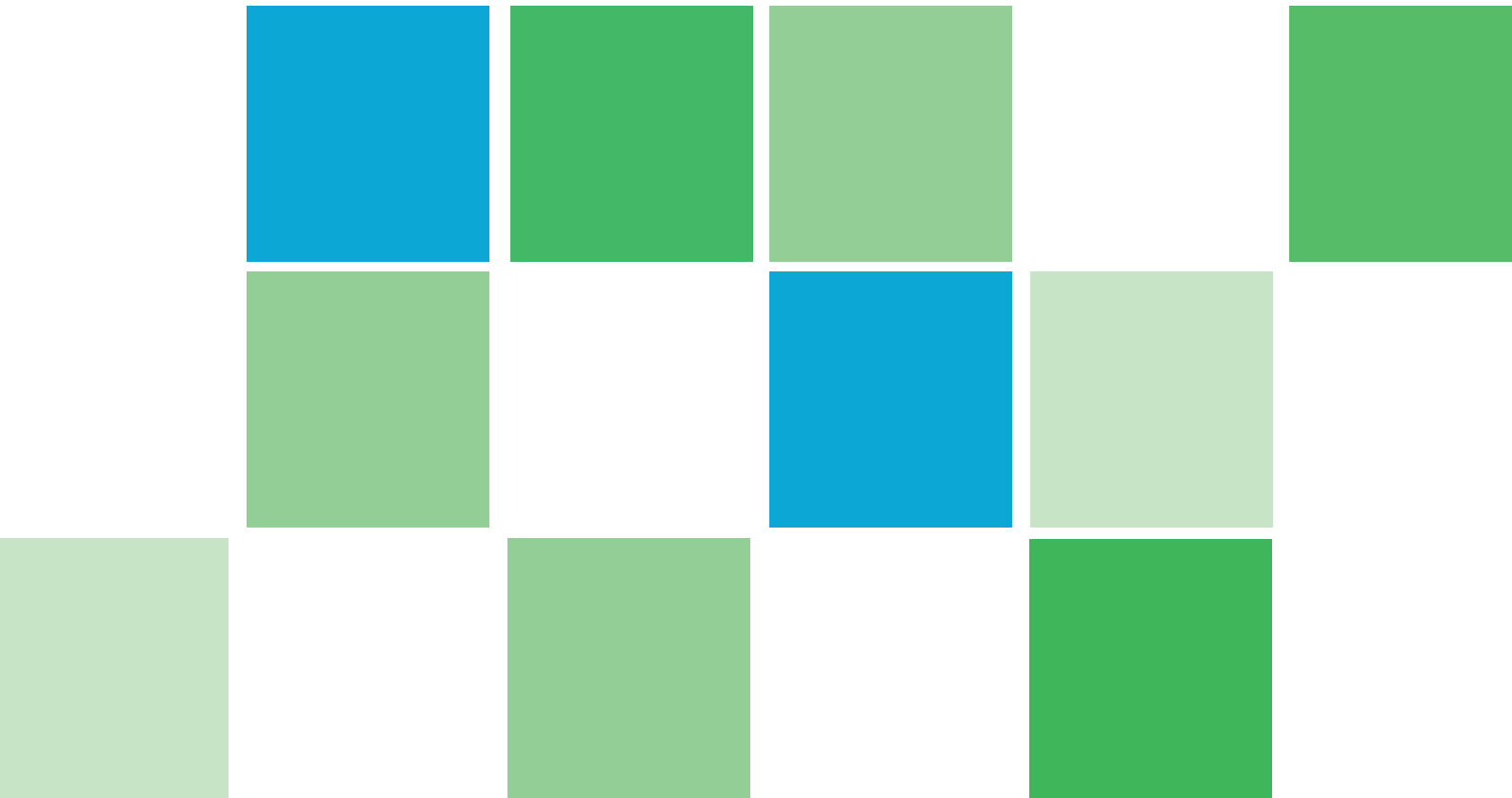




Local Development Plan



CONTENTS

3 D J

	Foreword	1
	About This Document	3
	List of Consultation Questions	3
	What Happens Next	4
1	Introduction	5
2	Spatial Profile of the Borough	9
	Geographical Context	10
	Settlement Context	10
	Economic Characteristics	12
	Social Characteristics	13
	Environmental Characteristics	16
3	Policy Context	23
	National	24
	Regional Policy Context	26
	Local Policy Context	28
4	Development of the Issues Vision and Options	33
	Identification of the Issues	34
	Prioritisation of Issues	34
	Identification of a Vision	35
	Development of a Vision	35
	Development of a Strategy	35
	Development of Options	35

Development



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Local Development Plan is a statutory document and must be prepared by following prescribed procedures. We are now at the first formal consultation stage in the process. The draft Preferred Strategy draws together our work to date, the evidence gathered on key issues and the outcome of early consultation work. During the summer and autumn of 2007, the Council undertook a number of community engagement events at which a range of local

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

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

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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Incomes and Economic Activity

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

Entrepreneurial Dynamism

- 2.12 The key indicator used to assess economic enter S U L V H L V W R W D O 9 \$ 7 U H . of 2005 there were 940 businesses registered in Blaenau Gwent. In contrast, there were 80 deregistrations (1.2 per 1000 population) in Blaenau Gwent in 2005 (-9.6%) in comparison with -6.8% for Wales. A comparison at the regional level reveals that Blaenau Gwent has consistently experienced the second least number of new registrations over the past five years after Merthyr Tydfil and, in most recent years, registrations in Blaenau Gwent have been over 150 less than in any other Local Authority area in the region (with the exception of Merthyr Tydfil, which is performing below Blaenau Gwent).

