Report of Consultation - Issues/Challenges and Vision

Adroddiad Ymgynghoriad - Prblemau/Heriau a Gweledigaeth

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council
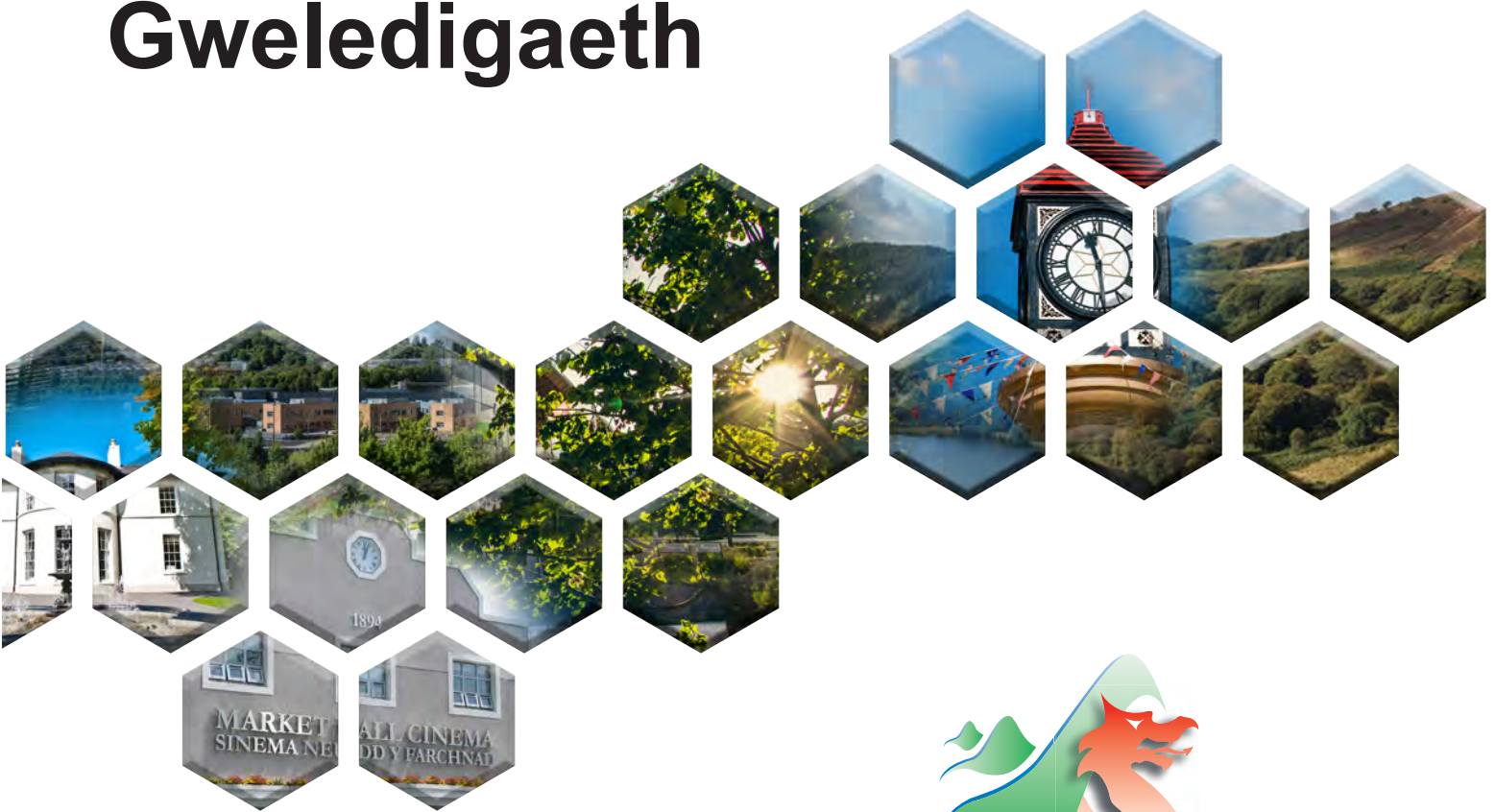
Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd 2018 - 2033

January / Ionawr 2020

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Issues and Vision Workshops– Report of Consultation

1.0   Introduction

1.1   Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) is in the process of preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the County Borough. The LDP is the Council's land use plan that will establish where and how much development will take place in the County Borough over the period 2018-2033. It will also identify which areas are to be protected from development and will replace the existing Local Development Plan (LDP 2006-2021) once adopted.

1.2   The RLDP is being prepared in line with the Council's adopted Delivery Agreement (October 2018), which sets out the timetable and approach to community consultation. At this stage of the process (Stage 1 Pre-Deposit Participation) the consultation is focussed on engagement and consensus building with key stakeholders. Formal consultation will be undertaken at the next stage (Stage 2 Pre-Deposit Consultation).

1.3   The first stage in preparing the plan is pre-deposit participation. One of the aims of this stage is to build consensus on the issues and strategy for the replacement LDP. A series of issues and vision workshop events have been held throughout April, May and June 2019 to engage with stakeholders, Members and internal officers. Building on the opinions and views expressed at these workshops, a second series of workshop events will be held in July to gain views on the strategy options.

Purpose of the Report

1.4   The purpose of this report is to record all of the information gathered across the series of issues and vision workshop events. The views expressed at the workshop events has helped the Council to identify a list of challenges / issues for the replacement LDP to address and a draft vision of where we want to be by 2033. The challenges / issues will be developed into objectives for the strategy to meet.

1.5   Section 3.0 of this report summarises the comments received in the workshop events on each of the challenges and includes the proposed amended challenge / issue taking into account the comments received.

1.6   Section 4.0 of this report summarises the comments received in the workshop events on the current vision and sets out the revised vision taking into account the comments received in workshop 1. Section 5.0 summarises the views expressed by the primary school children at the Children's Grand Council.

1.7   A record of the comments made at each of the workshop sessions is set out in Appendix 1.

2.0   The Workshop Sessions

2.1   A series of issues and vision workshop sessions were held with stakeholders, internal officers, Members and primary school children as set out below:

Internal regeneration officers – Wednesday 17th April 2019 held at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale

Members Workshop 1 – Wednesday 8th May 2019 (10:30am) held at the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale

Members Workshop 2 – Wednesday 8th May 2019 (2pm) held at the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale

Stakeholder Workshop 1 – Tuesday 14th May 2019 held at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale

Stakeholder Workshop 2 – Thursday 6th June 2019 held at the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale

Children's Grand Council – Wednesday 19th June 2019 held at Bedwellty House, Tredegar

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2.2   The overall aim of the workshop sessions were the same and involved two tasks:
- Task 1 - To identify the issues that the replacement Local Development Plan will need to address; and
- Task 2 – Identify where we want to be by 2033 – The Vision

2.3   The first workshop was held with internal regeneration officers and its purpose was to not only engage with officers on the issues and vision but it was also used as a test run for the planned future stakeholder and member sessions. It was identified that no amendments were required to the proposed structure of the session. The record of the information gathered in this workshop is summarised within section 3.0 below and the record of actual comments made is set out in Appendix 1.

2.4   Invitations were sent to all Members of the Council, all stakeholders on the LDP consultation database including various local interest groups and organisations from Blaenau Gwent and candidate site proposers. Across all of the sessions, the development plans team engaged with 87 attendees. A list of all attendees is provided in Appendix 2.

2.5   The content and purpose of the workshop was the same across all of the sessions. As an introduction to the session, Lynda Healy (Team Manager Building Control and Development Plans) provided a brief explanation of what the LDP is, an update on its progress and outlined the purpose of the workshop. Appendix 3 displays the slides used in the presentation. It should be noted that there was also opportunities for workshop attendees to clarify aspects of the LDP process and the workshop itself. An agenda is included at Appendix 4.

2.6   Due to the varying numbers across the sessions some were run slightly different, for example the Members sessions and stakeholder workshop 2 was slightly different in that it was not in a workshop group format and every challenge was discussed by all participants.

2.7   However, due to the high numbers in stakeholder workshop 1 session, the 14 challenges were grouped into economic, environmental and social as follows:

Economic	Challenge 1:Economic diversification Challenge 2: New roles for town centres Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration
Social	Challenge 3: Stabilising the population Challenge 4: Meeting housing needs and improving housing Challenge 6: Improving accessibility Challenge 8: Supporting sustainable transport Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
Environment	Challenge 10: Creating a place which supports its green environment Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources Challenge 13: Sustainable design and development Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration

2.8   6 groups were identified before the event based on their area of expertise or interest. 3 of the groups focussed on the social challenges, 1 on the economic challenges and two on the environmental challenges. Each group had a facilitator and a scribe to ensure that discussions were focussed and comments were recorded accurately. The groups for stakeholder workshop 1 are shown in Appendix 5. It should also be noted that there was an opportunity prior to the start of the session and during the break for people to comment on the other challenges not covered in the workshop group.

3.0 Task 1: Identify the Issues that the Replacement Local Development Pan will need to Address

3.1 The aim of task 1 was to identify the issues that the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) will need to address.

3.2 Attendees were asked to review each of the current challenges by considering the following questions:
- Is the challenge still relevant?
- What are the new influences / issues in that area?
- Does it need to be amended?
- Can any be merged?

3.3 Boards were created for each of the challenges with information on the progress or the latest position, possible new issues and future trends and direction. Appendix 6 is an example of a board created for one of the challenges.

3.4 The task also gave an opportunity for participants to identify any new challenges that had not been covered.

Summary of Workshop Comments from Task 1

3.5 The following section summarises all comments received across all of the sessions. A summary of individual workshop group discussions are set out in Appendix 1.

Challenge 1 Economic Diversification
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
Overall, the challenge is considered to be relevant and in fact was considered highly important.
What are the new influences / issues?
In terms of employment sectors, it was recognised that the future growth sectors are technology, IT and cyber security and that Blaenau Gwent should look beyond manufacturing. It was considered that, by the end of the plan period (2033) there will be a decrease in people working in the service and manufacturing industries due to a significant increase in automation systems and the use of technology. One of the group sessions recognised that tourism was a significant employment sector. It was also reflected in one workshop session that the enterprise zones should be covered in the challenge. However, it was reflected in another session that the Enterprise Zone hasn't delivered – Blaenau Gwent needs to maximise opportunities. This was further reflected when groups talked about the Cardiff City Region and the Circuit of Wales project. The level of skills was considered an important factor and is interconnected to economic growth. It was felt that companies would be willing to invest if local people had the skill levels. In fact it was felt that people don't have the qualifications to get the jobs that are available in the area. Schools need to play a role in skilling up students especially in terms of

customer services. Another key factor identified as interrelated to economic growth was accessibility. It was identified that the Metro would be a key influence in this area particularly the proposed increase of 4 trains per hour. However, the frequency and number of bus services and the integration of bus and train services to employment areas and tourism facilities remain significant issues. A key consideration for economic growth is ensuring that the current stock of industrial buildings is fit for purpose and that the land is available to attract the big quality employers. A balance between housing and economic growth is also a key consideration to ensure that there are not unsustainable patterns of travel.
Does it need to be amended? It was considered across a number of sessions that the focus of the challenge should change and be more about economic growth rather than economic diversification as that is the real issue.
Can any be merged? Across all of the workshop sessions, it was considered that the challenge should remain as a standalone challenge.
Other detailed considerations in relation to the economy which were identified during the sessions and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below: • The need to look at the development management policy relating to the employment hierarchy as retail uses are being allowed on industrial estates which is impacting on town centres.

3.6   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received. A full list of all revised challenges is set out in Appendix 7.

Challenge 1: Economic growth Diversification The area suffers from high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, high benefit dependence and limited quality employment opportunities which together result in low household incomes. A key challenge for the area is to secure jobs for the future. This will mean increasing the proportion of jobs in sectors with good growth prospects, such as new technologies and services, knowledge-based business, advanced manufacturing, IT and cyber security, tourism and low carbon sustainable technologies. The challenge is to provide land, services and environments that will enable economic growthdraw investment.

Challenge 2: New roles for Town Centres
Is the challenge / issue still relevant? Overall the challenge is still considered to be relevant as town centres remain an issue.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended? The issue relating to town centres is the need to change their focus. Town centres are never going to compete with the internet and out of town shopping. The focus of town centres

should be about more than just retail. The focus should be on looking at other uses such as leisure, businesses, training facilities, offices to create a cultural and service hub. These uses would also create footfall.

