designations Policy	Policy Theme
SP1: Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration	None	MU1 Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor MU2 'The Works' MU3 NMC Factory and Bus Depot	See strategic policy assessment in section 7 and assessment of strategic sites in section 6. Further assessment of effects will be undertaken through masterplanning, mitigation strategies and EIA work for individual sites.
SP2: Southern Strategy Area – Regeneration	None	Included under other themes.	See strategic policy assessment in section 7.
SP3: The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of the Town Centres	DM6 Use Class Restrictions in Principal and District Town Centres DM7 Use Class Restrictions in Blaina Local Town Centre	AA1 Action Area R1 Retail Allocations	1. Retail and Town Centre Vitality and Viability
SP4: Delivering Quality Housing SP5: Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites	DM8 Affordable Housing DM9 Rural Exception Sites DM10 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers	H1 Housing Allocations HC1 Housing Commitments GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	2. Housing
SP6: Ensuring Accessibility	DM1.3 New Development - Accessibility	T1 Cycle Routes T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements T3 Safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure T4 Improvements to Bus Services T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements	3. Accessibility
SP7: Climate Change	DM1 New Development DM2 Design and		4. Sustainable Design

Strategic Policy	Development Management Policy	Allocations and Designations Policy	Policy Theme
	Placemaking DM5 Low and Zero Carbon Energy		
SP8: Sustainable Economic Growth	DM11 Use Class Restrictions – Employment	EMP1 Employment Allocations EMP2 Employment Area Protection ED 1 Education Provision	5. Economy and Employment
SP9: Active and Healthy Communities	DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities DM13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities DM14 Protection of Open Space DM4 Infrastructure Provision	CF1 Community Centre TM1 Tourism and Leisure L1 Formal Leisure Facilities	6. Communities
SP10: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment	DM3 Air and Water Pollution DM15 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement DM16 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure DM17 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection	ENV1 Green Wedges ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes ENV5 Cemeteries	7. Natural Environment
SP11: Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment	DM18 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance	SB1 Settlement Boundaries	8. Built Environment
SP12: Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals	DM19 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications DM20 Mineral Safeguarding	M1 Safeguarding of Minerals M2 Mineral Buffer Zones M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable M4 Preferred Areas	9. Minerals
SP13: Delivering Sustainable Waste Management	DM21 Waste	W1 Land for Waste Management	10. Waste

## Results of the Assessment

- 8.6 Appendix K presents the results of the detailed appraisal of the potential effects of the LDP policies predicted to arise from their implementation. The section below presents a summary analysis of the detailed appraisal, focusing on significant effects and setting out

recommendations for improving the sustainability of the policies. Table 8.3 presents a summary of the significance of direct effects from the detailed appraisal. The significance of effects is denoted using the following system of symbols:

+++	Strongly positive
++	Moderately positive
+	Slightly positive
0	No effect
-	Slightly negative
--	Moderately negative
---	Strongly negative
+/-	Combination of positive and negative effects / neutral effect

- 8.7 For the purposes of analysing the results of the assessment, significant effects are those that result in strongly or moderately negative or positive effects.
- 8.8 It should be emphasised that the information quality, and attendant uncertainties and assumptions required to address them, vary across the evidence base for the SA objectives. This has been systematically recorded and taken into account in the detailed appraisal sheets (see Appendix G). Thus, where a major effect has been predicted for a particular SA objective, but the evidence base for this contains uncertainties or its interpretation requires a number of assumptions, the measure of information quality recorded in the appraisal has been reduced, and this is reflected in the calculation of the effect significance (see Section 2 for further details of the appraisal methodology).
- 8.9 The assessment is based on certain important assumptions with regard to the SA objectives, which are detailed in Table 3.6. Appendix H presents the results from the May 2010 assessment iteration, which has been used to identify changes in the predicted effects of the LDP. A commentary on this comparison is provided under the findings for each theme below.

**Table 8.3 - Summary of Significance of Effects of the LDP Policies**

SA Objective		Theme									
		1: Retail	2: Housing	3: Accessibility	4: Sustainable Design	5: Economy and Employment	6: Communities	7: Natural Environment	8: Built Environment	9: Minerals	10: Waste
1	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	++	+	++	++	+++	++	++	+	++	+
2	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	++	-	+	0	+++	++	0	+	+	0
3	To support the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	++	0	++	++	+++	+	++	++	-	-
4	To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	+++	++	++	++	+++	+	++	++	0	0
5	To meet identified housing needs	0	++	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0
6	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	0	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	0	++	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0

SA Objective		Theme									
		1: Retail	2: Housing	3: Accessibility	4: Sustainable Design	5: Economy and Employment	6: Communities	7: Natural Environment	8: Built Environment	9: Minerals	10: Waste
8	To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	0	0	+	0	+++	+++	0	0	+	0
9	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	++	+/-	+++	++	++	+++	+	+	-	+/-
10	To promote community health, social care and well-being	+	+	++	++	++	+++	+	0	-	-
11	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	+	+	+	+++	++	++	+	+	0	0
12	To protect and enhance the Welsh culture	0	0	0	+	-	++	+	+	+	0
13	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	++	+	+	++	--	+	+	0	+/-	+/-
14	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	+	-	+/-	+	--	+/-	+++	+	-	-
15	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	+	-	-	++	+/-	+	+	++	-	-
16	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity	++	+/-	+	++	-	+	++	++	--	-
17	To conserve soil resources and their quality	0	-	+/-	++	-	+	++	+	--	-
18	To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	-	--	+/-	+++	--	+	+	+	--	++
19	To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	-	--	--	+++	+/-	++	+	+	-	++
20	To maintain current air quality	-	-	+/-	++	--	++	++	+	-	+/-
21	To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	-	-	-	++	--	+/-	+	0	-	+
22	To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	+	+	+	++	+	+	0	+	-	+
23	To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	+	++	+	++	++	+	0	0	0	++
24	To conserve and enhance surface and groundwater quality	-	-	-	++	-	+/-	++	0	-	-
25	To protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	++	--	-	++	+/-	+	+++	++	+/-	-



## Theme 1 – Retail and Town Centre Vitality and Viability

- DM6 Use Class Restrictions in Principal and District Town Centres
- DM7 Use Class Restriction in Blaina Local Town Centre
- AA1 Action Area
- R1 Retail Allocations

### Summary

- 8.10 The policies under this theme perform well across most of the SA objectives, achieving a balance of significant positive effects. Significant positive effects have been predicted against SA objectives 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 13 (sustainable transport); 16 (previously developed land); and 25 (landscape). No significant negative effects have been predicted as a result of the policies included under this assessment theme.
- 8.11 Retail is a critical component of the economy and in seeking to protect and enhance the offer and complementary activities across the County Borough, the policies under this theme have considerable potential to deliver beneficial effects. The Action Area proposed in Policy AA1 at Southern Gateway, Ebbw Vale will create a strong physical gateway to The Works, which is likely to help deliver economic benefits. The provision of increased retail development at centres across the County Borough, supported by complementary forms of development, can be a key source of increased local job opportunities at a range of levels. Insofar as the policies will increase the attractiveness of the town centres and help to create the necessary conditions to promote a successful evening economy, the development of tourism will be supported.
- 8.12 The policies are likely to increase accessibility to retail facilities, which will contribute to achievements against this objective. DM7 seeks the provision of local shopping facilities to meet people's day-to-day needs in Blaina. AA1 and R1 allocate land to meet identified demand for new retail opportunities – the proposed allocations are located throughout the County Borough and are likely to improve accessibility for the local population. Supporting information for policy DM6 indicates that outside the Primary Retail Area, a diversity of uses will be encouraged. This could have indirect benefits for the achievement of improved accessibility to services and facilities over time. Policy AA1 is based on improvements to Ebbw Vale Principal Town Centre. Supporting text highlights that the Sustainable Development Framework for Ebbw Vale creates an opportunity for improved public transport and reduced traffic through developments proposed at the Works. This could create cumulative benefits for accessibility, as well as encouraging an increase in the use of more sustainable modes of transport, which could have benefits for a number of the SA objectives.
- 8.13 The policies could have benefits against the landscape objective insofar as the locational focus of development on existing settlements should safeguard against adverse effects on the quality and character of the surrounding landscape where openness is considered to be of particular importance.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.14 The results of the SA reflect that the iterations of the policies have resulted in improvements to the scores against objective 4 (vitality and viability of town centres) and 21 (flooding). The score against objective 21 was reduced to become non-significant negative as none of the site assessment was predicted to have a negative effect against this objective. In terms of objective 4, policies DM6 and DM7 seek to minimise the impact on the vitality and viability of the town centres through controlling the use classes permitted in retail areas. Supporting text highlights that the clustering of A1 uses is considered to be beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centres. Retail provision and the complementary offer are

keys in attracting custom in town centres. The cumulative effect of the policies should lead to significant beneficial effects.

- 8.15 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

### Recommendations

- 8.16 No further recommendations.

## Theme 2 – Housing

- DM8 Affordable Housing
- DM9 Rural Exception Sites
- DM10 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers
- H1 Housing Allocations
- HC1 Housing Commitments
- GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

### Summary

- 8.17 The policies under this theme perform with mixed results against the SA objectives with both significant positive and significant negative effects predicted. Significant positive effects were predicted against SA objectives 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 5 (housing needs); 6 (quality of housing); 7 (delivery and maintenance of affordable housing); and 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation).
- 8.18 There is the potential for the delivery of additional residential development to support a greater catchment, which in turn could support increased town centre vitality and viability, particularly for Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.
- 8.19 The housing policies in the LDP seek to ensure that the housing provided through development opportunities is reflective of local needs. To this end, the policies seek to provide a sufficient level of affordable and special needs housing, regeneration of existing housing stock, and the provision of sites for gypsy traveller communities. Policy DM8 seeks to provide at least 10% affordable housing on sites over a specified size Policy H1 also identifies 2 potential sites for the provision of 100% affordable housing in accordance with policy DM8. The provision of sites for 100% affordable housing (including H1.17 and H1.18) may have negative effects on the objective to achieve sustainable communities, as this type of layout may create social divisions. However, it is regarded that the small scale of these sites could provide a balance of positive effects as they will contribute to meeting local needs within the setting of a broader mixed community. Supporting text for Policy DM8 seeks that, under certain circumstances, contributions for the reuse or rehabilitation of older housing stock will be sought. This may improve the overall quality of housing stock in the County Borough over time.
- 8.20 Significant negative effects are predicted to arise from the policies within this component against SA objectives 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 19 (waste); and 25 (landscape). For the identified significant negative effects that are specific to sites, as listed below, mitigation will be included in the Site Descriptions document, which is a supporting document to the Plan. Chapter 9 of the LDP details survey requirements for housing sites that could lead to further mitigation.
- 8.21 The policy will result in the delivery of over 3000 new dwellings, which will also result in considerable trip generation, all of which will add to GHG emissions in the County Borough. Developing to national guidelines for the CfSH may minimise this effect, especially in the longer term where more housing will be zero carbon. Other LDP policies may also minimise

the effect of new housing developments, including SP6, which seek to encourage increased accessibility by sustainable modes.

- 8.22 The construction of new dwellings could result in considerable waste generation during and post-construction. SP13 seeks to encourage the movement of waste up the hierarchy and reduce waste generated through construction, which may minimise potential negative effects over time. A potential conflict with the gypsy traveller site allocation GT1 (Extension to Cwmcrachen) has been identified in the site specific assessments.
- 8.23 Site allocations H1.6 (Chartist Way) and H1.20 (Rear of Farm Road) are predicted to conflict with the landscape Objective (25). Potential conflicts are identified for sites H1.14 (Six Bells Colliery Site- Upper), H1.16 (Roseheyworth School), H1.17 (Former Mount Pleasant Court), H1.19 (Quarry adjacent to Cwm Farm Road), H1.18 (Hillcrest View). Development of over 3000 dwellings, including in greenfield sites, could have a significant effect on landscape quality. However, design policies and mitigation provided elsewhere in the LDP as well as national guidance, may minimise these effects. However, cumulative significant effects are likely in this distinctive location.

#### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.24 The final iteration of the SA has led to a reduction in the prediction of significant negative effects against SA objectives 14 (biodiversity), 21 (flood risk) and 24 (water quality). This is due to the potential for mitigation of predicted effects and changes to other policies within the LDP.

#### Recommendations

- 8.25 The recommendations of the SFCA Stage 2 should be taken into consideration.

### Theme 3 – Accessibility

- DM1.3 New Development – Accessibility
- T1 Cycle Routes
- T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements
- T3 Safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure
- T4 Improvements to Bus Services
- T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development
- T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements

#### Summary

- 8.26 The policies under this theme perform well across most of the SA objectives. The predicted effects equate to 5 significant positive effects and 1 significant negative effect. Significant positive effects have been predicted against the following SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); and 10 (health and well-being).
- 8.27 The availability of effective transport links is key to underpinning economic growth – delivery of infrastructure improvements, particularly rail facilities through policy T2, should convey some benefits to the local economy. Policy T5 also seeks specific road improvements that will facilitate the regeneration of the area and Policy T1 includes improvements to cycle routes that connect to sites with tourism potential, which could lead to medium and long term benefits.
- 8.28 The policy seeks to improve accessibility throughout the County Borough, seeking specifically that district hubs are well connected by public transport and walking and cycling routes. District hubs are likely to contain the largest number of community facilities and thus the policies are likely to improve access to them. Policy DM1 (part 3) specifically addresses the

various elements to improve accessibility, including appropriate provision for people with special access and mobility requirements. Increased travel by more sustainable modes may reduce overall road travel, benefitting local air quality. This may also deliver benefits for public health. Additionally, the promotion of walking and cycling routes throughout the County Borough, linking key areas, may encourage an increase in physical activity, which will have health benefits in the mid to longer term. Other effects may include benefits gained from an increase in social mixing through the use of public transport, which could increase social capital and a sense of wellbeing.

8.29 The policy is considered likely to support sizeable new infrastructure projects, which will result in considerable waste generation. Waste minimisation is encouraged through policy SP13. Over time, an increased uptake in more sustainable modes for local trips may reduce the need for road construction and Policy SP12 includes a requirement for the reuse of secondary aggregates that could reduce the significance of effects against the relevant SA objectives in some cases.

8.30 It is regarded that mitigation through the effective implementation of the other LDP policies should contribute to reducing the predicted negative effects against the SA objectives.

#### **Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)**

8.31 The final iteration of the SA has not resulted in the prediction of additional significant effects for this assessment theme. However, a reduction in the significance of the predicted negative effect against Objective 24 (water quality) in May 2010 has been predicted. Increased road building and the building of other infrastructure for improved accessibility could result in increased surface water runoff overall. However, the need for infrastructure may reduce over time if the use of public transport and other sustainable modes increases. Further, other LDP policies should ensure that the use of SUDS is implemented, to reduce surface water runoff in all new development.

#### **Recommendations**

8.32 No further recommendations.

### **Theme 4 – Sustainable Design**

- DM1 New Development
- DM2 Design and Placemaking
- DM5 Low and Zero Carbon Energy

#### **Summary**

8.33 The policies under this theme, not surprisingly, perform the best overall in the sustainability terms, delivering the greatest number of significant positive effects against the SA objectives. No significant negative effects associated with the implementation of these policies have been identified. The summary of the results below focuses on the significant positive effects, which are predicted against SA Objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 6 (quality of housing); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 11 (crime and fear of crime); 13 (sustainable transport); 15 (heritage assets); 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 19 (waste); 20 (air quality); 21 (flooding); 22 (sustainably sourced products and resources); 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation); 24 (water quality); and 25 (landscape).

8.34 The policies under this theme should improve the attractiveness of the built environment through the adherence to high design standards, helping to attract investment in the area leading to economic growth over the medium to long term. Improvements in the quality of the built environment should also help attract more tourists to the area. These effects are also likely to enhance the viability and vitality in the town centres.

- 8.35 Adherence to national requirements for sustainable design should ensure that the quality of housing in Blaenau Gwent overall is improved. Policy DM1 includes a requirement to ensure that proposals implement the transport user hierarchy. Supporting text indicates that new developments are linked to the proposals for an extensive community walking and cycling route network. This could help to ensure settlements and their related services and facilities are accessible to a greater number of people.
- 8.36 Cumulative and indirect benefits from an increase in walking and cycling routes could have benefits for health through a potential for an increase in physical activity, an increase in the opportunities for community interaction within and between settlements; possible reduction in car use as a result of modal, which could have benefits for health through improved air quality (from less traffic) and mental wellbeing through reduced stress associated with more active travel modes.
- 8.37 Policy DM2 requires that development has regard to the principles of Secured by Design, which could have direct benefits against SA Objective 11 (crime and fear of crime). Both policies DM1 and DM2 seek to improve the quality of the built and natural environment through sustainable design as well as enhancing local distinctiveness. Further, DM1 seeks to enhance accessibility by sustainable modes. These measures could improve the quality of settlements in terms of accessibility and permeability, which could help to deliver the conditions necessary to improve local identity and pride, which in turn could assist in reducing crime levels. In addition, improved environments and accessibility could lead to an increase in walking and cycling. This could increase community interaction and natural surveillance, leading to another source of potential for reducing the fear of crime.
- 8.38 The DM policies seek to implement the principles of sustainable design, which should ensure that the use of land is efficient and that any biodiversity is enhanced. In addition, Policy DM2 seeks to improve the quality of the built environment and also requires that landscaping and planting are integral elements of schemes. These requirements should help to minimise the effect of development on the surrounding landscape.
- 8.39 The principles included in policy SP7 and DM1, including proposals to improve accessibility by sustainable modes, along with national requirements for sustainable design, should reduce GHG emissions overall in new development. This could increase over time as requirements for the standards to which new buildings must be constructed become higher. Policy DM5 will enable the development of low and zero carbon energy generation that could compound this effect. The policy DM5 states that anaerobic digestion may be a potential source of energy, which could also help to reduce waste to landfill. Policy DM1 seeks to use recycled products in construction, which could help reduce waste generation.
- 8.40 Policy DM1 requires that policies reduce surface water runoff through minimising an increase in impermeable surfaces and the use of SUDS. This could lead to benefits for water quality and reductions in flood risk. Policy DM1 also seeks to promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources in construction, which should lead to benefits against Objective 22.
- 8.41 Policy DM1 seeks to promote energy efficient design. Policy DM5 seeks to enable the creation of energy from low and zero carbon sources. The LDP will be implemented within the context of national planning policy, which could help to create a level playing field and improve deliverability over time. Further advice on renewable energy related development will be contained in the SPD on renewable energy and the Renewable Energy Background Paper.

#### **Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)**

- 8.42 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show improvements to the scores against objectives 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 11 (crime and fear of crime); 19 (waste); and 25 (landscape).

- 8.43 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

### Recommendations

- 8.44 It is suggested that a requirement for development to link to the proposed walking and cycling network, as mentioned in the supporting text, is included in the policy wording for DM1.
- 8.45 The forthcoming SPD on Renewable Energy could include detail on how low and zero carbon energy schemes could reflect local character, to provide a more positive and proactive policy approach.

## Theme 5 – Economy and Employment

- DM11 Use Class Restrictions – Employment
- EMP1 Employment Allocations
- EMP2 Employment Area Protection
- ED 1 Education Provision
- TM1 Tourism and Leisure

### Summary

- 8.46 The policies under this theme perform with mixed results against the SA objectives although a greater number of significant positive effects have been predicted (9) compared with significant negative effects (5). Significant positive effects are predicted against SA objectives 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 8 (education and skills); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 11 (crime and fear of crime); and 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation).
- 8.47 Policy DM11 seeks to ensure that a flexible approach is taken to best fulfil the land requirements for new employment development and facilitate diverse economic growth. This should ensure a range of employment opportunities. The policy should achieve significant benefits over the duration of the plan period, particularly as the locational focus covers both existing business locations and new sites close to the key settlements. Policy TM1 seeks to encourage the development of tourism, leisure and heritage initiatives in town centres, as well as encourage 'activity tourism' in the countryside. This could deliver significant beneficial effects over time. The development of increased employment opportunities alongside the development of the leisure, heritage and tourism industries in the town centres should serve to enhance the vitality and viability of these areas.
- 8.48 Policy SP8 seeks to ensure the provision of infrastructure and skills development through employment, which is likely to encourage an increase in skills in the community over time. Further to this, policy ED1 seeks to provide new sites for the provision of educational facilities to accommodate increasing demand over time. Policy SP8 seeks that a 'first class learning infrastructure' is put in place to ensure that residents gain the skills they require, as well as the encouragement of local labour agreements. The intended means of implementing this approach is set out in the planning obligations SPG.
- 8.49 DM11 permits secondary sites to contain acceptable commercial services, which may include indoor health and fitness, day nurseries, commercial and vehicle repair or play facilities, which could have beneficial effects for accessibility to services and facilities, including health. Further to this, ED1 will seek to ensure that increased demand for education will be met to accommodate increased population levels. Employment allocations are likely to contribute to an increase in accessibility to employment. TM1 is likely to create significant benefits for accessibility through the enhancement of tourism facilities, which are also likely to create beneficial effects for local communities including an increase in accessibility to greenspace. There is evidence to suggest causality between criminal activity and a 'lack of things to do'.



As such, in seeking to broaden the range and availability of employment opportunities in the County Borough, as well as an increase in accessibility to local services and facilities including greenspace through the diversification of the economy towards tourism, the policy offers the potential to deliver some benefit towards reducing crime levels.

