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**THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND**

3rd September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee will be held in Via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 8th September, 2020 at 10.00 am.

***Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.***

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

**AGENDA**

**Pages**

**1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

2. **APOLOGIES**
- To receive.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
- To receive.
4. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**
- To consider.
5. **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 10
- To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 5th March, 2020.
- (Please note the minutes are for accuracy points only).
6. **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 11 - 14
- To receive the minutes of the special Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.
- (Please note the minutes are for accuracy only).
7. **ACTION SHEET - 5TH MARCH 2020** 15 - 16
- To receive the Action Sheet.
8. **PROPOSED SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21** 17 - 26
- To consider the report of the Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.
9. **CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION AND WELSH GOVERNMENT ASPIRE ROLL OUT** 27 - 34
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.
10. **INTEGRATED RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT PILOT** 35 - 38
- To consider the report of the Service Manager Regeneration and Development.

11. **REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - REVISED DELIVERY AGREEMENT** 39 - 116

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

12. **STRATEGIC HOUSING; CCRCD VIABILITY GAP FUNDING** 117 - 130

To consider the report of the Team Manager.

**EXEMPT ITEM(S)**

To receive and consider the following report(s) which in the opinion of the Proper Officer is/are an exempt item(s) taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption is available on a schedule maintained by the Proper Officer).

13. **LLANHILLETH PIT HEAD BATHS STUDY** 131 - 146

To consider the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.

To: Councillor J. Hill (Chair)  
Councillor P. Edwards (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor G. Collier  
Councillor M. Cross  
Councillor G. A. Davies  
Councillor M. Day  
Councillor L. Elias  
Councillor M. Holland  
Councillor H. McCarthy  
Councillor J. Millard  
Councillor J. C. Morgan  
Councillor J. P. Morgan  
Councillor L. Parsons  
Councillor K. Rowson  
Councillor B. Willis

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director  
Chief Officers

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE  
REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2003**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)**

Councillors J. Hill  
 M. Cross  
 G.A. Davies  
 G.L. Davies  
 P. Edwards  
 H. McCarthy  
 J.C. Morgan  
 K. Pritchard

**AND:** Corporate Director Regeneration & Community  
 Services  
 Head of Regeneration  
 Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities  
 Team Manager Connected Communities  
 Scrutiny Officer  
 Marketing Projects Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for Councillors K. Rowson, B. Willis and M. Day.</p>	

<p><b>No. 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>Councillors J.C. Morgan &amp; M. Cross declared an interest in the following item:</p> <p>Item No. 7 Targeted Regeneration Investment (6 The Circle, Tredegar)</p>	
<p><b>No. 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020 were submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p>Councillor G. Davies reported that his attendance had been omitted from the minutes.</p> <p>Councillor M. Cross referred to the third paragraph on page 14 of the minutes and stated that the 'TA Centre' should be amended to read the 'Tredegar Arms Hotel'.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p><b>No. 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET – 23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY, 2020</u></b></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u><i>Action Sheet 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 (Request for the Chair of the Member Leisure Review Task and Finish Group be invited to the meeting to provide feedback on the work of the Task and Finish Group).</i></u></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that a special meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee was held yesterday where the Chair of the Task and Finish Group provided a comprehensive report on the findings of the Group.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 6</b></p>	<p><b><u>EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN 2020-2030</u></b></p>	

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Connected Communities.

The Team Manager presented the report which provided an update on the development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan which was designed to represent the needs of the Authority, and was developed based on statistical data, strategic documents, surveys and stakeholder engagement events.

A Member said in order for the Plan to be a success, employers across the Borough needed to have confidence in the Local Authority. He expressed concern regarding a recent press release outlining the failed negotiations between the Council and a major company in Tredegar, resulting in them considering relocating outside of the Borough.

In response the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services said the Plan was very important for Blaenau Gwent and brought a leadership role focussing on building skills in the area. In relation to the issue raised, the Corporate Director confirmed that negotiations were currently ongoing with the company regarding their plans, and whilst they had chosen to take these discussions via the press, he assured that this instance was not a fair reflection of the Council's relationship with the business community across the Borough which was very good.

Another Member said he was pleased with the Plan, but would have liked a breakdown of companies that were providing in-house training to apprentices in Blaenau Gwent, and the Head of Regeneration undertook to provide a report on the apprenticeship scheme.

A discussion ensued regarding training opportunities for youngsters leaving school, and the Corporate Director explained that some companies operating within the Borough had headquarters elsewhere, and looked to the Council for their recruitment and training needs, and the Aspire scheme was a dedicated response to that need, however, there were other companies that had their own processes in place.

In response to a question raised by a Member regarding education, the Team Manager Connected Communities said

**Head of  
Regeneration**

	<p>one of the priorities of the Plan was very much focussed on education and schools. It was recognised that engagement with schools needed to start at primary school level, and one of the proposals was for Tech Valleys to create stronger links between schools and the business community, particularly at primary level, to ensure that learning pathways are seamless, and looking at how businesses can work better with schools and add value to the school system.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee support the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan; and endorse approval by the Executive Committee (Option 2).</p>	
<p><b>No. 7</b></p>	<p><b><u>TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT</u></b></p> <p>Councillors J.C. Morgan &amp; M. Cross declared an interest in this matter, namely 6 The Circle, Tredegar.</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided an update on the Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding opportunity, and sought agreement of further local projects. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member expressed concern regarding the progress of the Llanhilleth Pithead Baths which continued to be an eyesore in the community. He said many Councillors had made efforts in the past to have the building demolished, and expressed concern that other uses for the building were now being considered, which he felt would delay progress even further.</p> <p>In response the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities said Consultants had been commissioned to undertake a study to consider options for the building. A structural assessment had also been undertaken, and the outcome of the Consultant's study may be that removal of the building was the most feasible option.</p>	



	<p>The Chair reported that a meeting had been held with the Consultants, along with Ward Members and the Executive on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. He looked forward to receiving the outcome of the study, which would hopefully and provide an indication of residents' aspirations for the building.</p> <p>A brief discussion ensued when the Officer stated that the outcome of the study would direct the source of funding. In response to a question raised, the Officer confirmed that the consultants had been asked to consider demolition costs.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the Truck Shop in Tredegar, the Corporate Director confirmed that agreement had been reached with CADW, and formal 'sign off' was awaited. The Member asked that this be included in the action sheet for the next meeting.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities confirmed that the future use of the Truck Shop site was included in the Tredegar Town Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee endorse the approach outlined in Section 2 of the report (Option 2), specifically:</p> <p>Thematic - Property Enhancement Grants;  Capital Project Proposal – Boxworks; and  Development – Brynmawr/Nantyglo, Pithead Baths, Tredegar Town Masterplan and Ebbw Vale Masterplan</p>	<b>Corporate Director  Regeneration &amp;  Community  Services</b>
<b>No. 8</b>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 7<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2020</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted.</p>	

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)**

Councillors J. Hill  
 M. Day  
 P. Edwards  
 M. Holland  
 J. Millard  
 M. Moore  
 K. Pritchard  
 K. Rowson  
 B. Willis

**AND:** Managing Director  
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services  
 Head of Governance & Partnerships  
 Service Manager  
 Policy Officer  
 Marketing Projects Officer  
 Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities  
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p>	

	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.A. Davies and G.L. Davies.	
<b>No. 3</b>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<b>No. 4</b>	<p><b><u>DECARBONISATION PLAN 2020-2030</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director which presented the Council's Decarbonisation Plan which sets out a data driven strategic approach to addressing the carbon emissions in response to climate change.</p> <p>The Managing Director presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein including that the Welsh Government had published a delivery plan 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' with the ambition for the Welsh Public Sector to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Decarbonisation Plan sets out how the Council intend to deliver on this ambition over the next ten years. The Council had already taken a number of actions to reduce the carbon impact, such as, reducing energy use in schools through the Re:Fit programme by installing energy saving measures across a range of buildings; fleet review and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the Breakdown of Nine Carbon Transitions in relation to Waste. The Policy Officer said that emissions from the transport used to collect waste was taken into account and there was an element of double counting which could not be separated.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding achieving the deadline to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the massive impact this would have on industry and businesses. The Managing Director said that as a public sector organisation, how we respond in a public leadership role was important and started with addressing the climate impact of our own operations. With regard to the impact on industry and businesses, there was a need for behavioural change as part of a larger transformation of working practices. There may be huge opportunities for new renewable industries to emerge to</p>	

address demand and for Blaenau Gwent to be part of an emerging low carbon technology industry.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services echoed the Managing Director's comments, and said that opportunities were rapidly developing for renewable industries to emerge, and the Council would work with businesses to move towards a carbon neutral transition pathway. There were already a number of battery companies in Blaenau Gwent developing a network of local charging points for electric vehicles.

In response to a Member's question regarding Scope 3 (other indirect emissions) such as woodland and urban trees, the Managing Director said that the calculation in the Decarbonisation Plan showed a small allowance as it only related to the Council's Local Nature Reserves which were only a small part of the Council's total land holdings. The Council had adopted five new Local Nature Reserves, and in relation to tree planting consideration would need to be given to the types of trees and the most suitable locations.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services commented that there was now an opportunity to increase significantly the number of trees being planted to encourage biodiversity, it was particularly important to get the right types of trees e.g. native species. Progress had also been made to reintroduce trees into residential developments for economic purposes and help decarbonisation.

A Member commented that he welcomed the adoption of the Local Nature Reserves and would like this to be included as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

Another Member commented on the amount of data in the Decarbonisation Plan and enquired if Officers were confident that the evidence was accurate. The Service Manager said that international standards had been used to calculate the data and most of the data had already been in existence. International formulas had been applied to the existing data and he was fairly confident with the accuracy of the data.


<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the proposed Decarbonisation Plan be supported and the five newly adopted Local Nature Reserves be included in the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review prior to approval by Executive and Council.</p>	
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<p>Councillor Mark Holland requested that it be noted that he did not support the Committee's recommendation.</p>	
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**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Action Sheet**

**Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
6	<b><u>Employment and Skills Plan 2020-2023</u></b>  A report to be provided to Committee on the Apprenticeship Scheme.	Bethan McPherson	A report to be included in the 2020/21 Forward Work Programme.
7	<b><u>Targeted Regeneration Investment</u></b>  A Member requested an update on the Company Shop.	Amy Taylor	The Company Shop will be included within a place making study that will be subject to a funding application to the TRI programme. This will consider future opportunities for the building along with potential uses.
8	<b><u>Forward Work Programme</u></b>  A Member requested a list of proposed sites for Hydro power be provided.	Amy Taylor	A copy of the energy prospectus containing the proposed hydro sites was sent to the member.   Energy Prospectus.pdf

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# Agenda Item 8

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Report Subject: **Proposed Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2020-21**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Councillor John Hill, Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
July 2020	July 2020	25.08.20			09.09.20	Executive FWP – 02.09.20	Council FWP – 24.9.20	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present the Regeneration Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020-21 (Appendix 1) and to seek approval from Committee.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
  - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's recently revised Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
  - 2.3 The Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes are also aligned to the Audit Committee, Executive Committee and Council Forward Work Programmes.
  - 2.4 The Work Programme is a fluid document and there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
  - 2.5 Informal Scrutiny Briefing Sessions were held in July 2020, in order for all Scrutiny Members to contribute to the Forward Work Programmes, prior to formal approval of the Forward Work Programmes at the first Scrutiny Committees in September 2020.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
  - 3.1 The work programmes have been endorsed by the relevant departments of the Council.
  - 3.2 The work programmes have been considered and endorsed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny.

3.3 **Option 1**

To agree the Forward Work Programme for the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

**Option 2**

To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

## DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme

Provisional Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>  Deadline: 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2020	1. Llanhilleth Pit Head Baths Study	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider Llanhilleth Pit Head Baths Study outcome and process for development prior and recommend approval to the Executive.	Owen Ashton / Amy Taylor	Executive
	2. Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider the rollout of a Regional, Aspire Programme and recommend endorsement to the Executive.	Bethan McPherson	Executive
	3. Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) Pilot Project	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To bring the IRT pilot project to Scrutiny for consideration and to recommend approval to the Executive.	Owen Ashton	Executive
	4. Replacement Local Development Plan – Delivery Agreement	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider the of the Revised Delivery Agreement and recommend approval to Council.	Lynda Healy	Council
	5. Strategic Housing – CCRCV Viability Gap Funding	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide an update on current housing delivery and seek endorsement of the forward work programme, including associated funding streams.	Bethan McPherson / Julie McKim	Executive
	Trinity Chapel Update <i>To note: report removed as Covid has delayed the funding process and once the decision on funding has been made it will be brought back in with a fuller update.</i>	<b>Information Only</b> To receive a progress update on Trinity Chapel, Abertillery	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	

**DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme**

<b>Dates / Deadlines</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Executive / Council</b>
<b>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020</b>  Deadline: 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	1. Economy – Post COVID-19 Economic Recovery	<b>Progress Update</b> To present the strategic approach for BG to the economic recovery post COVID lockdown.	Ellie Fry / Richard Crook	Executive

## DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme

Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020</b>  Deadline: 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	1. Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider the Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan Document and recommend endorsement of a preferred development option to the Executive.	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	Executive
	2. Town Centre Task and Finish and Economic Response following COVID-19	<b>Progress Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the recommendations of the original report in line with new requirements and response to COVID19</li> <li>• To re-establish a T&amp;F for this purpose</li> <li>• To consider WG Transforming Towns revenue and prioritise initiatives in response to COVID19</li> </ul>	Owen Ashton / Amy Taylor	
	3. Visit to Turkish Glass Bottle Factory	<b>Progress Update</b>	Ellie Fry	
	4. New Destination Management Plan for 2020-2025	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider and recommend for approval the new Destination Management Plan for 2020-2025.	Alyson Tippings/Moe Forouzan	Executive
	Test Facility, Rassau	<b>Information Only</b> To update Members on the work that has been undertaken on the project to date and next steps	Richard Crook / Ellie Fry	
	Tech Valleys	<b>Information Only</b> To provide an update for Members on the work undertaken so far, the projects and WG spend.	Ellie Fry	
	Tredegar Town Centre WiFi	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with information on the free Public WiFi in Tredegar	Dave Ware / Amy Taylor	
	Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure	<b>Information Only</b> To provide information on the Gwent Wide collaboration to deliver Electric Vehicle infrastructure	Sarah Williams / Amy Taylor	
	Business Improvement District	<b>Information Only</b> To update Members on the work that has been undertaken on the project to date and next steps.	Sally Jones / Moe Forouzan	

## DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme

Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
<b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020</b>  Deadline: 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	1. Industrial Portfolio Findings and Action Plan	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To bring the prioritised action plan to scrutiny for endorsement in line with the strategy brief.	Manager for Ind Units / Ellie Fry	Executive
	2. Transport Review and Strategy	<b>Task and Finish Group</b> To request up to 5 Members to form a T&F consultation panel for the next stage of the transport review.	Owen Ashton	
	3. Aneurin Bevan report	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider the Nye Bevan report findings and action plan moving forward and recommend approval to the Executive.	Alyson Tippings/Moe Forouzan	Executive
	4. Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly Report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRCDD and influence areas of focus.	Ellie Fry	Executive
	5. Lime Avenue Employment Park	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide an update on progress of current development site.	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	Executive
	6. Energy Prospectus Annual Review	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with information on the progress made since approval of the Energy Prospectus	Amy Taylor	Executive
	Planning Annual Performance	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with information on the Annual Performance Report (APR).	Steve Smith	
	Progress Report on Repayable Town Centre Loan Funds	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with information to update them on the progress of the Repayable Town Centre Loan Funds	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	GovTech Catalyst Project	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with an update on the GovTech Catalyst Project	Amy Taylor	

**DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme**

<b>Dates / Deadlines</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Executive / Council</b>
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>  Deadline: 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	1. Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive an update on TRI funding	Amy Taylor / Nick Landers	Executive
	Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Closure Report	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with details of the final outputs and outcomes of the THI project	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	Lime Avenue Business Park and Boxworks	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with details of the delivery of the developments	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	RE:FIT	<b>Information Only</b> To provide members with an update on the RE:FIT Project and progress to install energy efficiency measures in public sector buildings	Amy Taylor	
<b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>  Deadline: 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2021	1. Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider performance of the Aspire programme and associated external business engagement.</li> <li>To provide performance information on the BGCBC internal apprenticeship programme</li> </ul>	Bethan McPherson	Executive

**DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme**

Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
<p><b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b></p> <p>Deadline: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021</p>	1. Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly Report	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRC and influence areas of focus.</p>	Ellie Fry	Executive
	2. Annual Industrial Property Performance update 2020/2021	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved i.e. constrained units updates, occupancy figures, new property developments.</p>	Moe Forouzan/Paul Miles	Executive
	3. Foundational Economy – Supply Chain Opportunities	<p><b>Pre-Decision</b> To present the outcomes associated with the delivery of the WG Innovation Fund Project (BG supply chains) and consider the project evaluation and associated recommendations to inform future approaches.</p>	Bethan McPherson	Executive
	4. Community Benefits	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider community benefit outcomes delivered (20/21) through BGCBC contracts and wider partner opportunities.</p>	Bethan McPherson / Laura Bull	Executive
	5. Employment and Skills Plan	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the outcomes of Year 1 delivery and associated best practice.</p>	Bethan McPherson	Executive
	6. Destination Management – Annual Performance Review 2020/21	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved and influence areas of focus.</p>	Moe Forouzan / Alyson Tippings	Executive
	Business Improvement District annual reports 2020/2021	<p><b>Information</b> To inform members on progress made to date.</p>	Moe Forouzan / Sally Jones	



**DRAFT Regeneration Forward Work Programme**

<b>Dates / Deadlines</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Executive / Council</b>
2021	Annual Industrial Property Performance update 2019/2020	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved i.e. constrained units updates, occupancy figures, new property developments.	TBC	Executive
2021	Renewable Energy Generation Project – Hydro Power	<b>Pre Decision</b> Endorse the proposals to take forward hydro generation projects	Amy Taylor	Executive
TBC	Regeneration Directorate Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor the performance information for the Directorate and to influence areas of focus.	Richard Crook Ellie Fry	Executive Info Item
TBC	Crowd Funding	<b>Pre Decision</b> To seek endorsement to engage and be the lead authority for a regional crowd funding platform, providing funding for community based projects.	Bethan McPherson	Executive

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# Agenda Item 9

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Report Subject: **Cardiff Capital Region & Welsh Government Aspire Roll Out**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services  
Tara Lane, Skills Development Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
19.08.20	20.08.20	25.08.20			08.09.20	14.10.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is:

- 1.1 To gain endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Cardiff Capital Region to roll out the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme and to become the host authority.
- 1.2 To gain endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Welsh Government to merge the Aspire Blaenau Gwent and Aspire Merthyr Tydfil programmes from September 2021, aiming to retain funding for both local authorities to work with the education sectors aiming to facilitate apprenticeships within the manufacturing sector.
- 1.3 Both proposals will work in parallel with each other under the same management structure which will be cost effective for both funders.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Aspire Shared Apprentice Programme was initially setup in 2015, with funding from WG, as a response to identified market failure within the engineering and advanced manufacturing sector within Blaenau Gwent. It proved so successful that it was expanded to include provision in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in 2017 and the project has been extended to September 2021 in both localities.
- 2.2 In 2019 it won the '**Large** Employer of The Year' award at the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru 2019 (AAC), which took place at the International Convention Centre, Newport. The award category entitled 'Large and Macro Employer of the Year' recognises and celebrates the employer's commitment to

developing their workforce through apprenticeships, whilst also supporting their employees during training

### 2.3 **The Aspire Offer to Apprentices across the CCRC D Region**

- The programme will provide an accessible platform for young people to access bespoke apprenticeship opportunities in the region facilitated by a programme management team liaising with local colleges and apprenticeship learning provider.
- The Aspire Team will provide a range of support from advice on their application form; to encouragement, preparatory guidance for interviews and the selection processes. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants at all stages of the application and recruitment processes and signposting will be provided to other similar advertised vacancies that may be of interest.
- The successful candidates will become part of a cohort that gives them an identity and peer to peer support in the first few months of their working life as an apprentice.
- They will also be supported by a mentor throughout the term of the apprenticeship helping them resolve educational and social impediments to the completion of their apprenticeship. The mentors will also act as a point of mediation between the apprentice, the employer and the educational provider.

