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County Borough Council



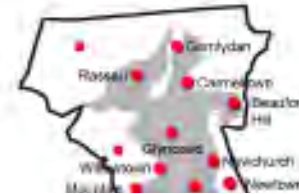
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The Ebbw Fawr Valley had a population of 23,622 in 2001 – a decrease of 1.3% from 1991. There are two main settlements within the district; Ebbw Vale and Cwm. The valley sides are generally very broad and become steeper to the South. Only one of the seven wards is among the most 100 deprived wards in Wales.



Ebbw Vale stands at the head of the valley of the Ebbw Fawr River and is the administrative centre of Blaenau Gwent County Borough. It is also the largest town of the County Borough. Ebbw Vale is rich in industrial heritage, with a history of iron and steel production.

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Hub: , ' , ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of Wales' retail centres, is the hub of the district. It contains a sports centre, a Higher and Further Education college, 2 comprehensive schools, a library and a small community hospital. Ebbw Vale also boasts a welfare ground that accommodates rugby, football and a county cricket wicket, together, with a regional indoor cricket school.

Ebbw Vale town centre contains over 100 commercial units. The out-of-town retail shopping mall at the Garden Festival site has a sub-regional catchment and contains over 40 commercial units.

Residential areas: EBBW VALE (itself is a cluster of seventeen distinct settlements) Rassau, Hilltop, Beaufort Hill, Newtown, Garden City, Garnlydan, Carmeltown, Glyncoed, Newchurch, Newtown, Willowtown, Pont-y-Gof, Mountain Air, Briery Hill, Ty Llwyn, Waun Lwyd and Victoria.

Cwm is the secondary residential settlement within the valley.

### Employment Areas

Large industrial estates are located to the north of Ebbw Vale Town Centre along the Heads of the Valley Road. Rassau Industrial Estate is the largest in the County Borough giving this settlement an important employment role.

to the Steelworks site. A station at Cwm is a possibility for the future.

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A rail link to Cardiff has been established for the first time since 1962.

North. The Brecon Beacons is a short distance to the North and can be accessed via Llangynidr from Beaufort or by way of the A465 and B4560.



West. The A465 connects Ebbw Vale to the historic town of Tredegar with the major country park of Parc Bryn Bach. Further along the A465 is Merthyr – a sub-regional shopping centre.

East. The A465 links the district to employment opportunities and a cinema at Brynmawr. The A4047 links Ebbw Vale to Beaufort and Brynmawr.

South. The A4046 links Ebbw Vale to the southern end of the borough;





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Biodiversity: There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (Statutory International Sites) within the Blaenau Gwent Planning Authority boundary. There are however, two SACs within the Brecon Beacons National Park area of Blaenau Gwent: Usk Bat Sites and Cwm Clydach Woodlands, each designated under the EC Habitats and Species Directives. Usk Bat Site is one of the best areas in the United Kingdom for the lesser horseshoe bat.

There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Statutory National) within the HARP area

A number of candidate Local Nature Reserves have been proposed for the County Borough area. In the Ebbw Fawr Valley area, these

domestically when compared to the regional averages, but less industrially than neighbouring Authorities. This may potentially be a reflection of Blaenau Gwent's housing conditions - there is a

resident population owns one car only, with 35% of Blaenau  
Gwent's residents neither owning nor having access to a car or van.

In comparison to regional and national statistics

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### Deprivation (see Appendix 1)

Four out of the six wards in this area are Communities First areas, namely Rassau & Garnlydan, Ebbw North and South and Cwm as a result of their high levels of deprivation.

Seven out of the sixteen Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in this area are within the top 25% of LSOAs, indicating high levels of overall deprivation as measured by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008. Many LSOAs have multiple deprivation indicating real issues of income, employment, health and education & skills. Deprivation relating to employment and health is a particular issue in this HARP area. It is also interesting to note the difference in areas adjacent to each other. For example in Cwm there is a LSOA that ranks 237<sup>th</sup> out of 1896 in overall deprivation adjoining another which ranks 1356<sup>th</sup> out of 1896.