- 8.50 Significant negative effects have been predicted to arise through the implementation of the policies in this theme against SA objectives 13 (sustainable transport); 14 (biodiversity); 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 20 (air quality); and 21 (flooding). Site specific mitigation will be included in the Site Descriptions document, which is a supporting document to the Plan. Chapter 9 of the LDP details survey requirements for employment sites that could lead to further mitigation.
- 8.51 Beneficial effects are likely to be realised through the encouragement of some employment opportunities in mixed use sites as well as in town centres. Conversely, negative effects may arise through the development of large industrial estates for employment uses, which may generate increased trips by car. The accessibility component indicates that further road building is necessary to accommodate economic growth, which does not provide any mitigation of this potential issue. Potential conflicts have been identified between this Objective and the following sites: EMP1.8 (Crown Business Park), EMP1.4 (Rassau), EMP1.7 (Marine Colliery), EMP1.5 (Rassau Extension East). Therefore, an overall negative effect has been predicted against objective 13.
- 8.52 Conflicts have been identified between objective 14 (biodiversity) and site EMP1.5 (Rassau Extension East). Potential conflicts have been identified between Objective 14 and the following sites: EMP1.9 (Crown Business Park), EMP1.8 (Crown Business Park), EMP1.2 (Tredegar Workshops), EMP1.6 (Waun-y-Pound), EMP1.4 (Rassau), EMP1.7 (Marine Colliery), EMP1.3 (North of Rising Sun Ind Estate), EMP1.10 (Roseheyworth Business Park) and MU1.
- 8.53 A number of the sites partially comprise areas designated for biodiversity protection. The Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework (MU1) includes the development of two major employment sites at Rhyd-y-Blew and Bryn Serth. This was subject to its own SA. Although they contain SINC designations, comprehensive mitigation strategies are being developed to ensure that no significant effects to biodiversity are experienced.
- 8.54 Proposed mitigation measures for other employment sites are included in the supporting text to the LDP. This should help to mitigate effects on biodiversity, although some negative effects are likely over time as linkages between habitats are lost. Policy TM1 could lead to the enhancement of biodiversity assets through the promotion of tourism in countryside locations. This could lead to some positive effects against Objective 14 although an overall balance of negative effects is predicted.
- 8.55 Potential conflicts have been identified through the site assessments between objective 21 (flooding) and site EMP1.2 (Tredegar Workshops), EMP1.3 (North of Rising Sun Ind Estate). Site ED1.2 is also predicted to conflict with this objective. As a primary school allocation, this could lead to significant negative effects. The potential for mitigation is unknown. The SFCA Stage 2 assesses site EMP1.2 as it is partially within DAM flood zones B and C as well as the EA defined flood zones 2 and 3, although the majority of the site is within a lower risk area. The SFCA also assesses site EMP1.3 as a small portion is within flood zones 2 and 3, which are attributed to Ebbw Fach, but do not take into account its culverting. Significant risks to people and property through increased flood risk could be likely where site allocation include high flood risk areas. The Marine Colliery site has been included within the SFCA Stage 2 on account of DAM flood zone B and the ASTSWF located on the site. Site EMP1.10 is included in the SFCA Stage 2 due to the presence of DAM flood zone B and over 40% of the site being located within an ASTSWF.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.56 Between the iterations of assessments, the balance of significant effects has changed from there being an equal number of significant positive and negative effects, to a greater number of significant positive effects being predicted.
- 8.57 A reduction in the significance of negative effects between iterations was predicted for SA objectives 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); and 24 (water quality). This was due to improved information relating to the quality of land and soils in the Borough, which is generally low, combined with the low number of sites predicted to affect the objectives.
- 8.58 Improvements to scores leading to significant positive effects were experienced for SA objectives 9 and 11. Details of the effects are outlined above.

### Recommendations

- 8.59 Habitat linkages should be maintained and enhanced to reduce cumulative effects and the creation of biodiversity 'islands'. A strategic approach should be taken and the framework used to ensure migration of species is possible throughout sites.
- 8.60 It is recommended that more vulnerable and highly vulnerable development is not allowed in areas of identified high flood risk, in line with TAN15 requirements. The recommendations of the SFCA Stage 2 should be taken into consideration.

### Theme 6 – Communities

- DM4 Infrastructure Provision
- DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities
- DM13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities
- DM14 Protection of Open Space
- CF1 Community Centre
- L1 Formal Leisure Facilities

### Summary

- 8.61 The policies under this theme are predicted to deliver a combination of significant and minor positive effects against the SA objectives. No negative effects have been identified. Significant positive effects have been predicted against SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 7 (delivery and maintenance of affordable housing); 8 (education and skills); 9 (accessibility to employment, services and facilities); 10 (health and well-being); 11 (crime and fear of crime); 12 (Welsh culture); 19 (waste); and 20 (air quality).
- 8.62 The requirement for infrastructure and community services and facilities as part of new development will help to provide a basis for the development of a successful community, which could have economic benefits leading to increased employment. Increased provision of community facilities may be required through policy DM4, including educational provision where needed. Supporting text to policy DM4 specifies that local labour market agreements will be used to enable local people to secure employment and skills development in the growing construction sector, which is a scheme already in operation at the Works.
- 8.63 The policies in the theme are likely to lead to significant benefits over time to improve the availability of community services and facilities available to the local population and thus improve their accessibility. Policies DM12 and DM14 seek to protect community facilities and open space including access to open space. DM13 seeks additional provision where necessary. Policy DM4 seeks that this provision is provided as part of planning obligations. Specific allocations provided in the LDP through policy CF1 may also lead to improved



accessibility to community services and facilities in alliance with policies included within the accessibility theme of this assessment. The community centre or the 'Star Centre' will host a range of services comprising early years provision, youth services, youth clubs and after school provision, learning, recreation, community safety, advice and information, community events and carnivals and venue hire. Policy L1 identifies land for leisure facilities that could lead to direct benefits.

- 8.64 The DM policies seeking the protection and enhancement of community leisure facilities and open space may help to improve community health and wellbeing through benefits such as an increase in facilities within walking distance, which could lead to indirect benefits for health through exercise and reduced reliance on the private car. An increase in wellbeing could arise through an increase in community interaction created. Policy DM12 seeks to protect residential amenity, which may help to preserve community wellbeing. Increased provision of community facilities including allotments and healthcare may be required through policy DM4 where a need is identified.
- 8.65 The provision of community facilities to service the local community may reduce the need for people to travel further afield to access the same facilities which could have beneficial effects for air quality.
- 8.66 There is evidence to suggest causality between criminal activity and a 'lack of things to do'. As such, in seeking to broaden the offer of community facilities and services in the County Borough, the policy offers the potential to deliver some benefits. This is especially the case in relation to the provision of the 'Star Centre' which will include youth and after school provision. Cumulative effects through the potential for an increase in skills and employment as well as an increased sense of community could lead to significant benefits in terms of reduced crime levels in the long term.
- 8.67 The policies could lead to an increase in the creation of community interaction and groups, as well as cultural events and activities. It is likely that some of these could be in the Welsh language, as well as helping to create a sense of identity within communities, which could lead to long term benefits for Welsh culture.
- 8.68 Policy DM4 could lead to the provision of recycling facilities where needed, which could improve performance against SA Objective 19.

#### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.69 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show improvements to the scores against objectives 1 (economic growth and local economy); 2 (local employment); 7 (delivery and maintenance of affordable housing); 8 (education and skills), 11 (crime and fear of crime); and 12 (Welsh culture), leading to significant positive effects.
- 8.70 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

#### Recommendations

- 8.71 No further recommendations.

### Theme 7 – Natural Environment

- DM3 Air and Water Pollution
- DM15 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement
- DM16 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure
- DM17 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection
- ENV1 Green Wedges
- ENV2 – Special Landscape Areas

- ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes
- ENV5 Cemeteries

### Summary

- 8.72 The policies under this theme are predicted to deliver significant and minor positive effects against the SA objectives. No negative effects have been identified. Significant positive effects have been predicted against SA objectives: 1 (economic growth and local economy); 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 14 (biodiversity); 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); 20 (air quality); 24 (water quality); and 25 (landscape).
- 8.73 The enhancement of the natural environment is likely to improve the attractiveness of the area, thus potentially attracting inward investment. Longer-term economic prosperity is dependent on the availability of natural resources and the state of ecological systems and services they provide. The beneficial effects associated with the implementation of these policies will become more pronounced in the longer term.
- 8.74 Environmental protection and enhancement is likely to have benefits for the development of the tourism industry, improving local assets that attract visitors to the area.
- 8.75 The allocation of green wedges to prevent settlement coalescence will help focus development within the town centres thus helping to enhance their viability and vitality.
- 8.76 Policy DM15 seeks that development maintains or enhances locally designated sites (SINCs or LNRs), Local Priority Habitats and ecological corridors, or provides adequate compensation where development cannot be located elsewhere. Nationally and Internationally designated sites are protected by national legislation and planning policies. Policy DM16 seeks to enhance green infrastructure, which can help species to survive in light of predicted climate change effects, allowing for easier migration and dispersal. DM17 will also contribute to the protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows that may have biodiversity importance. Policies ENV1 and ENV3 will allow the implementation of the policies' principles.
- 8.77 Policy ENV4 requires reclamation of the derelict land that could help remediate the contaminated sites where feasible, bringing them back into productive use. The goals of preserving and enhancing biodiversity sites and features are also deemed beneficial for soil resources conservation.
- 8.78 DM3 requires proposals to ensure that new development will not result in airborne emissions that could have an unacceptable effect on the health or amenity of natural environment of the surrounding area, taking into account the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity. This could help to maintain current air quality levels in the short and long terms. Conservation, management and enhancement of habitats and wildlife corridors may have minor positive effects on local air quality through sequestration of many pollutants from the atmosphere, including nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter, compounding this effect.
- 8.79 Policy DM3 is concerned with the protection of controlled waters and seeks to ensure that development proposals will not have an adverse impact on these resources. This should lead to significant positive effects, particularly in the short term.
- 8.80 All of the policies in the component are likely to lead to the protection and enhancement of landscape character. Policy DM16 specifies that the Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) network incorporates Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), which should enhance their importance as protected areas. Improvements to green infrastructure should have increased benefits for landscape value. ENV2 seeks to protect SLAs, defining specific locations. Policy DM17 should also help to maintain landscape character locally. Further, policy ENV1 will

help to ensure that the quality of the landscape in some areas is maintained through preventing the coalescence of settlements. Policy ENV4 could help to improve landscape quality through land reclamation schemes to improve the visual environment.

#### **Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)**

- 8.81 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show improvements to the scores against objectives 20 (air quality); 24 (water quality); and 25 (landscape), leading to significant positive effects.
- 8.82 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

#### **Recommendations**

- 8.83 Although no negative effects were predicted as a result of the policies, the following recommendations could improve the significance of predicted beneficial effects.
- 8.84 Supporting text to policy DM16 could refer to the potential for GI to incorporate SUDS and help to reduce surface water runoff and flood risk, in association with policy DM1.

### **Theme 8 – Built Environment**

- DM18 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance
- SB1 Settlement Boundaries

#### **Summary**

- 8.85 The policies under this theme are predicted to deliver significant positive effects against 5 of the SA objectives. No negative effects have been identified. Significant positive effects are predicted against SA objectives 3 (tourism economy); 4 (vitality and viability of town centres); 15 (heritage assets); 16 (previously developed land) and 25 (landscape).
- 8.86 Policy DM18 seeks to protect buildings and structures of local importance, which are not statutorily protected. This should help to maintain heritage assets that have the potential to attract tourists to the area. Policy SP11 aims to promote heritage tourism. It is recognised that heritage assets should not only be protected for their own sake, but also harnessed to support heritage tourism for the purposes of regeneration.
- 8.87 The protection of heritage assets could bring about benefits to the vitality and viability of the town centres by increasing their distinctiveness and attractiveness and encouraging an increase in footfall throughout the day and evening through an increase in visitors. Policy SB1 will ensure that development is focused within urban areas, which could help to improve their viability and vitality over time.
- 8.88 Promoting the full use of urban land within the settlement boundaries (SB1) should help optimise the existing brownfield land development opportunities and protect landscape value. Policy DM18 promotes renovation and conversion of the existing buildings in the rural areas where this does not affect the quality of the countryside.

#### **Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)**

- 8.89 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show improvements to the score against Objective 4 (vitality and viability of town centres), leading to significant positive effects.
- 8.90 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

#### **Recommendations**

- 8.91 No further recommendations.