There were a mix of views in relation to the identified town centre roles in the current LDP. Most of the workshop sessions considered the roles to be about right as each of the town centres offer something slightly different. Although it was identified that tourism should be promoted more. However, the regeneration session stated that the identified roles for the town centres have not made any difference and there is a need to relook at them as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan.

There is also a need to ensure that there are sustainable transport links between the town centres as town centres should have different offers and shouldn't be competing against each other.

There has been a notable decline in the presence of banks in the town centres which has been replaced by mobile banks. However, mobile banks are a problem in terms of where they are located for example the mobile bank in Abertillery parks at the car park at the top of town. People drive to it and then don't spend money in the town.

In terms of the retail hierarchy there were mixed views. In the Members session, it was emphasised that Brynmawr should not "play second fiddle to Ebbw Vale". It was considered that Ebbw Vale as a principal town is a dis-service to the other towns. Brynmawr is more successful and has witnessed more growth. The 4 towns (Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar) should all be looked at and worked on. In the session with regeneration officers, it was considered that Blaina should not be identified as a local town centre however recognised Ebbw Vale as the main town centre of the Borough due to demographics.

Can any be merged?
Across all of the workshop sessions, it was considered that the challenge should remain as a standalone challenge.

Other detailed considerations in relation to town centres which were identified during the sessions and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below:
- It was also identified in a few of the sessions that the town centre boundaries need to be relooked at as it was considered that they can be contracted. There is also a need to look at the primary retail area policy as it is evident that the town centres are failing to attract A1 uses only.
- There is a Task and Finish Group for town centres already established. The LDP needs to feed into this. This group should be linked to the destination management group.
- Abertillery and Ebbw Vale have received significant funding however it was considered that the money has not been spent well. Pedestrianisation in the town centres also does not work.
- Encourage social enterprises in town centres to increase community engagement and reduce loneliness.
- Subsidise business rates for new companies within the town centre

- Create a shop local scheme
- Hold a town centre open day
- Social Saturday events (applies to all town centres) – close the one way systems during the summer and hold outdoor activities.
- Free wifi within the town centres

3.7 The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 2: New roles for town centres ~~The town centres suffer high vacancy rates and low presence of national retailers compared to other valley towns. Most suffer as a result of the dominance of out of town food retail stores.~~ Town centres are suffering as a result of a change in people's shopping habits. A key issue is that town centres need to diversify and broaden their offer to create footfall. Town centres need to have clear roles so that they don't ~~the town centres~~ compete against each other ~~and have no clear roles~~. The challenge is to provide a more flexible policy approach ~~new retail hierarchy,~~ and identify clear roles ~~and limit damage from out of town retail development~~.

Challenge 3: Stabilising the Population
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
There was unanimous agreement across the sessions that the challenge is still relevant as the Blaenau Gwent population is declining. This has been due to the loss of primary industries where there are limited employment opportunities particularly in terms of professional occupations.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
There was agreement across all of the sessions that losing the 16-64 demographic will impact on the economy and the need for job creation locally. However, it was acknowledged that this was also a problem in Brecon Beacons National Park. There is a need to stimulate growth in Blaenau Gwent focussing on the core demographic of 16-64 year olds. It was questioned in the stakeholder session what the role is for Blaenau Gwent, for example is it a commuter area or a tourist destination? There is a need to look to neighbouring authorities and their successes for example Merthyr Tydfil has attracted major retail and leisure uses. Analysis of the evidence in relation to household projections is required to gain an understanding of who is staying in the area and the reasons why. It was questioned for example if younger people can afford to live in cities. It was also discussed in one group session that household projections are falling, therefore if these figures are relied upon then more housing may not be needed. However, another group identified that levels of growth should not be just based around household projections. However, it was considered that overall the levels of growth should be moderate, realistic and achievable. The stakeholder session identified influences and factors that may attract people to the area

which should be capitalised upon through the Replacement Local Development Plan:

- Promote the Valleys as an alternative to Cardiff / Newport
- The recent completion of the A465 Heads of the Valleys dualling
- Tourism – provide more tourism and leisure facilities i.e. hotels, links to Brecon Beacons National Park and promotion of the Blaenau Gwent area
- Provide good quality schools and public services
- Construction of good quality affordable houses
- More jobs are required in the area
- Make land available in Blaenau Gwent to build, concerns were raised with regards to planning regulations
- Make the most of our natural environment
- Investment of Metro Cardiff Capital Region
- Enhancement of infrastructure

Can any be merged?
Several workshop sessions identified that this challenge could be merged with challenge 4: meeting housing needs and improving housing. However in another workshop session it was identified that all other challenges are intrinsically linked to this challenge

3.8   The changes proposed to challenge 3 are shown after challenge 4.

Challenge 4: Meeting Housing Needs and Improving Housing

Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
Across all of the sessions, the challenge is still considered to be relevant.

What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
The Local Development Plan needs to reflect local needs in that there is a need for more one bedroom properties and the ageing population means that there is a requirement for bungalows and adapted properties. The aspirations of people in Blaenau Gwent also need to be reflected in that they want to move into more modern accommodation. Though this would also attract people to come and stay.

here was a range of views across the sessions in terms of the housing market. It was acknowledged by one group in the stakeholder session that the housing market is complex. It was also acknowledged that developers have not been coming to the area but the interest is picking up slowly. One group considered that there is a need to look at small companies and support self-build sites. However in the Member session, it was suggested that the focus should be on medium size builders for development. Davis Homes was identified as a good developer, whilst another developer from Bridgend was also named as keen to develop in this area.

The removal of the Severn bridge tolls is an opportunity to attract commuters or for those who are forced out of the market elsewhere.

In one of the groups of the stakeholder sessions it was identified that the planning system is not helpful in bringing forward new development in Blaenau Gwent. Whilst in another group it was identified that the granting of planning permission on council owned land for

example could attract the developer and builders to the site.

The topography and ground conditions of sites can be constraints. The ground conditions can increase development costs. The LDP should seek to identify new viable and deliverable housing sites.

The sessions identified that empty properties are an issue, however one group identified that they were not a priority. Consideration was given to addressing empty properties through demolishing them or improving them through investments and grants. Property guardians were also identified as a strategy to reduce empty homes. Abertillery and Six Bells was identified as local areas where there were particular problems with empty properties and that regeneration was required in this area.

The quality of existing private housing stock particularly the private rental market was also identified as an issue that needs significant investment to bring them up to modern efficiency requirements and modern living requirements.

Can any be merged?
This challenge could be merged with challenge 4.

3.9   It is proposed to merge challenges 3 and 4. The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received to challenges 3 and 4:

Challenge 3: ~~Stabilising the~~ Ppopulation growth and improving housing offer The area has ~~been losing population since 1921~~ stabilised its population, although ~~as a result of~~ people are still leaving the area to find housing and employment elsewhere. One of the problems with net out migration is that it tends to be biased towards those more mobile and economically active. The challenge is to provide land for housing and provide the jobs to retain people in the area.

~~**Challenge 4: Meeting housing needs and improving housing** A high proportion of Blaenau Gwent's housing is pre 1919, with 20% of this being either unfit or being in need of substantial repair.~~ There is ~~also~~ a shortage ~~in terms~~ of flats, bungalows and detached properties to meet housing requirements. The quality of existing private housing stock is an issue in terms of modern living and efficiency requirements particularly in the rental sector. ~~More recently,~~ Aaffordability remains an issue. ~~has become an issue as house prices rose dramatically in 2006.~~ The challenges are to ensure new developments contain a mix of house types and tenure; ~~that social sector housing meets the Welsh Housing Quality Standard benefiting the environment~~; ~~reducing~~ managing the number of vacant properties; and improving the quality of the private housing stock.

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant
What are the new influences / issues?
It was reflected that a greater push on increasing skills in the technology sector through

apprenticeships is required. It was also reflected that there should be more opportunities in terms of vocational training as tradesmen always have work.

Schools need to be fit for purpose i.e. 21st century schools should ensure the right equipment and relevant tools are available for adapting skills for changing jobs.

There is no welsh language provision at secondary school level in the Blaenau Gwent area.

Does it need to be amended?
The challenge needs to be amended to delete the reference to the Children and Young People's Plan is out of date.

Another group identified that the focus of the challenge needs to concentrate more on skills rather than education attainment.

Can any be merged?
One group considered that the skills element of this challenge could be merged with challenge 1 (economic) and this challenge could focus on educational opportunities and infrastructure.

Other detailed considerations in relation to education and skills which were identified during the sessions and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below:
• A closer working relationship is required between education and regeneration
• Motivation through education is key for example ambassadors should go into education and speak of how they did it
• Schools should be community based and designed to enable resources to be shared with communities
• Allow planning permission for childcare provision in socio-economic deprived areas. It has been proven that high quality childcare interrupts the poverty cycle.

3.10   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 4 ~~5~~: Improving education attainment and skills A high proportion of adults have no qualifications and education attainment is generally low. Whilst education attainment has improved considerably, lately, more needs to be done in this area. People have limited and low skill levels to gain good quality jobs. The challenge is to ensure that skills and training match the economic growth sectors and the infrastructure is put in place ~~to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan requirements~~ so ~~and~~ that ~~these~~ facilities can be accessed by all.

Challenge 6: Improving Accessibility
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
Public transport remains a key issue that requires improvement especially in terms of frequency of services, and the length of services. The connections between train and bus

services are also not integrated. There is also limited space on train carriages therefore there is a need for more carriages on trains. It was also identified that there is a need to reinstate circular routes to Ebbw Vale / Brynmawr / Abertillery.

The new rail spur from Abertillery to Newport is vital and should be included in the new RLDP.

Improvements in the localised transport network are key to ensure that there are internal links within Blaenau Gwent for people to access employment areas.

An example of external links from Blaenau Gwent to the new Grange Hospital in Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran was cited as a bad example that needs improvement as it currently takes 4 or 5 bus changes from Blaenau Gwent to the hospital. This is considered unacceptable.

It was acknowledged that improvements to cycle routes have been completed, however there is a need to further improve cycle routes and footways. Consideration has to also be given to the active travel plan to ensure towns/ housing are linked to employment sites and green areas.

Provision of electric charging points in new developments should be required and existing businesses should be encouraged to provide these facilities.

Another point raised in one of the workshop sessions is that challenge 6 is the (or part) solution to deliver challenges 1-5, 7 and 9.

Can any be merged?

It was considered in several sessions that this challenge could be merged with challenge 8. It was suggested in another session that the challenges 6,7 and 8 should be merged.

3.11   The changes proposed to challenge 6 are shown after challenge 7.

Challenge 7: Creating a Network of Hubs

Is the challenge / issue still relevant?

On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant.

What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?

It was agreed across the sessions that Blaina should not be highlighted as a local hub as it is considered to be a village with very little in the way of services and shops.

There was a mixed response to whether Ebbw Vale should remain as the principal hub. It was seen by some stakeholders and members that Ebbw Vale should remain as the principal hub as it was the area where there were the most opportunities for growth. However, other stakeholders did not agree and considered that all hubs in the hierarchy need to be equal and well connected. This point was further emphasised in that it was considered that the language that is used in this challenge is key for example does the hierarchy make sense as each town could have its own specialism and it is inevitable that they are not going to be of equal size.

A further point raised related to improving links across the borough from east to west.
Can any be merged?
It was questioned by one participant if this challenge could be merged with challenge 8. Whilst another considered that it could be merged with challenge 2 or 6.

3.12   It is proposed to merge challenges 6 and 7. The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 5̶6̶: Creating a well-connected network of hubs ~~Improving accessibility~~ Being able to access services, jobs and markets is a key requirement for any area to be successful. Good links are required both inside and outside of Blaenau Gwent. The challenge is to help develop a transport network which improves connectivity within and outside of Blaenau Gwent. The dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road and improvements to the Ebbw Railway are key.

~~**Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs**~~ Blaenau Gwent is made up of a number of towns and villages but only a few are large enough to be self-sufficient in terms of comprising an adequate range and mix of services. As a consequence, it is vital that a network of hubs is created to provide the sustainable level of services for the area. This network of hubs is also a key part of delivering sustainable settlements where local and regional services can be easily accessed through sustainable modes of transport.