Retail

- 2.13 The main shopping areas in Blaenau Gwent are Abertillery, Blaina, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Tredegar and the Festival Park Outlet Centre.
- 2.14 High vacancy rates currently exist within many of the town centres. However, the Council is

2.23 A lower proportion of residents in Blaenau Gwent own their own homes than across Wales or (QJODQG ± D WR WBLAENAU GWENT HOMES are in private ownership compared with LQ :DOHV DQG LQ (QJODQG

Health and Well being

2.24 Life expectancy in Blaenau Gwent is the lowest LQ :DOHV DW. In comparison the :HOVK DYHUDJH LV \HDUV VRXUFH :\$* SURiÂ* SQ!` S



Welsh Language and Culture

- 2.31** Despite the rich industrial heritage of the locality, there are very few members of the population that identify themselves as Welsh, rather than British (12% according to 2001 Census). The use of the Welsh language in Blaenau Gwent is relatively low, when compared to Wales as a whole and other individual authorities.
- 2.32** +RZHYHU WKHUH LV D GLVWLQFWLYH μYDOOH\V¶ FXOV developed from a strong sense of community and social networks that are not linked to the Welsh language.

Transport

- 2.33** In terms of travel distances to work, in Blaenau Gwent the majority of the population travels less than 5km commuting distance. 31% of tKH & RXQW\ %RURXJK¶V SRŠ private car for their work journey, with only 7% of the population walking or cycling to work. In terms of car ownership, 45% of the resident population owns one car only, with 35% of %ODHQDX *ZHQW¶V owning only access to a car or van. In comparison to regional and national statistics, in general terms car ownership levels are considerably below average in Blaenau Gwent and a considerably greater proportion of the population is without access to a car.
- 2.34** A new rail link to Cardiff has recently opened providing an hourly service to Cardiff with two rail stations serving Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Parkway & Llanhilleth). The line provides access to and from Cardiff, which is linked with the Great Western line giving links eastward to London and westward to Swansea, Fishguard and the Republic of Ireland.
- 2.35** Bus links connect the main towns with Newport and Cardiff and local bus services connect Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Abertillery and Tredegar. These bus links provide a good level of service during weekdays and on Saturdays. Conversely, Sunday service is limited and some lateral connections between valleys are poor.
- 2.36** The dominant feature of the highway network in Blaenau Gwent is the Heads of the Valleys Trunk Road (A465) located at the northern end of the County Borough. The proposal to upgrade the road between Hirwaun and Abergavenny to dual carriageway standards has commenced. On completion of this work the A465/A40 route between Neath and Monmouth will be to a standard commensurate with its strategic nature. The completion of the section

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

- 2.37 The nearest airports to Blaenau Gwent are Cardiff International, Bristol and Birmingham. Locals are largely reliant on private transport or car hire to access the airports, as public transport links are limited.
- 2.38 The public rights of way network in the County Borough is nearly 300km in length - 68% of

Figure 2: Environmental Designations

- 2.41 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Statutory National) within the Planning authority boundary:
 f & ZP 0HUGGRJ :RRGODQGV &RHG 7\¶Q \ *HOOL
 f Brynmawr Sections (geological site)
 There is also a SSSI in the Brecon Beacons National Park area
 f Mynydd Llangatwg
- 2.42 There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR) (Statutory National) within the Planning Authority boundary though there is one in the Brecon Beacons National Park area called Cwm Clydach.
- 2.43 15,000 ha. The parts of the LNR that include the SSSI have been designated as such as a result of the presence of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. A number of candidate LNRs have been proposed for the County Borough area, these are: Parc Bryn Bach (Tredegar); Sirhowy :RRGODQGV 7UHGHJDU (EEZ 9DOH *DUGHQ &LWUQ09f

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

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

Water and Flood Risk

- 2.52 The main water courses in Blaenau Gwent are the rivers Ebbw Fach, Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy. Generally chemical water quality is very good and biological quality fairly good. Between 1999 and 2005 biological water quality has tended to improve from good to very good. Chemical water quality has tended to stay the same or deteriorated slightly.
- 2.53 Water supply in the County Borough is provided by the Ebbw Valley Water Treatment Works (Ebbw Valley Water Treatment Works) and the Sirhowy Water Treatment Works (Sirhowy Water Treatment Works). The Sirhowy Water Treatment Works is located in Sirhowy and the Ebbw Valley Water Treatment Works is located in Ebbw Vale. The Sirhowy Water Treatment Works has a capacity of 10 million litres per day and the Ebbw Valley Water Treatment Works has a capacity of 10 million litres per day. The Sirhowy Water Treatment Works is currently under a programme of improvement and is expected to be completed in 2010. The Ebbw Valley Water Treatment Works is currently under a programme of improvement and is expected to be completed in 2010.

Question 1



3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1

f action to strengthen the environmental networks will enhance the quality of life, .ui6.