## Theme 9 – Minerals

- DM19 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications
- DM20 Mineral Safeguarding
- M1 Safeguarding of Minerals
- M2 Mineral Buffer Zones
- M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable
- M4 Preferred Areas

### Summary

- 8.92 The policies under this theme perform with mixed results against the SA objectives. The assessment has identified 1 significant positive effect and 3 significant negative effects.
- 8.93 A significant positive effect is predicted against SA objective 1 (economic growth and local economy). An adequate supply of mineral resources is important for the national, regional and local economy. Policy DM12 seeks that mineral applications will result in benefits for the local economy. This could lead to benefits for the economy over time.
- 8.94 Significant negative effects are predicted against SA objectives 16 (previously developed land); 17 (soil resources and quality); and 18 (greenhouse gas emissions). Mitigation for site specific effects will be included in the Site Descriptions document, which is a supporting document to the Plan. Chapter 9 of the LDP details survey requirements for housing sites that could lead to further mitigation.
- 8.95 The assessment of the site allocations has identified conflicts between objective 16 and all of the allocated sites. Therefore significant negative effects are predicted.
- 8.96 The assessment of the site allocations has identified conflicts between objective 17 and sites M4.1 (Trefil Quarry Extension) and M4.3 (Land at South East of Cwm). A potential conflict was identified for site M4.2 (Tirpentwys Cut). Therefore significant negative effects are predicted.
- 8.97 Transportation of minerals is likely to increase road traffic and transport related emissions. Policy DM19 seeks that mineral applications are acceptable in terms of highway and transportation considerations and volume of traffic with priority given to transportation by rail. This could lead to some benefits against objective 18. The assessment of the site allocations has identified the potential for conflicts between objective 18 and all of the allocated sites. Further, it is considered that the potential for mining for Coal is in direct conflict with objective 18.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.98 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show an increase in the significance of the negative effects predicted for objectives 16, 17 and 18. This is a direct result of the integration of the findings of the sites assessments, which provide additional clarity on potential effects. Mitigation will be provided for sites through the site allocations document and LDP Chapter 9.
- 8.99 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

### Recommendations

- 8.100 No further recommendations.

## Theme 10 – Waste

- DM21 Waste

- W1 Land for Waste Management

### Summary

- 8.101 The policies under this theme have led to the prediction of 3 significant positive effects. No significant negative effects have been predicted. Significant positive effects have been predicted against the following SA objectives: 18 (greenhouse gas emissions); 19 (waste); and 23 (energy efficiency and renewable energy generation).
- 8.102 Policy DM21 seeks to ensure that facilities present the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO), which should help to avoid environmental effects including emissions. Specifically, the policy seeks to encourage a site selection process that includes the need for civic amenity sites to be located close to neighbourhoods or settlements, which could reduce emissions produced in accessing them. Further, the provision of increased local waste management facilities could reduce sub-regional traffic as the area could become more self-sufficient. However, the allocation for a regional waste management facility at Waun y Pound could increase traffic. Proposals are required to ensure maximum efficiency, including the generation of energy from waste, which could lead to benefits against Objective 18. Minimisation of waste production and its diversion from landfill should also help minimise landfill GHGs, i.e. emissions of methane, which have high global warming potential. Overall, it is considered that a significant positive effect could be realised in the long term.
- 8.103 Implementation of the waste hierarchy through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and facilities is the key aim of the policies delivering benefits against objective 19.
- 8.104 Policies within this theme promote resource recovery facilities. Policy W1 allocates sites for waste management facilities that potentially could accommodate anaerobic digestion facilities. Anaerobic digestion is a treatment that results in the production a biogas that can be used to generate electricity and heat. Further, policy DM21 seeks to ensure that opportunities for Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities are fully explored and that energy recovery is ensured, so as to maximise the potential for low carbon energy generation in the County Borough.

### Improvements in the SA predicted effects (May 2010 – April 2011)

- 8.105 Between the iterations of assessment, the results of the SA show an increase in the significance of the positive effects predicted for objectives 18 and 23. Other score changes did not result in significant effects.
- 8.106 It is considered that previous SA recommendations have been effectively incorporated in the policies' wording.

### Recommendations

- 8.107 No further recommendations.

## 9. Focussed Changes (November 2011)

### Introduction

- 9.1 In May 2011, the Deposit LDP, alongside the SA Report (April 2011) was consulted on for six weeks. A further six week consultation was undertaken in July 2011 in response to sites submitted during the first consultation. The Focussed Changes document details how the consultation comments have been taken into account in the LDP. This section sets out how the Focussed Changes would contribute to the sustainable development of Blaenau Gwent through the LDP.

### Methodology

- 9.2 The Focussed Changes (including minor changes) were reviewed against the SA of the latest iteration of the LDP policies. This was ordered by theme, in the same way that the policy appraisal was undertaken.
- 9.3 The review included an evaluation of whether or not the focussed change was likely to lead to a change in the predicted effects of the LDP through SA, and whether the change would contribute to improved sustainable development more generally. Minor changes made to the LDP were also considered as part of the review process. However, some of the changes were not considered sufficiently large to warrant consideration in this report.
- 9.4 Table 9.1 explains whether or not SA is deemed to be required as a result of the changes made to the LDP as a result of the consultation on the LDP described above. As explained in section 1, the consultation process in April 2011 also resulted in revisions to this SA Report directly. Specific details of the responses and changes made as a result of the consultation comments on the Deposit SA Report can be found in Appendix L.

### Summary of Results

- 9.5 The results of the review of the Focussed Changes of the LDP are presented in Table 9.1. Overall, it has been concluded that no further SA is required as a result of the changes made to the LDP. All of the changes considered are likely to improve the potential of the LDP to contribute to more sustainable development.
- 9.6 A review of the HRA Screening of the Focussed Changes of the LDP found that no additional HRA Screening was required as a result of the Focussed Changes. The report states: *"In summary, the screening assessment of the proposed focused changes to the LDP does not change the findings of the HRA... No changes are thought to have a Likely Significant Effect, when considering the existing mitigation measures provided for by the LDP in its policies, on any of the European sites (as identified in the HRA) either alone or in combination with other projects/plans. Therefore no Appropriate Assessment is required."*

### Objectives

- 9.7 A small number of strategic changes were made to the overarching objectives of the LDP. One change related to the overall population predictions and subsequent housing figures. As the SA is a strategic appraisal process, specific population figures have not been considered as the basis for analysis, rather the general growth patterns. It is considered that, as changes to reflect more up to date statistical data, reducing overall growth levels, this change could have positive effects on the impact of development within the plan area, and so improved potential for sustainable development may result. However, the change is not of a scale that would lead to a change in the scoring through SA and so additional appraisal has not been undertaken. Thus results presented in section 4 of this report remain valid.



**SP1 and SP2**

- 9.8 Changes to the strategic policies and associated supporting text have been reviewed. It is considered that the changes made will improve the LDP in terms of its potential for the achievement of sustainable development. However, none of the changes are significant enough to require further SA as they would not be likely to lead to changes to the scoring of effects. This results presented in section 7 of this report remain valid.

**Theme 2: Housing**

- 9.9 Similar to the summary under the sub-heading 'objectives', the changes to the population figures under policy SP4 are approximate and would not lead to changes to the predicted effects under SA, as the broad effects would remain similar. Changes are also made to the gypsy traveller policy. As this change is based on national guidance and an up to date needs survey, it is considered that no changes to the SA would result through re-appraisal, as the latest iteration of the assessment includes the consideration that the delivery of gypsy traveller sites will be based on local identified needs. A similar approach is taken with the consideration of the number of 100% affordable housing sites to be provided.
- 9.10 Changes to policy H1 remove two sites from designation in response to the revised population and subsequent revision to the housing figures. Neither of the sites removed was predicted to have negative effects against the SA Objectives in the site assessments. Some benefits may result from a removal of these sites, as this could lead to an overall reduction in development levels and associated effects. However, as a relatively minor change on a strategic level, it is unlikely that these sites would have an effect of the prediction of the significant effects of this assessment theme.
- 9.11 Based on the above reasons, it is considered that the results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

**Theme 3: Accessibility**

- 9.12 Only one change was made to the policies under this assessment theme, which comprised a change to the cycle route designated within policy T1. The rationale behind the change was that the route would be more 'appropriate'. The assessment assumes that the decision behind the allocation of cycle routes is based on evidence and that the routes would be in suitable locations to enable their implementation and use. In this case, a more appropriate route would not change the predicted effects under SA, although it is likely to improve the potential of the LDP to contribute to more sustainable development. Thus results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

**Theme 4: Sustainable Design**

- 9.13 The single change made to the policies under this theme was a wording change to policy DM2. The change is likely to improve the applicability of the policy to more proposals and help to improve clarity. This could help to improve the potential sustainability of the LDP. In terms of SA, this policy is already predicted to have significant positive effects against relevant objectives, so further appraisal is considered to be unnecessary. Thus results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

**Theme 5: Economy and Employment**

- 9.14 The focussed changes to the area of green wedge under policy EMP1 as well as a change to extend the boundary to include land to the south for site ED1.2 (primary school) were the only change under this assessment theme. The change to EMP1 is likely to improve the local environment. However, the specific areas of the green wedges were not included in the policy appraisal process. Therefore the change is unlikely to affect the SA scoring and evaluation. The change to the boundary of site ED1.2 is likely to increase the developable area for the primary school within an area of high flood risk which could increase the risk of and from flooding. The appraisal of this policy against SA objective 21 (flood risk) is already



significantly negative. Along with the fact that national guidance and the SFCA results will require a flood consequences assessment as part of development proposals; the change is unlikely to affect the overall predicted effects under SA. The predicted significant effects of the SA will be monitored through the monitoring strategy to ensure that flood risk is minimised. Thus results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

#### **Theme 6: Communities**

- 9.15 A minor change (as opposed to a focussed change) was included in Table 9.1 under this assessment theme, as it directly relates to SA Objective 12. This objective seeks to protect and enhance Welsh culture. This is reflected within the change to text within Chapter 3 of the LDP. However, it is considered that the change is contextual and not directly reflected in policy wording. As such the change is unlikely to affect scoring under SA, although could enable the LDP to achieve benefits for communities. Thus results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

#### **Theme 7: Natural Environment**

- 9.16 The Focussed Changes make a number of amendments with regard to policy SP10: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment. Changes seek to improve clarity as well as add further detail to specify the protection of the water environment and species and habitats that aren't protected under legislations but remain important. Further detail is also added in relation to the Habitats Directive. Policy DM3 is also subject to changes relating to the addition of detail to protect the water environment and fish migration specifically. Changes to policy DM15 add 'species' to the consideration of habitats.
- 9.17 Although these changes are likely to help to improve the implementation of policies, further SA is considered unnecessary as the SA already predicts significant positive effects against the relevant objectives. The natural environment was already interpreted as including the water environment as well as important habitats and species.
- 9.18 The change to policy ENV1.2 amends the boundary of the green wedge designation. Although this is likely to improve the local environment, the specific areas of the green wedges were not included in the policy appraisal process. Therefore, this change is unlikely to affect the overall predicted effects under SA.
- 9.19 Based on the above reasons, it is considered that the results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

#### **Theme 9: Minerals**

- 9.20 Changes to policy DM19 seeks to improve clarity relating to the intention of the policy, which may enable energy providers to be subject to fewer requirements within the LDP. However, this is unlikely to affect the overall SA predictions as all development will be subject to the spectrum of policies included within the LDP which seek to ensure that environmental, economic and social priorities are safeguarded.
- 9.21 As with other policies, a focussed change to policy M2 seeks to change text relating to buffer areas, although their consideration in the prediction of effects under SA is already included in the assessments. The amendment of the boundary of the Trefil Quarry or the preferred area of M4.1 or its buffer, is unlikely to affect the overall SA scoring, although site specific evaluations should provide assessment and mitigation for any predicted significant negative effects. The survey requirements in Appendix 1 to the Focussed Changes highlights that the following surveys would be required: TAN 11 Noise Assessment; BS4142 Noise Assessment; BS5387 Tree Survey; full ecological survey including trees and significant vegetation; and a biodiversity constraints and enhancement plan.
- 9.22 Based on the above reasons, it is considered that the results presented in section 8 of this report remain valid.