Challenge 8: Supporting Sustainable Transport
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
It is acknowledged that this challenge reflects the transport hierarchy. However, it is questioned why public transport is 3rd in the hierarchy.   Consideration needs to be given to the topography of the valleys as it can affect links / barriers to cross valley connections.   Persimmon Homes have started offering discounts to people who purchase their properties for purchasing bikes (from local stores) and on bus tickets to promote the use of other forms of transport.   The provision of electric charging points should be required through building regulations.   There are limited cycling and storage facilities therefore people are unlikely to cycle to work.
Can any be merged?
This challenge should be merged with challenge 6.
Other detailed considerations in relation to education and skills which were identified during the sessions and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below: • Safe routes to school

3.13   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 6 8: Supporting sustainable transport For those trips that do have to be made a much greater proportion will need to be by walking, cycling and public transport. This would also make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions and provide for those without access to a car. Blaenau Gwent has low car ownership and a poor evening and Sunday bus services. The challenge is to create an environment and transport network in which it becomes a more attractive choice to walk, cycle or travel by public transport.

Challenge 9: Promoting Health and Well-being for All
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant especially due to the Future of Generations and Well-being Act, in fact the emphasis has increased significantly.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
Improvements to sustainable travel and green infrastructure will affect health and well-being going forward and are key to this challenge. There has been a notable reduction in leisure services and local theatres within Blaenau Gwent. There is a need to retain them and provide more parks, like Bryn Bach park as these facilities are needed for people's well-being. A further issue is the management of these facilities. There is also a need to promote our natural environment for walking and cycling. It is acknowledged that low life expectancy can mean low income. The historic nature of the jobs in this area has affected health and there is correlation between better paid jobs and better standards of living. With regards to crime, in one of the workshop sessions it was identified that crime is an issue but it is not as bad as what is being portrayed on the boards. There are not enough police officers visible in the community and anti social behaviour is moving from one place to another around Blaenau Gwent. A multi-agency and common approach is required as there are significant variances within the wards. Feeling of sense of safety is important and key.
Can any be merged?
Across all of the workshop sessions, it was considered that the challenge should remain as a standalone challenge.

3.14   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 7 9: Promoting physical and mental health and well-being for all ~~Safeguarding Development~~ and renewal of settlements needs to take account of all aspects of the quality of life of those who live there, including safety, health and freedom from disturbance. In particular, Blaenau Gwent has low life expectancy and high numbers of people with limiting

long-term illness. Fear of crime is also a key issue for residents. The challenge is to provide the infrastructure and create environments that promote safety, health and a sense of well-being for all.

Challenge 10: Creating a Place which supports its green environment
Is the challenge / issue still relevant? On the whole it was considered that the challenge is still relevant.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended? The general view was that planning often constrains development and needs to be more proactive. The LDP was, however, recognised as a strategic document which should identify opportunities and provide a framework which facilitates the multiple benefits on the ground. It was identified that changes in legislation need to be reflected in the challenge. The Environment Act 2016 made it a duty for NRW to prepare Area Statements. It is unclear what the area statements will contain and will they set new priorities for the LDP to address. Some participants questioned the role of planning in that they wanted planning to go a lot further in delivering benefits. However it was recognised that it may be that all planning can do is "facilitate" positive actions from other actors/sectors and prevent unacceptable harm. It was recognised that the term ecosystem resilience should be included in the challenge. Planning should be enabling ecosystem resilience rather than protecting and enhancing natural assets. Other challenge rewording suggestions were made as follows: • Planning constraints • The LDP should identify opportunities • Health and well-being should be reflected in the challenge
Other detailed considerations which were identified during the sessions in relation to the natural environment and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below: • There were mixed views in relation to the number of environmental designations in Blaenau Gwent. There was concern from one workshop group that too much of the environment is protected such as Special Landscape Areas. It was questioned if everything is protected can it be considered special. On the other hand, a view from another workshop group was that the LDP should expand on the identified important areas to maximise connectivity. • It was questioned what the condition of protected areas are. Current measurements of area gained / lost is too blunt/simplistic. Are we measuring the right criteria to understand the condition of ecosystems? The Council's ecologist is working on a new approach/framework for measuring/monitoring ecosystem resilience. • A concern is getting action on the ground e.g. environmental enhancements - Questions over whether the LDP/Planning in general can directly address this. The LDP's role may

be more relevant at the strategic level.

3.15   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 8~~10~~: Creating a place which supports its green environment The setting of Blaenau Gwent, bordering the Brecon Beacons and the Vale of Usk, with its rugged mountains and its peaceful valleys, is a major asset which needs to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The natural environment with its variety of wildlife is valuable in its own right but can also contribute to the economic and social well-being of the area. Climate change is a threat to this. The challenge is to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems. ~~protect and enhance the natural assets both to support the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent and as features in their own right.~~

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
Is the challenge / issue still relevant? Predominantly across all of the sessions, the challenge was considered still relevant. However, one of the workshop groups did question whether Blaenau Gwent's sense of identity is significantly different from other towns/villages and whether it is a key challenge for the LDP to address. The group also questioned planning's role in Welsh language, especially given the provision of Welsh language in Blaenau Gwent is limited. However, participants were reluctant to remove the reference to the welsh language.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended? The challenge needs to be strengthened to bring it in line with recent legislation such as The Historic Environment Act which was introduced in 2016. Consideration needs to be given to the opportunity to use Valleys Regional Park in promoting historical assets and cultural identity.
Can any be merged? Across all of the workshop sessions, it was considered that the challenge should remain as a standalone challenge.
Other detailed considerations which were identified during the sessions in relation to the historic environment and will be taken into account as the RLDP process progresses are summarised below: • The LDP should consider and facilitate how we best use tradition and history. It remains important that we retain key elements of the past. It is also important that new uses are found for heritage assets and a balance is found between facilitating new development while preserving key features. • Consideration should be given for the potential for Supplementary Planning Guidance regarding archaeology and history and the identification of special heritage areas. • Brownfield site development from a former activity where there is potential for archaeological remains. Early consultation for mitigation is required. • The renewal of disused historic ponds / lagoons / water systems would benefit the

historic environment in terms of nature, water and air quality, walks and schools.
- The County Borough is an arbitrary creation and doesn't reflect the history and culture of individual town/villages which are often formed around local industries. It may be that certain towns/villages in the County Borough have a stronger sense of historical / cultural identity than others and a more focussed approach is required.

3.16   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenge based on the comments received:

Challenge 9 ~~11~~: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity Blaenau Gwent has a distinctive location, history and townscape and this is a further potential key to the area's transformation. This will mean bequeathing to future generations the best of the legacy of the past, including the heritage as an iron, coal and steel producer, the links with the Chartist movement and the birthplace of Aneurin Bevan. The challenge is to protect, conserve and enhance the best of the buildings and townscape.

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 Wales ~~the Country~~, the ~~Council~~ challenge is ~~keen~~ to ensure that the spatial planning system protects and enhances Welsh culture and language where possible.

Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?   Recent changes in legislation drives an increased consideration of this challenge and therefore it remains relevant but it was considered by several workshop groups to be very broad covering a range of issues.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?   The prominence of the circular economy in PPW10 needs to be highlighted and referenced in the challenge.   The issues of air, water, land contamination and noise are important and need to be reflected in the challenge. Technical Advice Note 11 is being updated and changes will need to be reflected in the LDP.   The workshop group recognised the need to think long term and provide sufficient primary aggregate. However long term thinking is difficult in relation to quarry developments as it would require longer than a 15 year LDP. In accordance with PPW10, developers should aim for biodiversity gain when considering new quarry developments. It was also identified by another group that long term mineral plans need to be combined with woodland plans. Therefore it was felt that this challenge needs to link with challenge 10 (creating a place which supports its green environment) – not separating nature conservation and resource extraction.   There is an opportunity to reduce energy demand and promote energy conservation and efficiency measures through the LDP.

The challenge needs to take out the reference to 'legacy' as this has been remedied.
Can any be merged?
Several of the workshop group sessions considered that the challenge was too broad and covered a range of issues therefore it was questioned if there was scope to split the challenge.

3.17   The following shows the tracked change issues / challenges based on the comments received. It is proposed to split the challenge into two.

Challenge 10~~2~~: Sustainable use of natural resources Responsible use of the area's physical resources is a key part of a better future. ~~Air and water pollution, noise, land contamination and dereliction have long blighted the area and affected people's health and well-being and this is a legacy which needs to be remedied. Climate change means that the areas subject to the risk of flooding are growing. The amount of waste going to landfill~~ is significant and ~~needs to be reduced.~~ The exploitation of minerals needs to be limited. The challenge is to promote the circular economy by reducing waste generation and maximising reuse and recycling, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the provision of an adequate supply of minerals. ~~help ensure that the physical environment is safe and healthy; that land is used efficiently; waste is minimised, recycled and processed sustainably; and the re-use or recycling of construction and demolition material and industrial wastes serves not only to reduce the amount of waste produced but also to conserve scarce resources and minimise environmental damage.~~

Challenge 11~~2~~: Environmental Quality ~~Sustainable use of natural resources~~ ~~Responsible use of the area's physical resources is a key part of a better future.~~ Air and water pollution, noise, land contamination and dereliction have long blighted the area and affected people's health and well-being and whilst this has improved in reality there is still room for improvement. ~~this is a legacy which needs to be remedied~~. Climate change means that the areas subject to the risk of flooding are growing. ~~The amount of waste going to landfill is significant and needs to be reduced. The exploitation of minerals needs to be limited.~~ The challenge is to help ensure that the physical environment is safe and healthy; that land is used efficiently.~~; waste is minimised, recycled and processed sustainably; and the re-use or recycling of construction and demolition material and industrial wastes serves not only to reduce the amount of waste produced but also to conserve scarce resources and minimise environmental damage.~~

Challenge 13: Sustainable design and development
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
Across all of the sessions, the challenge was considered still relevant.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
Planning Policy Wales 10 places significant emphasis on renewable energy and setting targets. It was raised in several sessions that Blaenau Gwent should strive for higher standards and set targets. An example of work being undertaken by the Council is the preparation of an energy prospectus which focusses on generating electricity in the County

Borough's public buildings. Other areas being explored are ground source heat pumps, combined energy centres and hydro power on residential and industrial areas. Retrofitting of solar panels on buildings was also broadly supported, particularly on industrial buildings

However, in a different workshop session, it was questioned whether off shore wind turbines could provide all energy and therefore this would remove the requirement for standalone renewable energy development on land. Concerns about the environmental and amenity of solar panel farms and wind turbines were also raised.

The Plan should promote and support other forms of recycling facilities. There is likely to be an increase in the recycling targets for this year, however Blaenau Gwent will be behind the 64% target.

There is an opportunity for development of 5g infrastructure, however there could be an impact on nature particularly birds.

It was also felt in one workshop session that a balance needs to be struck between improving sustainable design standards and ensuring that developments remain viable.

Can any be merged?
Across all of the workshop sessions, it was considered that the challenge should remain as a standalone challenge.

3.18   The following shows the tracked change issue / challenges based on the comments received:

Challenge 1~~2~~3: Sustainable ~~Dd~~design and ~~Development~~ the provision of renewable energy
Blaenau Gwent has the potential to generate much more of its own energy by sustainable means that reduce carbon emissions. The design and layout of buildings could contribute to a reduction in the consumption of energy and emission of greenhouse gases. Meanwhile, some change in climate is certain to occur and it will be necessary to adapt to this in the future development of the area. The challenge is to help, through the development process, to achieve the potential for reducing greenhouse gases and impacts of climate change.

Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration
Is the challenge / issue still relevant?
This challenge reflected the opportunities at the former Tin Plates Works in Ebbw Vale (known as The Works) and the northern corridor in Ebbw Vale. The challenge was to ensure that the benefits of regenerating these sites are spread across Blaenau Gwent. The challenge was still considered relevant due to limited development taking place at these sites.
What are the new influences / issues? Does it need to be amended?
The challenge needs to reflect the opportunities that the Circuit of Wales could potentially provide.

It was acknowledged across most of the workshop sessions that Ebbw Vale has the largest |

amount of available land and the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone makes it the main industrial focus. Therefore it should remain as the principal hub. However this should not be the case in terms of retail, Blaenau Gwent should be an all-inclusive retail hub.

Another workshop session also identified that the Heads of the Valleys road is the artery of the valleys and questioned whether growth should be focussed in this area.

It was also highlighted in one of the workshop sessions that key assets such as train stations, services and shops need to be reflected when developing the strategy for development.

Can any be merged?

It was suggested by one participant at the stakeholder workshop session that challenge 14 should be merged and subsumed within challenges 1, 2, 4 and 7.