### 2.4 **The Aspire Offer to Businesses across the CCRC D region**

- One of the main appeals of the Shared Apprenticeship Programme to businesses is that flexible approach that can be offered, depending on business needs and capacity.
- The main attributes of the Programme are:
  - The creation of 'Partnership Agreement' between industry and the Programme
  - Continued investment in business engagement building upon local level connections
  - The Aspire Team undertake the recruitment process for employers
  - Employers make final recruitment decisions
  - All apprenticeship level positions are paid for
  - Regular reports on the progress of individual apprentices
  - Short surveys are completed at the end of the apprenticeship and feedback is provided to the apprentice and employer
  - The employer has a qualified employee to help take the business forward.

- 2.5 To date the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme has:
- Recruited and supported 79 apprentices placed in 20 Businesses
  - 55% of apprentices within cohorts 1 to 5 have progressed onto higher education / HNC.
  - 100% of apprentices on cohort 1 have been employed, of which 64% retained within host employer
  - Framework completed – cohort 1 – 94%
  - 100% of apprentices in cohorts 1-5 have had the opportunity to rotate to another company to fulfil skills gaps
- 2.6 With the submission of the joint proposal costs can be streamlined and alongside the City Deal Proposal become more a cost effective model with the programme management being led by the existing teams in place. The models would have the capabilities to operate across the city region with the additional recruitment of mentors.
- 2.7 It is envisaged that not all 10 authorities may require the support to facilitate apprenticeships, the programme may specifically operate in sectors. It is anticipated that the semi-conductor cluster and the pharmaceutical clusters across the region will most definitely benefit from the programme
- 2.8 It is suggested in both proposals that Blaenau Gwent will be the Lead authority, this will mean that the authority will become the joint employer with host companies across the region.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 **Option 1: (Preferred option):**

Consider and endorse the submission of two proposals, one to City Deal and the other to Welsh Government by the end of summer 2020  
Approval provide a strategic context and clear focus to support a partnership and collaborative approach to implementing specific actions and associated Employment and Skills delivery.

#### 3.2 **Option 2:**

Do not consider or endorse the submission of proposals

### 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- Cardiff Capital Region: Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan mentions the Shared Apprenticeship Programme as a tool to support the achievement of the WG apprenticeship target.
- Tech Valleys
- Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan: Forge new pathways to prosperity through employment and skills development
- Corporate Plan: Economic Development and Regeneration

- Regeneration Priorities: employment and skills, enterprise and innovation.

## 5. Implications Against Each Option

### 5.1 *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)*

#### Short Term

To date there has been no confirmation of funding post 2022 and this is Welsh Government funding.

#### Long Term

It is anticipated that the Welsh Government Proposal will be for £2.2m over 6 Years

The City Deal Proposal will be for £2.6m - £3.3m to over 6 academic years' dependant on the level of financial support to SMEs.

It is anticipated that each Local Authority will contribute to the running of the programme within their respective authority circa £20k– as with Blaenau Gwent & Merthyr currently.

Internal Finance Team have been party to initial discussions and the proposals and further meetings are planned to scrutinise the funding and to ensure all programme management costs are covered.

### 5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

Demand for the service across the region doesn't materialise; mitigated through market research, early business/LA engagement and a phased approach to delivery.

Demand for the service exceeds resource available; this will be managed within the realms of the funding, some areas may not require the service and because the programme will be centrally funded the programme management team can allocate resource where required.

Duplication of provisions/lack of engagement from FEs; mitigated through early engagement with providers and colleges. Over the last few months a number of meetings have been held to discuss apprenticeship allocation and how best Aspire could potentially facilitate opportunities and support recruitment and compliment their service.

### 5.3 *Legal*

Legal advice and joint contracts of employment have been agreed for the programme currently and it is expected that these will remain the same future host employers.

In addition to contracts of employment, there are training agreements in place with the apprentice, Aspire, host employer and training provider.

#### 5.4 **Human Resources**

Throughout the process and discussions with both funders, conversations and advice has been sought from OD.

The proposal offers efficiencies between two local authorities through one management team to oversee the regional delivery.

The intention is to:

- Retain BGCBC team within the structure
- MTCBC – retain current staffing team along with the recruitment of an additional mentor
- All officers associated with the regional delivery would be employed by BGCBC

There are ongoing discussions with finance to explore the options and whether the funding can cover any costs associated with any future redundancy cost pressures.

All staff within the programme management team will have fixed term contracts for the duration of the programme which is up to 6 years.

Additional team members will be offered fixed term contracts for 1-2 years' dependant on the caseload.

Continuous employment carried over from other LAs will be a further consideration, if a secondment opportunity is not achievable.

Should there be any consideration to Toupee arrangements for staff from current partner LAs, OD would be engaged as part of the negotiations prior to any formal agreement being made.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

To date the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Scheme has:

- Recruited and supported 79 apprentices placed in 20 Businesses
- 55% of apprentices within cohorts 1 to 5 have progressed onto higher education / HNC.
- 100% of apprentices on cohort 1 have been employed, of which 64% retained within host employer
- Framework completed – cohort 1 – 94%
- 100% of apprentices in cohorts 1-5 have had the opportunity to rotate to another company to fulfil skills gaps

Key statistics are outlined within the plan providing a baseline against which delivery will be measured.

Measures will be developed to complement specific actions within the plan.

## 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

- Recruit and support over 300 apprentices across the region over 6 years
- 20% of apprentices to progress onto higher education / HNC.
- 70% of apprentices to be employed within host employer
- 100% of apprentices to have had the opportunity to rotate to another company to fulfil skills gaps

The Employment and Skills plan will outline specific priorities and associated actions to;

- Increase the number of employment opportunities available
- Increase the range of employment opportunities available
- Ensure appropriate employment provision to support people into work and progress once in work
- Train and upskill local residents aligned to demand or growth sectors
- Raised awareness of opportunities to support educational attainment and aspiration
- Increased employment and skills opportunities secured through community benefits.

## 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

To date the emerging proposals have been developed in consultation/discussions with;

- Merthyr Tydfil Council
- Welsh Government
- City Deal
- Regional Skills Partnership
- Coleg Gwent
- Coleg Y Cymoedd
- Coleg Merthyr Tydfil
- Torfaen Council
- RCT Council

## 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

- The proposals aim to meet the needs businesses; future skills planning and fulfil current skills gaps. The success within two local authorities demonstrate the need for a coordinated approach to facilitate the recruitment for business and engagement with learning providers.
- The team are continually working with education to identify progression routes onto higher education as industry requires these higher level skills and with this apprenticeship pathway it provides alternative routes to employment for young people



- The proposals are offering employers and local authorities to demonstrate the employment opportunities within local areas providing skilled young people locally and meeting regional needs

#### 6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Within the plan there is acknowledgement of current employment, skills and attainment figures relating to the local population and our relatively weak performance comparative to other areas within the region. The plan seeks to address this by putting in place measures to address current performance.

#### 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

- The proposals are integral to collaborative working across the city regain and with individual local authorities, that is the key to its success, to date there has been RSP engagement, partner LA and FE discussions, business engagement,
- There are currently Joint Contracts of employment in place with all current employers with apprentices and these documents will be shared and part of the proposal,
- It is vital that the team works closely as they have done in the past with FE. It will be important to utilise the apprenticeship contract within individual providers for each area. Relationship with the FE to support delivery

#### 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The contents of the plan will link closely with Education.

#### 6.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

The plan is aimed at ensuring Blaenau Gwent Prospers, this is inclusive of all in our efforts to raise skills and employment levels for residents.

### 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

#### 7.1

A baseline, aligned to the proposals will be developed to measure the medium and long term impact of the programme. An annual review and update on progress will be prepared and reported through scrutiny, executive and the PSB.

#### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- N/A

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# Agenda Item 10

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**  
Report Subject: **Integrated Responsive Transport Pilot**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Owen Ashton, Service Manager Regeneration & Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
19.08.20	20.08.20	25.08.20			08.09.20	14.10.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Members views on the purpose and scope of the Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) Pilot project and recommend approval for the project to progress in Blaenau Gwent.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Welsh Government has identified Blaenau Gwent as an area that would benefit from a pilot scheme that it is running across three local authority areas in Wales. Alongside Pembrokeshire and Conwy Councils, Blaenau Gwent will benefit from piloting a new type of public transport that will introduce hybrid service/ bookable journeys that interconnect with rail and other commercial routes and will form part of Transport for Wales' 'Flecsi' service.
- 2.2. The IRT 'Flecsi' service will be able to run outside the usual running times of the commercial services to enable travel to shift work in BG's industrial estates, will link with the express bus route to Neville Hall Hospital, and connect with the rail provision to Cardiff.
- 2.3. The project will pilot a new way of delivering bus services in Blaenau Gwent, working closely with the existing commercial service providers and plugging gaps within these services. The project is also working with Job Centre Plus and will aim to improve access to employment for those without access to a car. During times in the day when the demand for IRT service is lower, the buses may be available for journeys for shopping trips or other community provision. There is also scope for the project to support provision for school transport where this is needed – this will help support the viability of the project longer-term.
- 2.4. Two buses will be procured as part of the project and will initially operate in the Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr valleys, this pilot route is supported by

transport data. As a result of Covid-19, what were once deemed commercially viable routes for operators are increasingly seen as 'un-commercial'. The precise timings and coverage of the service are therefore still being detailed in consultation with commercial and other operators.

- 2.5. The project will be overseen by a Programme Board made up of the BGCBC officers along with representatives from Transport for Wales, Welsh Government, the Community Transport Association and Job Centre Plus.
- 2.6. The pilot project will provide an opportunity to test the demand for particular routes and services, and will aim to provide a greater level of flexibility and certainty for users. It is hoped that the project will develop routes to such an extent that their patronage creates a sustainable and integrated transport provision, which can evolve with the change in needs and patterns of travel as the area recovers post-Covid-19.
- 2.7. The project will also tie in to the overall transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent, by providing data to improve our understanding of travel patterns and where appropriate, integrate innovative technologies to enable us to enhance and adapt transport services to serve the current and future needs of residents.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Option 1 – progress with the pilot project to introduce IRT to BG**

That we progress with the pilot project and introduce IRT to Blaenau Gwent

#### **Option 2 – to not progress with the IRT pilot**

That we do not undertake the pilot project in BG.

#### **3.2 Preferred Option**

Option 1 – to proceed with the pilot project for BG.

### **4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1. This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in the following area:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

#### **5.1. *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The project will be fully funded over two years by the Welsh Government. During and following completion of the project, and evaluation exercise will be undertaken to establish whether to continue the project.

5.2. ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has limited experience of running a public transport service. It is therefore proposed that an operator is procured to run the project on the Council's behalf and that a dedicated officer is funded to oversee the pilot – this will be fully funded by Welsh Government for the duration of the project.

5.3. ***Legal***

Prior to procuring the project, a contract will be drawn up in consultation with colleagues in Procurement and Legal, establishing the requirements of the service to be provided. This contract will form the basis of the Council's legal agreement with the successful operator.

5.4. ***Human Resources***

As noted above, the Council will procure an operator to run the project on its behalf. There will be a need for a dedicated officer to oversee the project – this post will likely be part-time and will be fully funded through the project.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

6.2. ***Expected outcome for the public***

The project will pilot an Integrated Responsive Transport approach in Blaenau Gwent, aimed at improving access to employment and services and plug gaps within the existing transport service provision. By working with a range of partners, it is hoped that the project can establish a sustainable and attractive public transport offer for local residents.

6.3. ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The project presents an opportunity to address some of the challenges facing residents in accessing employment and services via public transport. The project will work with a range of partners to establish a longer-term solution as we move towards a low carbon economy and a post Covid-19 economy.

6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The success of the project is predicated on successful collaboration and partnership working with a range of partners and stakeholders. By working closely with Transport for Wales, the project will draw on a wide range of experience across Wales and the rest of the UK and by working with JCP the project can target services where they are most needed. Similarly, there is a need for us to work collaboratively with current operators and residents to encourage people to use the services as ultimately, the project's success will depend on whether or not it is used.

6.5. ***Integration (across service areas)***

The project will provide opportunities to support services across the Council. As has been mentioned, there is scope to allow the project to support school

transport and, once the core timetable is established, there may also be scope to support other services such as Social Services.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be integrated into the project including gateway reviews at key stages. The project is currently establishing baseline data which will be used to assess the success of the project as part of its evaluation on project completion.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

*None*

# Agenda Item 11

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Report Subject: **Replacement Local Development Plan – Revised Delivery Agreement**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration & Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11/08/20	19/08/20	25.08.20			08/09/20		24/09/20	

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Scrutiny's support and then Council approval for a Revised Delivery Agreement (DA) for preparing the replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and a Covid-19 Assessment of the plan's evidence base, strategies and policies.

## 2. Scope and Background

### Background

- 2.1 The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) (2006-2021) was adopted in November 2012. To ensure the Plan is up to date, the Council was required by Welsh Government regulations to undertake a full review of the LDP at the end of 2016. Accordingly, a full review of our LDP was undertaken which culminated in a Review Report. Council considered the report on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 agreeing to review the LDP through the full revision process.
- 2.2 As a result of Welsh Government requesting all councils to consider joint working and preparation of a Strategic Development Plan the Delivery Agreement for the RLDP was not approved by Council until the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The Delivery Agreement was then submitted to Welsh Government who approved it on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- 2.3 Members will be fully aware that progress on the Plan commenced in line with the Delivery Agreement timetable. Pre-participation events were held with Members and stakeholders to agree the issues, vision and strategy for the Plan culminating in the preparation of the Preferred Strategy. There was a slight delay in presenting the Preferred Strategy to Council due to concerns raised by Welsh Government regarding the strategy. However, the Preferred Strategy was agreed by Scrutiny on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November and Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2019. Pre-Deposit Public Consultation commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> January and ran for 6 weeks to the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. A report on the

comments received and changes to be made will be presented to Scrutiny and Council prior to agreement of the Deposit Plan.

- 2.4 Although the preparation of the Plan was running 3 months behind schedule it was within the 3 month slippage allowed for by the Delivery Agreement. The Development Plans team was preparing to go out for consultation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Candidate Sites and further information on existing sites when the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

**Welsh Government Letter – Covid-19 Pandemic and need to put on hold LDP preparation**

- 2.5 On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 Welsh Government wrote to all Chief Planning Officers in Wales regarding the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and the preparation of Local Development Plans. The letter identified that it was important not to progress plans that could be in conflict with legal requirements set out in the Community Involvement Scheme in their Delivery Agreements. A conversation with a senior officer at Welsh Government confirmed that we should not proceed with the planned 2<sup>nd</sup> call for candidate sites.

- 2.6 Though work on the Plan has proceeded in terms of building up the evidence base and considering comments received at Preferred Strategy Stage, the loss of one member of the team (that only comprises 2.5 FTE's) to Covid-19 related redeployment and limits placed in terms of site visits has delayed certain work streams.

**Minister for Housing and Local Government Letter – Planning and the Post Covid-19 recovery**

- 2.7 On the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 the Minister for Housing and Local Government wrote to all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives regarding the Corona virus pandemic reflecting on the impact on those in our community who have least and the exacerbation of social, economic and environmental inequalities. The Minister advised that our approach going forward must focus on addressing longstanding inequalities by taking a values based approach to recovery which promotes social, economic and environmental justice. The Minister identified the planning system as being central to shaping a better future for Wales and that it is essential that all levels of government ensure that plans, policies and procedures improve the wellbeing of our people and the resilience of our environment. It is her strongly held view that we must not sacrifice the principles of sustainable development and place making in the pursuit of economic recovery at any cost.

- 2.8 The Minister considers that as LDPs are evidenced based the result of the pandemic and resulting downturn in the economy will mean that much of the evidence on which LDPs are based is likely to be out of date. This she considers is particularly the case for economic and social evidence covering areas such as the need for social and market housing, viability, economic forecasts and transport modelling.

- 2.9 To address these concerns she advised that LDPs currently undergoing



review should undertake an assessment of the evidence, strategy and policies in terms of sensitivity to the consequences of the pandemic. Robust conclusion should be reached on the need for new evidence and any consequential changes to strategy and policy before progressing plan preparation. The Assessment is to be submitted to the Welsh Government with requests to extend the Delivery Agreement.

- 2.10 The letter also addressed the need for changes to the Delivery Agreement’s Community Involvement Scheme (CIS), which sets out who, when and by what means communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the plan preparation process. With many buildings temporarily closed, stakeholders inability to attend consultation events and issues arising from social distancing, existing CISs cannot be complied with. For these reasons, the CIS will need to be adjusted in light of the latest Government advice and social distancing principles to enable plan preparation to progress.

**Scope**

- 2.11 This report is seeking approval for two documents, the Revised Delivery Agreement (See Appendix 1) and the Covid-19 Assessment of the Replacement Local Development Plan evidence base, strategy and policies (See Appendix 2).

**2.12 Delivery Agreement - Timetable**

The Delivery Agreement timetable needs to be amended to reflect:

- the Covid-19 delay
- the need for longer consultation periods

Covid-19 will result in a 7 month delay as proposed consultation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Candidate Sites will not be able to proceed until October 2020 at the earliest. The need for longer consultation periods adds a further 2 weeks to the process. The statutory Deposit of the Plan will now take place in June 2021 rather than October 2020. The Plan is now unlikely to be adopted until Autumn 2022. A more detailed project plan is attached as appendix 3 to the Delivery Agreement document.

- 2.13 Key Milestones for delivery are set out in the table below:

Stage		Timescale	
Definitive		From	To
<i>Revise Delivery Agreement</i>		<i>May 2018</i>	<i>October 2018</i>
		<i>Council consideration October Submission to WG October</i>	
<i>Pre-Deposit Participation</i>		<i>October 2018</i>	<i>October 2019</i>
		<i>Update evidence base Hold participation events Prepare Reports Prepare Preferred Strategy Political reporting on Preferred Strategy</i>	
<i>Pre-Deposit Public Consultation</i>		<i>November 2019</i>	<i>May 2021</i>
		<i>Consultation on Preferred Strategy – 6 week consultation</i>	

	Prepare Report of Consultation Prepare Deposit Plan Political reporting of Draft Deposit Plan	
Statutory Deposit of Proposals	June 2021	November 2021
	Consultation on Deposit Plan – 6 weeks Prepare responses to comments Political reporting of responses	
<b>Indicative</b>		
Submission of LDP for Examination	Winter 2021	
Examination and receipt of Inspector's Report	Spring 2022	
Publication of Inspectors Report	Summer 2022	
Adoption	Autumn 2022	

2.14 The current LDP runs until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 at which time it will 'drop dead' i.e. will cease to have any weight and there will be no local planning framework for decisions on planning applications. This will result in all policies allocations designations, settlement boundaries and Supplementary Planning Guidance becoming redundant. As the replacement plan will not be in place until Autumn 2022 there will be a policy vacuum for 10 months. The lack of a local planning policy framework would be a significant risk to decision making and would result in uncertainty for investors, businesses, stakeholders and our local communities. Although the Minister in her letter said that she would continue to explore opportunities to introduce legislation to ensure that current LDPs that have passed their end date continue to enjoy the development plan status for decision making purposes there is uncertainty that this will be possible due to the legislative requirements involved.

#### **Delivery Agreement – Community Involvement Scheme**

2.15 The Community Involvement Scheme (found in part 3 of the document attached as Appendix 1) sets out how the Council proposes to proactively involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the replacement Plan. This has been updated to enable:

- a longer consultation period for the deposit plan (8 rather than 6 weeks)
- clarification on the availability of documents (libraries and council offices if open)
- use of neighbour notification letters to make people aware of allocations
- sending out electronic or hard copies of documents where required
- the use of larger consultation venues to enable social distancing
- the availability of pre-arranged individual appointments with officers
- increased use of web based technologies (short video clips and electronic presentations)

#### **Covid-19 Assessment Report**

2.16 The introduction (section 1) of the Covid-19 assessment report sets out the purpose of the document. It then provides the background (section 2) as to

why to the work stopped on the RLDP and how we can now proceed. It also sets out relevant extracts from Welsh Government's Building Better Places, The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures, Placemaking and Covid-19 Recovery (WG July 2020) so that it is clear what Welsh Government are expecting from Local Development Plans moving forward. Section 3 of the document provides an overview of the impact of Covid-19 at UK level and then Blaenau Gwent looking at economic, social and environmental impacts.