### Cumulative Effects

- 9.23 Further to the SA effects considered in Table 9.1, the cumulative effects of the changes have been considered in the review of the Focussed Changes. Although the individual changes to the policies may not be expected to lead to an improvement in the scoring under SA, some of the changes could lead to environmental improvements through the potential for an increase in green infrastructure through changes to the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework/Policy MU1 (green links to link habitats) and enhancing the natural environment through policy SP2. The rationale behind the changes to the green wedges in policies EMP1 and ENV1.2 was to enable the protection of an ecological corridor and strengthen the green wedge. It is considered that, together, these policy changes could have positive cumulative effects for the creation of green infrastructure and its associated benefits for biodiversity, landscape and health and wellbeing considerations across the plan area. Other results included in Table 9.1 remain valid.

### Monitoring

- 9.24 Further to the focussed changes considered in Table 9.1, change FC14 updates the delivery and implementation survey requirements table, including survey requirements to provide further clarity and meet HRA requirements. The monitoring table is also updated (FC15). These changes are reflected in chapter 13 of this SA Report, which seeks to monitor the predicted effects of the SA, in line with the monitoring strategy for the LDP wherever possible.

Table 9.1 - Focussed Changes: Potential for improved contribution to sustainable development and assessment of the need for further Sustainability Appraisal

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
1.	Objectives	Objectives 1 and 2	Focussed changes FC1.A to FC1.D relate to the updating of the population growth figures to 2021. These have changed from 69,300 growing to 71,100 to 68,914 growing to 70,849. Subsequently, the housing figure has also been lowered from 3,666 to 3,500.	On a strategic level, as population predictions are by their very nature approximate, it is considered that these changes will not have an effect on the predicted effects from the SA. No further SA required.
		Objective 3	Change FC2.A seeks to revise the affordable housing figure to 1,000, which is an increase from the previous figure of 800.	It is considered that an increase in affordable dwellings would lead to an improvement in the performance of the LDP against the SA objectives. However, as a relatively minor change, no further SA is considered necessary. No further SA required.
		Objective 12	Change FC5.A amends objective 12 to read: <b><u>The valuable landscape of Blaenau Gwent has been protected, enhanced and managed and together with the natural heritage, helped foster sustainable tourism and promoted community pride.</u></b>	The change alters the objective replacing 'unique' with 'valuable' and adding in the additional words as underlined. It is considered that the additional changes will improve the potential of the objective to contribute to sustainable development. However, as this objective is relative to stage B1 of the SA process and not detailed policies, further SA of this change is unnecessary. No further SA required.

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
2.	No theme name- originally assessed under SP1 and site allocations	SP1: Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration MU1 Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor MU2 'The Works' MU3 NMC Factory and Bus Depot	<p><b>SP1</b></p> <p>Change FC4 makes a minor wording change: Amend Policy SP1 Northern Strategy Area criterion b. to delete reference to growth in town centre, to read as follows:</p> <p>Promoting Ebbw Vale as the principal hub for Blaenau Gwent, where the majority of social and economic growth will be accommodated <b>including</b> major retail expansion, administrative and cultural developments.</p> <p>Change FC5.B adds to paragraph 6.6 that <b><u>'The site offers opportunities to respond to community needs and integrate environmental aspects for positive benefits.'</u></b></p> <p>Change FC5.I seeks to amend paragraph 8.9 by adding: <b><u>'A network of green links – to allow the effective integration of the SINC's and other key habitat areas'</u></b> to the elements of the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework.</p>	<p>The change will remove specific reference to the town centre, which could improve the potential for implementation of the plan, through not restricting development to a specific location within Ebbw Vale. Development will still be located in the 'key centre' of Ebbw Vale, which was assessed as part of the SA.</p> <p>Change FC5.B adds detail to the paragraph within the LDP that is likely to contribute to improved sustainable development, in conformity with the SA Objectives.</p> <p>The Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework is enhanced through change FC5.I, which will help to contribute to a number of the SA Objectives, particularly 14 (biodiversity).</p> <p>It is considered that the changes will enhance the performance of the plan against the SA Objectives. However, it is considered unnecessary to reassess the policy as mitigation for the SINC's has already been included in the assessment.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<p><b>MU1</b></p> <p>Change FC5.H seeks to amend policy MU1, adding '<u>a network of green links</u>' to the uses on site.</p> <p>Change FC10.B amends the boundary of policy MU1 on the proposals map to enable the extension of the Green Wedge as shown on map 5, attached at appendix 3.</p>	<p>It is considered that the changes will enhance the performance of the plan against the SA Objectives. However, it is considered unnecessary to reassess the policy as mitigation for the SINC has already been included in the assessment.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
3.	No theme name- originally assessed under SP2	SP2: Southern Strategy Area – Regeneration	<p><b>SP2</b></p> <p>Minor change MC.5 adds that proposals should build on the 'unique identity of the area by protecting <u>and enhancing</u> the built heritage and the natural environment.'</p>	<p>It is considered that this change would enhance the performance of the plan against the SA Objectives. However, as a minor change it is considered that further SA is unnecessary as the policy is already predicted to have significant positive effects against SA Objective 15 (To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings).</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
4.	1.Retail and Town Centre Vitality and Viability	SP3: The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of the Town Centres DM6 Use Class Restrictions in Principal and District Town	No changes.	No further SA required.

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
		Centres DM7 Use Class Restrictions in Blaina Local Town Centre AA1 Action Area R1Retail Allocations		

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
5.	2. Housing	SP4: Delivering Quality Housing SP5: Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites DM8 Affordable Housing DM9 Rural Exception Sites DM10 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers H1 Housing Allocations HC1 Housing Commitments GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	<p><b>SP4</b></p> <p>FC1.E revises the housing figures and population numbers as described in row number 1 of this table.</p> <p>FC1.F seeks to reduce the over provision of housing to 3,932 dwellings.</p> <p>FC2.B seeks to revise criterion 2.a to read (change in bold and underlined):</p> <p>2. To ensure that local housing need is met and sustainable linked communities are created:</p> <p>a, A mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenure including <u><b>at least 335 affordable dwellings will be delivered to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent's current and future population;</b></u></p> <p>Change FC3.A change to the provision for gypsy traveller accommodation from 6 to 4 pitches in response to The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy &amp; Traveller Housing Needs Assessment (September 2011).</p>	<p>On a strategic level, as population predictions are by their very nature approximate, it is considered that these changes will not have an effect on the predicted effects from the SA.</p> <p>FC2.B removes the specified need for the provision of special needs housing, however, it is likely that this type of housing will be provided on a needs basis by service providers and it is unnecessary for inclusion within the LDP. This aspect of the policy did not directly contribute to the original score and therefore it is considered unnecessary to reappraise the policy based on this change.</p> <p>As the change to the gypsy traveller policy is based on WG guidance and an up to date needs survey, it is considered that this change would have no affect on the SA of the LDP as the previous assessment also specified that the provision was based on local needs.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>



Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)														
			<p><b>SP5</b></p> <p>Figures in FC1.G decreased to change SP5 as follows (original figure used in the assessment is in brackets):</p> <p>a. In order to create a network of sustainable linked hubs provision for new housing will be located in the following hub areas:</p> <table><tr><td>Ebbw Vale</td><td>1,614 dwellings (1,600)</td></tr><tr><td>Tredegar</td><td>696 dwellings (900)</td></tr><tr><td>Upper Ebbw Fach</td><td>438 dwellings (400)</td></tr><tr><td>Lower Ebbw Fach</td><td>358 dwellings (350)</td></tr></table> <p>c. The delivery of the housing requirement figure will be increased in five-year periods recognising the step change required to reach the higher completion figures.</p> <table><tr><td>2006-2011</td><td>700 (820)</td></tr><tr><td>2011-2016</td><td>1,300 (1,320)</td></tr><tr><td>2016-2021</td><td>1,500 (1, 526)</td></tr></table>	Ebbw Vale	1,614 dwellings (1,600)	Tredegar	696 dwellings (900)	Upper Ebbw Fach	438 dwellings (400)	Lower Ebbw Fach	358 dwellings (350)	2006-2011	700 (820)	2011-2016	1,300 (1,320)	2016-2021	1,500 (1, 526)	<p>In terms of the housing distribution figures, these are largely unchanged, or have been revised down. It is considered that this is likely to have a positive effect against the SA Objectives, as the potential for negative effects from new development will be reduced. As this is likely to lead to an improvement overall, it is considered that no addition SA is required as a result of this change.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
Ebbw Vale	1,614 dwellings (1,600)																	
Tredegar	696 dwellings (900)																	
Upper Ebbw Fach	438 dwellings (400)																	
Lower Ebbw Fach	358 dwellings (350)																	
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Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<p><b>DM8</b></p> <p>Change FC2.E changes the 10% affordable housing requirement to 'at least' 10%, and clarifies that the figure is a minimum threshold and a higher percentage will be sought where the development can support it.</p> <p>Change MC.25 changes the number of 100% affordable housing sites from 13 to <u>12</u>.</p>	<p>This change will help aid the delivery of the policy, which could help to improve the potential of the LDP to contribute to more sustainable development. This change, however, is unlikely to affect the overall SA predictions.</p> <p>The number of affordable housing sites where 100% affordable housing is decreased through this change. However, as this figure is based on a local needs assessment, it would not affect the overall prediction of the SA.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
			<p><b>DM9</b></p> <p>Change MC.18 changes the title of DM9 to <b>Affordable Housing Exception Sites</b></p>	<p>The change of the title of the policy would not change the policy content assessed under SA, but could improve clarity within the plan.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<p><b>DM10</b></p> <p>Change FC8 amends the title of policy DM10 to read: <b><u>Caravan</u></b> Sites for Gypsies and Travellers</p> <p>The change replaces the criterion relating to screening: <b><u>‘Adequate landscaping and planting with appropriate trees and shrubs helps the site blend into its surroundings.’</u></b></p> <p>The change also deletes the criterion relating to well defined boundaries.</p>	<p>The change of the title of the policy would not change the policy content assessed under SA, but could improve clarity within the plan.</p> <p>The replacement criterion helps to provide clarity in relation to screening and landscaping. However, it is unlikely that this change would affect the prediction of effects under SA. The deletion of the criterion relating to well defined boundaries will not have an effect on the scoring against the SA Objectives.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
			<p><b>H1</b></p> <p>Changes FC1.K and FC1.L delete two sites from Table H1 and amend the proposals map as appropriate. This change removes sites H1.4 Jesmondene Stadium and H1.5 Business Resource Centre, Tredegar from the site allocations. The removal of these sites reduced the housing figure in Tredegar from 358 to 132.</p>	<p>Neither of these removed sites was predicted to have negative effects against the SA Objectives in the site assessments. The removal of the sites is directly linked to the reduction of the housing provision as discussed above. This is likely to have localised environmental benefits as the effects of new development will be reduced. As this is likely to lead to an improvement overall, it is considered that no addition SA is required as a result of this change.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>
6.	3. Accessibility	SP6: Ensuring Accessibility DM1.3 New	<p><b>T1</b></p> <p>Focussed change FC10 amends the proposals map by deleting the identified cycle route T1.7 Bedwellty Pits,</p>	<p>The rationale behind the route change is because it is considered to be more appropriate. Therefore, it is considered that the route will be</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
		Development - Accessibility T1 Cycle Routes T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements T3 Safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure T4 Improvements to Bus Services T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements	Tredegar to County Borough and replace it with the new route as identified on map 7, appendix 3.	more viable or better used (although the Focussed Changes do not explain the meaning behind the use of the word 'appropriate'.) It is therefore considered that the change would enable the LDP to deliver more sustainable modes of transport.  No further SA required.
7.	4. Sustainable Design	SP7: Climate Change DM1 New Development DM2 Design and Placemaking DM5 Low and Zero Carbon Energy	<b>DM2</b> Change FC6 amends the criterion:  'They are of good design which reinforces local character and distinctiveness of the area <u>or improves areas of poor design and layout</u> ';	It is considered that the change adds clarity to the policy and improves the applicability to more areas, including those considered to have poor layouts of design. This will improve the LDP's potential to achieve sustainable development. Scores against this policy are already significantly positive, so additional SA is considered to be unnecessary.  No further SA required.
8.	5. Economy and Employment	SP8: Sustainable Economic Growth DM11 Use Class Restrictions –	<b>EMP1</b> Change FC10.C amends the boundary of policy EMP1.8 on the proposals map to enable the extension of the	As a strategic appraisal process, the specific areas of the green wedges were not a consideration within the SA. This change is therefore not considered to require additional