3.19   No changes have been made to challenge 14 as the challenge is more strategic in nature and it is considered more appropriate for this challenge to be looked at after the Spatial Strategy Options Workshop which is to be held in July 2019.

3.20   Across all of the workshop sessions, no additional challenges were identified.

4.0   Task 2: Identify where we want to be by 2033 – The Vision

4.1   The aim of task 2 was to identify where we want to be by 2033 taking into account the issues identified in task 1.

4.2   Attendees were asked to judge if the current LDP vision (see below) was fit for purpose or if it needed to be amended. If it needed amending what needed to change and how should it be changed. A sheet containing other relevant visions such as that of the National Development Framework, the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan were provided to aid discussion.

Current LDP Vision

> *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.*

Summary of Workshop Comments from Task 2

4.3   The following section summarises all comments received across all of the sessions. A summary of individual group discussions are set out in Appendix 1.

Is the current LDP vision fit for purpose or does it need to be amended?

There were mixed views across the workshop events as to whether the current LDP vision is fit for purpose, as set out below:

- Several workshop groups identified that the Vision remains relevant. However one workshop group questioned how the vision will be delivered and considered that the objectives are important. Another workshop group described the current vision as very aspirational and that the vision needs to be realistic.
- Another issue raised was that the vision was generic and isn't localised to Blaenau Gwent. The vision should say more about Blaenau Gwent and its assets.
- Several workshop groups identified that the current Vision lacks an economic growth focus which should be at the forefront of the vision. The vision should also embrace the evolution of technology and cover the provision of jobs and seek the development of skills.
- Several workshop groups stated that the Vision should give greater consideration to low carbon and technology and the use of more natural resources.
- A number of workshop groups also reflected that connectivity / accessibility need to be included in the Vison

If it needs to be amended what needs changing and how should it be changed?

Suggestions of how the vision can be improved were also highlighted:

- The vision should be a short statement that is less wordy and is easier to read and understand and to the point
- The vision should have shorter sentences with more punctuation
- The vision should be split with bullet points
- The vision should set specific goals and aims
- When redrafting the vision, it was suggested to look at the National Development Framework wording and the well-being objectives
- The reference to the town centres as being thriving should be replaced with 'thriving communities'
- The Vision should look to maximise opportunities particularly from the Cardiff Region City Deal
- The vision is about the future and therefore it is not always necessary to include the historical context
- The vision should not be just about achieving a range of good quality affordable homes because people aspire for better than affordable
- The importance of tourism should be reflected

4.4 The following shows a tracked change version of the vision taking into account the comments received. The revised Vision, without tracked changes is set out in Appendix 8.

*Through collaborative working, by 203321, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of connected sustainable, vibrant valley communities that support the **well**-**being** of current and future generations with:*

- Residents living in safe, healthy communities, in a range of good quality homes and having better access to services

- *A prosperous ecoomy 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 distinctive natural ~~unique~~ environment, cultural and historic identity is ~~will be~~ protected and enhanced ~~to~~ creating~~e~~ a place where people want to live, work and visit.*

5.0   Children's Grand Council

5.1   To engage with the children of Blaenau Gwent, the planning policy team attended a Children's Grand Council on Wednesday 19th June 2019. A Children's Grand Council is set up in Blaenau Gwent to enable pupils of primary school age to have their say on issues that affect them.

5.2   The team run a 45 minute session as part of a wider agenda. The session was about Planning for the Future – What will it look like? Lynda Healy gave a short presentation showing photos and sharing facts of how things have changed since the 1970's (when Lynda Healy was in primary school) compared to the present day in terms of live, work, play and getting about. Appendix 9 contains the slides. The children were given the task of what will the future look like in the next 20 years and asked to pick a topic (live, work, play or getting about) and either draw or write a few lines about what it will be like. Some prompts were provided for example will you live in Blaenau Gwent? What type of house will you live in? What type of work will there be? Where will children play?

Summary of Comments

<table><tr><td>

Live
- There will be more people living in care homes
- More people will be growing their own food
- There will be an increase in energy efficient homes
- More houses will be built on stilts and there will be an increase in tower blocks
- There will be an increase in the use of solar panels on homes

Work
- Robots will take over jobs
- There will be a greater reliance on technology

Play
- There will be an increase in walking paths

Getting About
- There will be significantly more electric cars, increased use of trains, use of electric scooters and bikes and hoverboards
- Autonomous vehicles will be used more

Environment
- Increased recycling
- Cleaner environment
- More trees and plants
- Less use of plastic
- Pollution is a problem

</td></tr></table>

6.0 Summary of Key Issues /Challenges Identified and Changes Required to the Vision

6.1 Taking into account all of the comments received at the different workshop sessions, key issues / challenges for the replacement LDP to address can be identified, as follows:

- Greater focus on economic growth rather than economic diversification;
- Town centres and their future role – taking a more flexible policy approach;
- Connectivity within and outside of Blaenau Gwent;
- Support for improved sustainable transport in the form of electric charging points, and improved public transport; and
- Improved housing offer in terms of aspirational homes and range particularly in terms of the ageing population.

6.2 With regards to the Vision and taking into account the comments received across the different workshop sessions it was generally considered that the Vision was fit for purpose. A summary of the improvements suggested were made as follows:

- The current Vision lacks an economic growth focus
- Connectivity and accessibility needs to be included
- Greater consideration to low carbon and technology and use of sustainable resources is required
- Town centres are not thriving therefore the vision needs to refer to thriving communities
- The vision should be more than just about affordable homes
- The vision should be changed to read better and consideration should be given to shorter sentences, bullet points and punctuation

7.0   What's Next?

7.1   The workshop sessions were considered extremely useful to identify the issues/ challenges for the LDP to address and to improve the current vision to identify where we want to be by 2033. The next step is to prepare spatial options that will assist in addressing these issues and meeting the vision. Engagement of the growth and spatial options will take place in early July. The views / comments received at this stage will be taken into account as the Council determines the preferred strategy for the LDP, which will formally be consulted on in November 2019.

Appendices

Challenge 1: Economic diversification
- Economic growth sectors should also focus on IT and cyber sectors
- Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone should be reflected

Challenge 2: New role for town centres
- Ebbw Vale is the main town centre due to demographics
- Disagree with Blaina as a local town centre
- Our consumer behaviour has changed – town centres are an issue everywhere not just for Blaenau Gwent
- A future offer for the town centres should be around being a 'front line service' Leisure should also be a future role
- Questioned the current policy approach of the primary retail areas
- Questioned whether the town centre boundaries should be contracted
- The current town centre roles haven't made a difference – they need to be relooked at
- Grants to refurbish vacant properties and loans to complement match funding are now available

Challenge 3: Stabilising the population
- The LDP strategy should be about stabilising the population with moderate / modest growth
- Retain skilled working age population and encourage in-migration of skilled / working age population – 'Bristol Effect'
- Deliverability of sites is key

Challenge 4: Meeting Housing and improving housing
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) has been met
- Need to encourage diversification of building types and housebuilders
- HMOs are becoming more popular but have their problems
- There are 800 empty houses, however are these derelict or currently being advertised for purchase / rent?
- Offer an alternative housing offer that is innovative, self-build and small medium enterprises
- Private rental quality vs perception of affordable housing
- Potential oversupply of private rented (higher cost)

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills
- Removal of reference to Children and young people's plan
- Loss of sixth forms in school – are as many young people doing A levels?

Challenge 6: Improving accessibility
- Connectivity within the County Borough between hubs and between employment areas is key

- Where are the active travel routes / cycle routes?
- Opportunities for mini buses / taxis to replace tradition bus services
- Similarity between challenges 6 and 8
- The Metro will increase train services of 2-4 trains per hour

Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs
- Consider the removal of Blaina
- Accessibility and connections are key
- Inevitable that the hubs are not going to be equal size

Challenge 8: Supporting Sustainable Transport
- Provision of electric charging points

Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
- Green infrastructure is key
- The review of Aneurin Leisure's provision is key
- Loss of leisure land
- Resource driven – good at putting things in but not maintaining it
- Efficiency of the play areas needs to be looked at

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
- Support for the conversion of historic buildings into tourism
- Demand is building for welsh education
- Nursery welsh provision is full

Challenge 12: Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- Maintaining a low carbon footprint is the challenge
- Accommodate other forms of recycling facilities – promote and support through the LDP
- There will be an increase in the waste target this year but Blaenau Gwent will be behind the 64% target
- 5g infrastructure – mapping impact on nature – birds

Challenge 13: Sustainable deign and placemaking
- Energy prospectus currently underway
- ReFIT project underway

Vision
- The vision should be more aspirational and less wordy
- Should be about thriving communities and not thriving town centres
- Well connected infrastructure should be included in the wording
- Embrace opportunity of technology evolution
- The vision is inward looking and not outward looking
- Doesn't refer to low carbon and technology
- The vision should be more concise

Appendix 1: Comments Received across All of the Workshop Sessions

- The opportunities that are coming forward in the next 18 months – could massively affect the LDP
- Look at the wording of the NDF and Blaenau Gwent Well-being objectives
- The vision should be less explicit

Challenge 1: Economic Diversification

The challenge is relevant

- Questionable if economic diversification is still what the challenge should be about? The challenge should focus more on economic growth
- People moving into the area due to recent changes such as the removal of the tolls at the Severn Bridge
- Is the label of Tech Valleys the right label?
- Enterprise Zones should be covered
- A growth sector should be around technology and not just limited to manufacturing. By 2033 there will be a significant increase in automation processes.
- Assess the current stock of employment buildings – plenty of empty factories
- Blaenau Gwent fails to attract the big quality employers
- Concern for service industries – losing jobs due to automation systems and the use of technology
- Look at the policy restrictions within the employment hierarchy. Retail uses are being allowed on industrial estates which is impacting on town centres.
- Balance between living and working in the borough
- Balance between housing growth with economic growth – not have unsustainable patterns of travel.
- We need to be working closer with Tai Calon

Challenge 2: New role for town centres

The challenge is still relevant

- What is the town centre? What uses have grown?
- The town centres should be about more than just retail. We should be looking at other uses such as businesses/office/residential that create footfall.
- People have to want to go to a town centre
- Mobile banks are a problem in terms of their location for example the mobile bank in Abertillery parks at the car park at the top of town. People drive to it and then don't spend money in the town.
- In terms of the retail hierarchy, Members are not going to accept Brynmawr "playing second fiddle to Ebbw Vale". Ebbw Vale as a principal town is a dis-service to the other towns. Brynmawr is more successful and has witnessed more growth.
- The 4 towns (Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar) should be looked at and worked on
- Tourism should be pushed more – it is not creating footfall
- There is a Task and Finish Group for town centres – LDP to feed into this. This group should be linked to the destination management group
- Abertillery and Ebbw Vale have received significant funding – the money has not been spent well
- Pedestrianisation in the town centres does not work
- HMOs – certain types cause anti-social problems

Challenge 3: Stabilising the Population and Challenge: Meeting Housing Needs
- Brecon Beacons National Park have the same sort of problems as Blaenau Gwent in terms of demographic changes
- The decline in the working age population is definitely an issue and goes hand in hand with employment opportunities
- Building aspirational houses to make people come and stay
- The LDP will fail if we don't have the infrastructure
- Granting planning permission on the land for example on Nantyglo School Site to get the developers / builders in
- Shouldn't just be focussing on national builders – looking at medium size builders
- The quality of Davies Homes builders is good
- In terms of housing needs, there is a waiting list in the borough. More now than ever, there is need for bungalows particularly for older people

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills
This is definitely still an issue
- Closer working relationship is required between education and regeneration
- Greater push on increasing skills in the technology sector - apprenticeships

Challenge 6: Improving accessibility
- The rail spur to Newport is vital and should be included
- Working with Transport for Wales is key
- Links from Blaenau Gwent to the new Grange hospital in Cwmbran is very poor – 4 or 5 bus changes are required from Blaenau Gwent to the hospital – this is not acceptable
- Localised transport network is key to ensure there are internal links within Blaenau Gwent for people to access employment areas

Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs
- Industrial estates should be identified

Challenge 8: Supporting sustainable transport
- Walking and cycling are at the top of the transport hierarchy with public transport being 3rd. Given the topography of the valleys, public transport should be given greater priority. Walking and cycling are leisure activities.
- There are no bus services after 5 in Abertillery
- Electric bikes
- Electric charging points

Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
- The challenge is relevant