- 2.17 Section 4 of the document provides an overview of the assessment of the evidence base and concludes that generally the evidence base is either as good as it can be due to the lack of new trend data or that it can be updated and will be used to inform the Deposit Plan. The full assessment of the evidence is in appendix 1 of the document.
- 2.18 Section 5 reviews the Blaenau Gwent Preferred Strategy and policies. Again generally the strategy which is about reducing inequalities between Blaenau Gwent and the rest of Wales is in alignment with the Welsh Government Building Better Places document and though it has an economic focus it does not do this at the expense of social and environmental considerations. An assessment of the objectives for the Plan show that they are in line with the Welsh Government Building Better Places document.
- 2.19 Similarly the strategic policies are found to be sufficiently flexible to deal with what are unknown times and providing a monitoring framework is put in place to reflect associated uncertainties the Plan will be sufficiently robust whilst setting out a clear distinct vision of what we want for Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.20 It is the deposit plan which will also include land allocations, designations and development management policies that tends to be more restrictive. These are yet to be agreed but will need to provide flexibility.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Option 1:**

Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment Report as presented in this report.

#### **Option 2:**

Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment Report subject to amendments.

- 3.2 DMT approved the Report on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 agreeing Option 1.

33 The Preferred option is Option 1 - for Members to support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment. This is to ensure that the statutory requirement to have a Local Development Plan for the area is met and requirements of Welsh Government in terms of the submission of a Covid-19 assessment of the evidence base, strategy and policies.

- 3.4 Option 2 would enable members to suggest amendments to the Delivery

Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

**Corporate Plan**

4.1 The Council's core vision of "Proud Heritage, Strong Communities and Brighter Future" is intrinsically linked to land use planning and is therefore key to the delivery of the LDP. Accordingly the Community Involvement Scheme of the Delivery Agreement is based on the five core values of: Proud and Ambitious, Trust and Integrity, Working Together, Raising Aspirations and Fair and Equitable. The LDP supports the Corporate Plan Priorities of:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community.

4.2 In particular it will play a key role in delivering a variety of homes, potential energy opportunities and ensuring the long term future of town centres. It will also help deliver on the new areas of activity identified in the refresh including the ambition to become a low carbon Council and Borough, the successful deployment of technology to improve how we work and the impact we have, on the environment.

**Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.3 The Local Development Plan will seek to deliver the land use requirements of the Well-being Plan. The Local Development Plan will influence how communities develop over the next 15 years and will impact on the following objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.

**Statutory Responsibilities**

4.4 There is a statutory responsibility in primary legislation (Planning Act 2015) for the local planning authorities to prepare a development plan within the framework set by national policy in Planning Policy Wales.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

**Option 1: Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment**

It was previously estimated that the cost of producing a replacement LDP

would be in the order of £280,000+. This covered the cost of studies (£150,000) and the examination in public (£130,000). New evidence requirements and the need for updates are likely to increase the cost of studies to above the £150,000 estimate. We have already committed to spend £154,157 and further evidence is required and updates are now necessary. The reserve built up to cover the costs (£192,166.54) is dwindling and in addition there are likely to be increased costs due to Welsh translation requirements, the need to print more documents than previously expected, and the costs associated with the extra consultation work. The budget pressure previously identified for the financial year 20/21 totalling £132,000 is likely to increase but will now be spread over two financial years (20/21 and 21/22).

The long-term impact of the Development Plan should be positive as it will enable the delivery of housing which will increase the Council tax revenue. Also a population increase will improve the Council's settlement from WG.

**Option 2: Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment**

Assuming any proposed changes would not have a financial cost then the impact on budget would remain the same as above.

**5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions**

**Option 1: Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment.** Appendix 3 of the Delivery Agreement identifies the risks and mitigating actions in relation to the preparation of the Replacement Local Development Plan. There is a risk of delay if Welsh Government does not agree with the conclusions in the Covid-19 Assessment or the extension required in the Delivery Agreement. We have minimised the delay as far as is possible given the limited capacity of the team.

**Option 2: Support the Revised Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment subject to changes.**

It is unlikely that revisions will change the risks set out in Appendix 3 of the Delivery Agreement significantly.

**5.3 Legal**

**Option 1: Support the Delivery Agreement and the Covid-19 Assessment**

There is a statutory requirement to prepare a Local Development Plan.

**Option 2: Support the Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment subject to changes.**

There is a statutory requirement to prepare a Local Development Plan, regulations to follow, soundness tests to meet and guidance on what how a Plan should be prepared.

## 5.4 **Human Resources**

### **Option 1: Support the Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment**

A Planning Assistant was appointed on a short term contract to assist the team though this has now finished. Though ideally this should be extended financial pressures mean that this is unlikely. However, we are seeking to secure support internally.

### **Option 2: Support the Delivery Agreement and Covid-19 Assessment subject to changes.**

This is likely to be the same as above.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Welsh Government measures the success of the planning policy team in terms of:

- Is there an adopted development plan in place that is within the plan period?; ( Good)
- Deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement in months; (Good)
- Annual Monitoring Reports produced annually; (Good)
- Time between triggering Regulation 41 and submission of a Delivery Agreement to review the plan, in months (Improve)
- Local Development Plan (LDP) revision deviation from dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months (Good currently but will change to Improve)
- Current housing land supply (5 year requirement) (Improve).

Performance is mixed. On the positive side: there is currently an adopted plan in place; and even with the delay of Covid-19 we will be within a 12 month slippage of the DA timetable; and we regularly submit our AMR. On the other hand we took much longer than a year to submit our Delivery Agreement. This was frustrating as we were held up by Welsh Government's request for joint working. The requirement to prepare a plan in 3 years and 6 months with a 3 month slippage was another target we were meeting until Covid-19 caused a delay. It is hoped that this target will be amended to take account of lockdown. We perform poorly against the 5 year housing supply requirement being well under the requirement.

### 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The Delivery Agreement sets how, when and where the public can expect to be involved in the preparation of the replacement Local Development Plan. The Local Development Plan will provide clear guidance on what developments will happen in the Borough over the 15 year plan period. The Plan is about ensuring people: live in decent homes; in clean safe neighbourhoods; with access to parks, countryside and other public spaces. It

is also about securing enough sites for industry, offices, shops, community facilities, sports and leisure, to make sure there are enough job opportunities to help create a better Blaenau Gwent.

### **6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Involvement is a key element of the Delivery Agreement. Part 3 of the document sets out the Community Involvement Scheme. This includes the Council's approach, who we will involve, how we will involve people, and what we expect from them. It also sets out the purpose, when, who, how and the reporting mechanism for each stage of plan preparation.

### **6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Delivery Agreement is only concerned with the period of Plan preparation. However, the Local Development Plan is all about forward planning and long term thinking for the development of Blaenau Gwent. The Plan will have a 15 year plan period.

### **6.5 *Preventative focus***

The Delivery Agreement seeks to prevent delays in preparing the Local Development Plan. Preparation of the replacement Local Development Plan seeks to prevent inappropriate development. This can vary from poor design to stopping development in flood risk areas or areas required for other uses. The Plan is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which will assess the impact of the Plan on the environment, society and economy and will seek to minimise negative impacts.

### **6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working***

Much of the work on the evidence base has been undertaken on a regional basis with South East Wales Strategic Planning Group and with Torfaen and Monmouthshire who are progressing plans in the same timeline as us (where savings can be made) to ensure a consistent of approach.

### **6.7 *Integration(across service areas)***

The Local Development Plan will need to include the land use requirements of all service areas across the Council and other public service area requirements. It will require input from colleagues in housing, economic development, highways, ecology, education, environmental health, leisure and estates.

### **6.8 *EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

An initial integrated sustainability appraisal of the Preferred Strategy has been undertaken and an integrated sustainability appraisal will be undertaken for the deposit plan. This incorporates an equalities impact assessment.

## 7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The Preparation of the Plan will be monitored through the Annual Performance Report on Planning and through Business Planning reporting process. Once the Plan is adopted it will be monitored through an Annual Monitoring Report.

### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1: Revised Delivery Agreement
- Appendix 2: Covid-19 Assessment
- [Welsh Government letter to all Chief Planning Officers in Wales 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020](#)
- [Minister for Housing and Local Government letter to all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020](#)
- [Building Better Places – The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures – Placemaking and the Covid-19 recovery \(WG July 2020\)](#)



# Revised Delivery Agreement

## Cytundeb Cyflenwi Diwygiedig

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**Replacement Local Development Plan**  
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Amnewid

**September/ Medi 2020**

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

### Revised Delivery Agreement

**1.1** The Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Delivery Agreement was approved by Welsh Government on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Work had subsequently commenced which included pre-deposit participation (identification of Issues, Vision and Objectives and Growth and Spatial options, Call for Candidate Sites, development of the evidence base) and pre-deposit consultation (consultation of the Preferred Strategy). Though progress was 2 months behind the agreed timetable it was within the 3 month slippage period allowed. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council were about to undertake a Second Call for Candidate Sites when the country went into Lockdown. The Council were advised by Welsh Government not to proceed with the Second Call for Candidate Sites due to difficulties with being able to undertake consultation in line with the Community Involvement Scheme identified in the Delivery Agreement. This meant that the Plan risked being found ‘unsound’ by and Inspector at Examination.

**1.2** In July Welsh Government advised that it is now possible to proceed with the Plan. As the original timetable has slipped beyond the 3 months slippage allowed a revision of the Delivery Agreement timetable is required. The amended timetable is set out in Part 2 and Appendix 2. In addition to address issues with Covid-19 the Community Involvement Scheme has been amended to ensure the safety of staff and the general public. This is set out in Section 3. In addition the Risk Assessment in Appendix 3 has been updated.

### Local Development Plan Review

**1.3** A full review of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (adopted November 2012) has been undertaken, the findings of which are set out in the [LDP Review Report](#). The Review Report provides an overview of the issues that have been considered as part of the full review process and subsequently identifies changes that are likely to be needed to the LDP. It concludes by recommending that the LDP is replaced following the full revision process.

**1.4** The adopted Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (November 2012) remains extant and will continue to provide the policy framework for the determination of planning applications while the RLDP is being prepared. This will remain in force until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 or on adoption of a RLDP, if sooner.

### Purpose of a Delivery Agreement

**1.5** This document sets out how people will be given the opportunity to influence future development in Blaenau Gwent. It will explain how and when people will be involved and consulted in developing new planning policy for the area.

**1.6** Planning is about ensuring people: live in decent homes; in clean and safe neighbourhoods; with access to parks, countryside and other public spaces. Planning is also about securing enough sites for industry, offices, shops, community facilities, sports and leisure, to make sure there are enough job opportunities and to help create a better Blaenau Gwent.

**1.7** This Delivery Agreement is split into two parts:

The **Timetable** for producing the RLDP: This provides an indication of when different stages of plan preparation will take place. Definitive dates are provided up to the deposit stage and indicative dates for later stages. This section also covers how we intend to monitor the delivery agreement and the replacement plan.

The **Community Involvement Scheme** covers how we intend to involve the community in the preparation of the Local Development Plan. It outlines the Authority's principles of community engagement; its approach in relation to who, how and when we intend to engage with the community and stakeholders, how we will respond to representations and how these representations will inform later stages of plan preparation.

**1.8** The Council is required to prepare a Draft Revised Delivery Agreement. In developing the Draft Revised Delivery Agreement the Council needs to:

- Revise and update the existing Delivery Agreement;
- Seek the views of selected key stakeholders on the draft document ;
- Secure full Council approval for the draft revised Delivery Agreement;
- Submit to the Welsh Government for agreement;
- Revise, where required, following response from Welsh Government;
- Publish on the Council website; and
- Review the Delivery Agreement on a regular basis.

### Preparation of the RLDP

**1.9** In preparing the RLDP the Council aim to achieve the following objectives:

- undertake an integrated sustainability appraisal into the plan making process in order to facilitate sustainable development where the seven well-being goals and 5 ways of working have been integral in the process;
- secure early and effective community involvement to enable the consideration of wide ranging views and the building of a broad consensus;
- deliver a fast and responsive approach to plan-making;
- produce a plan that is strategic, concise and distinctive in setting out how the County Borough will develop and change; and
- deliver sustainable development based on a clear understanding of infrastructure requirements, availability of resources, viability and market factors.

**1.10** The preparation of the RLDP will have regard to relevant legislation policies and other initiatives at the European; national, regional and local level. The newly adopted Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan (LWBP) will be of particular importance at the local level. The LWBP relates to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Blaenau Gwent and will have clear links with the LDP where it relates to land use planning.

### The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) & Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

**1.11** A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory requirement of LDP preparation, in order to assess the environmental, social and economic implications of the plan's strategy and policies. The SA/SEA process is utilised to ensure that policies in the LDP reflect sustainable development principles and take account of the

significant effects of the plan on the environment. SA, incorporating SEA, was an iterative process throughout the preparation of the adopted LDP and is reflected in the Plan's proposals and policies.

**1.12** The Council will undertake an integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) of the RLDP where the seven well-being goals and 5 ways of working have been integral in the process. In doing so, the Council will work closely with the environmental consultation bodies – NRW and Cadw – as required under the SEA regulations.

**1.13** There will be the opportunity for involvement at the various stages of the development of the ISA and this is shown in the tables on pages 17-23.

**1.14** The ISA, incorporating the SEA will be undertaken as follows:

- A Sustainability Scoping Report – will identify the existing sustainability issues in Blaenau Gwent and provide baseline information along with a review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies. The existing SA indicators and objectives will be revised and updated as necessary. A revised Sustainability Framework will be produced.
- An Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISAR) – will predict and evaluate the effects of the LDP options, spatial strategy and strategic policies on the social environmental and economic objectives as set out in the Scoping Report. The ISAR will be published at the same time as the Preferred Strategy and updated when the Replacement Deposit LDP is prepared.
- A Final Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISAR) – will bring together all elements of the SA and take into account the binding recommendations of the Planning Inspector. The

Final SAR will be published following receipt of the Inspectors Report.

- A Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement – will be published to explain how the sustainability considerations and the Sustainability Assessment have been taken into consideration in the production of the RLDP.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

**1.15** In accordance with the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, the impacts of any land use Plan on the conservation objectives of a European Site are to be assessed by means of an Appropriate Assessment. Though there are no European Sites within the borough there are a number in the wider area that development may impact upon. It is intended that the process will run concurrently with the plan making process and form an iterative part of plan preparation.

**1.16** There are two stages of Habitat Regulation Assessment:

- Screening
- Habitat Regulations Assessment

## Evidence

**1.17** As outlined in the Updated Background Papers there is a need to update and undertake various evidence base assessments throughout the preparation of the RLDP. At this stage it is envisaged that this will include:

- Housing Market Assessment
- Population and Household Projections
- Affordable Housing Viability Assessment
- Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy

- Settlement Boundary Review
- Retail Needs Assessment
- Employment Land Review
- Open Space Assessment
- Green Infrastructure Assessment
- Renewable Energy Assessment

This is not a definitive list and additional evidence base requirements may emerge as the plan revision progresses.

### Well-being of Future Generations Act

**1.18** The Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act (WBFG) gained Royal Assent in April 2015. The Act aims to make a difference to the lives of people in Wales in relation to the seven well-being goals and also sets out five ways of working. The seven well-being goals relate to: a prosperous Wales; a resilient Wales; a healthier Wales; a more equal Wales; a Wales of cohesive communities; a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language; and a globally responsible Wales. The five ways of working are long-term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention. As a requirement of the Act a Local Well-being Plan (LWBP) must be produced. The Blaenau Gwent LWBP has been published and has clear links to the LDP. Both the WBFG Act and the LWBP will be considered fully throughout the preparation of the RLDP. The Well-being Assessment will form part of the evidence base of the RLDP.

### Tests of Soundness

**1.19** Soundness is an integral part of the Development Plan system and this will be important in demonstrating whether the Local Development Plan shows good judgement and whether it is

appropriate. The Council must submit the RLDP to the Welsh Government for examination. An independent Inspector will be appointed by Welsh Government to undertake an examination to determine whether the Plan is fundamentally sound.

**1.20** The Inspector will assess whether the preparation of the plan has been undertaken in accordance with legal and regulatory procedural requirements, and complies with the Community Involvement Scheme. The Inspector must also decide whether the Plan meets the three tests of soundness.

**Test 1 – Does the plan fit?** (i.e. is it clear that the LDP is consistent with other plans);

**Test 2 – Is the plan appropriate?** (i.e. is the plan appropriate for the area in light of evidence?); and

**Test 3 – Will the plan deliver?** (i.e. is it likely to be effective?).

**1.21** The conclusions reached by the Inspector will be binding and, unless the Welsh Government intervenes, the Council must accept the changes required by the Inspector and adopt the RLDP.

### Candidate Sites

**1.22** The Development Plan system requires the authority to give early consideration to engagement with developers, landowners and the public on potential sites to be included within the Local Development Plan. The aim of this is to avoid substantial numbers of additional sites coming forward at the examination stage and also to ensure that the preferred strategy is deliverable.

**1.23** The Authority intends to write to all those identified on the consultation list (See Appendix 1) to give them the opportunity to identify and promote any areas of land they consider suitable for

housing, employment, retail, leisure and recreation, waste, transport, and community facilities.



## 2.0 PART 2: TIMETABLE

### Timetable for Delivery

**2.1** The Council has established a timetable summarising the key stage in plan preparation (Table 1), which while challenging, provides a realistic timeframe for preparation of the RLDP having regard to the resources available. In preparing the original timetable, regard was given to the Welsh Government's expectation that a replacement plan must be prepared within 3 years and 6 months. The revised timetable whilst taking into account the need for expediency also has to consider the delay caused by the Covid-19 lockdown and the implications of this for future consultation events.

**2.2** Table 1 is split into definitive and indicative stages:

**Definitive Stages** - This part of the timetable is under the direct control of the Council and therefore target dates, whilst challenging are considered realistic. This part of the timetable is up to the statutory deposit stage

**Indicative Stages** - Beyond the statutory deposit stage, stages are increasingly dependent on extraneous factors (e.g. number of representations received, the number of hearing sessions required, time taken to receive the Inspector's Report) over which the Council has less control.

**2.3** A detailed project plan outlining the timescale for each of the stages of plan preparation is included in Appendix 2.

**Table 1: Summary of Timetable for the LDP Process**

Stage	Timescale	
	From	To
Delivery Agreement	May 2018	October 2018
	Council Approval October 2018 Submission to WG October 2018	
Revised Delivery Agreement	July 2020	October 2020
	Council Approval October 2018 Submission to WG September 2020	
Pre-Deposit Participation	October 2018	October 2019
	Update evidence base Hold participation events Prepare Initial SA and HRA Reports Prepare Preferred Strategy Political Reporting on Preferred Strategy	
Pre-Deposit Public Consultation	November 2019	May 2021
	Consultation on Preferred Strategy – 6 week consultation  Prepare Report of Consultation Prepare Deposit Plan and update SA/HRA Political reporting of Draft Deposit Plan	
Statutory Deposit of Proposals	June 2021	November 2021
	Consultation on Deposit Plan –8 weeks Prepare responses to comments Political reporting of responses	
<b>Indicative</b>		
Submission of LDP for Examination	Winter 2021	
Examination and receipt of Inspector's Report	Spring 2022	
Publication of Inspectors Report	Summer 2022	
Adoption	Autumn 2022	

## Management of the LDP Process

**2.4** The Development Services Manager will be responsible for the overall delivery of the LDP and the Team Manager Development Plans will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the process. The Development Plans Team will lead in the preparation and delivery of the RLDP with Member engagement and political reporting at appropriate stages.

**2.5** The existing staff resources are set out in Table 2 below, approximately 75% of officer time will be dedicated to the LDP to account for day to day involvement in liaison with development management, monitoring of the existing LDP and the need for regional working. Additional time will be dedicated by the Development Services Manager to the efficient delivery of the RLDP. It will also be necessary to call upon staff resources from other internal departments to assist in undertaking various evidence base updates/ assessments. This is likely to include officer support from Development Management, Housing, Highways, Economic Development, Green Infrastructure, Education, Estates and Democratic Services.