Children: There has been a consistent increase in the percentage of babies born with low birth weight (LBW) across Wales from 7.5% in 1998 to 7.7% in 2002. The increase in Blaenau Gwent as been more marked rising from 7.5% in 1998 to 10.1% in 2002. As a result Blaenau Gwent has the highest proportion of LBW babies in Wales. LBW is strongly connected with poor health and deprivation and LBW babies are more likely to experience health problems through child and adulthood. Recent evidence of causes of LBW include mothers smoking during pregnancy, poor diet and excessive alcohol and drug consumption during pregnancy. Sub unitary research shows that LBW rates were slightly worse than the county borough average in the wards of Cwm and Ebbw Vale South.

From the needs analysis carried out for the Children's and Young People's Plan the following issues have been identified:

- Blaenau Gwent has the second worst record of all LHBs in Wales for percentage of 5 year olds with dental caries
- Levels of education attainments by the age of 7 are very low and are falling
- Key needs are to support families to address parents skills and ability to support their children's basic skills development. Basic Skills Agency in 2002 estimated Blaenau Gwent to have the second highest proportion of adults with poor basic skills in literacy (33%) and numeracy (38%) compared to Welsh averages of 28% and 32% respectively.
- Pupil aspirations are inextricably linked to their achievement and low expectations can contribute to underachievement. Often low expectations and poor self-esteem can be part of familial patterns. From the Census 2001, Blaenau Gwent was the second worst area for percentage of 16-24 year olds with no educational, vocational or professional qualification
- The Communities that Care survey found that Blaenau Gwent young people showed high rates of regular drinking (21%) and binge drinking (31%) despite a high perception of future harm and a relatively higher proportion with a family member with serious drug or alcohol problems. Young people in Blaenau Gwent were significantly less likely than the national average to have ever used illegal drugs or sniffed glue – 12% in comparison to 19%. Young people in Blaenau Gwent are more sensible about smoking than their peers across the UK.
- Overall the Communities that Care Survey 2005 showed that young people had lower risk factor scores and higher protective factor scores for future health and behavioural problems than the UK average. The only exceptions were –

higher scores for community neglect as a risk factor largely due to a perception of 'lots of fights' and 'lots of empty and abandoned buildings'; higher scores for low commitment to school largely due to higher levels of exclusion, suspension and expulsion and higher scores for early problem behaviour largely due to greater use of alcohol and arrest rates.

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Using the analysis of need and views from practitioners working in the county borough, it is clear that Blaenau Gwent and in particular the Ebbw Fawr Valley has many issues to address. That said, there are a number of key opportunities for the area given its location and rich industrial heritage.

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- Since the demise of heavy industry the towns and villages are seeking to redefine themselves
- Throughout Blaenau Gwent there are poor quality buildings, some dating from Victorian times, other more modern construction of the 1960s.
- Lack of visitor accommodation and provision
- Poor maintenance of public land and highways
- Lack of business confidence in the area
- Lack of community pride
- Poor signage to towns, villages and places of interest
- Low levels of income
- Smoking, poor diet and obesity rates are significantly higher than the Wales average
- Blaenau Gwent has the highest rates of hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions in Wales, with particularly high rates for women
- Adult population has a high rate of excess alcohol consumption
- Respiratory disease remains high, and death rates do not appear to be reducing.
- Poor mental health (mild level of severity)

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- Rich industrial heritage
- Varied landscape

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- Integration of existing town centre with development on The Works site
- Anti social behaviour in certain areas
- Inadequate highway network to cope with planned development in the area
- Need to develop a wider choice of modern housing in most of the settlements
- Pockets of deprivation throughout the area

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- Redevelopment of steelworks site
- Learning Campus
- Possible extension of railway to Ebbw Vale town centre
- Good road communication to A465



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The actions that need to be taken to address the issues are captured in a number of strategies and plans.

The key documents and a brief summary are set out below.

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The Community Plan sets out the vision of making Blaenau Gwent a better place to live, work and visit. The Plan aims to develop new ways of working by building partnerships with local communities, voluntary and business sectors, the local authority and other agencies, in order to change the area and meet community needs and ambitions.

The Community Plan identifies 7 key themes under which are aims, key projects and a monitoring body. The key themes are:

- Regeneration
- Health, Social Care and Well-being
- Lifelong Learning
- Environment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Culture and Sport

- Stem out-migration and attract people to the area to create a more balanced population.
- Provide a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet local housing needs and attract people to the area.
- Improve accessibility to services through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, particularly, public transport, walking and cycling.
- Improve education levels and skills through supporting infrastructure development of the Learning Campus, new schools and integrated education services, including life-long learning.
- Create an accessible network of green open spaces and high quality leisure infrastructure to promote participation in sport and active recreation to improve health and well-being.
- Capitalise on the unique landscape and natural heritage, foster sustainable tourism and promote community pride.
- Protect, enhance and manage the diversity of the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent through the identification of ecological corridors
- Raise the standard of design to improve the quality of the physical and natural environment; and protect

and enhance Blaenau Gwent's historic and cultural environment.