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

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

South East Regional Waste Plan

- 3.17 The South East Wales Regional Waste Plan aims to achieve Landfill Directive targets by 2013, principally through maximising recycling and composting and limiting the amount of waste going to landfill. A review of the Plan is currently being undertaken and should be adopted in autumn 2008. The Plan includes a requirement for LDPs to contribute towards the identification of appropriate locations for waste management facilities. The Plan suggests that a series of options will be appropriate and depending which option the Council agrees to pursue, the LDP will need to identify between 1.4 and 4 hectares of land. The Council are working with Torfaen to explore appropriate options for reducing waste going to landfill in order to meet the EU Land Directive and the Wise About Waste (Welsh Waste Strategy targets). The identified option will impact on the 1()-2(1()-2(h)-218(wi2l(e)1(c)1(q8(wo7yp)-2(t)1(o)1(s05-2(1()-(Was(Was(Wpou 61-21)

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

LOCAL POLICY COORDINATION

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

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

3.28 ~~7KGDIEWQHQRGHRSEYDQV~~ a 3-year plan, which sets out how all agencies in Blaenau Gwent working with children and young people will cooperate to achieve common goals, to improve outcomes for children and young people. The plan articulates the ~~3DEMSYVROQGHDLO~~ the actions it will take, in order to bring about changes in ~~FKGHQGRGHRSEYDQV~~ The vision for the Partnership is:

3.29 The Plan represents a new way of thinking about how local services need to change in offer to ensure that all children and young people ~~acknowledge~~ ~~acknowledge~~ seven core aims by ensuring that young people:

- f* Have a flying start in life;
- f* Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- f* Enjoy the best possible health and be free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- f* Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- f* Are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- f* Have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional well-being; and
- f* Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy (Draft 2008)

3.30 The Regeneration Strategy identifies an overarching aim and six principles along with proposals to translate them into action. The overarching aim is to ~~promote~~ ~~promote~~ ensuring that the benefits of regeneration are shared by all those in Blaenau Gwent. The six principles are:-

Principle 1: Diversify the Economy and Develop Manufacturing

Build on the diversification of the local economy by promoting and supporting new areas of opportunity, and developing the strengths of ~~the area~~.

Principle 2: Boost Business Support and Enterprise

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

Principle 3: Promote Learning and Modern Skills

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

Principle 4: Focus Investment in key Communities

~~the area~~ communities so that they are more desirable places to live, learn, and work.

Principle 5: Maximise the Ebbw Vale Opportunity County Wide

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

Principle 6: Develop the Transport Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2001-2006)

3.32 The Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan translates national government targets on biodiversity into targets which can be delivered locally. It includes lists of nationally and



4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISSUES, VISION AND OPTIONS

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISSUES

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

PRIORITISATION OF ISSUES

- 4.3 In July 2007, a workshop was held to agree and then prioritise the list of issues the Counre

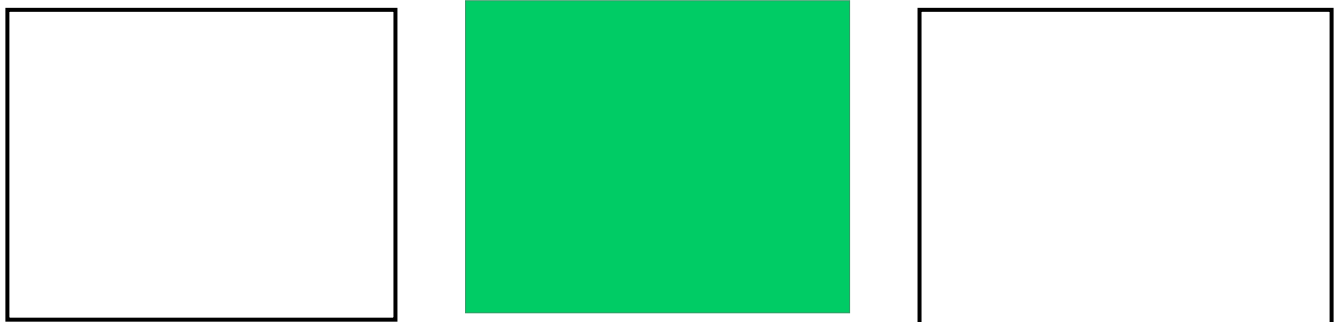
4.4 When attendees at the workshop were asked to prioritise the two most significant issues across all the topic areas the most significant issues were:

- f* The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries;
- f* The need to find a role / function for town centres;
- f* The need to create a more balanced population stemming out-migration; and
- f* The need to provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations, including the need for affordable housing.

IDENTIFICATION OF A VISION

4.5 The next stage in the process was to identify DMLRQWDE WBLV RZDEX Gwent should look by 2021. At the Issues and Vision workshop, attendees considered whether or not the Community Plan vision could be used for the Local Development Plan or if a new vision was required. The view was that a new vision was required and each of the 3 groups drafted a vision. From these three visions the Planning Policy Team prepared one vision.

4.6 At the Vision and Option workshops, held in the autumn of 2007, participants were given the opportunity to amend the draft Vision prepared by the Planning Policy Team. From this work a final Vision was prepared and approved by the Steering Group (Executive, April 2008) and Local Development Plan Forum (RBLRQWDEKS&DG Meeting, April 2008). The Vision is set out in paragraph 5.1.



DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY OPTIONS

4.7 ~~NOGLRQWRSLRQDQ Y&BV~~ ed at the Issues and Vision Workshop; the findings of the consultation exercise on the Issues Paper; the evidence base; the Wales Spatial Plan, National Policy and Local Policy, a set of 3 options were identified by the Planning Policy Team. All three options were realistic.

4.8 The three options were based on the issues of significance identified at the Issues and Vision workshop, that is; different scenarios in terms of the level of growth, employment and retail. Each of these result in different spatial expressions and impacts on the future growth of the ~~R&R&D&FRSWLRQV~~ considered to be deliverable.