Challenge 10: Creating a place with supports the green environment
- Tir Pentwys Tip – 0% aggregate from here. There are 14 dragonflys on site which should make it a SSSI

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
- There is a museum in every town – this is not reflected and is missing
- Don't have the bilingual attitude
- Culture is a significant issue in PPW10

Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration
- Ebbw Vale has the largest amount of available land
- Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone - main industrial focus
- Make Blaenau Gwent an all-inclusive retail hub

Vision
- Break vision down, make it concise and shorter
- Cardiff Region City Deal – got to target Blaenau Gwent
- Talk about our position in the City Region
- Aspire to be better for example we don't just want affordable homes
- Importance of Tourism

Appendix 1: Comments Received across All of the Workshop Sessions

Challenge 1: Economic diversification
- Heighten aspirations
- More forward thinking – for example in terms of the types of houses we build – not just terraced, better housing
- White collar workers have greater aspirations
- Focus on the Heads of the Valleys
- Enterprise Zone hasn't delivered – need to maximise opportunities
- Some industrial units are not fit for purpose. We need to question why
- Energy an issue on Rassau Industrial Estate
- Circuit of Wales should be included
- Certain parts of Blaenau Gwent are dormitory

Challenge 2: New roles for town centres
- Build on uniqueness of towns
- National downfall mostly due to online shopping
- Hierarchy won't work
- Bottom up redevelopment of town centres
- All of the town centres are too large and the boundaries need to be contracted
- The Tredegar Heritage Initiative is very strong. Build on heritage in the towns.
- Link towns together – physically and emotionally, connectivity isn't just about transport
- Got to have things in the town centres to draw people in
- The town centres can't get the basics for example no shoe shops in Tredegar
- Scales are tipping towards too much food particularly in Ebbw Vale
- Loss of banks and businesses taking the footfall away
- Bedwellty House and Park are not advertised
- Town centres are fighting against each other and have been for too long
- Free wifi within the town centres

Challenge 3: Stabilising the population
- Population is an issue
- Removal of tolls on Severn Bridge – ripple effect of this
- Selling the beauty of the Valleys
- All other challenges link to population challenge

Challenge 4: Meeting housing needs and improving housing
- Where we build and the type of houses we build are key
- One bedroom houses and bungalows are needed
- Encourage medium sized builders to build locally
- We have a higher number of RSLs in Blaenau Gwent
- The quality of private sector housing is still an issue
- HMOs is an issue – can we control how many? Associated perceptions – well management is required

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills

Improvement but…

- Massive lack of training opportunities post 16
- More about skills rather than education attainment
- Shared apprenticeship is working
- Skills in response to changing industries and needs
- Schools looking at alternative curriculum
- Talk to schools and trainers about what skills are needed

Challenges 6: (Improving accessibility), 7 (Creating a network of hubs) and 8 (Supporting sustainable transport)

- Link across the borough from east to west
- Agreed to merge the challenges

Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all

- Clear direction with Police
- Figures on crime doesn't reflect what police are saying
- Partnership working has broken down
- Sense of safety is important and key
- Crime is an issue but not as bad as what we are portraying

Challenge 10: Creating a place which supports the green environment

- Doing well in this area – we need to grow it further

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity

- Listed buildings – many can cause problems
- The local list is welcomed
- Protect the buildings unless we enforce
- Partnership working together

Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources

- Low car ownership – be interesting to compare age against car ownership

Challenge 13: Sustainable design and development

- Energy prospectus – generate electricity in County Borough's public buildings
- Ground source heat pumps – Ebbw Vale
- Combined energy centres and hydro power on residential / industrial areas – look at everything

Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration

- Need to look at all projects – Heads of the Valleys road is the artery of the valleys

Table 1

Challenge 3: Stabilising the Population
- Losing the 16-64 demographic will impact on the economy and the need for job creation locally
- A465 Heads of the Valleys dualling may attract people
- Stabilising population levels is affected by economic as well as housing factors and strategies
- What is the role of Blaenau Gwent? Is it a commuter area? Tourist destination?
- Look at neighbouring authorities successes i.e. Merthyr Tydfil attracting major retail and leisure uses
- Build good quality houses that attract people to the area
- Tourism – attract people to the area by providing facilities i.e. hotels, links to national park and advertise to the wider area
- Provide good schools and public services
- Look to stimulate growth in Blaenau Gwent focussing on core demographic of 16-64

Challenge 4: Meeting Housing Needs and Improving Housing
- Potential to deallocate (remove / not count the sites in the housing requirement figures)
- Identify new viable and deliverable housing sites
- Developers have not been coming to the area but the interest is picking up slowly
- The housing market is complex – look to big companies and support self build sites
- Mixed size of sites to be supported, less affected by market forces
- Improve social / private landlord stock
- Address vacant properties – demolish / improve by investment / grant
- Abertillery / Six Bells – 'old stock' properties with poor infrastructure / parking problems. Reuse existing properties /regeneration required in this area.
- Bridgend developer looking to invest in the area– Waterstone Homes?
- Viability – demand for 4 bed homes but developers 'forced' to provide mixed developments
- Severn bridge toll removal – opportunity to attract commuters or for those that are forced out of the market
- Plan to reflect local needs
- Existing private housing stock needs significant investment to bring it up to modern efficiency requirements and modern living requirements

Challenge 6: Improving Accessibility & Challenge 8: Sustainable Transport
These challenges have previously been considered together and it was agreed that these challenges should now be merged
- Provide new rail spur to Abertillery and train station
- Reap rewards of infrastructure improvements already completed
- Improve cycle/footways/public transport

- Active Travel Plan – ensure towns/housing are linked to employment sites /green areas
- Topography of the valley town affects links/barriers to cross valley connections
- Public transport links within the borough need to be improved. Reinstate circular routes to Ebbw Vale / Brynmawr / Abertillery
- Working from home more popular – people likely to stay in area
- Provide electric charging points on new developments / existing businesses encouraged to provide facilities

Challenge 9: Promoting Health and Well-being for All
- Low life expectancy can mean low income
- Historic 'dirty jobs' in the area affected health
- Better paid jobs linked to better levels of living
- Improve facilities relating to health service provision
- Improvements and sustainable travel and green infrastructure will affect health and well-being going forward
- Provide more parks in Ebbw Vale? Like Bryn Bach Park
- Playing fields / parks have been lost - look to replace
- Public service boards should be consulted
- Should we be discouraging takeaways / unhealthy food choices

Vision
- Lack of provision for jobs – encourages skills, but need to move away to access employment
- Set specific goals / aims
- Shorter vision statement – easy to read / understand / to the point
- Vision needs to start with economic / employment
- Flip incentives on head – attract big employers then target skills to fulfil those specific jobs

General discussion
- Education – is there opportunity for post 18 courses, student accommodation, attract students
- New developments, like shopping only providing low paid jobs
- Circuit of Wales development could attract jobs, new skills
- Enterprise Zone – provide new jobs / new businesses / hubs
- Welsh Government funding - £100 million over 10 years
- Improve communications to the public of new developments / funding opportunities
- Identify new roles for our town centres
- Important for people to spend locally
- New food and leisure provisions are required in the borough and opportunities to utilise existing buildings and facilities should be explored
- Ensure there are flexible policies to encourage facilitate development

Table 2

Challenge 3: Stabilising the Population
The challenge is still relevant. BG population is declining.
- No work – e.g. professional jobs- there is nothing to aspire to
- Loss of primary industries
- Delineating town - Dormitory towns - where population just returns home to sleep

What are the new influences / issues in this area?
Influences
- Cheap housing
- Services locally are of the same quality e.g. schools
- Network – need to draw on a network of services already in the community
- Need for a draw to remain in Blaenau Gwent
- Futureproof area for all ages
- Investment of Metro Cardiff Capital Region
- Work link units near Metro hubs
- Travel links need to be enhanced
- Active travel links
- Heads of the Valleys dualling – change to speed limits?
- Improved access by road
- If there are a lot of first time buyers from outside Blaenau Gwent - house prices will increase

Issues
- Different household sizes and houses that meet aspirations required e.g. garden / size of property
- Encourage more new residential development in Blaenau Gwent
- Improve connectivity
- Parking and infrastructure

Challenge 4: Meeting Housing Needs and Improving Housing
The challenge is still relevant.

What are the new influences/issues in this area?
- Planning system is not helpful to bringing forward new development in Blaenau Gwent
- Developing homes – linked to a lifestyle – eg bungalows/passivhaus/energy efficient homes/future proofing new developments
- Making it more attractive for people to move into the borough
- New carbon neutral homes of mixed tenure – SME to encourage them to build in the area
- Social Housing – viability – rent policy – rent is affordable – rent needs to be affordable and developments need to be affordable to build – eg viability model
- Land availability in Blaenau Gwent suitable for development
- More capital grant funding for social housing

- Increase viability of house building (at present 60 year business plan)
- Landowners believe that their land is worth more than it is – making it difficult to develop
- Abnormal costs – costs of putting ground into a stable position before building starts
- Planning department in Blaenau Gwent – not helpful. This does not just relate to residential development but also a day care facility. There is a need to be clear about the difference between an officer recommendation and councillor decisions
- Grant funding from different sources
- Empty properties are a challenge but not a priority
- People's expectation does need to be managed through education – maybe we are not able to build the home that will meet all of people's needs – maybe other options do need to be explored
- The right housing is needed to meet people's needs
- Property guardians to reduce empty homes –https://www.propertyguardians.com/

Challenge 6: Improving Accessibility
Challenge remains relevant
- North / South rail connections are good but east to west connectivity is difficult
- Homes are built on very steep streets with steps – so if you are a wheelchair user or reduced mobility it makes it very difficult to access your home safely – making you a prisoner in your own home
- Challenges of public transport – a short journey in the car takes 1.45 minutes in the bus
- More trains
- Cardiff Capital Region – metro region – how can we ensure that all of the services are linked together

Challenge 8: Sustainable Transport
The challenge remains relevant.
- The transport system requires significant improvement to meet the needs of the demographic
- Downward cycle of losing bus routes. It was question how to respond to the challenge in the community? Examples were provided: social media – car pooling website /app; sharing cars; and mini vans instead of buses
- Active travel – challenges with geographical, weather, infrastructure, use of sustainable systems – electric cars, use of tunnels
- Carbon neutral
- Boris Bikes – same as they have in London bikes you can hire – to get around your local area
- If you live in Tredegar – easier to use Bargoed or Rhymney lines to get the train

Challenge 9: Promoting Health and Well-being for All
The challenge remains relevant.
- Valleys regional park
- Gateway community – rehab / well-being
- Safeguarding our open / green spaces – open spaces are being used by off road bikers
- Community safety issues

- Stewards / rangers / 'mounty's' on horses looking after green open spaces
- Property guardians

Vision
- The Vision remains relevant but how will it to be delivered i.e. the objectives are important
- Cradle to grave approach

General Discussion
- Links to schools / outdoor space / link to nature
- Invest in education - 0-5 years provision
- Town centres are not thriving, transport links have been adapted to avoid them
- Establish a future role of town centres – gyms, business rates too high, social hubs - should we look towards Merthyr Tydfil as an example?
- Hub / spoke approach for Blaenau Gwent?
- Maximise opportunities through positioning ourselves as an area
- Maximise opportunities around the environment – less than 10 minutes to Brecon Beacons? Bike park? Mountain biking? Outdoor pursuits? Valleys Regional Park – gateway centre? Bryn Bach Park –into Brecon Beacons?
- Opportunities for accommodation
- Lack of a night time economy in the area
- Positive attitude – more flexibility if one can demonstrate in the interests of the wider community
- Cultural and historical identity was here prior to the mining heritage – need to recognise all of our history – falconry
- Future focussed – historical context is not always necessary
- Recognise change is needed to improve and adapt

Table 3

Challenge 3: Stabilising the population
- Analyse who is staying and why – can younger people afford to live in cities
- Households projections falling – if relied on figures then more housing may not be needed
- Hidden households – increase in household numbers in a property as people can't move on
- Housing affordability
- Ageing population – bungalows, adapted bungalows
- Lack of one bedroom properties
- Government policies e.g. welfare reform has had an impact
- More jobs are required
- Transport and sustainable economic footprint of housing – spend in local economy
- Can't base everything on population projections
- Technology is changing so fast – who knows what it will look like in 5 year time
- Need more local attractions, tourism accommodation
- Lots of assets for tourism in Blaenau Gwent
- Removal of tolls at Severn Bridge – need to look at as an opportunity
- Need to make the most of our natural area – need investment in it
- Need to make land available in Blaenau Gwent to build – concerns with planning regulations