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
		Employment EMP1 Employment Allocations EMP2 Employment Area Protection ED 1 Education Provision	Green Wedge as shown on map 6, appendix 3.	SA, although the change is likely to improve the performance of the plan in terms of its ability to achieve more sustainable development.  The change to the boundary of site ED1.2 is likely to increase the developable area for the primary school within an area of high flood risk which could increase the risk of and from flooding. The appraisal of this policy against SA Objective 21 (flood risk) is already significantly negative. Along with the fact that national guidance and the SFCA results will require a flood consequences assessment as part of development proposals, the change is unlikely to affect the overall predicted effects under SA. The predicted significant effects of the SA will be monitored through the monitoring strategy to ensure that flood risk is minimised.  No further SA required.
9.	6. Communities	SP9: Active and Healthy Communities DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities DM13 Provision for Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Facilities DM14 Protection of	Minor change: Change MC.4 adds the following paragraph to the context within chapter 3:  <b><u>The Welsh language is integral to the character, culture and history of Wales. Whilst Blaenau Gwent does not have a large Welsh speaking population as found in other parts of the Country, the Council is keen to ensure that the spatial planning system</u></b>	SA Objective 12 seeks to protect and enhance Welsh culture. This additional text is clearly in support of this SA Objective. However, it is considered that this does not necessitate further SA as the text provides context and is not included within the policy wording.  No further SA required.

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		Open Space DM4 Infrastructure Provision CF1 Community Centre TM1 Tourism and Leisure L1 Formal Leisure Facilities	<u>protects and enhances Welsh culture and language where possible.</u>	

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5053880	7. Natural Environment	<p>SP10: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment</p> <p>DM3 Air and Water Pollution</p> <p>DM15 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement</p> <p>DM16 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure</p> <p>DM17 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection</p> <p>ENV1 Green Wedges</p> <p>ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas</p> <p>ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation</p> <p>ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes</p> <p>ENV5 Cemeteries</p>	<p><b>SP10</b></p> <p>Change FC5.C modifies policy SP10.a as follows:</p> <p>Amend Policy SP10 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment by the deletion of the word preserved, the deletion of <u>critterion c</u> and the amendment of critterion a to read as follows:</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent's unique, natural environment and designated landscape will be protected, and, where appropriate, enhanced. This will be achieved through:</p> <p>a. Protecting national, European and international nature conservation sites in line with national planning policy <u>as well as other species and habitats identified as priorities for nature conservation</u>;</p> <p>Focussed change FC7.A seeks to amend policy SP10 through the addition of a further criterion as follows:</p> <p><b><u>Ensuring development proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the water environment and contribute to improving water quality where practicable.</u></b></p> <p>Change FC5.D refers to the amendment of paragraph 6.66. Although not a direct policy change, the revision seeks to ensure that development will not be permitted, 'in accordance with the <b>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) where it adversely affects the integrity of these sites</b>'. Further text is then provided about the assets in Blaenau Gwent. Further, the text adds that <b>'Relevant authorities have a legal duty under section</b></p>	<p>Criterion c (<i>Giving appropriate consideration to European and nationally designated and other important species and habitats identified as priorities for nature conservation, in line with national planning policy</i>) has been deleted as it repeats requirements included in criterion a. Further detail to protect other species and habitats should reinforce the intention of the policy and help the LDP to achieve more sustainable development.</p> <p>Focussed changes FC7.A and FC7.B add a further detail to specify the protection of the water environment. Water quality is already scored as having a significant positive effect against this objective and so further SA is considered to be unnecessary.</p> <p>Change FC5.D adds in further detail relating to the Habitats Directive and legal duties. This could help to improve clarity for the implementation of policies. However, further SA is considered to be unnecessary as the assessment under the biodiversity objective is already significantly positive.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>



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			<p><b>DM3</b></p> <p>Change FC7.D amends policy DM3 to add an additional criterion, which is:</p> <p><b><u>b. They contribute to improving water quality wherever practicable;</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Issues with fish migration</u></b> has been added to paragraph 7.24 in addition to considerations of sewer overflows, pollution from industrial estates and old mines, in relation to the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Similarly, change FC7.F adds changes to '<b><u>secure the protection of water quality and quantity and, wherever practicable, improve water quality.</u></b> Consideration will be given to the quality and quantity of the water resource and how this impacts upon the wider environment in terms of <b><u>improving fish migration through removal of obstructions</u></b>, preventing further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems associated habitats, fisheries, promoting the sustainable use of water and controlling water abstractions.</p>	<p>Focussed change FC7.D and FC7.F add further detail to specify the protection of the water environment and fish migration. Water quality and biodiversity are already scored as having a significant positive effect against this objective and so further SA is considered to be unnecessary. However, it is considered that these changes could help the LDP to deliver more sustainable development.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<p><b>DM15</b></p> <p>Change FC5.F amends policy DM15 to add 'species' to the consideration of biodiversity designations so that the designation as well as the species within it are protected:</p> <p>a. It maintains or enhances the ecological or geological importance of the designation <b>and species</b>, or</p> <p>b. The need for the development outweighs the nature conservation importance of the site/<b>species</b> and it can be demonstrated that the development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere and compensatory provision will be made equivalent to that lost as a result of the development.</p> <p>Change FC5.G adds in that '<b><u>Proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on</u></b> international and nationally designated sites will be assessed in accordance with national policy.'</p>	<p>It is considered that these changes could improve the LDP's ability to achieve more sustainable development. However, further SA in considered unnecessary as the change would not affect the predicted effects of the plan. Significant positive effects against the biodiversity objective (14) are already predicted.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<b>ENV1.2</b> Change FC10.A amends the boundary of Policy ENV1.2 on the proposals map to extend the Green Wedge shown on map 4, appendix 3.	As a strategic appraisal process, the specific areas of the green wedges were not a consideration within the SA. This change is therefore not considered to require additional SA, although the change is likely to improve the performance of the plan in terms of its ability to achieve more sustainable development.  No further SA required.
10.	8. Built Environment	SP11: Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment DM18 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance SB1 Settlement Boundaries	<b>SP11</b> MC.11 amends the title of policy SP11 to 'Protection and Enhancement of the <u>Historic Environment</u> '	Although the change will add greater clarity to the LDP, the meaning in terms of SA is essentially the same and so it is considered that no appraisal is required.  No further SA required.

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
11.	9. Minerals	<p>SP12: Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals</p> <p>DM19 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications</p> <p>DM20 Mineral Safeguarding</p> <p>M1 Safeguarding of Minerals</p> <p>M2 Mineral Buffer Zones</p> <p>M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable</p> <p>M4 Preferred Areas</p>	<p><b>DM19</b></p> <p>Change FC9.A seeks to amend criteria a and b of Policy DM19 as follows:</p> <p>Proposals for mineral extraction and associated development, including the tipping of mineral waste and the reworking of tips, will be permitted where:</p> <p>a. <b><u>For non-energy minerals</u></b> a proven need has been established for the material involved, either in a local, regional or national context;</p> <p>b. <b><u>Where appropriate, an</u></b> assessment has been made that demonstrates that it would not be feasible to supply the mineral from secondary sources;</p> <p><b>DM20</b></p> <p>FC9.B: Amend Policy DM20 Mineral Safeguarding by the deletion of criterion b. as follows:</p> <p><b><u>b. There is an overriding need for the development and prior extraction cannot reasonably be undertaken; or</u></b></p>	<p>The change provides greater clarity as to the intention of the policy, and may reduce requirement for energy providers to prove the need for mineral extraction. However, all minerals development will be subject to the other requirements within the policy, which will help to ensure that the effects predicted are minimised in accordance with the current sustainability appraisal predictions.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
5053880			<p><b>M2</b></p> <p>Change FC12.A amends the boundary of Policy M2.1 (Trefil Quarry) on the proposals map to reflect the boundary of the IDO as shown on map 8, appendix 3. Paragraph 8.82 is also amended under change FC12.B as follows:</p> <p><u>Mineral Buffer zones are shown around all quarries and mineral operations, including dormant sites. The purpose of the buffer zone is to safeguard mineral reserves for future working, by ensuring they are not sterilised by alternative development, but also to ensure the environmental effects of quarrying/mining do not adversely affect sensitive development (including residential areas, hospitals and schools). However, development such as extensions to existing properties, small infill development within settlement boundaries would normally be permitted.</u> Mineral Buffer Zones have been identified around the limestone quarry at Trefil, the open cast coal recovery operation at Six Bells and around Blaentillary Drift, which is located in Torfaen County Borough.</p> <p><u>In the case of the buffer zone at Trefil the boundary is identified around the dormant part of the quarry in addition to the active part. Whilst dormant sites retain permission, full modern conditions would be applied to the extant permission in accordance with national guidance prior to any working recommencing on site. National guidance also recognises the importance of determining the future use of dormant sites to give certainty to local communities that may be affected by future mineral</u></p>	<p>FC12.A amends the boundary of policy M2.1. It is considered that this is unlikely to change the strategic predictions of the SA in relation to minerals. Site specific evaluations should provide assessment and mitigation for any predicted significant negative effects.</p> <p>The consideration of buffer zones under FC12.B in the SA will remain unchanged as a result of this change, as they are already considered in the prediction of effects.</p> <p>No further SA required.</p>

Row No.	Theme	Relevant Policies	Focussed or Minor Change to policy wording (It should be noted that not all of the minor changes are included in this table. Only changes that could potentially relate to the SA of the policy content of the LDP have been included)	Evaluation (May 2010) (green: no further SA required; red: further SA required)
			<b>M4</b> FC13.A Amends the proposals map to delete part of the Preferred Area of Policy M4.1 as shown on map 9, appendix 3. FC13.B amends the buffer around Preferred Area of Policy M4.1 to reflect the amendment to the Preferred Area as shown on map 10, appendix 3.	It is considered that this is unlikely to change the strategic predictions of the SA in relation to minerals. Site specific evaluations should provide assessment and mitigation for any predicted significant negative effects. No further SA required.
12.	10. Waste	SP13: Delivering Sustainable Waste Management DM21 Waste W1 Land for Waste Management	No changes.	No further SA required.

## 10. Cumulative, Synergistic and Indirect Effects

- 10.1 The results of the detailed assessment of the strategic policies and the Development Management, Allocations and Designations are presented in Appendices J and K. The assessments focused primarily direct and indirect (secondary) effects, acting in isolation. As required by the SEA Regulations, cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects have also been recorded and analysed during the appraisal. More details about the methodology utilised can be found in section 2. Table 10.1 lists the results of this analysis.