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

- f* population decline from the 2006 figure

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

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

Level of Growth

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

Employment

- 4.11 The employment strategy was based on achieving a thriving economy through regeneration. It was seen as essential that Blaenau Gwent benefited from the attraction of inward investment projects within the region, and it was seen as essential that a continuous supply of serviced industrial land and buildings was made available to accommodate future inward investment projects. It was also recognised that there was a need to support and develop indigenous businesses. The strategy results in the identification of 180 ha of employment

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

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

Level of Growth

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

Employment

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

Town Centres

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

Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

- f* stems out-migration and stabilises popul

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

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

Level of Growth

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

Employment

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

Town Centres

4.20 This option proposes that the towns of Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar will

- 4.24 It was clear following the workshops that option 2 was the preferred option. However, the development industry considered the step change from 100 to 200 houses per annum was too ambitious. At the same time others considered that the option was not being ambitious enough and that it failed to meet the figure set by the Housing Market Assessment. It was therefore agreed to respond to these issues. The housing requirement 13.68 re (68)-62(4 5 Isproach 72 u am-5(ha1(u)loyent)a amroles-10(amf)-2(7the)-2(69eowr

I

o73 Pc

ensiomic-7327(c5(e)limegy-7327(flexibility-732

Question 3

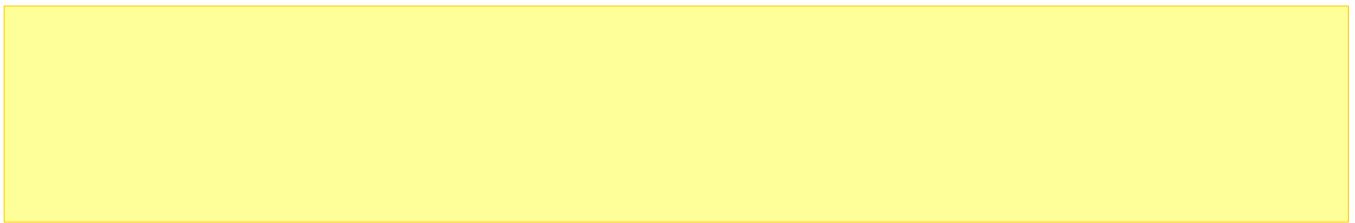
Do you broadly agree with the choice of the Preferred Strategy (option 2)?

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

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

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

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





SP1 The Heads of the Valleys area will be the focus for development. Ebbw Vale will accommodate the majority of development. Abertillery will be the focus of new development serving the needs of its respective communities.

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

(Objective 2)

Creating a network of sustainable linked communities to spread regeneration benefits

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

(Objective 3)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Sustainable Development

SP4 All new development should:

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

(Objective 3)

RETAILING AND TOWN CENTRES

- f* a new hierarchy of towns with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre (sub-regional hub), with Tredegar, Brynmawr, Abertillery and Blaina becoming district/local shopping centres (district/local hubs);
- f* within these town centres there will be a focus on regeneration making them more desirable areas

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

Retail Hierarchy

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

(Objectives 1 & 2)

EMPLOYMENT

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

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

- 6.9 The Preferred Strategy is to create employment opportunities that will help diversify the economy and develop manufacturing through specialisation. This will result in the identification of 50-80 ha of land for employment purposes with a greater emphasis on mixed-use sites close to town centres. Sites will be identified in the Deposit Plan following completion of the Candidate Site Assessment process.
- 6.10 The creation of a successful tourism and leisure sector based around; the natural and historical assets of the County Borough, the Heads of the Valleys Regional Park concept; and nearby attractions such as the World Heritage Site in Blaenavon and the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains will play a contribution to the aim of diversifying the economy. The natural assets the valleys offer provides opportunities for mountain biking and this could be explored in particular on the eastern valley slopes in Ebbw Vale and around Abertillery. The historical legacy provides opportunities to build tourism opportunities around heritage trails, such as the chartists in Blaina /Nantyglo and Aneurin Bevan in Tredegar. The renovation of Bedwellty House and Park provides an opportunity for Tredegar to attract visitors and for the town to benefit by catering for the needs of the visitors. The location of Brynmawr, at a gateway to both the Brecon Beacons National Park and Blaenavon World Heritage Site provides an opportunity to service visitors either through providing a stop over facility (directing and informing travellers), or by encouraging people to stay in Brynmawr.
- 6.11 In developing tourism it will be important to ensure that it is sustainable, that is, it must make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment and conservation.
- 6.12 The proposed 107-bed Local General Hospital at the former Corus site will provide opportunities for expansion in the growing social care sector.
- 6.13 The creation of a learning campus at the Corus site bringing together Coleg Gwent and all sixth forms across the County Borough in a state of the art learning facility provides the opportunity to improve educational ren3eal -102(a)1(n)(wivhe)-81 1(lske)s(a)1(l)t(v)1(e)op y(

Employment and Diversification of the Economy

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

Development of the Tourism and Leisure sectors

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

HOUSING

f new housing will be provided at a level which will stem out-migration and attract people to the area; leading to an increase in population from 69,300 in 2006 to 71,000 in 2021;
f

Ebbw Fach Lower (Abertillery)	300	100
-------------------------------	-----	-----

A large number of housing sites have been identified through the Candidate Site process but none of these are strategic sites which merit identification in the Plan. The register of Candidate Sites is available to view at the Council website and for further information. New housing sites will be identified through assessment against the Candidate Site criteria.