Challenge 4: Meeting Housing Needs and Improving Housing
- People's aspirations in Blaenau Gwent is that they want to move into more modern accommodation
- Affordability is an issue
- Topography of the land is a constraint
- Revenue for developers – lower house prices
- Ground conditions of the land can increase development costs
- Planning obligations system for developers to be reconsidered – could be reduced
- More one bed properties
- Ageing population means there is a requirement for bungalows and adapted properties

Challenge 6: Improving Accessibility
- The trains are limited for example can't get to Newport
- Public transport links to train stations are poor and timetables don't link
- Limited space on train carriages therefore there is a need for more carriages
- Times of trains are also limited – need to be more frequent and available for longer times
- Need improved bus links and timetables
- Heads of Valley roads delays are extreme and can then cause problems when making bus connections as buses won't wait

There is potential to link challenges 6 and 8

Challenge 8: Supporting Sustainable Transport
- Electric cars – charging sockets should be required through building regulations
- Better integrated public transport
- Persimmon Homes have started offering discounts to people who purchase their properties for purchasing bikes (from local stores) and on bus tickets to promote the use of other forms of transport
- If cycling to work then no showers facilities or facilities to store the bikes
- Safe routes to school – parking dangers (discourage people from driving where they can)

Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
- Safe routes to school will encourage walking and cycling and increase health and social well-being
- Reduction in leisure services and local theatres. The Council is closing them – these are needed for people's well-being
- Need to promote our natural environments – walking, cycling
- Need to look at matters that improve both mental and physical health
- Crime – police officers not being seen, not enough police officers visible in the community
- Closure of police stations
- Education and opportunities for children and young people – reduce anti-social behaviour and crime (look at project in Ely, Cardiff)
- Multi agency approach is required in dealing with crime
- New housing brings in more council tax revenue
- Consider food banks, fuel poverty, period poverty
- Need more jobs with good salaries not just living wage or zero hours contract
- Digital connections

Vision
- Celebrate history and local stories
- The current vision is very aspirational
- The vision needs to take into account lack of European funding
- The vision is generic doesn't say about Blaenau Gwent and its assets – needs to be unique to Blaenau Gwent
- The vision needs to be more vibrant and thriving for young people
- It should encourage creative people into the area – this can regenerate the area
- The future of town centres is important. Town centres are in decline due to the impact of online shopping for example banks are closing. The same shops on the High Street e.g. hairdressers. The question is how can we support / change town centres? Could be meeting spaces? If town centres close then utilise the space better e.g. leisure facilities, playgrounds, youth clubs
- Consideration of eco home and use more natural resources
- Be realistic with the vision needs to be more localised
- Think outside the box

Improved communication between the councillors and the public is needed. Mixed workshops could have been good with Councillors – can this be done at the next stage?

Table 4

Challenge 10: Creating a place which supports its green environment
The challenge is still relevant.

Blaenau Gwent has Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Special Landscape Areas

- "Area designation doesn't mean protection". Concern that we are trying to protect too much of the environment, such as SLAs. If everything is protected can it be considered special?
- What's the condition of protected areas? Current measurements of area gained/lost is too blunt/simplistic. Are we measuring the right criteria to understand the condition of ecosystems? The Council's ecologist is working on a new approach/framework for measuring/monitoring ecosystem resilience.
- Waiting for area statements from NRW and SoNar Report No. 2 - What will area statements contain and will they set new priorities for the LDP to address?
- What is the role of planning? Priorities and challenges, bringing together multiple benefits

Some participants wanted planning to go a lot further in delivering benefits, but it may be that all planning can do is "facilitate" positive actions from other actors/sectors and prevent unacceptable harm.

Ecosystem Resilience
- Diversity
- Extent
- Condition
- Connectivity
- Adaptability

Will the planning system lead to this? (Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) and local authority priorities)

- A concern is getting action on the ground e.g. environmental enhancements - Questions over whether the LDP/Planning in general can directly address this. The LDP's role may be more relevant at the strategic level.

Should the term 'ecosystem resilience' be in the challenge. Maybe planning should be enabling "Ecosystem resilience" rather than "protecting and enhancing natural assets".

The challenge needs rewording to reflect the following
Planning constraints
The LDP should **identify opportunities**

The general view was that planning often constrains development and needs to be more proactive. The LDP was, however, recognised as a strategic document which should identify opportunities and provide a framework which facilitates the multiple benefits on the ground.

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity

- Questionable whether Blaenau Gwent's sense of identity is significantly different from other towns/villages and whether it is really a key challenge for the LDP to address
- Opportunity to use Valleys Regional Park in promoting historical assets and cultural identity
- The LDP should consider and facilitate how we best use tradition and history?
- Important that new uses are found for heritage assets and a balance is found between facilitating new development while preserving key features
- Planning should help create a feeling of sense of place and home
- Remains important that we retain key elements of the past
- County Borough is an arbitrary creation and doesn't reflect the history and culture of individual towns/villages which often formed around local industries. It may be that certain towns/villages in the County Borough have a stronger sense of historical/cultural identity than others and a more focussed approach is required.
- Planning's role in welsh language was considered to be limited, particularly in an area such as Blaenau Gwent, which doesn't have a high percentage of Welsh speakers. Participants were reluctant to remove it from the challenge, though.
- These are quotes from participants at the table in response to the welsh language in general -"quite important" "part of identity"

Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources

- The challenge is considered relevant but it was considered to be very broad, covering a range of issues
- Opportunity to reduce energy demand and promote energy conservation and efficiency measures in the first instance
- The prominence of the Circular economy in PPW10 may need to be highlighted in and reference in the challenge
- Being aware of what targets can drive – unintended consequences. This relates to a comment made in relation to the aggregates levy where the tax has made it difficult to sell primary aggregate bi-product, particularly at sandstone quarries.
- Mineral resource until 2043
- 212 tonnes of aggregate per house built
- We can't reduce aggregate use and build houses or roads
- The UK is well ahead of other countries in the use of recycled and secondary aggregates and further improvements are likely to be limited.
- Recognised need to provide sufficient primary aggregate – think long term e.g. reclamation for wildlife – use ecosystem resilience assessments
- Long term thinking is necessary but difficult in relation to quarry developments – longer than a 15 year LDP?
- Important to consider air / water / land contamination/ noise – TAN 11 being updated
- Aim for biodiversity gain (PPW 10) when considering new quarry developments
- This challenge needs to link in with challenge 10 – not separating nature conservation and resource extraction

Challenge 13: Sustainable Design and Development

- Environmental Health: need electric car charging points
- Should BGCBC strive for higher standards and set targets? E.g. solar panels
- Would extra cost impact the viability of new developments? A balance needs to be struck between improving sustainable design standards and ensuring that developments remain viable
- PPW10 is pro renewable technologies without consultation
- Consider scale – e.g. could off shore wind turbines provide all energy to remove the need for standalone renewable energy developments on land
- Need to secure and waste less energy in line with the energy hierarchy
- Noise issues with turbines operating incorrectly highlighted
- Aim for multiple benefits e.g. retrofitting of solar panels on buildings was broadly supported, particularly industrial buildings
- Still concerns about the environmental and amenity of impacts solar panel farms and wind turbines

General Comment

The LDP's challenges are very broad and there will inevitably be conflict between them with the need for trade-offs. As such consideration should be given to prioritising the challenges over the plan period.

Appendix 1: Comments Received across All of the Workshop Sessions

Table 5

Challenge 1: Economic Diversification
- The challenge is still relevant and highly important
- Skills are important – companies are willing to invest as long as skills are there
- People don't have the qualifications to get jobs that are available
- Benefit system is more attractive to some than working low paid jobs
- Land, buildings needed
- Solar energy attractive to keep running costs low
- Accessible buildings for staff – transport links
- Schools need to skill up students! Customer services! Education is key!
- Existing industrial buildings need to be fit for purpose
- Infrastructure needs to be accessible – funicular is not working, need integrated bus services
- Metro is important
- Economic investment isn't going to work until extra trains are put on and bus services don't link with train stations
- Provision of bike stands
- Tourism – lack of public transport to tourism attractions – lack of signage
- Balance to be had cost of electric cars is difficult in a deprived area
- It will take longer for improvements to filter down to poorer areas
- Should this challenge be about economic diversification or should it focus on economic growth as that is the real issue
- Wage has only gone up because of the increase in the living wage
- The extra income people are receiving is being used to pay off debts or being sent back to families at home rather than spending in the local economy it is being spent elsewhere

Challenge 2: New roles for town centres
- Town centres are still an issue
- Diversification of town centres – more than retail is needed
- Shops need to offer something the internet does not
- Not on a level playing field with out of town shopping – no free parking, shoppers want to shop in the dry
- More links between town centres needed
- Home delivery has had a big impact on town centres
- No experience if shopping online
- The focus should be on making the town centres a cultural and service hub
- Training facilities encouraged in the town centres
- Business rates should reflect start up businesses
- Very difficult for people to start up with paperwork etc
- Advertising links for help
- Decline in banks in the town centres
- Technology has changed the high street
- Town centres as a destination needs to change

- Towns shouldn't compete but have offers for local residents to visit their nearest shopping centre
- Charging points should be available

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills
- Employers to look to train staff up with NVQs
- Reference to Children and Young People's Plan needs to be updated
- Role of teacher to change to facilitator and skill provider
- Money needs to be invested
- Challenge still relevant however skills could be linked to challenge 1 and economic however this challenge should focus on educational opportunities
- Schools need to be fit for purpose – 21st century schools making sure correct equipment and relevant tools are available for adapting skills for changing jobs
- New head teachers have got more of a vision for schools to be community based
- Share resources with communities – schools are being designed to facilitate this
- Make resources available to community groups
- Motivation through education is key
- Ambassadors to go into education and speak about their success and how they achieved it

Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs
- Should Blaina be a local hub? No it's just a village, very little services / shops
- Ebbw Vale is still the principal hub
- The language that is used in the challenge is key for example does the hierarchy make sense as each town could have its own specialism but connectivity and links are key
- Footfall is needed – make a hub attractive to attract the footfall
- Diversity and promote town centres
- Again transport links are key
- Smaller hubs may improve with more financial help

Vision
- Shorter sentences with more punctuation
- Split the vision with bullet points?
- Economic growth is key then protect environment alongside – economic growth needs to be included and at the forefront of the vision
- Land designation needs to be looked at – SINCs
- Connectivity / Accessibility needs to be reflected in the Vision

Table 6

Challenge 10: Creating a Place with supports its green environment
The challenge is still relevant
- Location of minerals are specific – need to be sustainably managed
- Changes in legislation need to be reflected – Historic Environment Act and Area Statements from NRW
- Health and well-being attitudes
- Maintain sustainable interaction with the natural resources
- Trends towards online purchases
- Potential for brownfield development
- Digital age – encourages flexible ways of working – no need for migration
- Brecon Beacons National Park – extend to surrounding areas
- Responsibility for minerals development – balance
- Commercial value of natural resources to be developed through the management of woodland and habitats
- Quality – needs to be improved to change perception
- Blaenau Gwent is the gateway to Brecon Beacons – needs to be marketed
- Potential for tourism – Valleys Regional Park
- Walking / cycling routes
- Long term view – protect and enhance
- The challenge needs to expand on the identified important areas and maximise connectivity

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
Yes the challenge is still relevant
- Influences – equal status – Welsh language to continue and b developed
- Celebration of local celebrities
- Potential for Supplementary Planning Guidance re Archaeology and history identify special heritage areas
- Archwilio App – can be developed for Blaenau Gwent
- Title maps should be used more effectively
- Important connections with Valleys Regional Park
- Challenge needs to be strengthened to bring it in line with legislation – to enhance potential
- Lots of information that is still to be understood
- Consider information held by other generations
- Positioning of Blaenau Gwent regionally and nationally and impact of strategic projects such as City Deal, Valleys Taskforce etc on how we consider use of Blaenau Gwent's environment. For example outward migration to cities for jobs is the Blaenau Gwent offer "green suburb with high health benefits".
- Brownfield site development is former activity – potential for archaeological remains. This is important because it's the start of the community. Need early consultation for mitigation.
- Opportunity for schools to visit – info boards/app/walks/trails