- To minimise further climate change contributions and mitigate its predicted effects on the County Borough.

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

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.

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The draft Children and Young People's Plan is a 3-year plan, which sets out how all agencies in Blaenau Gwent working with children and young people will cooperate to achieve common goals, to improve outcomes for children and young people. The plan articulates the Partnership's vision, and details the actions it will take, in order to bring about changes in children and young people's lives. The vision for the Partnership is: "Working together we will

strive to ensure that all children and young people will be supported to achieve their full potential”.

The Plan represents a new way of thinking about how local services need to change in order to ensure that all children and young people achieve the Welsh Assembly Government’s seven core aims by ensuring that young people:

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

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

Principle 1: Diversify the Economy and Develop Manufacturing  
Build on the diversification of the local economy by promoting and supporting new areas of opportunity, and developing the strengths of Blaenau Gwent’s manufacturing industry.

Principle 2: Boost Business Support and Enterprise  
Scale up targeted business support and promote enterprise and self-employment as a means of growing economic output and raising activity rates.

Principle 3: Promote Learning and Modern Skills  
Create a lifelong learning culture with a commitment to improving basic and essential skills through to participation in higher education for all.

Principle 4: Focus Investment in key Communities  
Focus investment in Blaenau Gwent’s key communities so that they are more desirable places to live, learn, and work.

Principle 5: Maximise the Ebbw Vale Opportunity County Wide  
Maximise the value of the Ebbw Vale opportunity by linking the Corus site and the town centre and by ensuring that other towns and villages can benefit from the transformational opportunity.

Principle 6: Develop the Transport Infrastructure  
Invest in key projects to enhance external connections and to

The strategy sets key housing objectives across tenure for the

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The policy framework is dominated by county borough level plans, with few plans or strategies at a sub unitary level. In ten out of the sixteen wards in the county borough Community First Action Plans have been prepared.

The Steering Group felt that part of the consultation exercise should focus on what the outcomes for the HARP areas should be. These outcomes would be based on the needs identified from existing plans and strategies and from the analysis of need as part of the HARP preparation.

Firstly the plans that have a direct contribution to make to the themes under the Turning Heads strategy were determined via a mapping exercise. The plans used were:

- Children's and Young Peoples Plan
- Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy
- Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy
- Blaenau Gwent's Draft Regeneration Strategy
- Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century
- Safer Blaenau Gwent Partnership Strategic Assessment 2008-09
- Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020
- Communities First Action Plans
- Blaenau Gwent 2010

The Community Plan was not included in this list as it was considered out of date.

Secondly, common outcomes were identified from all these plans and a form of words agreed to capture the actions that individual service areas, partner organisations are seeking via their individual plans. The outcomes for each HARP area were broadly similar therefore there was no difference in the consultation undertaken in each HARP area.

Each strategic outcome is a statement for what should change in the area in order to address some of the needs/issues in the area. Fourteen draft strategic outcomes were agreed and these formed the basis of discussions at the four workshops. Participants were asked to add/amend the draft strategic outcomes and to suggest new outcomes if they felt that there were major omissions.

The strategic outcomes presented at the workshops area as follows:

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- 1. Adults will have fewer barriers to participation in employment, training and education
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- 2. Young people will have increased educational awareness and aspirations, with more taking part in education, training and employment







1. Adults of all ages will have fewer barriers and more opportunities to participate in employment, training, retraining and education
2. Young people will have increased educational awareness and aspirations with more taking part in education, training and employment
3. There will be more training and employment opportunities in the service sector including tourism and leisure
4. The natural environment will be protected, enhanced and more widely used by all for recreation and leisure.
5. More people will be physically active
6. People will be eating a balanced and healthy diet which includes more fruit, vegetables and salad
7. People will be better informed and able to improve their own physical and mental well being by eating more healthily, smoking less and enjoying alcohol more responsibly
8. People's understanding of their finances will be improved, leading to better financial management
9. There is greater respect, awareness and understanding within the community promoting community integration and pride
10. Due to either demolition, landscaping or high quality renovation schemes there are fewer derelict, neglected buildings or patches of land
11. There are more opportunities to access information and support from organisations that impact on community life
12. There will be increased support and practical measures for families and young children
13. Schools will be a valued resource for communities that lack other facilities and used out of school hours for a range of activities for all ages
14. There will be more businesses set up and managed by the community
15. There will be more support for starting and sustaining local businesses
16. There will be increased support for and take up of local sustainable energy and recycling initiatives
17. More varied cultural activities and facilities are available aimed at all ages, residents and visitors