Affordable Housing

Since 2004 house prices have risen dramatically and have created affordability issues in the region. The Plan is to raise the housing completion figure to 250 by the end of the Plan period it is not considered feasible to raise the figure from an average of 103 to 250 in the early years of the Plan. Affordable housing sites do not have requirements for the provision of affordable housing, neither is it considered feasible to expect the planning system to deliver all of the required affordable housing. The number of affordable houses likely to be developed in the Plan period is between 600 and 800 which is 27% of the number of sites of over 10 units and through the delivery of a small number of 100% affordable housing.

The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy-Traveller Study identifies the need for approximately 100 gypsy and traveller pitches. The investment of over £100 million pounds over the plan period will result in the investment of over £100 million pounds over the plan period. This will generate large areas of housing as social rented properties account for 26% (21% from Council 5% from Social Landlords) of all houses in the region.

Housing Provision

SP8 Provision will be made for the development of between 2,250 and 3,000 dwellings during the plan period; broken into the following Housing Market Areas	
Sirhowy Valley	800
Ebbw Fawr	1,500
Ebbw Fach Upper	400
Ebbw Fach Lower	300
Housing sites will include a mix of dwelling types and sizes and tenure to meet the needs of the community.	
The Delivery of the houses will be back loaded recognising the step change in housing requirements.	
2006-2011	500 -750
2011-2016	750 -1,000
2016-2021	1,000 -1,250
(Objectives 6 & 7)	

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

f

SP12 Development proposals will be assessed in relation to:

- f* Reduce the need to travel;
- f* Promotion of public transport, walking and cycling;
- f* Protection of the safety of the highway network;
- f* Accessibility to all users;
- f* Pedestrian safety; and
- f* &DU SDUNLQJ VWDQGDUGV VHW RXW LQ WKH &R...
(Objective 8)
Pedestri

SP16 7KH &RXQW\ %RURXJK¶V GLVWLQFWLYH FKDUDFW
ODQGVFDSH ZLOO EH SURWHFWHG SUHVHUYHG DC

Minerals

- SP18 The Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of minerals by:
- f* Safeguarding known reserves of coal, sand and gravel, limestone and high quality hard rock taking into account relevant environmental, planning and transportation considerations; and
 - f* Maintaining a 10-year land-bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national guidance.

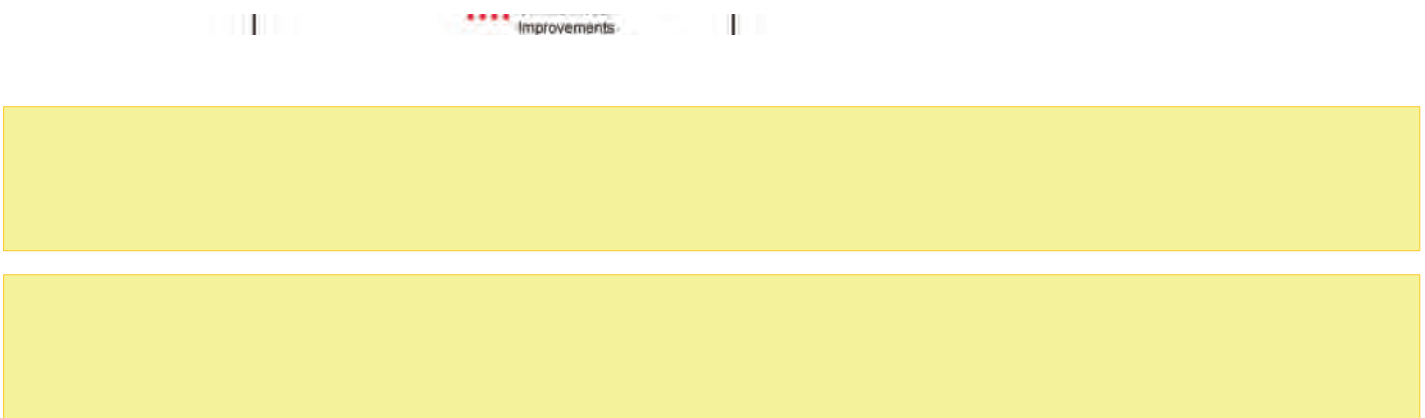
WASTE MANAGEMENT

- 6.32 The Regional Waste Plan includes a requirement for Local Development Plans to contribute WRZ DUGV UHG XFLQ Jewelling through Recognition of appropriate locations for waste management facilities. The Plan suggests that a series of options will be appropriate depending which option the Council agrees to pursue. As the Council have yet to pursue a particular option the development plan will identify 1.4 to 4 hectares of land for waste.