**Table 2: Development Plans Team Staff Resources**

Officer Job Title	Number of Posts
Development Plans Manager	0.5 (Also responsible for Building Control)
Team Leader – Development Plans	0.8 (reduced hours)
Planning Policy Assistant	1

**2.6** The Delivery Agreement has been prepared on the basis of a RLDP. However it is considered that collaboration with neighbouring authorities will be fundamental to the preparation of the RLDP, particularly with regard to a joint evidence base.

**2.7** The Council recognises that additional professional specialist services will also be required to progress and establish a robust evidence base to inform the RLDP. Whilst it is anticipated that a considerable amount of evidence base work will be undertaken by Blaenau Gwent officers the use of external consultants is likely to be necessary in relation to technical/specialist elements of the evidence base. An initial assessment has been carried out of the elements of plan preparation that are likely to require external consultant input and financial resources have been secured accordingly.

**2.8** Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire Local Planning Authorities have identified a number of topic areas where studies could be commissioned jointly.

**2.9** A sufficient budget will be made available to progress the RLDP to adoption within the prescribed timetable. This is anticipated to cover expenditure relating to all elements of preparation of the RLDP and the Independent Examination.

## Risk Management and Analysis

**2.10** While the timetable for preparation of the RLDP is realistic, it is acknowledged that it will also be challenging. It is recognised that there are a number of factors that could result in plan preparation deviating from the proposed timetable. The timetable consequently allows for flexibility through a degree of tolerance of

up to 3 months delay, before a formal revision to the Delivery Agreement is required. Appendix 3 sets out a risk assessment including a number of potential issues that could cause difficulties in keeping to the proposed timetable, together with the Council's proposed approach to managing them.

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

**2.11** The RLDP will contain sufficient policies to provide the basis for determining planning applications. However, SPG has an important supporting role in providing more detailed or site specific guidance on the way in which LDP policies will be applied. While SPG does not form part of a development plan it should be derived from and be consistent with the relevant LDP. The SPG should also be clearly cross referenced to the policies and proposals it supplements.

**2.12** A total of 9 Supplementary Planning Guidance documents have been prepared and adopted to support existing LDP policies. The SPGs cover the following topic areas:

- Householder Design Guidance
- Model Design Guide for Wales Residential Development
- Access, Car Parking and Design
- Hot Food and Drink Uses in Town Centres
- Shopfronts and Advertisements
- Planning Obligations
- Heads of the Valleys - Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development – Landscape and Sensitivity and Capacity Study
- Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Requirements

- Nature Conservation Planning Guidance for Small Scale Wind Energy

**2.13** It is anticipated that the SPG topics listed above will continue to be necessary and relevant, and so will be carried forward with any amendments necessary to support the RLDP, and/or the updated evidence base.

**2.14** It should nevertheless be noted that SPG to the LDP cannot be formally adopted until after the Inspector's Report has been received and it is clear that there are no changes to the policy approach set out in the replacement plan. It is anticipated that a Green Infrastructure SPG will be prepared and consulted on in parallel with the RLDP.

### Monitoring and Review

**2.15** The Council will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Delivery Agreement at each stage of the Local Development Plan preparation process. This will establish whether the Council is meeting its objectives in terms of public engagement in the process and whether or not timescales are being met.

**2.16** An updated timetable will be submitted to Welsh Government following the Deposit stage. This will provide certainty of the timescales for the remaining stages (i.e. replacing 'indicative' with definitive stages). The Council will redefine the indicative timetable within three months of the close of the formal 6-week deposit period and submit it to the Welsh Government for agreement.

**2.17** Other stages when the contents of the Delivery Agreement will be reviewed are:

- If the process falls significantly behind schedule, i.e. 3 months or more;
- If any significant changes are required to the Community Involvement Scheme;
- Following the publication of any relevant new regulations/guidance from EU/UK/Welsh Government with a direct bearing on the Plan preparation process;
- If there are any major changes of circumstances that materially affect the assumptions, evidence, policies or proposals contained in the Plan; and
- If there are any significant changes in the resources which are available to undertake the Plan preparation.

**2.18** The review of the Delivery Agreement will require further consultation with consultees, and a renewed Welsh Government agreement.

## PART 3: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCHEME (CIS)

### The Council's Approach

**3.1** The Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) sets out how the Council proposes to proactively involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the RLDP. One of the aims of the LDP system is that plan production is based on effective community involvement in order that a range of views can be considered as part of a process of building a wide consensus on the plan's strategies and policies.

**3.2** The five ways of working prescribed by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act are integral to the Community Involvement Scheme, namely long-term; integration; involvement; collaboration; and prevention. The CIS describes the ways in which the community can influence the LDP at different stages of the plan preparation process. The Council has also prepared a timetable for the production of a LDP (see Part 2, Table 1 and Appendix 2) which should be read in conjunction with the CIS.

**3.3** Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's core vision set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan "Proud Heritage, Stronger Communities, Brighter Future". This is intrinsically linked to land use planning and is therefore key to the delivery of the LDP. Accordingly the CIS is based on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's five core values of: Proud and Ambitious, Trust and Integrity, Working Together, Raising Aspirations and Fair and Equitable. The key priorities from the Council's Corporate Plan that support the development of the LDP are: Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities; and Economic Development and Regeneration.

**3.4** Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is also committed to ensuring the ten national principles for public engagement in Wales are utilised. Public engagement in the preparation of the RLDP will take place in accordance with the guidelines set out in this CIS. The Council recognise that community engagement must be designed to make a difference the main objectives for involving the community in the LDP preparation are based on the ten national principles and can be identified as:

- Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference to involve people at the earliest opportunity, in time to shape plan preparation work;
- To encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose;
- Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way to ensure that the process is easy to understand for everyone within a reasonable timescale and using the most suitable methods;
- Communicate and work with relevant partner organisations to ensure that people's time is used effectively and efficiently;
- The information provided is appropriate and understandable so that people are well placed to take part in the engagement process;
- To make it easier for people to take part because any barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed;
- To enable people to take part effectively engagement processes should try to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants;
- To provide two way dialogue with participants by responding to comments received and publishing the Council's response in a report of consultation; and
- Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement throughout the process.

## Who will we involve?

**3.5** Effective involvement of people and communities and collaboration with other organisations are two of the five ways of working set out in the Well-being Future Generations Act and are key aspects of preparing the RLDP. Who we will seek to involve in the RLDP process is set out below:

### Individuals who have registered an interest through the LDP database

**3.6** Throughout the adopted LDP process, a database was maintained to include members of the public, interested persons and any individual organisations who requested to be kept informed at each stage of the LDP process. The Council will use the database for the RLDP as a starting point to involve and inform individuals throughout the LDP revision process. Anyone can request for their details to be included or removed from the database. Anyone who makes representations at any of the stages of the RLDP will be automatically added to the database in order for them to receive updates on progress and allow them to be adequately informed of further opportunities to participate at a later date. It should be noted that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in May 2018. By commenting on the LDP, individuals and stakeholders give their consent for their details to be held by the Council throughout the LDP revision process and for a period of 6 years following adoption.

**3.7** If you wish for your details to be added to the RLDP database, please contact the Planning Policy Team by email, phone or in writing using contact details set out at 3.31.

## Elected Members

**3.8** It is recognised that the involvement of Elected Members of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council throughout the LDP revision process will be of key importance. Members have a unique position as not only do they represent the communities within their individual ward, they also represent public interest and are involved in decisions for the wider benefit of the County as a whole. Accordingly, Members will play an essential role in the RLDP process by providing information to local residents, informing us of issues/opportunities within their local area and more fundamentally making decisions on matters affecting the Blaenau Gwent area as a whole.

**3.9** The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development has responsibility for planning policy, including the RLDP. Engagement with Senior Management and Members will be undertaken as and when deemed necessary. Liaison with the Executive Member and all other Members is essential throughout the process. Member workshops and meetings will be undertaken as and when deemed necessary. Members will be fully informed throughout the process and notified of every participation / consultation stage.

## Town and Community Councils

**3.10** Town and Community Councils also play a key role in disseminating information to the residents within the area on matters of local importance and will be a key link to communities across Blaenau Gwent. Town and Community Councils will be consulted at every stage of the LDP revision process and through

their individual communication methods will help raise awareness of the RLDP to local communities.

### **Partnership Groups**

**3.11** Existing partnership groups are seen as important means of engaging the wider community in the preparation of the RLDP, particularly in early stages of public participation.

**3.12** Liaison with Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board and partners will be of particular importance to ensure the RLDP aligns with the Local Well-being Plan. We will work closely with the Council's policy partnership engagement team who are central to the delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan.

### **Business, Landowners, Developers and Agents**

**3.13** Land and investment will be needed to implement proposals in the RLDP and efforts will be made to engage with the private sector business community at an early stage. We will engage with planning agents who are regular customers of Blaenau Gwent's planning service. Landowners, agents and prospective developers who wish to put land forward to be considered for development will therefore also be included on the RLDP database.

**3.14** The Candidate site process will be the opportunity for those who have an interest in land to submit sites to be considered for development. A common methodology is being established across the south east region for local planning authorities to utilise for their respective RLDPs. A 'Call for Candidate Sites' will be undertaken and all candidate sites will need to be submitted via standard forms. There will be a second call for further candidate

sites and detailed information following consultation on the Preferred Strategy. Accordingly all submissions must be made at the appropriate times, the dates of which will be advertised.

### **Additional Consultation Bodies**

**3.15** Appendix 1 provides a list of the specific and general consultation bodies along with UK Government departments and other consultees. The specific consultees comprise of the Welsh Government and those bodies with specific functions that apply to the Plan area for example Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. The Authority must also consult UK Government Departments where aspects of the plan appear to affect their interests.

### **Hard to Reach Groups**

**3.16** Hard to reach groups and those that are seldom heard are those groups who have not taken part traditionally in the plan preparation process. Additional effort will therefore be required to ensure these groups are engaged in the RLDP process. A flexible approach will need to be undertaken in relation to the engagement with these groups, albeit within the parameters of the specified engagement / consultation periods. Engagement with these groups may be achieved by using existing forums and groups wherever possible. It is nevertheless recognised that the very principle of hard to reach groups is that they may not be involved in existing partnerships/groups and this may therefore not always be achievable.

### **Existing Local Forums**

**3.17** There are a number of local forums that exist in the County Borough. Engagement with these forums will be important to the LDP revision process in particular to engage with hard to reach groups. The forums that exist are as follows:

- Citizens Panel
- Grand Council
- Youth Forum
- 50+ Older Network
- Access for all Forum

### **Wales Planning Aid**

**3.18** Wales Planning Aid is an independent service providing planning advice to groups and individuals, particularly in disadvantaged areas, helping them to understand the planning system and influence what happens in their local area. Where appropriate we will work with Planning Aid on consultation/training activities.

## **Management and Working Groups**

### **Executive Members and Corporate Leadership Team Group**

**3.19** In order to guide the formulation of the replacement plan, the Council will use the existing Executive Members and Corporate Leadership Team group. The group will allow for engagement to take place with senior officers and elected members through specific workshops and meetings, where appropriate.

### **SA/SEA Working Group**

**3.20** The ISA Working Group will be an internal and external group of expert professionals and interested parties that will assist in the scoping of the SEA and the assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the RLDP on the environment.

### **How will we involve you?**

**3.21** We will seek to publicise the LDP revision process at every stage and reach as much of the community as possible, as well as other stakeholders to advise people about the RLDP and how they can get involved. This will be done by:

- Direct contact via email unless there is a preference for a written letter.
- Social Media: Twitter by utilising the corporate account @BlaenauGwentCBC and via Facebook on the Blaenau Gwent County Borough council.
- Engagement with Senior Managers and Elected Members through specific workshops / virtual meetings, and within reports to appropriate Democratic Committee meetings.
- All LDP information and documents will be made available on the Council's website which will be updated regularly.
- Making documents available at the Council's main office buildings and local libraries in the County Borough if possible.
- Press releases for the local media, where appropriate.
- Regular email updates that describes progress on the RLDP.
- Public information exhibitions and drop in sessions will be held in accessible and neutral locations. Consultation venues with increased capacity for social distancing will be used.
- Prearranged individual briefing session appointments will be available to avoid a high number of stakeholders at public information exhibitions.
- Site notices will be displayed regarding land allocations.



- Neighbour notification letters in respect of land allocations.

### Availability of Documents

**3.22** The RLDP documents will be made available at each of the relevant stages. All documents will be made available electronically on the [Planning Policy website](#). Electronic representation forms will also be made available during periods of consultation. An increased use of web based technologies such as short video clips and electronic presentations on key issues will be used, where appropriate. In addition to online availability the documents will also be made available in paper format at the Council’s main office buildings and local libraries in the County Borough if possible.

**3.23** If the documents cannot be accessed in the locations listed above, paper copies of documents will be sent out during the RLDP process.

### Welsh Language and Bilingual Requirement

**3.24** The Welsh Language Standards place a legal duty on Councils to make it easier for people to use services through the medium of Welsh. The Council has published a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for 2017-2022, the requirements of both the Council’s strategy and the Welsh Language Standards will be maintained at each stage of the RLDP.

**3.25** Bilingual engagement will be carried out in the following ways:

- We welcome correspondence in both Welsh and English. Where correspondence is received in Welsh and a reply is necessary, this will be sent in Welsh.

- All comment forms, posters, public notices (including site notices) and newsletters will be bilingual.
- Any pages on the Local Development Plan website and posts published on social media will be bilingual.
- Any public meetings will be conducted bilingually where a request has been made ahead of time. Prior notification is required in order to provide a translation service.
- The adopted RLDP will be available in both Welsh and English format.
- Contact will be made with the consultees on the database at an early stage asking their language preference.

### What we expect from you

**3.26** In order to ensure any comments and representations on the RLDP are considered, they must be submitted within the prescribed timescales. The Delivery Agreement sets out the timetable of relevant stages and provides a guideline of when we seek your involvement. More detailed information is available at Table 1 and Appendix 2. This will ensure that individual views are considered and taken into account through the process.

**3.27** It is also of importance that you notify the planning policy team should your contact details change during the RLDP process in order for us to keep you fully informed of progress. With regard to candidate sites, land ownership changes may also occur during the process it is imperative that these are communicated to the Planning Policy team in order to ensure progress is not delayed.

### Building Consensus

**3.28** The Council will seek to build consensus through the various engagement and consultation methods set out within the CIS. Consensus building can only be achieved if the community and other interested parties are kept fully informed and effectively engaged throughout the preparation of the RLDP. This is of particular importance in the early stages of plan preparation. It is nevertheless recognised that there will be occasions where consensus cannot be achieved and a difference in opinion between certain parties occurs. A clear audit trail of decisions will be maintained in order to ensure that there is transparency in the decision making process, and to provide assurances to those that disagree that the decisions have been made in an informed and balanced way. However, decisions made will not be revisited via subsequent consultation opportunities, so participants are requested to focus their input on the matter being considered at that stage.

### Late Representations

**3.29** As noted in paragraph 3.25, responses are required by the specified deadline of the specific consultation period in order for them to be considered. Any late comments/representations will be logged as 'not duly made' as they were not made in accordance with the published timescales. The timescale to produce the RLDP is already challenging, the acceptance of late representations could result in further delay which would not be acceptable.

### Petitions

**3.30** Where petitions are received they will be logged as one body and the Council will ask for a lead person to be identified as a group representative. This will not take away the right of any

individual to appear at the Examination but assists the Council in managing the process.

### Contact Details

**3.31** Details will be provided on how to contact the Council in relation to any consultation phase. Comments are welcome in English or Welsh and can be emailed to [planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) or made in writing to:-

Planning Policy, Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent NP23 6XB, alternatively contact the team on 01495 354740 or by email at [planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

### Plan Preparation and Consultation Stage

**3.32** The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of the plan making process up to and including the submission of the RLDP to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. It seeks to explain the purpose of the Plan stage, who will be engaged/consulted, how the Council intend to engage/consult and how the information will be reported. The subsequent stages in the process are not directly in the control of the Council and therefore may be subject to change. Whilst the following tables are an accurate record of the planned programme of consultation, it should be noted that the CIS might be subject to revision at appropriate stages in the process.

## Stage 1: Pre-Deposit Participation (Regulation 14)

### Aims and Objectives of this Stage

- To develop an evidence base for the preparation of the revised LDP;
- To identify suitable sites for inclusion in the revised Plan;
- To develop objectives, alternatives and the Preferred Strategy for the revised LDP (Strategy Options);
- Build consensus on the objectives, alternatives and Preferred Strategy of the revised LDP with key stakeholders with the intention of producing a sound revised Plan; and
- To ensure the Pre-Deposit documents are consistent with the Well-being Plan and the emerging LDP 'Vision' for Blaenau Gwent.

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
Review and update existing evidence base	To inform the development of the Spatial Strategy & Preferred Options	Oct 18 – Sep 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Service Board</li> <li>• Internal Officers</li> <li>• Neighbouring LAs</li> <li>• Additional Consultation bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings</li> </ul>	Topic Papers and Study Reports
'Call for Candidate Sites'	To identify potential development sites	Nov – Dec 18	Consultation database including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Landowners</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Agents</li> <li>• Home Builders Federation</li> <li>• Registered Social Landlords</li> <li>• Internal Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Information gathering</li> </ul>	Candidate Site Register
Identification and assessment of vision, objectives and options	To inform the development of the Preferred Strategy	Apr – Jul 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members</li> <li>• Public Service Board</li> <li>• Existing Local Forums</li> <li>• Internal Officers</li> <li>• Other Consultees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various Workshops and Meetings</li> <li>• Email/letter</li> </ul>	Reports of Engagement
<b>SA/SEA</b>					
Review /Update SA baseline and SA framework	To update the baseline information and framework	Oct 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Officers</li> <li>• Statutory Consultees</li> <li>• SA/SEA Working Group</li> <li>• Neighbouring LAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Meetings</li> </ul>	Report as part of the SA/SEA Scoping Report
SA/SEA Scoping Report	To comment on the scope of the SA/SEA and objectives	Oct – Nov 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Consultees</li> <li>• SA/SEA Working Group</li> <li>• Elected Members</li> <li>• Neighbouring LAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Working Steering Group Meeting</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	Report of Consultation

## Stage 2: Pre-Deposit Public Consultation (Regulations 15 & 16)

### Aims and objectives of this stage

- To undertake wider public consultation on the Preferred Strategy and Options;
- To make the various documents publicly available and widely accessible for inspection;
- To undertake public consultation over a statutory 6 week period;
- To consider the representations made to the public consultation and provide feedback;
- To consider whether any changes are needed to the Preferred Options and Strategy for the revised LDP; and
- To consult on the Sustainability Assessment of the Preferred Strategy.

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
6 week Public Consultation on Preferred Strategy and assessment of representations received	To enable anyone to make representations to the Council's Preferred Strategy	Nov-Dec 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Elected Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Existing Local Forums</li> <li>• Hard to Reach groups</li> <li>• Town and Community Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Drop in sessions/ Exhibitions</li> <li>• Copies of the pre-deposit documents available in the Council offices and all public libraries</li> </ul>	Report of Consultation and recommendations
Second call for further candidate sites and detailed site information	To identify potential development sites and obtain detailed site information	Oct-Dec 20	Consultation database including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Landowners</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Agents</li> <li>• Home Builders Federation</li> <li>• Registered Social Landlords</li> <li>• Internal Officers</li> </ul> Candidate site database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Information gathering</li> <li>• Prearranged individual briefing session appointments</li> </ul>	Candidate Site Register
<b>SA/SEA</b>					
6 week consultation on Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report	To demonstrate how Preferred Options have been derived having regard for SA/SEA and give opportunity for comment	Nov-Dec 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Existing Local Forums</li> <li>• Hard to Reach groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Drop in sessions/ Exhibitions</li> <li>• Copies of the pre-deposit documents available in the Council offices and all public libraries</li> </ul>	Report of Consultation and recommendations to Executive

### Stage 3: Statutory Deposit of Proposals (Regulation 17)

#### Aims and Objectives of this Stage

- To undertake Statutory Consultation on the Deposit Plan over a 8 week period to meet the LDP regulations;
- To provide an opportunity for all stakeholders and the wider general public to consider the Plan in its entirety;
- To make the various documents publicly available and widely accessible for inspection;
- To consult on the Environmental and Sustainability Appraisal Reports and Habitat Regulation Assessment.