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## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Ebbw Vale is the central commercial hub not just for this valley but for the county borough as a whole. Investment in the Steelworks site is a multi-million pound regeneration scheme and of sub-regional significance.

In addition to the former steelworks redevelopment, the Council and its partners have already started work in regenerating the town centre of Ebbw Vale.

The result of this assessment process has been the determination of priority projects, reserve projects and projects requiring further development. Details of all the projects are set out below for your information together with the score. The maximum that a project could score is 20 points. The priority projects are shown on Plan 1.

d. Church Street Regeneration

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a. Northern Gateway Public Realm Enhancements – Market Street, James Street

This project has been developed with the support of the former WDA and urban design consultants. Significant streetscape works are required to enhance the environmental quality of the public realm of this key gateway. Detailed designs have been prepared.

b. Physical Regeneration Grants

There is a need to assist existing and new businesses, renovate and modernise town centre properties, thereby creating and safeguarding jobs and contributing to the enhancement of the physical environment.

c. Cross Valley Community Links – Former Steelworks/Town Centre/Church Street

This scheme will create 4 pedestrian links to and from the steelworks redevelopment providing access to the new facilities on the former steelworks site but as important giving resident and visitor access to the town centre.





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#### Church Street – Provision of affordable homes

This project aims to address 2 significant problems in Church Street - a large number of long term vacant domestic and commercial properties and a shortage of affordable homes. Future use of the properties may include use as a home, office space or demolition and clearance.

#### Childcare Centre, Cwm

To provide purpose built, high quality child friendly accommodation with additional facilities for school age children and the wider community. Mini Allsorts Playgroup has provided childcare in Cwm for 14 years and has used other organisations venues. A dedicated building would allow the playgroup to expand their services to school age children and hours of operation to beyond the school day to meet the needs of children and families. Quality childcare and out of school provision enables parents to work or train or prepare for work. Cwm has a very high proportion of lone parent families in work and one of the highest proportion of children aged 0-14 years living in the area.

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#### Implementing Priority Industrial Estate Regenerating Strategies

A regeneration strategy for the Rassau Industrial Estate has been

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Throughout the process of preparing the HARPs, one of the issues



across the county borough will be able to access the facility and grant scheme.

### Raising Young People's Aspirations

This project seeks to improve emotional well being and raise aspirations in children, young people and families by organising a series of events and training for practitioners who work with children and young people. Emotional well being is vital for underpinning young people's ongoing development and ability to participate effectively in society.

### Improving Sexual Health & Relationships in Young People

Building on the success of current Reach Out for Sexual Health project, this project will increase work to reduce teenage conceptions, continue to provide condom card schemes and raise young people's awareness of sexual health issues. This work forms a vital component of the education and personal development of young people.

### Community Transport for Blaenau Gwent.

To undertake an audit into the current needs of communities , to develop targeted transport schemes, co-ordination of existing transport resources and to stabilise and build capacity of the existing transport sector to deliver a targeted transport programme.

### Green Open Space

Blaenau Gwent has been found to be grossly deficient in the basic provision that no person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of natural greenspace. Through BTCV projects (submitted separately) Family Employment Initiative and Green Exercise this could be achieved. Therefore a joint bid between BGCBC and BTCV is recommended.

Family Employment Initiative: This initiative is designed to engage families in targeted areas using local green space as a catalyst to economic activity. It is part of HoV employment and training strategy. It demonstrates that community led development of green space which is in close proximity of neighbourhoods has a positive social and well being affect on families living nearby. Up to three sites could be improved per annum at an average cost of £7,500 per site.

### Green Exercise – Site Improvements

The project will engage with people who are inactive due to long term health limiting conditions and encourage and support them in gaining an active lifestyle and ensuring they are ready to look for employment whilst receiving specialist support of through the project. The project will also offer a service to employers to assist their staff to commute actively, use company grounds for physical exercise. Up to 4 sites per annum could be improved at an average of £5,000 per site.