- Renewal of disused historic ponds/lagoons/water systems. Benefit historic environment – nature, water quality, air quality, species, walks/schools – Hybrid electric use
- Cadw – climate change re historic assets – land and buildings
- Best practice guidance for managing change

Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources
- Recent changes in legislation drive an increased consideration of this challenge
- Long term mineral plans need to be combined with woodland plans
- Connections with NRW over forest plans
- Issues of flood risk management need to consider wider down stream effects
- Promotion of renewable energy schemes
- Increase awareness
- Identify and support community based initiatives
- Promote high quality assets – air quality, water

Challenge 13: Sustainable Design and Development
- Increased relevance
- Challenge could be delivered through more emphasis on small scale development – increase contributions from individual developments e.g. Sun Days – Barrets - Slough
- Increase emphasis of materials
- Change of wording in guidance – "give due consideration"
- Increase conditions through planning to ensure delivery
- Ensure infrastructure elements are designed into development areas
- Raise awareness of the availability of supply chains – up to date technology

Housing
- Rood gardens – beehives
- Water capture (rain) for loo flushes
- Ground source heating
- Solar on all houses
- Be firm with developers – show benefits to environment, less cost etc

Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration
- Ensure key assets – train station / services / shops are designed into the strategy for development
- The Works has this – need to emphasise the need for progress
- Prioritise around infrastructure
- Emphasis on integrated networks e.g. students from Abertillery travelling to Ebbw Fawr Campus

General discussion:
- Transport – look at places like Austria transport is zoned
- Communication – do it early – "not cart before horse"

Appendix 1: Comments Received across All of the Workshop Sessions

Vision

- Raising awareness of new technologies
- Use of solar energy should increase
- Projects to upgrade old housing – heating sustainable energies etc
- Long term thinking – speculate to accumulate
- Forward thinking

Challenge 1: Economic Diversification
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- Need high end industries
- Tourism is key to the regeneration of the area – lack of accommodation in this area
- The area is not promoted enough
- Significant investment planned for Festival Park – would be better if the community was involved
- Lack of self-employed people
- Internet connection is faster here than in London this could be an opportunity for IT related businesses
- Needs to be more of a focus on economic growth and not diversification
- There is a negative portrayal of the area

Challenge 2: New roles for town centres
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- The day of the old town centres have gone, town centres are more service centres and meeting places
- The hierarchy should not have an Ebbw Vale focus
- Abertillery is more vibrant in the evening. The night time economy is important as this is when employed people spend their money
- More flexible policy approach is required – we need to think differently
- Encourage people who have retail ideas to bring them forward in the form of pop up shops and waived rents for example
- Agree with the town centre roles identified for Abertillery

Challenge 3: Stabilising the Population
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- Abertillery is a commuter and dormitory town
- There is limited land to develop in Abertillery – reuse of buildings and using the assets we have got should be the priority
- Definitely don't want to lose the 16-64 age range
- Need to be more positive
- Level of growth should be realistic

Challenge 4: Meeting housing needs and improving housing
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- The challenge should be merged with challenge 3
- Parking is a problem in Abertillery
- Second home ownership is currently not an issue. However if we go for a higher level of growth it may become an issue and vacant properties may increase
- There is a data gap in terms of private sector housing

Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills

Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- No welsh language provision of comprehensive school in the area – 25 minutes travel to nearest provision
- People's aspirations have increased as they know they need good qualifications
- More skilled, vocational apprenticeships required
- Tradesmen always have tjobs
- The challenge shouldn't just be about education attainment but should be amended to reflect skills rather than just education

Challenge 6: Improving accessibility
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- Frequency of buses and timings are an issue particularly for shift workers in employment areas
- For anybody who doesn't own a car, a fundamental change is required to the bus service

Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs
- Don't agree with Ebbw Vale as the principal hub
- All the hubs need to be well connected
- Need to make all of the hubs equal
- The Ebbw Fach Valley has the greatest population
- More employment in the north west of borough

Challenge 8:Supporting sustainable transport
- Agree with the principle of merging this challenge with challenge 6

Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- Significant emphasis - has to happen because of Well-being Act
- Strong sense of community
- Police report – antisocial behaviour is moving around Blaenau Gwent from one area to another
- There are huge differences between wards – a commonality joint approach is required
- Hand an area of woodland over to the children to 'look after'

Challenge 10: Creating a place which supports the green environment
Unanimous agreement that the challenge remains relevant
- Blaenau Gwent is a gateway to Brecon Beacons National Park

Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
Unanimous agreement that the challenge remains relevant
- The welsh language is growing
- Fantastic heritage in this area needs to be shouted about

Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources
- This challenge is very broad and could be cut back
- Take out reference to legacy as we have remedied it

Challenge 13: Sustainable design and development
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant

Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration
Unanimous agreement that the challenge is relevant
- Regeneration should be spread across Blaenau Gwent

Vision
- Sounds good
- It should include reference to economic growth

Internal Regeneration Workshop: Wednesday 17th April 2019

	Name	
1	Alwyn Hughes	Team Leader – Industrial Units
2	Bethan Macpherson	Team Manager – Connected Communities
3	Colin Jones	Team Leader – Building Control
4	Ellie Fry	Head of Regeneration and Development
5	Justin Waite	Team Leader – Development Management
6	Louise Horner	Senior Estates Officer
7	Martyn Jeffries	Regional Inspire Manager
8	Muhammad Forouzan	Team Manager – Business and Innovation
9	Nick Landers	Principal Project Officer
10	Richard Crook	Director – Regeneration and Community Services
11	Steph Hopkins	Team Leader – Development Management
12	Steve Smith	Service Manager – Development Services
13	Tara Lane	Skills Development Manager

Member Workshop 1 (am session): Wednesday 8th May 2019

	Name	Ward
1	Councillor Bob Summers	Ebbw Vale North
2	Councillor Joanne Collins	Llanhilleth
3	Councillor John Hill	Brynmawr
4	Councillor Jonathan Milliard	Ebbw Vale South
5	Councillor Keith Pritchard	Ebbw Vale South
6	Councillor Lee Parsons	Llanhilleth
7	Councillor Lyn Elias	Brynmawr
8	Councillor Martin Cook	Abertillery
9	Councillor Phil Edwards	Ebbw Vale North
10	Councillor Stewart Healy	Beaufort
11	Councillor Wayne Hodgins	Brynmawr

Member Workshop 2 (am session): Wednesday 8th May 2019

	Name	Ward
1	Councillor Bernard Willis	Tredegar Central & West
2	Councillor Clive Meredith	Badminton
3	Councillor Dai Davies	Ebbw Vale North
4	Councillor John C Morgan	Georgetown
5	Councillor Keith Hayden	Georgetown
6	Councillor Keri Rowson	Nantyglo
7	Councillor Tommy Smith	Sirhowy

Stakeholder Workshop 1: Tuesday 14th May 2019

	Name	Organisation
1	Adrian Drew	Local Agent
2	Alan Reed	Individual
3	Alison Hoskins	Head of Adult Services

	Name	Organisation
4	Alun Squire	Local Landowner
5	Alyson Tippings	BGCBC
6	Brian Brooks	Local Landowner
7	Brian Cromwell	Individual
8	Chris Engel	BGCBC
9	Councillor Barrie Sutton	Brynmawr Town Council
10	Councillor Julie Holt	BGCBC Councillor
11	Daniel Lewis	NRW
12	David Sharman	Tai Calon
13	Dr Elaine Davey	Welsh Historic Gardens Trust
14	Ellie Griffin	Individual
15	Howard Allen	Local Landowner
16	Hywel Jukes	Local Landowner
17	Ivor Beynon	Individual
18	Jason Price	Persimmon Homes
19	Jeff Price	Local Landowner
20	Joan Price	Local Landowner
21	John Cowley	Site Promoter
22	John Raine	Merthyr CBC
23	Judith Doyle	GGAT
24	Julie McKim	BGCBC
25	Kelly Collins	CCBC
26	Ken Thomas	Goldtops
27	Kevin Stevens	E5
28	Laura - Jane Suter	Girl Guiding Gwent
29	Lisa Thomas	Individual
30	Liz Hancocks	BGCBC
31	Malcolm Shepherd	Local Landowner
32	Mark Brooks	Individual
33	Mark Hopkins	BGCBC
34	Martin Haven	Local Landowner
35	Matthew John	Tai Calon
36	Michelle Church	BGCBC
37	Mike Rees	LRM
38	Ms. Nicola Williams (Asst. Town Clerk)	Brynmawr Town Council
39	Nia Watts	Monmouthshire County Council
40	Owen Davies	Owen Davies Consulting
41	Patrick Addison	Spicer Haart
42	Peter Adamson	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
43	Peter Barnes	Local Agent
44	Robert Davies	BGCBC
45	Robert Murray	Torfaen CBC
46	Sarah Jeremiah	BGCBC
47	Sharon Northall	BGCBC
48	Stacey Irish	Girl Guiding Gwent
49	Steven Roberts	Cwmglo Jewellery and Fashion
50	Susan Davies	Local Landowner

	Name	Organisation
51	Terry Morgan	Local Agent
52	Vic Warren	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

Stakeholder Workshop 2: Thursday 6th June 2019

	Name	Organisation
1	Ralph Connor	Site Promoter
2	Councillor Nick Simmons	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Town Council
3	Councillor Keith Jenkins	Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council
4	Councillor Tracey Dyson	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Town Council
5	Councillor Rob Phillips	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Town Council

Blaenau Gwent Revised Local Development Plan 2018-2033

Lynda Healy – Team Manager Building Control and Development Plans
Hayley Spender – Team Leader – Development Plans

14th May 2019

a better place to live and work / lle gwell i fyw a

Revised Local Development Plan - Stages and Involvement

Stage 1: Pre Deposit Participation (Engagement)
Stage 2: Pre Deposit Consultation (Public Consultation on Preferred Strategy)
Stage 3: Statutory Deposit of Proposals (Public Consultation on Deposit Plan)
Stage 4: Submission of LDP to Welsh Government
Stage 5: Examination by an Independent Inspector
Stage 6: Publication of Inspectors Report
Stage 7: Adoption by the Council

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Todays Workshop Session

- Local Development Plan
  - What is it?
  - Timetable
  - Stages involved
  - Stage we are at
- Thinking About Our Futures (Presentation)
- Workshop Session
  - Task 1: Issues /Challenges

Tea Break

  - Task 2: Vision
- Next Steps

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Stage 1: Pre-Deposit Participation

- Developing the evidence base
- Identifying suitable sites (Candidate Sites)
- **Building consensus on the issues** and strategy for the revised LDP (Engagement)
- Preparation of the Preferred Strategy

Holding 2 workshops
- Issues and Vision (today)
- Strategy Options and Preferred Strategy (Early July)

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Local Development Plan – What Is It?

The Local Development Plan sets out planning policies to guide the future development of the Borough. It includes policies on a wide range of topics such as housing, employment, services and facilities, and the natural environment.

Current Local Development Plan – adopted 2012

Reviewed the Plan in 2016
Agreed that a Full Review was required in Sept 2017
Held up by WG request for Joint LDPs

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Workshop 1: Issues and Vision

Task: 1
Identify the Issues that the Revised Local Development Plan will need to address (50 mins)
Task: 2
Identify where we want to be by 2033 – The Vision (15 mins)

WG guidance advises us that we are not starting from scratch and the we should review what the current plan says

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Revised Local Development Plan - Timetable

Formally commenced work following approval of the Delivery Agreement in October 2018

Adopt the Revised Local Development Plan in Spring 2022

3 years 6 months

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'Futures'

Andrew Parker – Presentation on thinking about our futures

This will help us with revising the current issues and with the vision

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Task 1: Issues

Review Current Challenges

- Is the challenge still relevant?
- What are the new influences / issues in that area?
- Does it need to be amended?
- Can any be merged?

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Task 2: Vision (15 mins)

The Vision should set out where we want to be by 2033 – taking into account the issues identified

- Is the current vision fit for purpose or does it need to be amended?
- If it needs to be amended what needs changing?
- How should it be changed (shorter/bulleted)?