Waste

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

Figure 3: Key Diagram

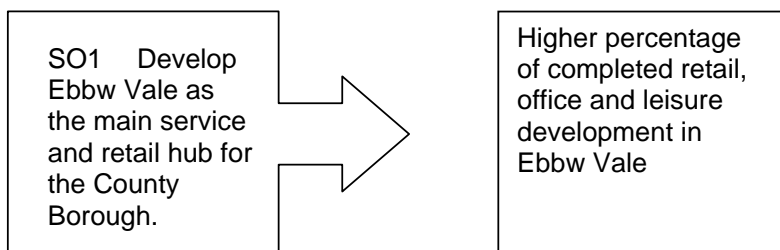


7.0 MONITORING OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

7.0 MONITORING OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

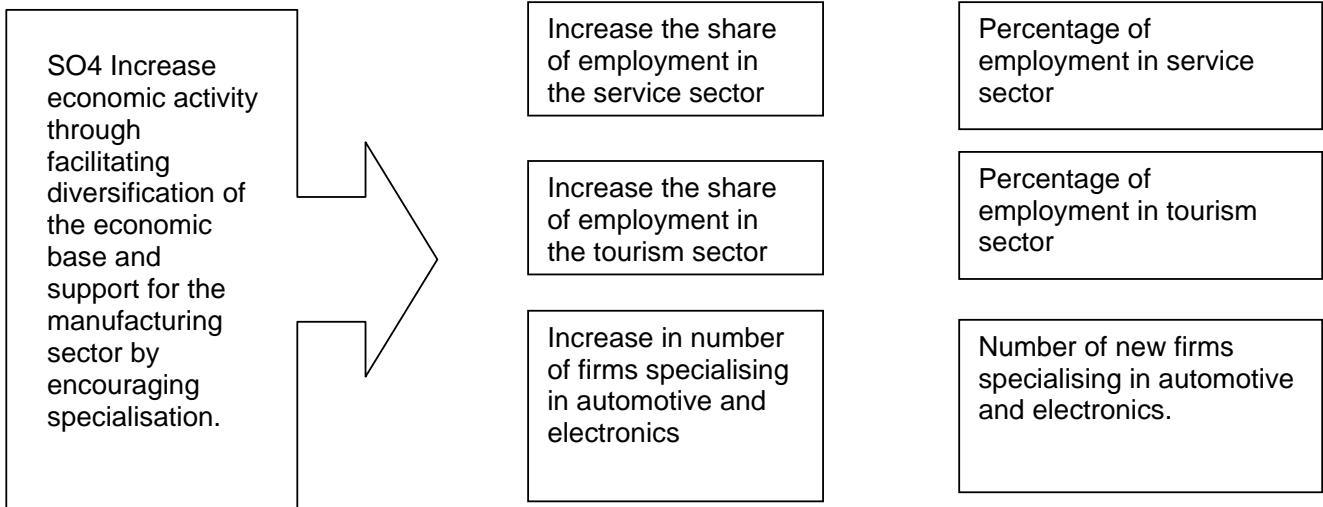
- 7.1 The Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) every year, providing an assessment of the effectiveness of the Local Development Plan. The AMR also identifies actions that need to be taken to rectify any issues raised through the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

SO1 Delivering a hierarchy of sustainable linked communities

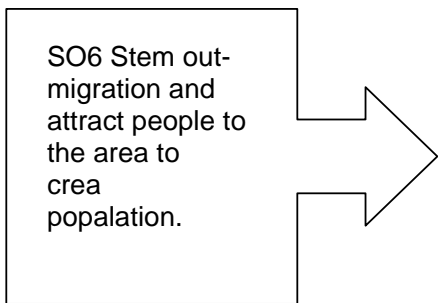
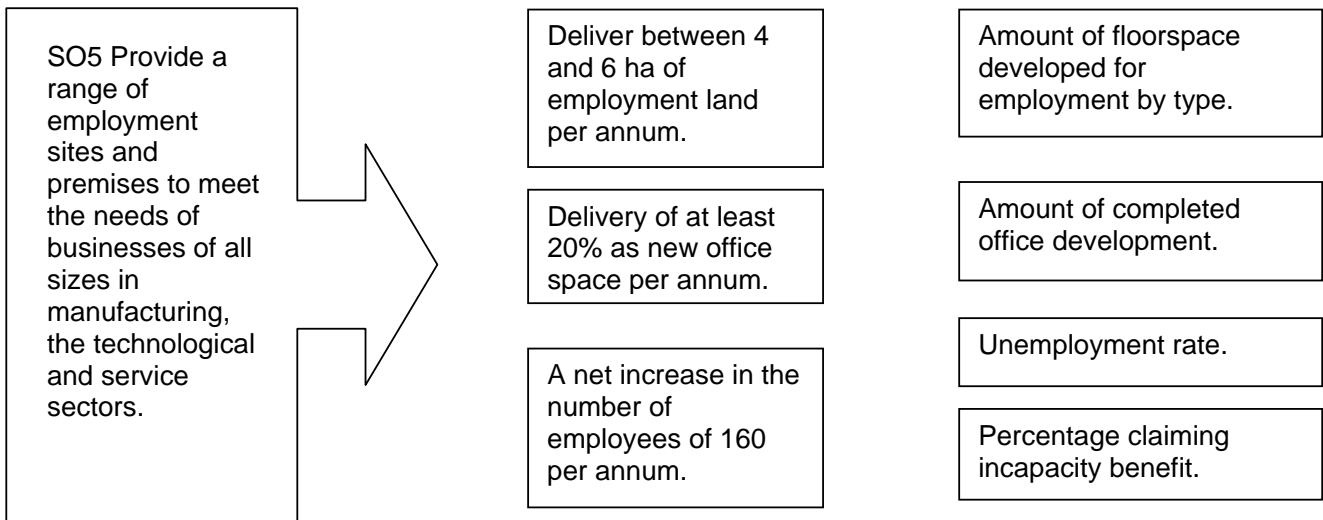




SO4 Diversify the economy

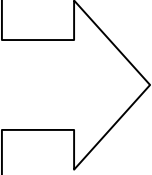


SO5 Provide employment sites



SO7 Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes

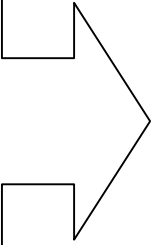
SO7 Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet local housing needs and attract people to the area.