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### Children's University:

This project rewards out of school hours learning in a variety of

to 8 yr olds, Children's University accredits 9 to 13 yrs and the Youth University operates for 14 to 19 yr olds. To develop this initiative in the county borough a full time administrator is required. This initiative would be suitable for roll out across the HoV area supported by a team of administrators.

#### Head for Arts

This is a collaboration between four local authorities providing a community arts service across the eastern HoV area as a medium for stimulating regeneration. The projects aims to nurture and encourage the creative talent of participants and to embed arts and crafts skills into communities so that they can develop their own high quality community events and activities. This application for funding is to enhance the programme of activities with the purchase and maintenance of a van to transport the specialised equipment and materials to the various communities.

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BGCBC established an internal officer working group whose initial

The workshops were held on:

- Upper Sirhowy Valley, Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November

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| Beaufort Primary Multi Use Playing Field                               | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Garnlydan Shops Environmental Improvements                             | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Road Access Improvement Main Road/South Street junction, Beaufort Hill | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Car Park Beaufort Hill School, Bangor Road, Beaufort Hill              | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Road Access Improvement North Street/Main Road, Beaufort Hill          | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Traffic Calming, Frost Rd, Beaufort Hill                               | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Crossing Patrol, Beaufort Hill   | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Road Improvement Swan Crescent, Beaufort Hill                          | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Garden, play area & storage cabin                                      | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Environmental Improvement waste ground, Beaufort Rise                  | Needs further investigation |     |         |              |         |              |         |              |

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| Emotional Resilience | Needs more development on delivery   |         |        |             |         |              |         |              |
| Community Transport  | Needs more development on delivery   |         |        |             |         |              |         |              |
| Health of Children   | Needs more development on delivery   |         |        |             |         |              |         |              |
| Green Open Space     | Joint bid of Access to Green Open Space and BTCV projects – Green Exercise & Family Employment Initiative recommended<br>2 GO""%"" |         |        |             |         |              |         |              |

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It is envisaged that the HoV Programme will undertake monitoring on the individual projects. If BGCBC becomes aware of potential underspend, HoV will be notified as soon as possible. It is hoped that any underspend released from a project will be recycled into another project in that same HARP area.

Information from the HOV Programme Team will be useful in evaluating and revising the plan for 2010/11 funding.

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From the workshops held in 2008, a database of contacts has been set up of those people who wished to be kept informed and involved in the development of HARPs.

Information was also captured at these workshops on what participants felt worked well with the 2008 process and what worked less well. These comments will form part of evaluation of the 2008 process and will inform the process for 2009.

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| Cwm 1             | 433                 | 577                | 197           | 637           | 245                      | 1675          |
| Cwm 2             | 237                 | 362                | 256           | 171           | 236                      | 615           |
| Cwm 3             | 1356                | 1420               | 898           | 845           | 1265                     | 1578          |
| Ebbw Vale South 1 | 109                 | 327                | 109           | 16            | 109                      | 1422          |
| Ebbw Vale South 2 | 553                 | 575                | 420           | 612           | 558                      | 1066          |
| Ebbw Vale South 3 | 508                 | 542                | 421           | 334           | 439                      | 1348          |
| Ebbw Vale North 1 | 396                 | 411                | 240           | 362           | 581                      | 819           |
| Ebbw Vale North 2 | 75                  | 77                 | 53            | 156           | 105                      | 1456          |
| Ebbw Vale North 3 | 1313                | 1197               | 809           | 1128          | 1073                     | 1656          |
| Badminton 1       | 501                 | 524                | 470           | 222           | 615                      | 1723          |
| Badminton 2       | 1056                | 1075               | 673           | 1196          | 997                      | 1859          |
| Rassau 1          | 948                 | 1187               | 663           | 1020          | 923                      | 1746          |
| Rassau 2          | 126                 | 170                | 77            | 330           | 281                      | 1421          |
| Beaufort 1        | 551                 | 689                | 394           | 388           | 699                      | 1682          |
| Beaufort 2        | 93                  | 114                | 67            | 185           | 207                      | 1568          |
| Beaufort 3        | 1212                | 1426               | 1095          | 821           | 1282                     | 1435          |