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
8 week Deposit Consultation exercise	To enable all interested persons and organisations to make representations in respect of any policies and proposals in the Deposit Plan	-Jun-Jul 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Existing Local Forums</li> <li>• Hard to Reach groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available on the website</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> <li>• Copies of the Deposit Plan available in the Council's main offices buildings and local libraries if possible</li> <li>• Drop in sessions /public information exhibitions</li> <li>• Prearranged individual briefing session appointments</li> <li>• Site Notices or neighbour notification letters in respect of site-specific land allocations</li> </ul>	<p>Hard copy of representations placed in Council offices and on website</p> <p>Representations and comments to be included in a report of consultation which will be available on the website</p> <p>Representations submitted to WG for consideration by the Inspector</p>
<b>SA/SEA &amp; HRA</b>					
Sustainability Appraisal Report and Habitat Regulations Assessment	To consult on key outputs of the SA SEA process and HRA	Jun-Jul 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Existing Local Forums</li> <li>• Hard to Reach groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available on the website</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> <li>• Copies of the documents available in the Council's main office buildings and local libraries if possible</li> <li>• Prearranged individual briefing session appointments</li> </ul>	<p>Hard copy of representations placed in Council offices and on website</p> <p>Representations and comments to be included in a report of consultation which will be available on the website</p>
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### Stage 4: Submission of Local Development Plan to Inspectorate for independent Examination (Regulation 22)

#### Aims and Objectives of this Stage

- To consider the representations received during the statutory consultation period and provide a response to them that can be considered by the Inspector at the Examination; and
- Provide notice to all interested stakeholders of the submission of the LDP and associated documents to Welsh Government

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
Undertake work necessary for formal submission to Welsh Government for Examination	To enable examination of the Plan	Indicative date Dec 21 – Jan 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database</li> <li>• Representors database</li> <li>• Candidate site database</li> <li>• Elected Members</li> <li>• Internal Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Publication of documents on Council's website</li> <li>• Provide copies of relevant supporting documents in the Council's main office buildings and local libraries if possible</li> </ul>	

## Stage 5: Independent Examination (Regulation 23)

### Aims and Objectives of this Stage

- To undertake an independent Examination of the revised LDP;
- To examine the LDP in its entirety and test its 'soundness';
- Consider representations seeking changes to deposit Plan;
- For the Planning Inspector to consider all relevant evidence and prepare recommendations in the form of the Inspector's Report; and
- To undertake any further work requested by the Inspector.

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
Notification of Independent Examination	To ensure that interested persons/ organisations are aware that an Independent Examination into the LDP is taking place	Indicative date Mar – Apr 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal notification given by email</li> <li>• Notice placed on the website</li> </ul>	
Pre-Examination meeting	To advise on Examination procedures and format	Indicative date Mar – Apr 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and candidate site database</li> <li>• Representors database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email to Representors</li> <li>• Notice on the website</li> </ul>	Statements of Common Ground and Papers as necessary
Consideration of all representations to the Plan by the independent Planning Inspector appointed to consider the evidence	To provide an impartial planning view on the soundness of the Plan and the representations made in respect of it	Indicative date May-Jun 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representors database (Please note not all representors will appear at the Examination)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round Table discussions</li> <li>• Formal hearings (if requested and agreed by Inspector)</li> <li>• Written submissions</li> </ul>	Inspectors Report

### Stage 6: Publication of the Planning Inspector's Recommendations (Regulation 24)

#### Aims and objectives of this stage

- To publish the recommendations of the Planning Inspector, and the reasons for those recommendations and make them generally available for inspection; and
- To give notice to all interested persons and organisations that the Inspector's Report is available.

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
To formally adopt the LDP as the Development Plan for the County Borough within eight weeks of receipt of the Inspectors Report	To inform stakeholders of adoption	Indicative date Sept-Oct 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and Candidate site database</li> <li>• Representors database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LDP documents including the adoption statement and the Sustainability Appraisal Report made available on the website</li> <li>• Formal notification given by email to specific Consultation Bodies and Elected Members</li> <li>• Copies of all relevant documents available in the Council's main office buildings</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Notice on the Internet</li> </ul>	Report to Full Council
<b>SA/SEA</b>					
Formal Publication of Environmental Statement (contained within the SA report)	Identify any adjustments arising from the Examination	Indicative date Sept-Oct 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and Candidate site database</li> <li>• Representors database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LDP documents including the adoption statement and the Sustainability Appraisal Report made available on the website</li> <li>• Formal notification given by email to specific Consultation Bodies and Elected Members</li> <li>• Copies of all relevant documents available in the Council's main office buildings</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Notice on the Internet</li> </ul>	



## Stage 7: Adoption (Regulation 25)

### Aims and Objectives of this stage

- To adopt the LDP within 8 weeks of the receipt of the Inspector's report

Stage	Purpose	When?	Who?	How?	Reporting Mechanism
Publish the Inspector's Report	To provide stakeholders with an opportunity to read the report in advance of any changes being made to the LDP in line with the Inspector's recommendations	Indicative Date July – Aug 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation database and Candidate site database</li> <li>• Representors database</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspector's Report made available on the website</li> <li>• Copies of the report available in the Council's main office buildings and local libraries if possible</li> <li>• Formal notice to those persons who asked to be notified</li> </ul>	

## List of Consultees

<b>Specific Consultation Bodies as defined in LDP Regulation 2 (including UK Government Departments):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Government (Planning division will co-ordinate consultations)</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Network Rail</li> <li>• Office of Secretary of State for Wales</li> <li>• Telecommunication Operators – EE, Vodafone and O2, Openreach, Virgin Media</li> <li>• Aneurin Bevan Health Board</li> <li>• Gas and Electricity Licensees – National Grid, Wales &amp; West Utilities</li> <li>• Sewerage and Water Undertakers – Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</li> <li>• Department for Transport (including Secretary of State for functions previously exercised by the Strategic Rail Authority)</li> <li>• UK Government Departments – Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy</li> <li>• Home Office</li> <li>• Ministry of Defence</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighbouring Local Authorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brecon Beacons National Park</li> <li>• Caerphilly County Borough Council</li> <li>• Powys County Council</li> <li>• Torfaen County Borough Council</li> <li>• Monmouthshire County Council</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Community Councils:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abertillery &amp; Llanhilleth Community Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nantyglo &amp; Blaina Town Council</li> <li>• Brynmawr Town Council</li> <li>• Tredegar Town Council</li> </ul>

### General Consultation Bodies

The Council will consult with the following general consultation bodies, where appropriate, in accordance with the Delivery Agreement. This list is not exhaustive and may be added to as appropriate:

#### Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area:

- GAVO
- Age Concern Gwent
- Gwent Wildlife Trust
- Royal Voluntary Service

#### Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area:

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission
- The Valleys Regional Equality Council
- Citizens Advice Cymru
- Ethnic Minority Foundation
- Friends, Families and Travellers

#### Bodies which represent the interests in different religious groups in the authority's area

- Church in Wales
- Catholic Church in Wales
- Evangelical Movement of Wales
- Kingdom Hall Jehovah's Witnesses
- Muslim Council for Wales
- South Wales Baptist Association
- United Reform Church
- Salvation Army

- Cardiff Buddhist Centre
- UK Islamic Mission

#### Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area:

- Downs Syndrome Association
- Gwent Association for the Blind
- Mencap Cymru
- Mind Cymru
- Royal National Institute for Deaf People
- Wales Council for Deaf People
- Wales Council for the Blind
- Wales Council for the Disabled
- Blaenau Gwent Access Forum
- Disability Wales
- Disability Rights Commission
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

#### Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying out business in the authority's area:

- Blaenau Gwent Business Forum
- Business Wales (South Wales Regional Centre)
- Federation of Small Businesses in Wales

#### Bodies which represent the interests of Welsh culture in the authority's area:

- Cadw
- Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
- Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments

<b>Other Consultees</b>	
<p>The Council will consult with the following other consultees, where appropriate, in accordance with the Delivery Agreement. This list is not exhaustive and may be added to as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Aggregates Association</li> <li>• British Geological Survey</li> <li>• Canal and River Trust</li> <li>• Centre for Ecology &amp; Hydrology</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce, Local CBI, Local Branches of Institute of Directors</li> <li>• Coal Authority</li> <li>• Country Landowners &amp; Business Association (CLA)</li> <li>• Crown Estate</li> <li>• Design Commission for Wales</li> <li>• Farmers Union Wales</li> <li>• Fire &amp; Rescue Services</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Executive</li> <li>• The Home Builders Federation</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Community, Conservation, Amenity Groups, Agenda 21 Groups/Civic Societies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wales Environment Link</li> <li>• Welsh Environmental Services Association</li> <li>• Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales</li> <li>• Friends of the Earth (Cymru)</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Relevant Bodies</b></p> <p><b>Community Planning Groups :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Trust for Ornithology</li> <li>• Welsh Historic Gardens Trust</li> <li>• Wildlife and Wetlands Trust</li> <li>• Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships</li> <li>• RSPB Cymru</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Transport Operators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arriva Trains</li> <li>• Bus Users Cymru</li> <li>• Confederation of Passenger Transport</li> <li>• Great Western Railway &amp; Network Rail Western</li> <li>• Freight Transport Association</li> <li>• Road Haulage Association Ltd</li> <li>• Stagecoach</li> <li>• Sustrans</li> <li>• Gwent Joint Passenger Transport Unit</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fields in Trust</li> <li>• One Voice Wales</li> <li>• Planning Aid Wales</li> <li>• Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors</li> <li>• Royal Town Planning Institute (Wales)</li> <li>• Chartered Institute of Housing (Cymru)</li> <li>• Institute of Civil Engineers</li> <li>• Chartered Management Institute (Cymru)</li> <li>• Sports Wales</li> <li>• Wales Council for Voluntary Action</li> </ul>

- Blaenau Gwent Fair and Safe Partnership

#### **Education**

- Coleg Gwent
- National Library for Wales

#### **Housing Associations**

- Melin
- Linc Cymru
- United Welsh

#### **Elderly Persons Organisations**

- Age UK
- National Old Age Pensioners Association for Wales

#### **Ex Offenders Groups**

- Nacro
- Apex Trust

#### **Government Agencies**

- Arts Council of Wales
- Capital Region Tourism
- Coed Cymru
- Civic Trust Cymru
- The National Trust

#### **Local House Builders**

#### **Local Estate Agents**

#### **Homeless Organisations**

- Shelter Cymru
- Crisis

#### **Planning Consultants**

- Arup
- Arcadis
- Asbri Planning
- Atkins Global
- BNP Paribas Real Estate
- Boyer Planning
- Capita Property
- CDN Planning Ltd
- CH2M
- Cushman and Wakefield
- DLP Planning
- DPP Planning
- GVA
- James Barr Design
- Jones Lang la Salle
- Kevin Nield Associates
- Leith Planning Ltd
- Lichfield Planning and Development Consultancy
- Louis Chicot Associates
- LRM Planning Ltd
- Pegasus Planning Group
- RPS Group
- Savills
- White Young Green

<p><b>Children and Young People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCH Action for Children</li> <li>• Tredegar Youth Café</li> <li>• Brownies and Guides</li> <li>• BG Youth Carers</li> <li>• Children in Wales</li> <li>• Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs</li> <li>• Prince’s Trust</li> <li>• Youth Hostel Association</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Planning Agents</b></p> <p><b>Political including Local Assembly Members and Members of Parliament</b></p> <p><b>Voluntary Public Bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Horse Society</li> <li>• Ramblers Association Wales</li> <li>• Prince’s Trust</li> <li>• Welsh Consumer Council</li> <li>• Welsh Association of Motor Clubs</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 2: Timetable for the Preparation of the Revised LDP

	2018					2019					2020					2021					2022																					
Key Stage Definitive	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
<b>Delivery Agreement (DA)</b>																																										
Preparation of Draft DA	█																																									
Political Reporting of Draft DA and agreement to submit to WG		█	█	█	█																																					
Submission to Welsh Government				█	█	█																																				
DA agreed by Welsh Government																																										
<b>Update Evidence Base</b>																																										
Review Evidence Base																																										
Review SA - Update baseline and framework and prepare Scoping Report																																										
<b>Pre-Deposit Participation</b>																																										
Call for Candidate Sites																																										
Candidate Sites - Initial Assessment																																										
Consultation on Draft SA Scoping Report																																										
Identification & assessment of vision, objectives and options																																										
Preparation of Initial SA Report																																										
Preparation of HRA Report																																										
Preparation of Preferred Strategy																																										
Political reporting of Preferred Strategy																																										
<b>Pre-Deposit Consultation</b>																																										
Consultation on Preferred Strategy																																										
Consultation on Initial SA Report																																										
Analyse consultation responses and prepare Initial Consultation Report																																										
Candidate Site Assessment - Call for further information																																										
Candidate Site Assessment - Assessment																																										
Prepare Deposit Plan																																										
Update SA/HRA																																										
Political reporting of Deposit Plan																																										





Risk	Risk Score	Potential Impact	Mitigation
<b>Council</b>			
Change in staff resources to undertake preparation of replacement LDP.	Medium/High	Programme slippage	Ensure support at a corporate level
Staff turnover in small team	Medium	Programme slippage	Consider additional resources (including support from other sections within the Council)
Reduction and lack of financial resources	Medium/High	Programme slippage	Ensure plan preparation process is adequately costed with in-built capacity for unforeseen costs
Corporate reorganisation of structures	Low/Medium	Programme slippage	Ensure revised LDP process maintains highest level of corporate priority
Council decision making reporting cycle	Medium	Programme slippage	Streamline decision making procedures and ensure timetable is realistic
Political Change / Elections	High	Programme slippage	Early Member training
Lack of support from officers / other departments in production of the evidence base	Medium	Programme slippage	Ensure organisation wide support of plan process and timetable from outset

Risk	Risk Score	Potential Impact	Mitigation
<b>National / Regional Issues</b>			
Undertaking Consultation during Covid-19	High	Safety of staff	Ensure that consultation events are risk assessed
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wave of Covid-19 Infections leading to Lockdown	High	Programme slippage	No control at a local level – slippage is set by WG
Additional requirements arising from new legislation/national guidance e.g. revised Planning Policy Wales and LDP Manual	Medium/High	Programme slippage	Monitor emerging legislation/guidance and respond to changes as soon as possible
Need to amend emerging Plan to align with emerging National Development Framework (NDF) and Strategic Development Plan	High	Programme slippage	Ensure involvement in progress of regional work  Keep up to date with progress on NDF
Involvement in preparation of Strategic Development Plan	Medium/High	Programme slippage Resource implications as extent of input to the SDP is currently unknown	Ensure sufficient resources are made available to support the SDP process
Planning Inspectorate unable to meet target dates	Low /Medium	Examination and/or report is delayed	Maintain close liaison with the Planning Inspectorate to ensure early warning of any potential problems
<b>Local Issues</b>			

Risk	Risk Score	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Printing and production delays	Low	Programme slippage	Consider additional resources to undertake process in house
Insufficient information to undertake ISA	Low	Programme slippage	Identify and manage expectation of consultation bodies
Large volume and/or highly significant levels of objections to proposals e.g. site allocations	Medium / High	Programme slippage	Ensure close liaison and early/continued involvement of community, statutory bodies & stakeholders throughout the plan preparation process
SA/SEA/HRA implications on plan strategy / proposals	Low	Programme Slippage	Ensure process is fully integrated with LDP preparation
Plan fails test of 'soundness'	Medium	Plan cannot be adopted without considerable additional work	Ensure Plan and Community Involvement are 'sound'  Close liaison with WG Planning Division
Legal challenge	Low	Programme slippage  Quashing of adopted LDP	Ensure good knowledge of statutory requirements to ensure compliance

## Profile and Characteristics of Local Population

Population		Economic Activity		Economic Inactivity (Continued)	
<b>Total</b>	69,814	<b>Total Males</b>		<b>% inactive females 16-74 years:</b>	
Males	34,325	16-74 years	25,773	Retired	16.80%
Females	35,489			Student	4.3%
<i>Source: Census 2011</i>		<b>Total Females</b>		Looking after home/family	4.5%
		16-74 years	26,036	Permanently sick/disabled	9.6%
				Other	2.7%
				<i>Source: Census 2011</i>	
Age Structure		% Males 16-74 years who are:		Marital Status (%)	
Aged 0 to 4	5.8%	Working full-time	43.0%	All people aged 16+ (No)	57,321
Aged 5 to 15	10.9%	Working part-time	5.8%	Single (never married)	34.2%
Aged 16 to 19	13.3%	Self employed	7.6%	Married	44.3%
Aged 20 to 44	25.5%	Unemployed	8.7%	Separated but still married	2.2%
Aged 45 to 64	26.6%	Full-time Student	1.8%	Divorced	10.60%
Aged 65 years and over	17.9%			Widowed	8.5%
<i>Source: Census 2011</i>		<b>% Females 16-74 years who are:</b>		<i>Source: Census 2011</i>	
		Working full-time	27.2%		
		Working part-time	20.2%		
		Self employed	2.5%		
		Unemployed	5.1%		
		Full-time Student	2.3%		
		<i>Source: Census 2011</i>			
Ethnic Group		Economic Inactivity		Tenure (%)	
White	98.4%	<b>% inactive males 16-74 years:</b>		Owned Outright	32.9%
Asian or Asian British	0.5%	Retired	16.8%	Mortgaged	29.1%
Black or Black British	0.1%	Student	4.3%	Shared Ownership	0.1%
Chinese or Other	0.2%	Looking after home/family	4.5%	Council rented	11.1%
Mixed Ethnicity	0.6%	Permanently sick/disabled	9.6%	Housing Assoc. rented	12.9%
Other Ethnicity	0.1%	Other	2.7%	Private rented	11.4%
Identifying themselves as Welsh	72.4%			Other rented	1.4%
<i>Source: Census 2011</i>		<i>Source: Census 2011</i>		<i>Source: Census 2011</i>	
Welsh Speakers (%)					
Aged 3+	11.5%				
<i>Source: Census 2011</i>					

No Car	29.0%	% of people with a limiting long-term illness	27.2%	All aged 16-74 in employment	28,291
1 Car	43.8%			Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0.30%
2+ Cars	27.3%	% people of working age with limiting long-term illness	13.9%	Mining & Quarrying	0.30%
Total Cars (No.)	32,478			Manufacturing	20.10%
Source: Census 2011		<b>% of people whose health was:</b>		Public Utilities	2.10%
		Good	72.5%	Construction	7.90%
		Fairly good	16.8%	Wholesale & Retail;repair motor vehicle	15.20%
		Not good	10.7%	Hotels & Catering	4.60%
		<b>All people who provide unpaid care</b>	12.5%	Transport & Storage	3.90%
				Financial Intermediation	1.70%
		<b>% of people who provide unpaid care:</b>		Real Estate	1.10%
		1-19 hours a week	6.2%	Public administration & defence	7.00%
		20-49 hours a week	2.3%	Education	7.90%
		50 or more hours per week	4.0%	Health & Social Work	17.30%
				Other	3.70%
		Source: Census 2011		Source: Census 2011	
<b>Lone Parent Households (No)</b>					
With dependent children	2,759				
Source: Census 2011					
<b>Education &amp; Qualifications (%)</b>					
All people aged 16 and over	57,321				
No qualifications	36.0%				
Highest qualification (level 1)	15.80%				
Highest qualification (level 2)	15.50%				
Highest qualification (level 3)	9.80%				
Highest qualification (level 4 and above)	15.20%				
Other qualification/level unknown	4.20%				
Source: Census 2011					
<b>Household Size</b>					
Persons per household	2.3				
Source: Census 2011					
<b>Job Seekers Allowance: May 2020</b>					
		Number of claimants	3,135		
		% of claimants	7.20%		
Source: Nomis					



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol  
**Blaenau Gwent**  
 County Borough Council