You have been provided with other relevant visions to aid discussion

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14 Challenges in all

Table 1-3 to look at challenges 3, 4, 6, 8, & 9
Table 4 to look at challenges 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14
Table 5 to look at 1, 2, 5, 7, & 14

For each Challenge:
- Information is provided on progress
- Some new issues are identified
- Some future trends are also identified

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Next Steps

- Comments made at this session will be written up and sent to you – they will also form part of a report of engagement for this stage

- Our next task is to revise the issues and vision and prepare spatial options that will assist in addressing these issues and meeting the vision

- You will all be invited to the next workshop when we will look at levels of growth and spatial options (Early July)

- Public Consultation on the Preferred Strategy (November)

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Tea Break – 20 mins

Opportunity to:
- comment on other challenges

- identify new challenges

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Close

Please complete an Evaluation Form

Thank You for Attending

Thanks to our facilitators and scribers

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14 Challenges

Challenge 1: Economic Diversification
Challenge 2: New roles for town centres
Challenge 3: Stabilising the population
Challenge 4: Meeting housing needs and improving housing
Challenge 5: Improving education attainment and skills
Challenge 6: Improving accessibility
Challenge 7: Creating a network of hubs
Challenge 8: Supporting sustainable transport
Challenge 9: Promoting health and well-being for all
Challenge 10: Creating a place which supports its green environment
Challenge 11: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity
Challenge 12: Sustainable use of natural resources
Challenge 13: Sustainable design and development
Challenge 14: Spreading the benefits of regeneration

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Agenda

Tuesday 14th May 2019

Blaenau Gwent Revised Local Development Plan
General Offices, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6AA

Issues and Vision
Stakeholder Workshop

9.30-10.00	Registration, tea and coffee and opportunity to view information boards
10-10.05	Introduction (Steve Smith)
10.05-10.10	Workshop Format (Lynda Healy)
10.10-10.20	Presentation on 'Futures' (Andrew Parker)
10.20-11.10	Task 1: Issues/Challenges (All)
11.10-11.30	Tea Break and opportunity to comment on other challenges and identify new challenges
11.30-11.45	Task 2: Vision (All)
11.45	Next Steps and Close (Lynda Healy)

Social Group 1
Group Facilitator: Lynda Healy (BGCBC)
Scribe: Mark Hopkins (BGCBC)

Name	Organisation
Alan Reed	Individual
Brian Cromwell	Individual
Howard Allen	Local Landowner
Malcolm Shepherd	Local Landowner
Mark Hopkins	BGCBC
Mike Rees	LRM
Owen Davies	Owen Davies Consulting
Patrick Addison	Spicer Haart
Peter Adamson	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Peter Barnes	Local Agent
Susan Davies	Local Landowner
Councillor Barrie Sutton	Brynmawr Town Council

Social Group 2
Group Facilitator: Andrew Parker (BGCBC)
Scribe: Julie Mckim (BGCBC)

Name	Organisation
Alison Hoskins	BGCBC
David Sharman	Tai Calon
Ellie Griffin	Individual
Jeff Price	Local Landowner
Julie McKim	BGCBC
Kelly Collins	Caerphilly CBC
Lisa Thomas	Individual
Martin Haven	Local Landowner

Social Group 3
Group Facilitator: Ryan Morris (BGCBC)
Scribe: Michelle Church (BGCBC)

Name	Organisation
Adrian Drew	Local Agent
Alun Squire	Local Landowner
Dr Elaine Davey	Welsh Historic Gardens Trust
Jason Price	Persimmon Homes
Joan Price	Local Landowner
Matthew John	Tai Calon
Michelle Church	BGCBC
Nia Watts	Monmouthshire County Council

Environment Group 4
Group Facilitator: Justin Waite (BGCBC)
Scribe: Liz Hancocks (BGCBC)

Name	Organisation
Daniel Lewis	NRW
Hywel Jukes	Local Landowner
John Cowley	Site Promoter
Liz Hancocks	BGCBC
Robert Davies	BGCBC
Vic Warren	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

Economic Group 5
Group Facilitator: Hayley Spender (BGCBC)
Scribe: Steph Hopkins(BGCBC)

Name	Organisation
Alyson Tippings	BGCBC
John Raine	Merthyr CBC
Ken Thomas	Acting on behalf of Newbridge Construction
Laura - Jane Suter	Girl Guiding Gwent
Stacey Irish	Girl Guiding Gwent
Nicola Williams	Brynmawr Town Council
Robert Murray	Torfaen CBC
Sarah Jeremiah	BGCBC
Sharon Northall	BGCBC
Steph Hopkins	BGCBC
Steven Roberts	Cwmglo Fashion and Jewellery

Environment Group 6
Group Facilitator: Emma Scherptong
Scribe: Chris Engel

Name	Organisation
Brian Brooks	Local Landowner
Chris Engel	BGCBC
Ivor Beynon	Individual
Judith Doyle	GGAT
Kevin Stevens	E5
Mark Brooks	Individual

Economic

Challenge 1: Economic Diversification The area suffers from high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, high benefit dependence and limited employment opportunities which together result in low household incomes. A key challenge for the area is to secure jobs for the future. This will mean increasing the proportion of jobs in sectors with good growth prospects, such as services, knowledge-based business, advanced manufacturing, tourism and sustainable technologies. The challenge is to provide land, services and environments that will draw investment.

Current Position:

Unemployment
Unemployment rate in Blaenau Gwent is **6.4%** compared to **5%** in Wales. Unemployment of 20-24 year olds is **16.5%** compared to Wales **9.5%.**

Employment Levels
67.1% of working age people are employed compared to **72.7%** in Wales. This has increased from **59.2%** in 2008-09.

Benefit Dependence
Blaenau Gwent has the **largest percentage** of its working age population claiming key benefits. The rate of long term sickness is **significantly higher** than the all Wales level.

Employment Sectors
The largest employment sector is manufacturing **22.2%** in Blaenau Gwent compared to **11.4%** in Wales. Followed by wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles; and human health and social work both **16.7%** compared to **15.1%** and **16.1%** respectively for Wales.

Occupation Classification
Blaenau Gwent has the **lowest percentage** of working age population in the managers and professional occupations in Wales.

Household Income
The average gross weekly pay for full-time workers in Blaenau Gwent has increased by **£130.30** since 2009, although the average remains less when compared to Wales it is higher than Newport or Caerphilly.

Tourism
7.2% growth in visitors to the area contributing an extra **10.7%** to the local economy with **8.8%** increase in those directly employed in tourism.

Out Commuting
Compared to neighbouring authorities and Wales, Blaenau Gwent has relatively **high levels of out commuting** from the County Borough and **low levels of people commuting into the authority**.

GVA per Head
In 2003 and 2015, Blaenau Gwent has the **lowest GVA per head** of all local authorities in Wales.

Employment Land Delivery
1.08 ha of the **50 ha** allocated for employment have been delivered.

UK Competitiveness Index (UKCI)
Blaenau Gwent is the least competitive locality in the UK. However, Blaenau Gwent has registered an increase in its competitiveness level, but its overall UKCI score is still some way behind the second least competitive locality, Anglesey.

New Issues and Opportunities:
- Results of Employment Land Review
- Larger than local evidence base – collaboration with neighbouring authorities
- Hierarchy of employment areas – the right approach? Review of the identified employment protection areas?

Future Trends:
- 'In work poverty' is at historically high levels. New ways of thinking is required about what type of economic model suits those most deprived communities and individuals.
- How can Gwent business prepare for the major geopolitical structural shifts that are expected to continue over the next 30 years? How can they take advantage of the continuing shift of global economic power to the Asia-Pacific region? How can Gwent businesses be helped to target emerging economies?

Challenge 1: Economic growth   The area suffers from high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, high benefit dependence and limited quality employment opportunities, which together result in low household incomes. A key challenge for the area is to secure jobs for the future. This will mean increasing the proportion of jobs in sectors with good growth prospects, such as, new technologies and advanced manufacturing, IT and cyber security, tourism and low carbon sustainable technologies. The challenge is to provide land, services and environments that will enable economic growth.

Challenge 2: New roles for town centres   Town centres are suffering as a result of a change in people's shopping habits. A key issue is that town centres need to diversify and broaden their offer to create footfall. Town centres need to have clear roles so that they don't compete against each other.   The challenge is to provide a more flexible policy approach and identify clear roles.

Challenge 3: Population growth and improving housing offer   The area has stabilised its population, although people are still leaving the area to find housing and employment elsewhere.   One of the problems with net out migration is that it tends to be biased towards those more mobile and economically active. The challenge is to provide land for housing and provide the jobs to retain people in the area.

There is a shortage of flats, bungalows and detached properties to meet housing requirements. The quality of existing private housing stock is an issue in terms of modern living and efficiency requirements particularly in the rental sector.   Affordability remains an issue. The challenge is to ensure new developments contain a mix of house types and tenure; managing the number of vacant properties; and improving the quality of the private housing stock.

Challenge 4: Improving education attainment and skills   A high proportion of adults have no qualifications and education attainment is generally low. Whilst education attainment has improved considerably, lately, more needs to be done in this area. People have limited and low skill levels to gain good quality jobs. The challenge is to ensure that skills and training match the economic growth sectors and the infrastructure is put in place so that facilities can be accessed by all.

Challenge 5: Creating a well-connected network of hubs   Being able to access services, jobs and markets is a key requirement for any area to be successful.   Good links are required both inside and outside of Blaenau Gwent.   The challenge is to help develop a transport network which improves connectivity within and outside of Blaenau Gwent. The completion of the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road and improvements to the Ebbw Railway are key.

Blaenau Gwent is made up of a number of towns and villages but only a few are large enough to be self-sufficient in terms of comprising an adequate range and mix of services. As a consequence, it is vital that a network of hubs is created to provide the sustainable level of services for the area.   This network of hubs is also a key part of delivering sustainable settlements where local and regional services can be easily accessed through sustainable modes of transport.

Challenge 6: Supporting Sustainable transport: For those trips that do have to be made a much greater proportion will need to be by walking, cycling and public transport.   This

would also make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions and provide for those without access to a car. Blaenau Gwent has low car ownership and a poor evening and Sunday bus services. The challenge is to create an environment and transport network in which it becomes a more attractive choice to walk, cycle or travel by public transport.

Challenge 7: Promoting physical and mental health and well-being for all Development and renewal of settlements needs to take account of all aspects of the quality of life of those who live there, including safety, health and freedom from disturbance. In particular, Blaenau Gwent has low life expectancy and high numbers of people with limiting long-term illness. Fear of crime is also a key issue for residents. The challenge is to provide the infrastructure and create environments that promote safety, health and a sense of well-being for all.

Challenge 8: Creating a place which supports its green environment The setting of Blaenau Gwent, bordering the Brecon Beacons and the Vale of Usk, with its rugged mountains and its peaceful valleys, is a major asset which needs to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The natural environment with its variety of wildlife is valuable in its own right but can also contribute to the economic and social well-being of the area. Climate change is a threat to this. The challenge is to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems.

Challenge 9: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity Blaenau Gwent has a distinctive, location, history and townscape and this is a further potential key to the area's transformation. This will mean bequeathing to future generations the best of the legacy of the past, including the heritage as an iron, coal and steel producer, the links with the Chartist movement and the birthplace of Aneurin Bevan. The challenge is to protect, conserve and enhance the best of the buildings and townscape.

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 Wales, the challenge is to ensure that the spatial planning system protects and enhances Welsh culture and language where possible.

Challenge 10: Sustainable use of natural resources Responsible use of the area's physical resources is a key part of a better future. The exploitation of minerals needs to be limited. The challenge is to promote the circular economy by reducing waste generation and maximising reuse and recycling, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the provision of an adequate supply of minerals.

Challenge 11: Environmental Quality Air and water pollution, noise, land contamination and dereliction have long blighted the area and affected people's health and well-being and whilst this has improved in reality there is still room for improvement. Climate change means that the areas subject to the risk of flooding are growing. The challenge is to help ensure that the physical environment is safe and healthy; and that land is used efficiently.

Challenge 12: Sustainable design and the provision of renewable energy Blaenau Gwent has the potential to generate much more of its own energy by sustainable means that reduce carbon emissions. The design and layout of buildings could contribute to a reduction in the consumption of energy and emission of greenhouse gases. Meanwhile, some change in climate is certain to occur and it will be necessary to adapt to this in the future development of the area. The challenge is to help, through the development process, to achieve the potential for reducing greenhouse gases and impacts of climate

change.

Vision

Through collaborative working, by 2033, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of connected **sustainable, vibrant valley communities** that support the **well-being** of current and future generations with:

- residents living in safe, healthy communities, in a range of good quality homes and having better access to services;
- a **prosperous low carbon economy** where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life;

its **distinctive natural environment**, cultural and historic identity is protected and enhanced

creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Planning Policy Team

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