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

SO8 Improve accessibility

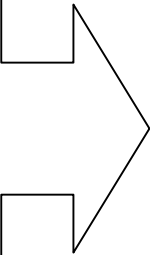
SO8 Improve accessibility to services through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, particularly, public transport, walking and cycling.



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

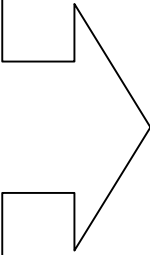
SO9 Improve education levels and skills

SO9 1 11.38promee

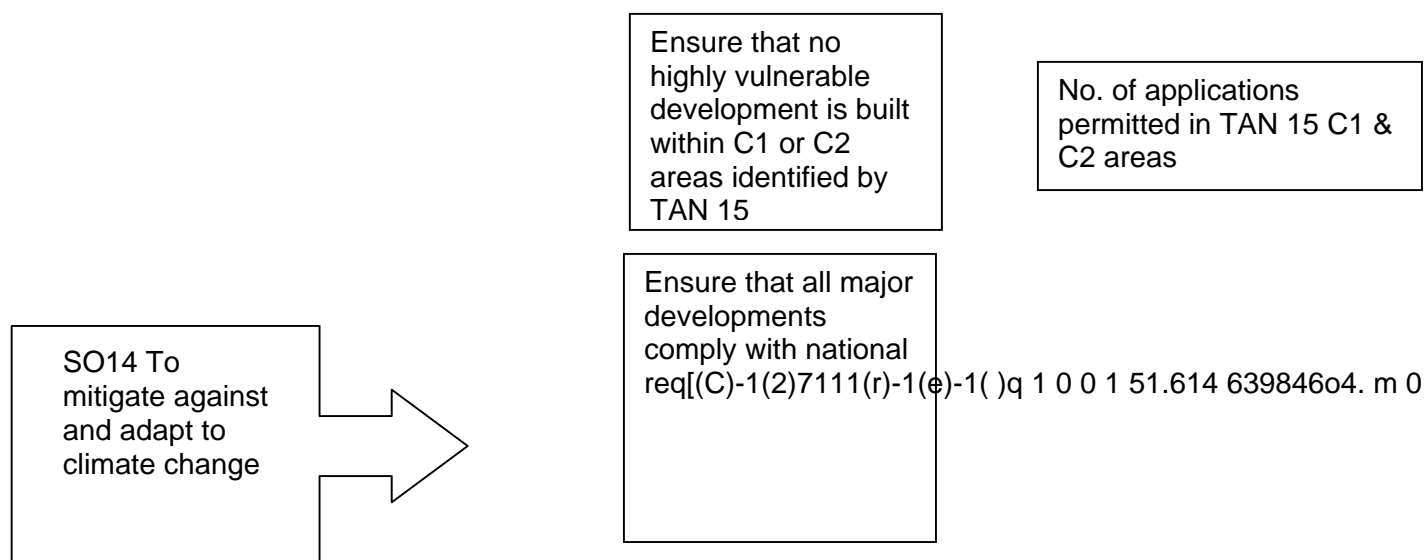


ET 1 - re 0 53()-1(n)-1(d)-1(u)-1(a)-1(l)-1()-2(i)-1(p)-1()]TJ 0-1(a)-1(e)4(e)-1(l)-1(o)-

[Empty text box]







Question 8

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

8.0 NEXT STEPS

8.0 NEXT STEPS

CANDIDATE SITE METHODOLOGY

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

f Small sites outside the existing settlement boundaries

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

f Small sites within existing settlements

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

Stage 1: Initial Planning Assessment

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

f Note relevant planning history

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

Stage 2: Expert Asses. re b57((e)1(a)is)1(pr(a)ie. r)-1eng 8.6

f Western Power Distribution

Stage 4 - Assessment against the LDP Preferred Strategy

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

Stage 5: Assessment of the site against LDP Sustainability Objectives

8.13 It is important to analyse each site in sustainability terms and to assess how they perform against each of the Sustainability Objectives as part of the Blaenau Gwent LDP Sustainability Appraisal (inc Strategic Environmental Assessment). The objectives form part of the SA framework which is a set of objectives, indicators and targets which will be used to assess the sustainability implications of the LDP. This was first issued in draft as part of the SA/SEA Scoping Report and following consultation the objectives have been revised and were approved by the Council.

8.14 7KH & RXQFLO 1 V 3 UHIHUHG 6 W LDP W I H b e s u b j e c t t o v i s i t a b i l i t y

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

DEPOSIT PLAN FORMAT

8.18 The Deposit Draft Plan will include detailed policies and site allocations to support the implementation of the Preferred Strategy. The Council envisage that the format of the Deposit Draft Plan will be as follows:

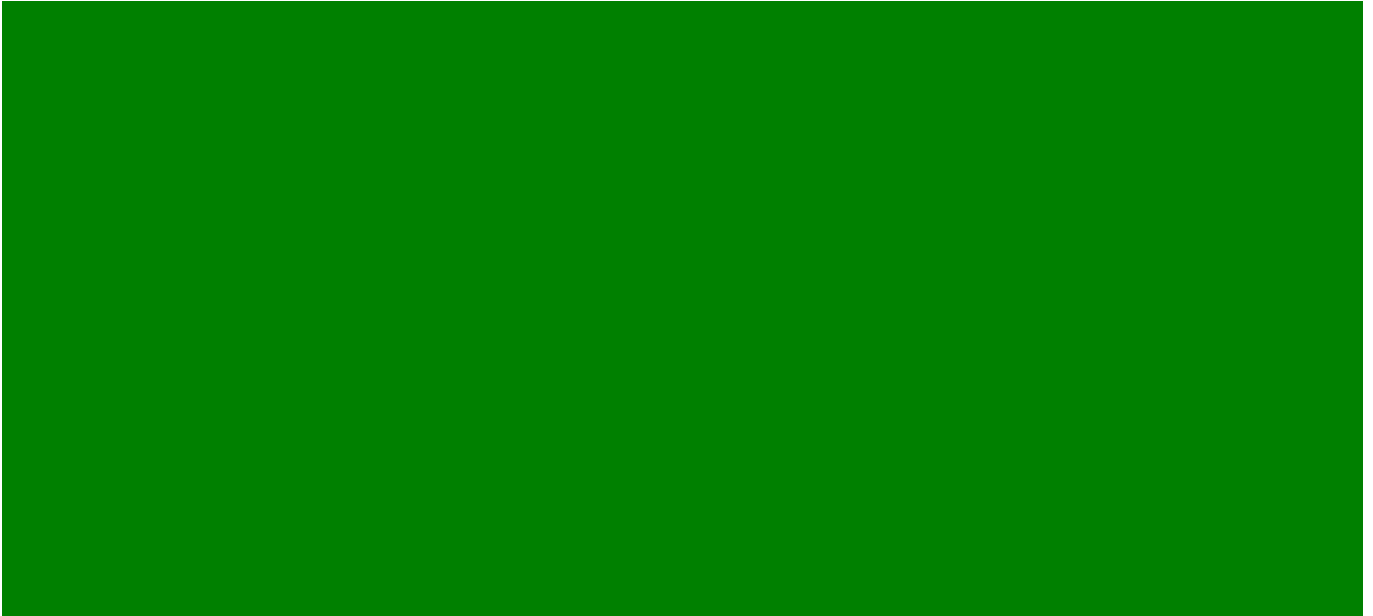
- Development Plan Process
- Spatial Profile
- Policy Context
- Vision and Objectives
- The Strategy including Key Diagram
- Strategic Policies
- Borough Wide Policies
- Implementation and Monitoring

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

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

Specific Topic	Status
Shopfronts	Draft for consultation
Security Fixtures for shopfronts	In preparation
Residential Extensions	Draft for consultation
Telecommunications	In preparation
Renewable Energy	Draft for consultation
Planning Obligations	Draft for consultation
Renewable Energy	In preparation
Geodiversity and geodiversity	Draft for consultation

9.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION



APPENDIX 2



STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY

Procedural

P1

<p>P2</p>	<p>The Plan and its policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment</p>	<p>An Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report will be prepared and published for consultation as part of the REPPSRWSESRDORWZO contain an appraisal of the LDP strategic options, REWLQQRWDWHSRCOM</p>
<p>Consistency Tests</p>		
<p>C1</p>	<p>It is a land use plan which has regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or adjoining areas</p>	<p>7BV3HVDWH has been prepared within the context of all relevant national, regional and local policy guidance (section 3 of the Preferred Strategy HVDORRGGWRWBERDUM emanating from the emerging LDP strategies of adjoining Local Authorities and has taken into account regional work for example, on waste, minerals and RMO</p> <p>BSIWSLSORWDBRQDLQ review of plans, policies and programmes, which have been considered in the preSDDWLRQIWA</p>
<p>C2</p>	<p>It has regard to national policy</p>	<p>Section 3 of the Draft Preferred Strategy has regard to QWLRQSDOQGDG milarly, the LDP SA Draft Scoping Report also contains a review of plans, policies and programmes, which have been considered LWSSDDWLRQIWA</p>
<p>C3</p>	<p>It has regard to the Wales Spatial Plan</p>	<p>Section 3 of the Draft Preferred Strategy Report directly refers to the Wales Spatial Plan and the Preferred Strategy reflects WSDWLDSDWRQ strategy, propositions and actions for Blaenau Gwent as part of the South East Wales area (the capital WEN</p>
<p>C4</p>	<p>It has regard to the Community Strategy</p>	<p>7BV3HVDWHH prepared in the context of Blaenau Gwent Community 3DORSDWEUWIRQLRQ HQBMRQQ2EHLRLRQXGV SRQW</p>
<p>Coherence and Efficiency Tests</p>		
<p>CE1</p>	<p>The plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations flow and, where cross boundary issues are relevant, it is compatible with the development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities</p>	<p>7BV3HVDWHH coherent and to flow from the identified national, regional and local policy framework including the DDWLDSDOQGWBPPEWVDWH</p> <p>It also takes into account work undertaken at the regional level, with neighbouring local authorities on apportioning projected household growth in South East Wales, the recommendations of the Regional Waste Plan, the emerging Regional DRW3DQQRW HRQBNLQ</p>

		<p>At this stage, the Preferred Strategy Report only identifies proposed strategic policies and broad locations for development. Detailed policies and allocations will be included in the full deposit plan.</p>
<p>CE2</p>	<p>The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust and credible evidence base</p>	<p>The Draft Preferred Strategy is realistic and appropriate as it follows from a robust evidence base and consultation process. The following studies have been completed:</p> <p>Joint Housing Land Availability - (2007)</p>

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



A land use plan that is subject to independent examination, which will form the statutory development plan for a Local Authority area. It should include a vision, strategy, area