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Adoption</b>	Final stage of LDP preparation where the LDP becomes the statutory Development Plan for the purposes of the Act.
<b>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</b>	A yearly report to monitor the effectiveness of the LDP and ultimately determines whether any revisions to the Plan are necessary. It assesses the extent to which the LDP strategy and objectives are being achieved and whether the LDP policies are functioning effectively.
<b>Baseline</b>	A description of the present state of an area.
<b>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)</b>	This is the name of the Local Authority preparing the LDP.
<b>Candidate Sites</b>	A site nominated by an individual with an interest in land (i.e landowner, developer, agent or member of the public) to be considered for inclusion in the LDP. All Candidate sites will be assessed for suitability for inclusion as potential allocations.
<b>Community</b>	People living in a defined geographical area, or who share interests.
<b>Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)</b>	The Community Involvement Scheme forms part of the Delivery Agreement. It outlines the principles of engagement and provides detail on how the Local Planning Authority will involve communities and stakeholders (including businesses and developers) in the preparation of the Local Development Plan.
<b>Consensus Building</b>	A process of dialogue with the community and other interested parties to understand relevant viewpoints and to seek agreement where possible.
<b>Consultation</b>	A formal process in which comments are invited on a particular topic or draft document usually within a defined period of time.
<b>Council</b>	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (excluding for planning purposes the Brecon Beacons National Park administrative area that falls within the Blaenau Gwent area.)
<b>Delivery Agreement (DA)</b>	A document comprising Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's (as Local Planning Authority) timetable for the preparation of the LDP together with its Community Involvement Scheme, submitted to the Welsh Government for Agreement.
<b>Deposit</b>	A formal six week stage in which individuals and organisations can make representations on the LDP. Representations that relate to whether the plan is 'Sound' are then examined by an Inspector.
<b>Deposit LDP</b>	This is a full draft of the LDP which undergoes a formal consultation period prior to it being submitted to the Welsh

	Government for public examination.
<b>Duly Made</b>	Representations to the LDP which are made in the correct way within the consultation period.
<b>Engagement</b>	A proactive process that seeks to encourage the involvement and participation of the community and other groups in the decision making process.
<b>Evidence Base</b>	Information and data that provides the basis for the preparation of the LDP vision, objectives, policies and proposals and justifies the soundness of the policy approach of the LDP.
<b>Examination</b>	The examination involves public examination of the Deposit LDP, the Deposit representations, the report of consultation, evidence base/background documents and the Sustainability Appraisal Report. This is carried out by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Welsh Government.
<b>Frontloading</b>	Community involvement and consensus building at early stages of plan preparation.
<b>Habitat Regulation Assessment</b>	This is the assessment of the potential effects of a Development Plan on one or more European sites and comprising Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), candidate SACs and Special Protection Areas. The assessment should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in a Development Plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in question.
<b>Indicator</b>	A measure of variables, over time, often used to measure achievement of objectives.
<b>Inspector's Report</b>	The report prepared by an independent inspector who examines the LDP. The Inspector's Report contains recommendations on the content of the final LDP and is binding upon the Council. The Council must adopt the LDP in the manner directed by the Inspector.
<b>Involvement</b>	Generic term to include both participation and consultation techniques.
<b>Local Development Plan (LDP)</b>	A land use plan that is subject to independent examination, which will form the statutory Development Plan for a local authority area for the purposes of the Act. It should include a vision, strategy, area-wide policies for development types, land allocations, and where necessary policies and proposals for key areas of change and protection. Policies and allocations must be shown geographically on the Proposals Map forming part of the plan.
<b>Local Planning Authority (LPA)</b>	In the case of Blaenau Gwent County Borough, this is Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council excluding Brecon Beacons National Park.
<b>National Development Framework (NDF)</b>	The NDF will set out a 20 year land use framework for Wales and will replace the current Wales Spatial Plan. The Welsh Government Planning Directorate has begun work on the NDF.
<b>Objective</b>	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends.
<b>Participation</b>	A process rather than a single event that provides opportunity for direct engagement with the community and

	stakeholders to input into decision making.
<b>Planning Inspectorate</b>	The Wales branch of the Planning Inspectorate is an independent body who will be responsible for the formal examination of the LDP.
<b>Planning Policy Wales (PPW)</b>	Planning policy guidance for Wales produced by the Welsh Government is set out in this document.
<b>Pre-deposit</b>	Stages of plan preparation and consultation before the Deposit LDP is finalised and approved by Council.
<b>Preferred Strategy</b>	This sets out the broad strategic direction for the LDP. This includes the preferred level of growth along with the spatial strategy for distributing growth. It also includes the vision, issues and objectives of the Plan.
<b>Press Releases</b>	Sent to Welsh media, including newspapers, radio and television news stations as appropriate. Media may choose not to print or broadcast an item.
<b>Regulation</b>	Regulations are set out in Welsh Statutory instruments. They provide the framework for the preparation of the LDP.
<b>Report of Consultation</b>	A Consultation Report is one of the documents required to be submitted for independent examination. An initial consultation report is also required for the pre-deposit stage.
<b>Representations</b>	Comments received in relation to the LDP, either in support of, or in opposition to.
<b>Review Report</b>	The Review Report provides an overview of the issues that have been considered as part of the full review process and identifies changes that are likely to be needed to the LDP, based on evidence. It also sets out the type of revision procedure to be followed in revising the LDP.
<b>Scoping</b>	The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of a Sustainability Appraisal, including the sustainability effects and options which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the SA report.
<b>Significant Effect</b>	Effects which are significant in the context of the plan. (Annexe II of the SEA Directive give criteria for determining the likely environmental significance of effects).
<b>Soundness Tests</b>	In order to adopt a LDP it must be determined to be sound by the Planning Inspector. The Tests of Soundness are set out in PPW. There are three tests to make that judgement in relation to the plan as a whole. A framework for assessing the soundness of LDPs has been developed by the Planning Inspectorate.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	Interests directly affected by the LDP – involvement generally through representative bodies.
<b>Strategic Development Plan (SDP)</b>	A Strategic Development Plan is a tool for regional planning to cover cross-boundary issues such as housing and transport. It will be prepared by a Strategic Planning Panel across a region. LPAs must have regard to the SDP when developing their LDPs.



<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b>	Generic terms used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) requires a formal “environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use”.
<b>Submission</b>	When the LDP, SAR and HRA are formally submitted to the Welsh Government for independent examination by a Welsh Government appointed Inspector.
<b>Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)</b>	Provides supplementary information in respect of the policies of the LDP. They do not (SPG) form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination but must be consistent with it and with national planning policy.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	Tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors). Each LPA is required by the SEA Regulations to undertake SA of the LDP. This form of SA fully incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR)</b>	A document required to be produced as part of the SA process to describe and appraise the likely significant effects on sustainability of implementing the Plan, which meets the requirements for the Environmental Report under the SEA Directive. The SEA Regulations requires each LPA to prepare a report of the findings of the SA of the LDP.
<b>Timetable</b>	Sets out the dates by which key stages and processes of LDP preparation are expected to be completed. These are definitive for stages up to the deposit of the LDP and indicative for the remaining stages after.
<b>Well-being of the Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)</b>	The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation that requires public bodies, such as local authorities, to put long term sustainability at the forefront of their thinking to make a difference to lives of people in Wales. Local authorities must work towards the seven well-being goals and enact the five ways of working set out in the Act.
<b>Workshop</b>	Where members of the public have the opportunity to engage in group debates and practical exercises with written or drawn ‘output’.

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# Covid-19 Assessment



Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033  
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd 2018 - 2033

August 2020

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document is to reflect on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Blaenau Gwent and consider the consequences for the Replacement Local Development Plan. The document outlines the impact of Covid-19 on Blaenau Gwent and assesses the consequences on the Replacement Local Development Plan's evidence base, strategy and policies in terms of sensitivity to the consequences of the pandemic. It also provides robust conclusions on the need for action.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Preparation of a Replacement Plan was well underway with consultation on the Preferred Strategy completed and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Candidate Sites about to take place when on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Welsh Government wrote to all Chief Planning Officers in Wales regarding the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and the preparation of Local Development Plans. The letter identified that it was important not to progress plans that could be in conflict with legal requirements set out in the Community Involvement Scheme in their Deliver Agreements. As a result Blaenau Gwent was advised to put on hold its plans for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Candidate Sites.

2.2 On the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 the Minister for Housing and Local Government wrote to all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives regarding the Covid-19 pandemic reflecting on the impact on those in our communities who have least, exacerbating social, economic and environmental inequalities. The Minister advised that our approach going forward must focus on addressing longstanding inequalities by taking a values based approach to recovery which promotes social, economic and environmental justice. The Minister identified the planning system as being central to shaping a better future for Wales and that it is essential that all levels of government ensure that plans, policies and procedures improve the well-being of our people and the resilience of our environment. It is her strongly held view that we must not sacrifice the principles of sustainable development and place making in the pursuit of economic recovery at any cost.

2.3 In terms of Local Development Plans, Local Planning Authorities are required to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on their areas and consider the consequences for LDPs under review or being implemented. The Minister considers that long held views and policies on matters including transportation, economic development, housing, regeneration, role of town centres and the importance of green infrastructure have all been brought into focus recently. We must think differently to promote a sustained recovery.

2.4 The Minister considers that as LDPs are evidenced based the result of the pandemic and resulting downturn in the economy will mean that much of the evidence on which LDPs are based is likely to be out of date. This she considers is particularly the case for economic and social evidence covering areas such as the need for social and market housing, viability, economic forecasts and transport modelling.

2.5 To address these concerns she advised that LDPs currently undergoing review should undertake an assessment of the evidence, strategy and policies in terms of sensitivity to the consequences of the pandemic. Robust conclusions should be reached on the need for new evidence and any consequential changes to strategy and policy before progressing plan preparation. The Assessment is to be submitted to the Welsh Government together with requests to extend Delivery Agreements.

2.6 Following this letter Welsh Government released a document Building Better Places, The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures, Placemaking and Covid-19 recovery (July 2020). The document sets out the Welsh Government's planning policy priorities that will assist in taking action in the recovery period after the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Local Development Plans are being tasked with taking a long-term view to improve health and well-being for all. Up to date LDPs are needed to urgently give local effect to local development priorities and national planning policy. They should be distinctive, with a truly local feel and dimension to them which provide a strategic framework for the development of local areas, whilst responding to the opportunity provided by national policy and legislation. The Minister wants us to reset the clock and think again about the places we want to live, work and play in. We need to rebuild a greener cleaner society with decarbonisation and social justice at its heart which respects our environment whilst giving people good places to live in, which are accessible on foot, bike and public transport.

2.7 The key message is that a plan led approach is the most effective way for the planning system to combat climate change. We must identify, plan for and achieve key steps in achieving the switch to a decarbonised and climate resilient society. A strategic role for the planning system is to direct growth to sustainable locations and prevent the creation of car-dependent developments. The sustainable transport hierarchy should be used to reduce the need to travel, prevent car-dependent developments in unsustainable locations, and support the delivery of schemes located, designed and supported by infrastructure which prioritises access and movement by active and sustainable travel.

2.8 Other relevant PPW policy areas relating to tackling climate change and making more resilient places include:

- the importance of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), which includes electric vehicles, in the decarbonisation of transport;
- a requirement for local planning authorities to establish targets for renewable energy generation in development plans, as well as to identify spatial areas where renewable energy developments will be permitted;
- severely restricting the extraction of new fossil fuels;
- ensuring biodiversity enhancement (a net benefit for biodiversity), ecosystem resilience and green infrastructure as part of advocating nature-based solutions;
- taking forward measures to embed the principles of a circular economy, particularly in the construction, and use, of the built environment and land, and the sustainable management of mineral resources; and
- directing development away from areas at risk of flooding.

2.9 The document identifies particular areas of national policy which should be the focus of consideration and action, in order to act as a catalyst for a recovery across the pillars of sustainable development. The eight issues identified are:

- Staying local: creating neighbourhoods
- Active travel: exercise and rediscovered transport methods
- Revitalising our town centres
- Digital places: the lockdown lifeline
- Changing working practices: our future need for employment land
- Reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors
- Green infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience
- Improving air quality and soundscapes for better health and well-being

2.10 All these issues will be used to assess the performance of the Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Preferred Strategy.

### 3.0 IMPACT OF COVID-19

#### Overview of Economic Impact

3.1 The economic policy response to Covid-19 can be seen as having three main phases. The first phase was rapid initial lock down of the economy. The main policy goals at this stage were to provide people and business with financial support to be able to follow lockdown guidance and support themselves. The intention was to prevent unnecessary damage to otherwise viable businesses and economic capacity so that when lockdown was lifted it would be easier to restore. The second phase has been the re-opening of the economy but with restrictions on the economy that force it to operate at pre-pandemic levels. At this stage policy has been targeting support at specific sectors to allow them to re-open. The timing of withdrawal of support it is crucial, removing support too early may lead to job losses and business closures having only been delayed rather than avoided. This is what is happening now. In the third phase the economy emerges from the health emergency as all demand side options become available once again. Crucially the shape and speed of this resumption of full economic activity will be shaped by the impacts of earlier measures. Added to this there is a risk of a further wave which risks local or even a further national lockdown.

3.2 The impacts of Covid-19 are not evenly distributed across the economy. The most severely impacted sectors have been food/accommodation and arts/leisure sectors. In other sectors such as construction and manufacturing whilst impacts on work place arrangements have an impact, the greater impact comes from the initial collapse in demand and it is restoring both demand and supply chains that is central to determining reopening. Those sectors that are least affected, in addition to critical sectors that have had to stay open, are those sectors where working from home is possible and demand is much less immediately impacted by lockdown such as the public sector and utilities.

**3.3** At a UK level almost a quarter of workers have stopped working since the crisis started, the majority of which have been furloughed rather than lost their jobs. With the furloughing scheme coming to an end at the end of October there is great uncertainty around future employment rates and economic recovery. To date numerous announcements have been made regarding staff cuts in the retail, travel and restaurant sectors.

**3.4** The average fall in household earnings has been 8%, but this is not evenly distributed with 23% having lost over 20% of their income. Neither, are these variations evenly distributed with just 5% of those earning over £40,000 having lost their jobs, compared to 12% for those earning less than £20,000. This reflected in the fact that 72% of the former group were able to work from home compared to just 33% of the latter group. In addition, those on lower pay tend to be less securely employed; only 26% of those with a permanent contract suffered a fall in earnings, compared to 66% of those on a temporary contract and 75% of the self-employed.

**3.5** The total number of unemployment claimants rose by 850,000 in April 2020 to hit 2.1 million, the fastest monthly rise in a generation. This is now expected to rise to 3 million by next year. In Wales this unemployment rate rose from 3.3% to 6.8%. Levels are running close to twice the pre-crisis levels and there has since been a second wave of job losses with more expected following the closure of the furloughing scheme.

**3.6** There are also differential impacts based on demographic characteristics. Young people are disproportionately employed in low paying jobs in the most affected sectors (food/accommodation and arts/leisure). Women are more likely to work in sectors that are locked down. BAME groups are also more economically exposed as they are more likely to fulfil roles in care, transport and delivery sectors and in the more marginal hospitality and self-employed sectors.

**3.7** It should be noted that the economic downturn resulting from the response to Covid-19 is different from 'ordinary' recessions in both scale and the types of economic impact. The size and speed of falls in many measures of economic activity are already historical records. However, there is a fundamental difference between the Covid-19 situation and ordinary recessions in that Government policy deliberately suppressed economic activity in order to slow infection of the pandemic. This has meant that the effects are both larger and spread across more economic sectors than in recessions that typically originate in specific parts of the economy, although the effects of these initial problems may then spread more widely. Also the main policy response to recessions, to stimulate demand, was not available to government in the short-term. This makes it all the more difficult to predict future trends whilst making it more imperative to address.

### **Impacts for Blaenau Gwent Economy**

**3.8** Blaenau Gwent has a low economic activity rate (72.9%), below the GB (79.1%) and Wales (76.6%) averages and a high unemployment rate (4.4%) in the national context (Wales 3.7% and GB 3.9%) (Source: NOMIS March 2020). The number of people claiming



out-of-work benefits at 7.2% is again higher than the Wales (6%) and GB (6.3%) rates (Source: NOMIS June 2020).

**3.9** Blaenau Gwent also has issues with skill levels, with a low proportion of residents having NVQ4 and above (24.9%) compared to national figures (Wales 36.3% and GB 40.3%) and a high proportion of people having no qualifications (13.8%) compared to national figures (Wales 8.5% and GB 7.7%) (Source: NOMIS Jan 2019-Dec 2019).

**3.10** Together these issues result in low wages for those Blaenau Gwent residents who are in work with Gross Weekly pay (£457.8) well below that of Wales (£540.7) and GB (£587.0) (Source: NOMIS 2019). It also means that Blaenau Gwent residents are more likely to have seen a cut in their income and be more susceptible to losing their jobs.

**3.11** The largest sector in Blaenau Gwent's economy is manufacturing (4,000 jobs 22.2% of total) with nearly three (2.7) times the proportional size of the manufacturing sector in Great Britain. This sector whilst initially impacted due to phase 1 of the lockdown has since seen an opening as demand for goods is returning. The main issue for this sector is the reliance on the automotive sector which is performing poorly due to a lack of confidence in the market, the move to electric vehicles and Brexit.

**3.12** The other main sectors are retail (3,000 16.7%) and health and social activities (3,000 16.7%). There has been a mixed picture in terms of retail with convenience stores doing well having had no lockdown restrictions whilst comparison shopping experienced a long period of closure. The ability of the comparison sector to bounce back has been impacted by a greater shift to on line shopping. Whilst there have been many national closures announced the impact on Blaenau Gwent's towns is unknown at this stage. Though not necessarily impacted by these national closures local shops may not have been able to survive the lockdown or survive through the restricted measures currently in place.

**3.13** In terms of health and social activities whilst those working in hospital environments have experienced the worst of Covid-19, the impact on jobs and finance has been more positive. However, moving forward there is some uncertainty over the finances for social care providers.

**3.14** The greatest impacts have been on the 1,000 (5.6%) working in the accommodation and food service activities and 500 (2.8%) people working in arts and entertainment who have seen the greatest impacts in terms of lockdown.

**3.15** In terms of the industries doing well, there are 300 people working in utilities (1.7%) with a further 3,000 (16.6%) in the public and education sectors.

**3.16** As Blaenau Gwent has relatively high numbers (25.1%) of people working in the sectors most affected (retail, food, arts and entertainment) and less people (18.3) working in areas least affected (public services, education and utilities) it is likely to be impacted disproportionately by the pandemic.

## Impacts on the Environment

3.17 There have been positive impacts on the environment as a result of Covid-19 particularly during the lockdown period when movement was restricted and work limited leading to a fall in carbon emissions. Some see the changes as a catalyst for accelerated systematic change and a new Green Deal. It has also resulted in drops in air pollution and in turn may serve as a catalyst for more structural changes in transport systems. Access to green space has become more important to people in lockdown and is becoming an important consideration for people in buying new homes. Deprived areas generally have less access to greenspace.

## Impacts on Society

3.18 Homelessness has seen considerable investment to ensure that people have been housed during the pandemic. Due to the economic shock and loss of jobs it is likely that more people will become homeless and need temporary accommodation or social housing. The exact impacts of this are unknown at this time.

## 4.0 BLAENAU GWENT REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – EVIDENCE BASE

4.1 The replacement plan evidence base is quite extensive covering social, economic and environmental issues. The Minister is particularly concerned with evidence covering areas such as the need for social and market housing, viability, economic forecasts and transport modelling.

4.2 In terms of the need for social and market housing it will be possible to update the Local Housing Market Assessment in terms of the latest information on need and the latest information on the housing market. It will however be impossible to predict future trends and in response to this flexibility will be required in terms of housing policies in the Deposit Plan.

4.3 Evidence on viability is currently being prepared and will be able to take into account the latest information. However, as already stated it is difficult to predict future changes that might impact on viability and hence again some flexibility will be required to ensure that development will remain viable.