**Table 10.1 - Summary of Cumulative, Synergistic and Indirect Effects**

LDP Policy/ Policies/ Theme	Effect	SA Objective(s)	Causes	Significance
<b>Beneficial</b>				
All	Cumulative effect on economic prosperity	1-4	<p>Establishment of a strong settlement hierarchy that reinforces the concept of directing mixed use development, including retail, to the most accessible locations should convey considerable benefits in terms of economic growth and the attraction and retention of the workers needed to drive growth.</p> <p>Improved connections via public transport across the County Borough should help to underpin improved vitality in the towns, delivering increased benefits against the objective over time.</p> <p>The development of the tourism market may offer some localised opportunities for employment, which are likely to be distributed across the County Borough.</p> <p>The requirement for infrastructure and community services and facilities as part of new development will help to provide a basis for the development of a successful community, which will have economic benefits that could lead to increased employment. Increased skills levels through increased training courses and lifelong learning could lead to cumulative economic benefits in the long term.</p>	Significant beneficial effects in the longer term. Effects likely to be long lasting and distributed across the County Borough.
SP1-4, 7, 8, 11, Themes 1, 2, 4,	Cumulative effect on efficient use of	16, 17	Locational focus on key settlements, for development and transport systems, should encourage maximisation of the development	Locational focus is likely to bring overall benefits in the short to



LDP Policy/ Policies/ Theme	Effect	SA Objective(s)	Causes	Significance
7, 8, 9	land		potential within the existing urban envelope and reduce pressure on greenfield development. This could generate benefits to soil quality, through the reuse of previously contaminated land requiring remediation. However, some site designations such as for housing and minerals could have negative effects on soil quality, with the aim of improving the viability of communities (housing) and due to locational constraints (minerals).	medium term and possibly into the longer term although some negative effects could also arise.
SP1-6, SP8-9, SP11, SP13, Themes 1-6	Synergistic and cumulative effect on accessibility to community facilities and improvement in community health and well being including reducing crime and the fear of crime	9, 10, 11, 12	<p>The policy seeks to direct development to the most accessible locations, including the reinforcement and growth of key settlements through directing investment, which includes the co-locating of employment, homes and all associated facilities and services. This could help to improve accessibility to community facilities and improve wellbeing and health through an increased sense of community cohesion. The policies could lead to an increase in the creation of community interaction and groups, as well as cultural events and activities. It is likely that some of these could be in the Welsh language, as well as helping to create a sense of identity within communities that could lead to long term cumulative benefits. Further benefits could result through an increase in local provision of services and facilities, leading to increased walking and cycling and natural surveillance, which could reduce the fear of crime.</p> <p>There is evidence to suggest causality between criminal activity and a 'lack of things to do'. As such, in seeking to broaden the offer of community facilities and services in the County Borough, the policy offers the potential to deliver some benefits. This is especially the case in relation to the provision of the 'Star Centre', which will include youth and after school provision. Cumulative effects through the potential for an increase</p>	Multiple beneficial effects once the policies are enacted, with full benefits that can be enjoyed by residents.

LDP Policy/ Policies/ Theme	Effect	SA Objective(s)	Causes	Significance
			<p>in skills and employment as well as an increased sense of community could lead to significant benefits for crime levels in the long term.</p> <p>An increase in housing quality is likely to have a synergistic positive effect on health through aspects such as an improvement in energy efficiency that could reduce fuel poverty.</p>	
SP1-6, SP8-9, SP13, Themes 1, 3-6.	Cumulative effect to enact a shift to more sustainable modes of transport and to improve local air quality and health	9, 10, 13, 20	<p>The promotion of a shift to more sustainable modes of transport could have cumulative effects on health through an improvement in air quality (indirect effects); alongside an increase in walking and cycling as a mode of transport (direct effect through informal physical activity). Additionally, an increase in the use of public transport could increase community cohesion through increased interaction. A reduction in accidents is also likely to ensue from a reduction in car usage. Allocations under theme 5 could have counteracting negative effects on air quality through an increase in car-based traffic.</p>	Overall benefits of the implementation of this policy are likely to be more prominent in the longer term.
SP2, SP4, SP5, Theme 2, 4	Cumulative effect on meeting housing needs	5, 6, 7	<p>The housing policies in the LDP seek to ensure that the housing provided through development opportunities is reflective of local needs. To this end, the policies seek to provide a sufficient level of affordable and special needs housing, regeneration of existing housing stock, and the provision of sites for gypsy traveller communities.</p>	Benefits likely to increase over time as more development proposals are realised to include a proportion of affordable housing.
SP1-2, SP8, SP10-11, Theme 4, 8	Cumulative effects for protecting heritage assets	15	<p>The majority of the County Borough's heritage assets are within the urban areas. The spatial strategy is reflective of this and has a particular focus on growth building upon existing cultural and heritage assets for tourism purposes. This should help to ensure that heritage assets are conserved and enhanced over the plan period.</p>	Beneficial effects over the plan period.
SP7, Themes 2, 4, 5,	Cumulative effects on the increase in	23	<p>Policies in the LDP seek to promote energy efficient design and enable the creation of energy from low and</p>	Beneficial effects over the plan period.

LDP Policy/ Policies/ Theme	Effect	SA Objective(s)	Causes	Significance
10	energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy		zero carbon sources through building design as well as EfW. This could lead to benefits against this Objective. The LDP will be implemented within the context of national planning policy, which could improve design standards, whilst creating a level playing field for improved deliverability over time.	
<b>Adverse</b>				
SP1, 3-5, 8, Themes 2, 5 and 9	Cumulative effect on local air quality and greenhouse gas emissions	18, 20	<p>In order to achieve redevelopment, prolonged construction works will be required throughout the plan area. This is likely to create dust from construction, and may result in increased traffic congestion with an adverse effect on air quality. Additionally, in the shorter term, an increase in economic development and population may lead to increased traffic congestion if the proposed shift to more sustainable modes is not yet enacted. This could lead to negative effects on air quality and GHG emissions.</p> <p>The total increase in built development over the plan period is likely to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution although the LDP policies are likely to minimise these effects.</p>	Significant adverse effects in the short to medium term, many of which can be mitigated if appropriately managed. Long term effects on greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution possible.
SP12, Theme 2	Cumulative effect on landscape quality	25	Development of over 3000 dwellings, including in greenfield sites, could have a significant effect on landscape quality. However, design policies and mitigation provided elsewhere in the LDP as well as national guidance, may minimise these effects. However, cumulative significant effects are likely in this distinctive location.	Potential long term adverse effect although design measures may minimise effects.
SP5, Themes 2 and 5	Cumulative effect of increasing development has the potential to increase flood risk.	21	The policies may result in an increase in impermeable surfacing that may have the potential to increase risk of localised flooding. Site specific assessments have highlighted potential risks. Synergistic negative effects could result although effective mitigation through implementation of other LDP policies and the recommendations	Potential long-term adverse effects unless mitigated in accordance with the SFCA.

LDP Policy/ Policies/ Theme	Effect	SA Objective(s)	Causes	Significance
			set out in the SFCA.	

10.2 As Table 10.1 illustrates the Preferred Strategy performs well in terms of cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects relating to:

- Economic prosperity;
- Efficient use of land;
- Accessibility to community facilities and improvement in community health and well being including reducing crime and the fear of crime;
- Shift to more sustainable modes of transport and to improve local air quality and health;
- Meeting housing needs;
- Protecting heritage assets; and
- Energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy.

10.3 There are also a number of negative effects highlighted by the assessment. These include:

- Local air quality and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Cumulative effect on landscape quality; and
- Flood risk.

10.4 The assessment therefore serves to highlight the need for those elements that are expected to result in negative effects to be addressed more overtly as part of the LDP process, supported by mitigation as appropriate, as well as enhancement of positive effects where possible.

# 11. Mitigation

- 11.1 The term 'mitigation' encompasses any approach, which is aimed at preventing, reducing or offsetting significant adverse sustainability effects that have been identified. In practice, a range of measures applying one or more of these approaches is likely to be considered in mitigating any significant adverse effects predicted as a result of implementing the LDP. In addition, it is also important to consider measures aimed at enhancing positive effects. All such measures are generally referred to as mitigation measures.
- 11.2 However, the emphasis should, in the first instance, be on proactive *avoidance* of adverse effects. Only once all alternative options or approaches to avoiding an effect have been examined should mitigation then examine ways of reducing the scale/importance of the effect.
- 11.3 Mitigation can take a wide range of forms, including:
- Changes to the preferred policies, including bringing forward new options to address specific elements that cause adverse effects, or adding or deleting options;
  - Refining options in order to improve the likelihood of positive effects and to minimise adverse effects;
  - Technical measures (such as setting guidelines) to be applied during the implementation stage;
  - Identifying issues to be addressed in project environmental impact assessments for certain projects or classes of projects;
  - Proposals for changing other plans and programmes; and
  - Contingency arrangements for dealing with possible adverse effects.
- 11.4 Mitigation measures for each policy were identified in the individual assessments throughout the SA process and are highlighted in the policy specific recommendations. It is considered that the recommended mitigation for the LDP has been incorporated where necessary as a result of the SA. Additional measures as a result of the HRA AA have also been integrated into the LDP. It is considered that these inclusions, alongside national planning policy and other documents accompanying the LDP such as the SFCA and the list of survey requirements for the site specific allocations, should lead to the avoidance of significant negative effects.

## 12. Monitoring

- 12.1 The SEA Directive states that '*member states shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes.....in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action*' (Article 10.1). In addition, the Environmental Report should provide information on a '*description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring*' (Annex I (i)) (Stage E).
- 12.2 SA monitoring will cover significant social and economic effects as well as significant environmental effects and it involves measuring indicators which will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) being monitored. In line with the SEA Directive, these significant positive and negative effects should be monitored with the implementation of the LDP.
- 12.3 The sustainability appraisal of LDP Policies and associated sites has identified significant effects with regards to most SA objectives (see Table 10.1 on cumulative effects) which will require monitoring.
- 12.4 The SA guidance recommends SA monitoring to be incorporated into Local Authority's existing monitoring arrangements. In accordance with Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Local Authority is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to assess the implementation of the Local Development Plan and the extent to which policies and proposals are being achieved and to identify any changes if a policy is not working or if the targets are not met. It is thus important that the Council seeks to integrate the monitoring of the LDP's significant sustainability effects in these wider monitoring arrangements.
- 12.5 In order to reach a final framework of indicators for the AMR the Council will need to consider the indicators proposed in the SA to identify those which can be most effectively used to monitor the sustainability effects of the LDP as a whole. Significant effects have been predicted against all of the sustainability objectives, and thus will form the basis of the monitoring programme. The monitoring programme as outlined below is preliminary, but includes consideration of the indicators included within the Monitoring Framework provided as Appendix 2 of the Focussed Changes to the Deposit Plan LDP. It is likely that the indicators will evolve further over time based on the results of public consultation, dialogue with environmental consultees and the identification of additional data sources, as in many cases information will be provided by outside bodies.
- 12.6 The proposed SA monitoring framework is shown in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 - Monitoring Framework

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
1. To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	Positive effect	Employment by sector	Nomis	Yes – SP8 objectives 8 & 9
		Accessibility between hubs- Number of highway and public transport schemes implemented (LI 5)	BGCBC transport section and WG	Yes- SP6 objective 4
		Amount of major retail, office and leisure development (sq m) (C1 1)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes – SP1 objectives 1 & 7
2. To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	Positive effect	% of working age population that are economically active	Nomis	Yes – SP8 objectives 8 & 9
		Earnings by residence	Nomis	No
3. To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	Positive effect	Total number of visitors	BGCBC	No
		Number of tourism facilities completed per annum (LI 14)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- objective 11 & 12
		Proportion of people visiting the County Borough for ‘activity’ tourism	BGCBC	No
4. To enhance the viability and vitality of town centres	Positive effect	Annual vacancy rate in Town Centres (LI 2)	Annual Town Centre Health Checks	Yes – SP3 objective 1
5. To meet identified housing needs	Positive effect	Number of net additional affordable and general market dwellings built per annum (CI 2)	Joint Housing Land Availability Study	Yes- SP4 objectives 2 & 3
		Percentage of vacant residential properties (LI 28)	Census Data	Yes- SP4 objectives 2 & 3
		Net additional Gypsy and Traveller units (LI 4)	Housing Land Availability Study	Yes – SP5 objective 3



SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
6. To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	Positive effect	Number of houses meeting Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)	BGCBC planning applications	No
7. To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	Positive effect	% Affordable Housing in mixed type schemes	BGCBC planning applications	No
		% of eligible residential planning permissions where affordable housing has been negotiated	BGCBC planning applications	No
		Average house price to income ratio	Land registry/ BGCBC	No
8. To improve educational attainment and increase skills levels	Positive effect	Delivery of learning infrastructure (LI 11)	BGCBC planning applications and survey	Yes- SP8 Objective 8
		Proportion of new employment opportunities that offer training schemes	BGCBC planning applications	No
9. To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	Positive effect	Number of community facilities per 1000 population	BGCBC	No
		The percentage of the total length of rights of way in the local authority area, that are easy to use by the general public (BV178)	BGCBC Regeneration (ROWIP)	No, but is monitored by ROWIP
10. To promote community health, social care and well-being	Positive effect	Community Satisfaction / perceptions	Housing Estate Surveys	No
		Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation	Welsh Assembly Government	No
		Hectares of recreational open space per 1000 population (FIT standard) (LI 12)	BGCBC Open Space Assessment	Yes- SP9 objectives 11 & 12
		Number of leisure facilities completed per annum (LI 14)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- objectives 11 & 12

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
		Delivery of health infrastructure (LI 12)	BGCBC planning applications and survey	Yes- SP8 objective 8
		Number of people with access to natural greenspace within 400m of their home as a percentage of all people (LI 15)	BGCBC Access to Green Space Study	Yes- SP9 objectives 11 & 12
		Proportion of households within 800m walking distance of key health services	BGCBC planning applications	No
		Percentage of population within 1km of National Cycle Network (NCN)	BGCBC	No
		Adult participation in sport in the previous four weeks (%)	Sports Council for Wales	No
		Any participation in sport in any setting (curricular, extracurricular, club or other setting) in the last year (primary school years 3-6)	Sports Council for Wales	No
		Any participation in sport at a club outside of school in the last year (secondary school years 7 to 11)	Sports Council for Wales	No
11. To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	Positive effect	Percentage of new housing that meets the 'secured by design' certification criteria	BGCBC planning applications	No
13. To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	Overall positive effect	Frequency of buses between hubs	BGCBC Transport	No
		Frequency of public transport to Cardiff or Newport	BGCBC Transport	No
		% of people using public transport	BGCBC Transport	No
		No. and value of planning contributions secured for improvements in public transport, walking and cycling	BGCBC planning applications	No
		Modal split - % of population travelling to work by sustainable modes	BGCBC Transport	No

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
14. To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	Overall positive effect	Number of developments which have an adverse effect of European sites (LI 20)	CCW	Yes- SP10 objective 12
		Area of SSSI lost to development per annum (LI 16)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- SP10 objective 12
		Amount of protected woodland and trees lost to development per annum (LI 17)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- SP10 objective 12
		Area of SINC lost to development per annum (LI 18)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- SP10 objective 12
		Area of LNR lost to development per annum (LI 18)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes- SP10 objective 12
		Number of new developments delivering habitat creation	BGCBC planning applications	No
		% of LBAP species that are stable or increasing	Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership	No
		% of greenspace important for wildlife corridors identified and safeguarded from or enhanced as part of development	BGCBC planning applications	No
		% of planning permissions incorporating a condition which is to establish a buffer zone (relating to development adjacent to a watercourse)	BGCBC planning applications	No
		Unavoidable loss of biodiversity compensated for	BGCBC planning applications	No
15. To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	Positive effect	Number of conservation area appraisals and conservation area management plans undertaken/implemented	BGCBC	No
		Number of listed buildings and historic sites (LI 21)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes SP11 objective 13
		Number of listed buildings or archaeological sites enhanced (LI 22)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes SP11 objective 13

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
		Number of listed or local buildings of historical value brought into use for tourism	BGCBC – tourism	Yes SP11 objective 13
		The number of scheduled ancient monuments having undergone positive management works	Cadw	No
		Number of historic assets that have an approved monument management plan in place	Cadw	No
		Condition of registered parks and gardens of historic interest	Cadw	No
16. To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss to biodiversity	Overall positive effect	Amount of new development permitted on previously developed land (brownfield development and conversions) expressed as a percentage of all development permitted (CI 8)	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objective 6
		Average density of housing development permitted on allocated sites (CI 6)	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objective 6
		Number of land reclamation schemes completed per annum (LI 6)	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP2 objectives 1, 6, 11 & 12
17. To conserve soil resources and their quality	Overall positive effect	No. and area of contaminated land sites remediated through new development	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Area of greenfield land lost to development (ha) which is not allocated in the plan (CI 11)	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objectives 11 & 12
		Number of development projects implementing soil creation and conservation techniques <sup>26</sup>	BGCBC Planning Applications	No

<sup>26</sup> See footnote explanation in Table 3.4

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
		Number of years land bank of permitted aggregate reserves (LI 24)	South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party- Annual Survey	Yes- SP12 objective 14
		Percentage use of secondary resources in new development	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
18. To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	A mix of significant positive and negative effects	Greenhouse gas emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent) by sector and per capita (tonnes per year)	DECC	No
19. To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	A mix of significant positive and negative effects	No. of sustainable waste management facilities per 1,000 households <sup>27</sup>	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Amount of waste arising and managed by management type (LI 26)	BGCBC Waste	Yes- SP13 objective 15
20. To maintain current air quality	A mix of significant positive and negative effects	Estimated background air quality (LI 30)	BGCBC	Yes – SP10 objective 12
21. To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	A mix of significant positive and negative effects	Amount of development (by TAN 15 paragraph 5.1 development category) permitted in C1 and C2 floodplain areas not meeting all TAN 15 tests (CI 9)	BGCBC planning applications	Yes – SP7 objective 6
22. To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	Positive effect	Use of reclaimed and sustainability sourced materials for construction	BGCBC planning applications	No
		Greywater recycling systems and water savings devices installed in new developments	BGCBC planning applications	No

<sup>27</sup> See guidance in Table 3.4

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
23. To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	Positive effect	% of new homes meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Code Level 4 or above	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objectives 5&6
		% of non-residential buildings meeting BREEAM Excellent standard or above	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objectives 5&6
		Capacity of renewable energy developments installed per annum (CI 5)	BGCBC Planning Applications	Yes- SP7 objective 6
		Capacity of low carbon energy developments installed per annum	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
24. To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	Overall positive effect	Percentage surface water (natural water bodies) <sup>28</sup> of Good Ecological Status <sup>29</sup>	Environment Agency Wales	No
		Percentage of surface water of Good Ecological Potential (heavily modified water bodies)	Environment Agency Wales	No
		Percentage surface water of Good Chemical Status	Environment Agency Wales	No
		Percentage groundwater of Good Status (quality and levels) (LI 29)	Environment Agency Wales	Yes – SP10 objective 12
		% of planning applications granted in sewered areas where there is no capacity and no planned upgrades	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
25. Protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	Overall positive effect	Proportion of valued landscape lost to development	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Number of new developments exceeding TAN 11 or BS4142 Noise Requirements	BGCBC Planning Applications	No

<sup>28</sup> See notes in Table 3.4

<sup>29</sup> See notes in Table 3.4

SA Objective	Predicted Long Term Effect of the LDP	Potential indicators to monitor change	Source	Included in LDP Monitoring Framework?
		Number of planning permissions granted that include conditions relating to light pollution	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Effect of development which negatively affects the Brecon Beacons National Park (visual and physical effects)	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Amount or proportion of landscape subject to enhancement associated with development	BGCBC Planning Applications	No
		Proportion of landscape characterised and managed	BGCBC	No



## 13. Conclusions

- 13.1 It is considered that the policies in the LDP Deposit Plan and Focussed Changes for Blaenau Gwent, taken together and alongside national planning policies, will help to lead to sustainable development over the plan period. On balance, the LDP Deposit Plan and Focussed Changes has great potential to lead to the creation of sustainable communities, with the proportion of significant positive sustainability effects being considered to outweigh the predicted negative effects.
- 13.2 The LDP overall is likely to have significant benefits for sustainable development, particularly relating to the following contributors:
- Economic growth and diversification of the local economy;
  - Increased levels of local employment and equitable distribution of opportunities;
  - Improved tourism economy complementary to the regional offer;
  - Enhanced vitality and viability of town centres;
  - Improved ability to meet housing needs including the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities;
  - Increased levels of skills and education;
  - Improved accessibility to essential services and facilities;
  - Improved levels of health and wellbeing including a reduction in crime and the fear of crime and an enhanced sense of local distinctiveness;
  - Increased potential for a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport;
  - Increased potential for enabling enhanced biodiversity;
  - Conservation of heritage assets;
  - Making the best use of natural resources including prioritising the use of previously developed sites and promoting the use of sustainably sourced materials;
  - Increased energy efficiency in new development and encouraging the generation of energy from low and zero carbon sources; and
  - Improved protection of landscape quality where possible.
- 13.3 It is considered that the mitigation of the predicted negative effects of the LDP, such as effects on local air quality, biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, soil quality and flood risk, can be achieved through the effective implementation of measures included within supporting documents to the LDP. Supporting documents that contain further policy guidance and mitigation include the Site Descriptions Document; national planning policies; site specific biodiversity mitigation strategies; and the SFCA Stage 2. It is considered that recommendations from the April 2011 iteration of assessments, which have not been integrated into the Deposit LDP, are concerned with the improvement of positive effects rather than with the mitigation of negative effects. Therefore their implementation is not critical to the sustainability performance of the LDP as a whole.
- 13.4 The HRA AA Report concludes that “...before the consideration of mitigation measures, there was a risk that delivery of 8 out of the 13 Deposit LDP strategic policies could potentially have adverse effects on the integrity of the sites concerned. However, after the introduction of mitigation measures these risks were removed... The Appropriate Assessment has identified that, before the consideration of mitigation measures, 4 European sites could potentially be affected by the delivery of the LDP when considered on its own. However,

*after the introduction of mitigation measures the AA did not identify any of the European sites which could potentially be affected by the delivery of the LDP.” It is considered that the LDP integrates the recommendations of the HRA report. These changes are reflected in the April 2011 Deposit Plan policies assessed in this SAR. A review of the HRA was undertaken on the Focussed Changes of the LDP. The report concluded that: “the screening assessment of the proposed focused changes to the LDP does not change the findings of the HRA... No changes are thought to have a Likely Significant Effect, when considering the existing mitigation measures provided for by the LDP in its policies, on any of the European sites (as identified in the HRA) either alone or in combination with other projects/plans. Therefore no Appropriate Assessment is required.”*

- 13.5 The process of Sustainability Appraisal throughout the LDP’s preparation has been thorough and comprehensive. Various methods of consultation have been utilised, both formal and informal, which have informed the development of both the LDP and the SA. Several iterations of assessment have been employed, with continuous dialogue between the BGCBC planning team and the SA team.
- 13.6 The evolving, iterative nature of the SA process employed for the development of the LDP has enabled the integration of the core principles of sustainable development into the LDP Deposit Plan and Focussed Changes. The value of this process, particularly in the refining of the Strategic Policies and the Development Management and Allocations and Designations Policies has been explained more thoroughly in sections 7, 8 and 9. These sections clearly demonstrate the improvements in performance of the LDP against the SA objectives between iterations. Improvements in performance have been attributable to factors such as: increased detail set out in policies and supporting text; improvements in the overall approach and LDP strategy; a shift of focus to encourage more sustainable forms of economic growth; and an increase in the supporting documentation to the LDP including mitigation strategies for particular predicted effects.

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