4.4 The economic evidence was prepared pre-pandemic however the consultant who prepared the study advises that it will be very difficult to update the information now in light of the lack of available trend data and ability to predict future trends with any certainty - given the economic downturn is different to previous downturns. So far we have had one quarter of negative growth and it is assumed that this will continue for the rest of the year. However, if we get a bounce back of the economy in 2021 or 2022 then there will be no real impact on land needs as the models used in the current study assumes some recessionary periods over the RLDP plan period. Added to this, Blaenau Gwent does not have a significant office sector and is therefore unlikely to see significant surpluses due to the shift in people working from home. On the other hand, it will be well placed to benefit from the

increase in logistics demand. In addition it has a cluster of medical supply companies which could benefit from growth in this sector. It is considered that flexibility is the key for the Plan to deliver a sustainable economic recovery. The Employment Land Review suggested that Blaenau Gwent requires between 3 and 46 ha of employment land with the higher figure being based on increasing economic activity, reducing unemployment, reducing out migration and out-commuting. This will help reduce the longstanding inequalities and promote social, economic and environmental justice.

4.5 A more detailed evaluation of the sensitivity of the existing evidence base to the impacts of Covid-19 and actions required are attached at Appendix 1.

## Conclusion

4.6 Generally the evidence can either be updated or is currently in preparation and will take account of Covid-19 issues. The only area where this is not possible is in terms of the economic information as we are advised by the consultants who undertook the study that extent of the uncertainties would make prediction of trends virtually impossible.

## 5.0 BLAENAU GWENT REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – STRATEGY AND POLICIES

5.1 It should be noted that the Blaenau Gwent Strategy and policies have been developed from the policy context, key challenges, drivers for change and participation of stakeholders. With the exception of the Welsh Government Building Better Places document the policy context has not changed. The key challenges which were developed into objectives for the Plan to meet will be assessed against the Building Better Places document. The Vision for the Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan identified in the Preferred Strategy is as:

*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:*

- *a prosperous low carbon economy where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life;*
- *residents living in well connected, healthy and safe communities, in a range of good quality homes with better access to services; and*
- *its distinctive natural environment, cultural and historic identity is protected and enhanced creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.*

5.2 This is considered to be distinctive and provides a local feel and dimension to the national policy framework within which we must work and the challenges Blaenau Gwent faces. To deliver the Vision four outcomes and nineteen objectives were identified. In order to ensure the vision, outcomes and objectives are relevant post Covid-19, an assessment has been undertaken to identify if they cover the priorities and actions for places identified by Welsh Government in Building Better Places (Source: Building Better Places, The Planning

System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures, Placemaking and the Covid-19 recovery (Welsh Government, July 2020).

**Table 1: Assessment of Objectives against WG priorities and actions for places post Covid-19**

Objective	Staying local	Active travel	Revitalising our towns	Digital places	Changing working practices	Re-awakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors	Green Infrastructure health and well-being and ecological resilience	Improving air quality and soundscape for better health and well-being.
<b>Outcome 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities</b>								
1. Spatial Strategy	✓		✓					
2. Demography								
3. Placemaking	✓					✓		
4. Climate change	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>Outcome 2: Create Opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills</b>								
5. Economic Growth	✓							
6. Education and skills	✓							
7. Minerals / Waste								
8. Circular Economy					✓			
9. Tourism			✓			✓		
<b>Outcome 3: Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities</b>								
10. Housing	✓							
11. Town Centres	✓		✓					
12. Sustainable Transport		✓						✓
13. Accessibility		✓						
14. Infrastructure							✓	
<b>Outcome 4: Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment</b>								
15. Ecosystems							✓	
16. Green Infrastructure	✓						✓	
18 Historical / Cultural						✓		
19. Environmental Quality								✓

- **Staying Local: creating neighbourhoods**

5.3 The only element that isn't specifically covered in the objectives is explicit reference to community growing spaces though this is generally covered by objective 14.

- **Active travel: exercise and rediscovered transport methods**

5.4 Active travel, sustainable travel and the transport hierarchy are fully covered by the objectives for the plan.

- **Revitalising our town centres**

5.5 Blaenau Gwent is well aware of the need to revitalise its town centres and this is recognised as an objective for the Plan to address. Though a retail assessment is being prepared for the Deposit Plan a town centre study has also been undertaken and both will inform the Deposit Plan policies.

- **Digital places – the lockdown lifeline**

5.6 The importance of broadband connectivity is recognised under the climate change objective.

- **Changing working practices – our future need for employment land**

5.7 Whilst there has been a seismic shift in lockdown with a significant increase in the number of people working from home Blaenau Gwent with a very low office base is unlikely to see significant loss of office space. Whilst the Council have plans to close the Civic Centre in Ebbw Vale plans are already in place to replace the site with housing. It is agreed that the plan will need to adapt quickly to the economic challenges which will occur as a result of the pandemic but this can be achieved through building in flexibility rather than designating sites for other uses. It must be recognised that other land hungry sectors such as logistics are growing. An assessment of strategic sites has recently been undertaken for the greater Gwent area and if we get a bounce back of the economy in 2021 or 2022 then there will be no real impact on land needs as the models used in the current study assumes some recessionary periods. Rather than having a knee jerk reaction it is considered more appropriate to build flexibility into the Deposit Plan.

- **Reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors**

5.8 The vision and objectives recognises the need for a positive framework for tourism and culture in Blaenau Gwent.

- **Green Infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience**

5.9 The importance of green infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience are all identified as objectives for the Plan to address.

- **Improving air quality and soundscapes for better health and well-being.**

5.10 The importance of air quality and soundscapes for better health and well-being is identified as an objective for the Plan to address.

### The Preferred Growth and Spatial Strategy

5.11 The Plans strategy is based on the aim to improve prosperity to close the employment gap with the rest of Wales. This involves helping 3,375 people into work through increasing economic activity, reducing unemployment, reducing out-migration and out-commuting. This is to be achieved by enabling good quality, secure and sustainable jobs.

5.12 The strategy encourages growth based on a clear understanding of the population and household changes over the plan period. It accepts that in order to create sustainable and viable places it must plan for a more balanced age structure. It must strike a balance of providing the right level of housing and employment growth and the necessary community infrastructure to encourage the younger population to return and middle aged population to remain in the area. Whilst enabling the older population to live healthy and active lives.

5.13 The distribution of the growth reflects a desire to spread this growth in an equitable manner in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns of movement and support local services and facilities. This involved an assessment of the level of sustainable transport and accessibility, the availability of local facilities and services and the level of employment in and around settlements.

5.14 To deliver the vision, objectives and the strategy there are 15 strategic policies. To ensure the policies remain relevant post Covid-19, an assessment has been undertaken to identify if they are sensitive to Covid-19, if they are, what actions are required and whether or not they cover the actions identified in Building Better Places. The assessment is attached at appendix 2.

## Conclusion

5.15 The Strategy and supporting Strategic Policies are generally in conformity to current national policy as set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) or where there are issues these will be addressed in the Deposit Plan and reported in the Consultation Report on the Preferred Strategy. To address the Ministers concerns further assessment has been undertaken of the vision, objectives, strategy and supporting policies. The vision was considered to be distinctive and provided a local feel and dimension in accordance with the national policy framework. The objectives of the Plan cover all the priorities and actions identified in the Building Better Places document. The sensitivity assessment of the strategic policies identified a number of sensitive areas but due to the uncertainties identified the best approach was to provide flexibility in policies and a monitoring framework that can reflect the risks. A number of the policies were found to address issues identified in the Building Better Places document.

5.16 As much of the evidence base is in preparation or can be updated and the Preferred Strategy has flexibility built in, it is considered that the Deposit Plan when prepared will be able to address the Ministers concerns. The Deposit Plan will be able to address longstanding inequalities through taking an approach to recovery which will address social, economic and environmental justice.

## Appendix 1: COVID 19 Assessment of Evidence Base

Document Title	Purpose	Sensitivity to COVID 19 consequences	Action
<b>Review Report (Sept 2017)</b>	To set out the proposed extent of likely changes to the existing LDP (2006-2021) and to confirm the revision procedure to be followed in preparing the Replacement LDP.	<b>Not sensitive</b>	No action required.
<b>Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement (October 2018)</b>	To set out how people will be given the opportunity to influence future development in Blaenau Gwent. Explain how and when people will be involved and consulted in developing the replacement Plan.	<b>Sensitive</b> Covid-19 and lockdown measures have resulted in a delay to undertaking consultation on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> call for candidate sites. It also means that the way we consult people will need to be changed to overcome risks of spreading the pandemic.	An extension to the existing timetable of 7 months will be required. Alterations to the community involvement scheme such as longer consultation periods, enhanced online participation methods, will also be required.
<b>SA/SEA Scoping Report (October 2018)</b>	To outline the proposed approach to the LDP's Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This report is the first stage of a SA process to identify, assess and address any likely significant effects on the environment from the emerging Blaenau Gwent RLDP.	<b>Not sensitive</b>	No action required.
<b>Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) for the Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan - Initial ISA Report (December 2019)</b>	To consider and communicate the likely effects of an emerging plan and alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The ISA seeks to maximise the development plan's contribution to sustainable development.	<b>Not sensitive</b> Covid-19 was not a consideration when this work was undertaken.	A further assessment will be undertaken of the Deposit Plan.
<b>Initial Habitat Regulation Assessment</b>	Set out the approach for the Habitat Regulation Assessment and identifies	<b>Not sensitive</b>	No action required.

<b>Screening Report (October 2018)</b>	the relevant designated sites.		
<b>Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy</b>	To identify any aspects of the Plan that might cause an adverse effect on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, otherwise known as European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> There may have been some short term positive impacts for the identified sites in terms of improvements to air quality during lockdown.	Some air quality monitoring is required and will inform a further assessment undertaken of the Deposit Plan.
<b>Candidate Site Register (June 2019)</b>	A log of sites submitted by land-owners, developers and the public as part of the call for candidate sites.	<b>Not sensitive</b>	No action required.
<b>LDP Demographic Evidence (June 2019)</b>	To provide a summary of demographic evidence, including a suite of population, housing and economic growth outcomes to inform the Strategic Growth Options	<b>Some sensitivity</b> Covid-19 has led to increased death rates. Though at a Blaenau Gwent level these are limited and are unlikely to have a significant impact on overall requirements. The evidence is being updated in light of the latest 2018-based projections.	An update is currently being undertaken. If there are significant changes as a result of this these will be incorporated into the Deposit Plan.
<b>LDP Demographic Evidence Employment Growth Analysis (July 2019)</b>	An addendum to the LDP Demographic Evidence the document examines the relationship between population, housing and employment growth under different assumptions.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> Welsh Government requires a broad balance of employment and housing growth to minimise the need for long distance commuting. This has become more of an issue during the Covid-19 lockdown. It is important that any change to employment or housing figures are considered together.	Update the assessment based on any changes to employment or housing requirements. Incorporate any changes into the Deposit Plan.
<b>Employment Land Review</b>	To quantify the future employment land	<b>Highly Sensitive</b> There have been	Due to the level of uncertainty with the



<p><b>Study (October 2019)</b></p>	<p>requirements of Blaenau Gwent based on Welsh Government Practice Guidance.</p>	<p>significant short term impacts on the economy. As we come out of lockdown a number of closures have been announced particularly in the retail, restaurant and travel sectors. The Retail and Leisure study covers these sectors. The study focuses on business uses such as B1, B2 and B8. In this area the greatest impacts are likely to be for office demand which is likely to reduce and an increased demand for logistics. The problem is that the exact impacts and future trends are unknown at this stage. In light of the range in the employment land requirement figure in the study there should be no need to change employment land requirements.</p>	<p>economy it is not possible to predict future land requirements. The Bank of England only recently announced a much reduced downturn in the economy than originally anticipated. Though a slightly longer recovery period than first anticipated. The bounce back is now expected by the end of 2022.</p>
<p><b>Local Housing Market Assessment (May 2019)</b></p>	<p>To identify housing market areas and provide detailed market analysis of housing need, demand and supply. Identifying different sizes, types and tenures of properties.</p>	<p><b>Highly Sensitive</b> The loss of jobs and reduced income leads to a greater need for affordable properties.</p>	<p>The Local Housing Market Assessment will be updated with latest household projections and housing need information. This will then inform the Deposit Plan.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Settlement Assessment (January 2020)</b></p>	<p>To identify those settlements which are potentially suitable to accommodate future growth in terms of their location, role and function. This involved an assessment of the current role and function of settlements, as well as an understanding of the relationships between settlements and their</p>	<p><b>Some Sensitivity</b> In terms of the closure of some facilities in the settlements though this is considered to have a limited impact on overall scores. The pandemic has reaffirmed the importance of directing development to the most sustainable settlements.</p>	<p>No action required.</p>

	potential future roles.		
<b>Evidence in Support of the Deposit Plan – Currently Being Prepared</b>			
<b>Topic Papers</b>	Provide supporting information and rationale for the Replacement LDP policies on a topic basis.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> Sensitivity will depend on the topic area.	All Topic Papers will be updated to take into account the latest evidence available.
<b>Candidate Site Assessment Report</b>	A proportionate assessment of sites with regards to their compatibility with the Replacement LDP.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> The 2 <sup>nd</sup> call for candidate sites has been delayed as a result of the pandemic. This will delay the assessment of all sites.	Undertake a 2 <sup>nd</sup> call for candidate sites and further information when a revised Delivery Agreement has been agreed.
<b>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment</b>	To assess the future accommodation needs of the Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Show People Communities and determine whether there is a requirement for additional site provision within Blaenau Gwent County Borough. This will inform any related site allocations and criteria based policies in the LDP.	<b>Not Sensitive.</b> All survey work was completed prior to lockdown. This information is still considered robust and current.	The inclusion of a criterion based policy in the Deposit Plan will ensure that any changing need can be met over the lifetime of the Plan.
<b>Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment</b>	To provide the evidence to inform policies and site selection processes.	<b>Not Sensitive</b>	None required.
<b>Retail and Leisure Study</b>	To identify a retail and leisure strategy, retail hierarchy and land requirements to inform the Replacement Local Development Plan.	<b>Highly Sensitive</b> The comparison retail sector has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic with long closures during lockdown and limited customers during the recovery stage. Pubs and restaurants have also been hit along with community and entertainment venues. The study is currently in preparation and survey work has considered pre and post lockdown views in terms of the town centres and retail patterns.	This study together with a town centre study already undertaken will inform policies in the Deposit Plan.
<b>Green Infrastructure</b>	An assessment of natural and semi-natural features,	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> The pandemic has further	A Green Infrastructure

<b>Assessment</b>	green spaces and corridors.	served to emphasise the importance of having locally accessible green spaces for health, well-being and recreation.	Assessment is in preparation and will inform the Deposit Plan policies.
<b>Open Space Assessment</b>	An assessment of existing outdoor sport and playing space provision compared to the Fields in Trust Standards, to identify shortfalls in provision and inform related policies.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> The pandemic has further served to emphasise the importance of having locally accessible recreational spaces for health and well-being.	The Open Space Assessment is in preparation and will inform Deposit Plan policies.
<b>Renewable Energy Assessment</b>	Estimates the potential renewable energy resource to inform policies and targets for the RLDP.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> Positive impacts on the environment as a result of Covid-19 and the lockdown led to a fall in carbon emissions. This may be a catalyst for accelerated systematic change and in terms of the move to renewable technologies.	The assessment is in preparation and together with the Council's ambition to become a low carbon Borough will inform Deposit Plan policies.
<b>Special Landscape Areas Review</b>	To review the current Special Landscape Areas, provide a statement of value and provide development management/landscape advice for each area.	<b>Not Sensitive</b>	The assessment is in preparation and will inform Deposit Plan policies.
<b>Plan – Wide Viability Assessment</b>	A high-level study which assesses broad levels of development viability in Blaenau Gwent.	<b>Highly Sensitive</b> During lockdown the housing industry was impacted due to the inability to sell houses. In addition reduced income and job losses impact on people's ability to purchase properties which leads to a lack of confidence in the market. Blaenau Gwent's marginal viability makes it susceptible to such changes in the market.	The study is currently in preparation and will be informed by discussions with representative groups and thus take into account the latest available information. This will inform the Deposit Plan policies.
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2020</b>	To identify the infrastructure required to support delivery of development during the plan period.	<b>Some Sensitivity</b> Infrastructure covers a broad range of areas and certain areas such as active travel will have been given greater	The Plan is in preparation and will take account of any issues and will then inform the Deposit Plan.

		priority in terms of infrastructure investment.	
<b>Integrated Planning and Transport Strategy</b>	To ensure integration between land use and transport planning. To set out aims, how policies support other objectives of the plan and how the plans policies and allocations will support sustainable transport.	<b>Highly Sensitive</b> The pandemic has led to modal shifts and different patterns of vehicle movements throughout the day. The strategy should be able to build on this impetus.	The strategy is in preparation and will inform the Deposit Plan.

Strategic Policy	Potential Covid-19 Impacts	RLDP Mitigation	Action Required
<b>Outcome 1: Deliver a Network of Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)</b>			
<b>SP1:Sustainable Economic Growth</b>	<b>Levels of Economic Growth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic forecasts are unreliable as they don't take account of Covid-19</li> <li>Changes in working practices as a result of homeworking</li> <li>Less demand for office space</li> <li>Potential for additional space for logistics and medical supply companies</li> <li>Impacts of economic recession as a result of Covid-19, Brexit and inherent structural changes</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluating the impact of growth is difficult due to the lack of data available to predict the required supply. These are very uncertain times and the best way to address them is to provide flexibility. The RLDP with a range of 1,500 to 3,375 new jobs and between 3 and 46ha has sufficient flexibility to cope with what might lie ahead. At present there are enquiries on nearly all of the sites included in the LDP.</p> <p>Monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to reflect the risks associated with the uncertainties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deposit Plan policies to provide flexibility.</li> <li>Monitoring framework to reflect the risks associated with the uncertainties.</li> </ul>
	<b>Level of Housing Growth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand for housing has been limited due to lockdown</li> <li>There has been a shortage of materials</li> <li>Affordability has been impacted due to lockdown and further changes could arise due to people losing their jobs</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluating the impact on future growth is difficult due to the lack of data available to predict future trends.</p> <p>Whilst the data is being updated to account for the 2018 WG projections this will not take account of Covid-19 impacts.</p> <p>It will be possible to update the Housing Market Assessment to include the latest housing need and demand figures.</p> <p>Flexibility already built into the strategic policy along with a sensible trajectory and appropriate monitoring will enable the Plan to overcome any uncertainties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Housing requirement figures based on latest WG projections.</li> <li>Update Affordable housing target based on latest need and viability information.</li> </ul>
	<b>Growth Distribution and Hierarchy of Settlements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some facilities could be lost (public houses, shops, businesses etc.) which would impact on the sustainability of some settlements</li> </ul>	<p>These changes are unlikely to significantly impact on the overall sustainability of settlements.</p>	None.

	<p><b>Strategic Mixed use Sites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the three strategic sites included in the Preferred Strategy may be impacted by changes to developers plans</li> </ul>	Discussion will be required with the owners and developers of the sites to determine delivery timescales for inclusion in the housing trajectory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with developers and owners to determine delivery timescales.</li> </ul>
SP2: Sustainable Placemaking and Design	<p><b>No Impact</b></p> <p>This is a criterion based policy that is not impacted by Covid-19 but will support a placemaking solution and enable the Plan to meet requirements of Building Better Places and delivering placemaking.</p>	None.	None.
SP3:Climate Change	<p><b>No Impact</b></p> <p>This is a criterion based policy that is not impacted by Covid-19 but will support climate change and decarbonisation solutions and enable the Plan to meet requirements of Building Better Places action on Climate Change and Decarbonisation.</p>	None.	None.
SP4: Employment and Skills	<p><b>Employment Land allocation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic forecasts are unreliable as they don't take account of Covid-19</li> <li>• Changes in working practices as a result of homeworking</li> <li>• Less demand for office space</li> <li>• Potential for additional space for logistics and medical supply companies</li> <li>• Impacts of economic recession as a result of Covid-19, Brexit and inherent structural changes</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluating the impact of growth is difficult due to the lack of data available to predict the required supply. These are very uncertain times and the best way to address them is enabling flexibility. The LDP with a range of 1,500 to 3,375 new jobs and between 3 and 46ha has sufficient flexibility to cope with what might lay ahead. At present there are enquiries on nearly all of the sites included in the LDP.</p> <p>Monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to reflect the risks associated with the uncertainties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deposit Plan policies to provide flexibility.</li> <li>• Monitoring mechanisms to reflect the risks associated with the uncertainties.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategic Sites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the two strategic sites included in the Preferred Strategy may be impacted by changes to developers plans</li> </ul>	Discussions will be required with the owners and developers of the sites to determine delivery timescales for inclusion in the Deposit Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with developers and owners to determine funding and delivery timescales.</li> </ul>
	<b>Abertillery Metro support for economic development proposals</b>	Inclusion will be reliant on WG decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor WG decision.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This proposal relies on the extension of the Ebbw rail line to Abertillery. The Welsh Government Transport Plan indicates that this under review.</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>Capitalising on Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These funding sources may change as a result of Covid-19 commitments.</li> </ul>	Discussion will be required with the funding sources to determine viability and delivery timescales for inclusion in the Deposit plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions with fund holders to determine availability of funding and inform site allocation delivery.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Employment Roles of major industrial areas</b></p> <p>The aim is to help assist in the diversification of existing and allocated areas identified and includes sustainable technologies and the foundation economy which will support the delivery of Building Better Places action on Changing working practices.</p>	None.	None.
SP5: Growing Tourism	This is a criterion based policy which encourages tourism facilities and the Valleys Regional Park. The policy accords with PPW and helps deliver Building Better Places action on reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors.	None.	None.
SP6:Sustainable Minerals Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though Covid-19 has probably resulted in a downturn in use of minerals during lockdown the UK government's policy to grow ourselves out of the economic downturn will likely result in mineral use returning to previous levels.</li> <li>The Regional Technical Statement is nearing completion and it is unlikely that projected figures will be changed as a result of the pandemic.</li> </ul>	Keep up to date with progress on the RTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact RTS working group.</li> </ul>
SP7: Sustainable Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lockdown resulted in the closure of waste transfer facilities.</li> <li>There will be an increase in waste as a result of increased use in the medical</li> </ul>	None.	None.

	<p>sector and some other sectors of single use equipment and gowns.</p> <p>As the policy is a criteria based policy with no specific land allocations or targets it is not impacted by Covid-19.</p>		
<b>SP8: Delivery of Homes</b>	<p><b>Housing Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The housebuilding industry was shut down for a period of time during lockdown</li> <li>• There has been a shortage of materials</li> <li>• Affordability has been impacted due to lockdown and further changes could arise due to people losing their jobs</li> </ul>	<p>Flexibility already built into the strategic policy along with a sensible trajectory and appropriate monitoring will enable the Plan to overcome any uncertainties.</p> <p>Discussion will be required with the owners and developers of the sites to determine delivery timescales for inclusion in the housing trajectory. The provision of affordable housing will need to be reconsidered based on the latest available information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with developers and landowners to determine timescales.</li> <li>• Update the Housing Market Assessment.</li> <li>• Inform Deposit Plan policies.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Allowances for existing commitments and windfall contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimates were undertaken prior to lockdown and based on the latest information available at that time.</li> <li>• Whilst figures may well be lower for this year there is no certainty as to what will happen in future years.</li> </ul>	<p>Flexibility and appropriate monitoring will enable the Plan to overcome any uncertainties and a review will be undertaken if delivery is outside acceptable limits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the Deposit Plan has the flexibility, the right trajectory and appropriate monitoring to overcome uncertainties.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Priority for allocating housing land</b></p> <p><b>No Impact</b></p> <p>This is not impacted by Covid-19 but will enable the Plan to meet Planning Policy Wales requirements.</p>	None.	None.
	<p><b>Provision of a range of sites</b></p> <p><b>No Impact</b></p> <p>This is not impacted by Covid-19 but will enable the Plan to meet Planning Policy Wales requirements.</p>	None.	None.
	<p><b>Brining Empty Properties back into use</b></p> <p><b>No Impact</b></p>	None.	None.



	This is not impacted by Covid-19 but will enable the Plan to meet Planning Policy Wales requirements.		
<b>SP9: Gypsy and Travellers</b>	<b>No impact</b> The policy states that provision will be made for any unmet future demand.	None.	None.
<b>SP10 Retail Centres and Development</b>	<b>Retail Hierarchy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town centres have been particularly hard hit by lockdown with long closures in the comparison sectors</li> <li>Changes in peoples shopping habits will also impact on town centres</li> </ul>	The retail hierarchy has yet to be identified and will be able to take account of the recent Retail and Leisure Study and latest information from town centre surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new retail hierarchy will be based on the latest available information.</li> </ul>
	<b>Roles of Town Centres</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The move to on line shopping which has been accelerated in lockdown has led to town centres requiring other roles and uses to support them.</li> <li>The Preferred Strategy recognises that towns need to be centres for more than retail and in line with Building Better Places (WG 2020) seeks to identify additional roles.</li> </ul>	None.	None.
	<b>Improved vibrancy, vitality and attractiveness of town centres</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst the need for this is greater as a result of Covid-19 and the ensuing economic downturn this is a criteria policy to help address the issue and does not require change.</li> </ul>	None.	None.
	<b>Town Centre Boundaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lockdown and the ensuing economic downturn has led to retail closures</li> </ul>	Town Centre boundaries are to be redrawn and will be based on the latest information available together with a degree of flexibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend town centre boundaries.</li> </ul>
	<b>New retail allocations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The comparison market has been greatly impacted by the lockdown.</li> <li>Peoples shopping habits are changing and</li> </ul>	New allocations will be informed by the Retail and Leisure Study which is taking account of changes during lockdown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify allocations if required.</li> </ul>

	have been accelerated as a result of lockdown.		
<b>SP11:Sustainable Transport and Accessibility</b>	<p><b>Delivery of Metro Improvements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lockdown has resulted in limitations on the use of Public Transport</li> <li>• As the economy is opened up public transport is to play a major role in modal shifts away from the car</li> <li>• The Metro improvements are reliant on Welsh Government and City Deal funding</li> </ul>	Delivery will be dependent on funding still being available for the projects identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of schemes will be reliant on WG decisions.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Accessibility Requirements for new development</b>  <b>No Impact</b>                  This is a criterion based policy aimed at ensuring that new development meets the transport hierarchy, expands active travel networks, provides sufficient access to the travel network and provides electric charging infrastructure. The policy accords with PPW and helps deliver Building Better Places actions on active travel.</p>	None.	None.
<b>SP12:Social and Community Infrastructure</b>	<p>This is a criterion based policy aimed at either protecting or providing new community facilities where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst Covid-19 will impact on the need for facilities such as burial grounds and health facilities land allocations will be based on needs identified by the service areas.</li> <li>• Whilst open space and allotments have been valued more during the pandemic need is based on standard assessments in line with national requirements and the ability to meet requirements.</li> </ul>	Discuss requirements with service areas.	Identify needs based on service area requirements and the open space assessment.
<b>SP13: Protection and Enhancement of the</b>	This is a criterion based policy which seeks the protection and enhancement of the Natural	None.	None.

<p><b>Natural Environment</b></p>	<p>Environment. The policy accords with PPW and helps deliver Building Better Places action on Green Infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The crisis has highlighted the importance of easy access and proximity to quality greenspaces</li> </ul>		
<p><b>SP14: Preservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment</b></p>	<p>This is a criterion based policy which seeks the protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment. The policy accords with PPW and helps deliver Building Better Places action on Reawakening Wales’ tourism and cultural sectors.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>SP15: Environmental Protection</b></p>	<p>This is a criterion based policy which seeks the environmental protection. The policy accords with PPW and helps deliver Building Better Places action on Improving air quality and soundscapes for better health and well-being.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>



# Agenda Item 12

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Report Subject: **Strategic Housing; CCRCD Viability Gap Funding**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Bethan McPherson, Team Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
12.08.20	20.08.20	25.08.20			08.09.20	14.10.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Outline the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity.
- Update on the current position in responding to the CCRCD Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including identification of potential development sites.
- Seek Scrutiny Committee support and Executive approval to progress business case(s) and associated work; in order to determine viability gap and support an application to CCRCD.

## 2. Scope and Background

### 2.1 CCRCD Viability Gap Funding opportunity

2.1.1 CCRCD have developed a £35million Viability Gap Fund, a targeted funding programme to bring forward new homes on key strategic housing sites across South East Wales. The fund is open to all 10 Local Authority areas within the region, with primary objectives to; unlock stalled sites that are unviable for housing delivery and enhance the long- term growth prospects and competitiveness of the region.

2.1.2 The capital investment is available to support Local Authority led applications, with specified infrastructure or remediation interventions that will assist in closing a proven viability gap, related to the identified site.

- 2.1.3 Whilst Local Authority partners must assume primary responsibility for the investment, funding can be awarded to sites owned by either the private or public sector, and sites in mixed and multiple ownership.
- 2.1.4 The Viability Gap Fund should be considered as a last resort, evidencing that all other opportunities have been exhausted and the development would not progress without CCRCD intervention.
- 2.1.5 CCRCD have outlined clear eligibility requirements that each LA and partners will need to satisfy when presenting development sites and submitting associated business cases, which are outlined within Appendix 2.
- 2.1.6 Submitted business cases meeting the eligibility criteria will be assessed and required to demonstrate; Value for money, overall cost of infrastructure / remediation capital investment required, a viability analysis which shows clearly the viability gap, an assessment of the connectivity impacts; and whether they will provide a commitment to providing for a portion of the site (target 10%) to be developed by SME developers.

## **2.2 CCRCD Viability Gap Fund – Revenue Funding**

- 2.2.1 The CCRCD have also made a small revenue fund (£500k) available to those LA Partners with limited capacity/resource, in order to support the preparation of capital funding applications.

## **2.3 CCRCD Viability Gap Fund Timeline**

- 2.3.1 The fund was originally intended to launch in April 2020, which has been delayed, with a revised timeline communicated;
- Fund launch – August 2020
  - Business case submission – Dec 2020
  - Decision – Jan 2021
- 2.3.2 The supporting revenue fund will be available and open to applications until March 2021. A maximum of 3 applications per LA are invited.

## **2.4 Blaenau Gwent position and potential sites**

- 2.4.1 This presents a challenging timeline within which to develop the business case and associated works to demonstrate a viability gap and need for CCRCD intervention (appendix 1 – draft application).
- 2.4.2 In recent years' private sector interest in progressing residential development has been limited in Blaenau Gwent, especially where there hasn't been a partnership approach and associated grant intervention. Aligned to the low demand, commissioning SI works (on BGCBC owned land) to determine viability has not been undertaken; and therefore is not readily available to support a submission to the fund.

2.4.3 Based on the eligibility criteria, the housing delivery group has considered known development sites and undertaken a broad assessment to identify those sites that in principle meet the fund requirements. These are identified in Appendix 2; With the Ashvale Site currently identified as the site most aligned to the criteria and in a position to progress.

2.4.4 Utilising the available revenue fund would assist in providing a dedicated resource to support the project delivery team in satisfying the viability gap fund requirements within the restricted timescales. To access the funding, match funding would need to be identified and a meeting with finance has been scheduled.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 RCSLT and CLT have identified option 1 as the preferred option

#### 3.1.1 **Option 1**

To note the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including the current position within Blaenau Gwent in respect of identifying potential development sites.

To endorse and recommend Executive approval of, continued exploration of the identified sites in order to determine the viability gap; and where appropriate progress business case(s) and associated work to support an application submission to CCRCD Viability Gap Fund.

#### 3.1.2 **Option 2**

To note the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including the current position Blaenau Gwent in respect of identifying potential development sites.

To recommend alternative sites for consideration, to determine viability gap; and where appropriate progress business case(s) and associated work to support an application submission to CCRCD Viability Gap Fund.

#### 3.1.3 **Option 3**

To note the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including the current position Blaenau Gwent in respect of identifying potential development sites.

Recommend that Blaenau Gwent does not pursue the development opportunity through the CCRCD Viability Gap Fund.

### 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities** Working with private developers and RSL partners to provide a variety of homes.

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well Being Plan** Providing safe, appropriate and affordable housing to local residents will underpin the 5 objectives outlined within the Wellbeing plan.

## 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

### 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

5.1.1 There is a housing delivery group, led by Strategic Housing to take forward the work and potential submission to the CCRCD Viability Gap Fund. The capacity of the team is a potential risk; a submission to the available revenue fund could assist in providing additional capacity/specialist resource. To access the funding match funding is required (50% up to £25k); with options being explored with the finance team.

5.1.2 A further financial consideration is potential funding to undertake initial viability/SI works required in order to support the application. Some of these costs could be recoverable. Consideration to availability of funding from the BGCBC Capital Funding Programme will be required and discussions are scheduled with finance. Depending on the site, some of the costs may be met through private/public partners; or external funding opportunities e.g. TRI.

5.1.3 Some of the sites identified have associated Land Reclamation Grant repayable to WG, this has been highlighted to the CCRCD Project Team for consideration in terms of how it would work alongside any investment funding via the viability gap fund.

### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 There are a number of risks associated with the options presented. This section outlines these risks and measures in place that seek to mitigate.

5.2.2 The timeline for preparing and submitting an application (based on known viability gap); and subsequent implementation on site is tight. Limiting the number of sites and selecting those ablest to progress at pace would assist in mitigating this risk. Ensuring appropriate resource (officers) would further mitigate the risk.

5.2.3 Agreement of strategic sites to take forward; not all development sites within Blaenau Gwent meet the fund criteria e.g. min number of units, deliverability and connectivity and have been discounted by the housing delivery group on this basis. To mitigate perception that development will not occur on those discounted sites, alternative approaches to progress will be explored.

5.2.4 Demonstrating a viability gap; a critical part of the submission is the ability to demonstrate a viability gap, which without CCRCD intervention would prohibit the site from progressing. There is a risk that the associated works will not identify a sufficient viability gap to support an application. In this circumstance, alternative approaches would be explored to bring forward



development e.g. open market private development, alternative funding including private finance, Social Housing Grant.

- 5.2.5 Developer engagement and agreement to work on an open book principle is a requirement of the Viability Gap Fund; willingness of developers to work on this basis may be a challenge, especially on sites where there is currently no developer engagement. Similarly managing land owner/developer expectations (value/profit) will be a further challenge. Positive and early engagement will be important to identifying appropriate and willing developers, in order to mitigate this risk.
- 5.2.6 CCRC promotion around the fund may stimulate interest from developer's/land owners of a given site, seeking to pursue the investment opportunity. Officers would manage these enquires on a cases by case basis; against known criteria and would report and new/additional opportunities.
- 5.2.7 Non submission; As areas such as Blaenau Gwent are a priority for the fund, not submitting an application may attract negative views/perceptions. Proactive exploration will help mitigate however noting the above risks will influence our ability to submit an application that meets the criteria and timescales.

### 5.3 **Legal**

LA will be the lead partner, responsibility for administration including state aid compliance sits with BGCBC; as an authority will be required to ensure the necessary agreements are in place with identified partners. Legal support, advice and guidance will be required.

### 5.4 **Human Resources**

Housing Delivery Group will oversee the work involved in developing an application and associated submission; utilising relevant departments as necessary (Regeneration, Planning Policy, Development Control, Estates, Tech Services, Procurement). Specialist resource would assist especially in satisfying the tight time lines.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The key performance indicators are identified within the report and include; Units delivered, value for money, providing access to strategic employment centres

### 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

New residential development within Blaenau Gwent  
Homes with good connectivity to employment opportunities  
Employment and Training opportunities  
Local business supply chains to support the local economy

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

CCRCD will be formally launching the Viability Gap Fund Opportunity, which may stimulate additional interest from land owners and developers to work with BGCBC to bring forward development. Engagement with existing partners on the identified sites will continue. Consultation and engagement would also form part of any planning applications associated with a given development site.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The funding opportunity provides a stimulus to explore available development sites and determine a known viability gap, which can be addressed in order to develop new homes; meeting WG build targets and contribute to local aspirations (increasing local population, generating additional income for the Local Authority via Council Tax return)

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The fund encourages the authority to determine a known viability gap for development sites; establishing this will enable the authority to explore the most appropriate measure to bring forward development in a timely manner.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

To facilitate the opportunities collaboration with partners will be critical and may involve; Private developer's/land owners, Registered Social Landlords

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Housing Delivery Group consists of representation from Regeneration, Planning Policy, Development Control, Estates, and Housing Solutions. Pursuing opportunities to bring forward quality housing within Blaenau Gwent brings wider benefits and the need for close collaboration with other departments, not least Finance, Education, Social Services and Housing Solutions.

6.8 ***EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 CCRCD have identified governance and assessment procedures to administer the fund; including set deadlines.

Reports relating to any successful bid to the fund and associated timelines would be prepared and submitted.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

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**Viability-Gap Application Form**

<b>1</b>	<b>Contact and identification information</b>	
1.1	Name of Local Authority acting as project sponsor (if a shared bid, list all Local Authorities participating in the bid)	
1.2	Primary contact information of Local Authority project sponsor	Name:

		Telephone:
		Email:

<b>2</b>	<b>Site Information</b>	
2.1	Site details	Site Name:  Site Locations: <i>Address, and easting, northing (coordinates)</i>
2.2	Site size (Ha)	Overall site size (ha), gross and net developable:  Overall net developable housing area (ha) (i.e. net of other use classes):  <i>Is the proposal on greenfield or brownfield land? If both, what is the split?</i>
2.3	Current use class of site	What is the current use class of the site?
2.4	Planning permission  (including surveys, and all other regulatory requirements)	Does the site have planning permission for the proposed development? Please include planning references if available  Is the site allocated in the Local Plan (if applicable)?  If not, please provide a description of a clear route to proposed planning permission



3.1	Please provide a full open-book viability analysis undertaken in accordance with Appendix that proves the scale of the funding required to achieve viability on site.	<p><i>Please ensure this provides:</i></p> <p><i>Calculations with scenarios/ sensitivity analysis. Please provide assumptions on GDV, build costs, externals, professional fees, sales costs, finance costs, contingencies and developers profit.</i></p> <p><i>Please also provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A List of the professional/ consultancy reports commissioned on this site to date.</i></li> <li>• <i>The number of homes to be provided on site. Will any further homes be unlocked on subsequent phases?</i></li> <li>• <i>An assessment of how land value assumptions align with knowledge of the local land market</i></li> <li>• <i>Breakdown of the funding components required, providing an indication of why these are State Aid compliant</i></li> <li>• <i>Proposed number of units and tenure split.</i></li> <li>• <i>Purchase price details</i></li> </ul>
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		<p><i>Are you in receipt of all technical/ professional advice? if not, please explain what is outstanding?</i></p> <p><i>Have you obtained quotations for the remediation/ infrastructure works? Please provide evidence if available</i></p>
3.2	Please provide evidence of alignment with local policy	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Are you promoting a policy compliant scheme, please provide details. Please provide details with reference to viability analysis</i>
3.3	Please provide an overview of the site's connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Please describe the connectivity to the local employment centre via public sector transport</i>
3.4	Please provide a red line boundary of the site, indicating the developable areas and use classes the subject of your application	
<b>4</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>	
4.1	Please provide delivery timelines for completion of the Viability-Gap Funded investment	<p><i>Project Start Date:</i></p> <p><i>Project End Date:</i></p>

4.2	Please provide a development schedule for when housing will be delivered on site	<p><i>Please provide the project start date (for housing delivery) and yearly completion volumes for housing.</i></p> <p><i>N.B. CCR will prioritise development sites that accelerate housing delivery</i></p>
4.3	<p>Please provide a report on title for the entire site to confirm that there are no barriers / restriction to the proposed development and all requisite rights and easements have been secured.</p> <p>If required, please provide multiple reports to align with the overall red line boundary map</p>	<p><i>Provide as attachment (s)</i></p> <p><i>Must include:</i></p> <p><i>Names of owners of land</i></p> <p><i>If private companies, please provide company name and address</i></p> <p><i>Details of any restrictive covenants or other barriers</i></p> <p><i>Dates of when current land ownerships came into their current state.</i></p>
4.4	Please identify any other relevant development partners involved in the scheme i.e. housing developers, third party infrastructure providers (e.g. Network Rail, highway authority, contractors).	<p><i>Please detail any third-party approvals or third-party investments that might be require in order for the project to proceed, or in order to unlock the viability constraints</i></p> <p><i>(e.g. Network Rail approvals)</i></p>
4.5	Please provide a high-level cash flow for draw down of funding and housing delivery.	<p><i>The amount of any funding award will take account of predicted cash flows for the schemes, expected developer contributions and the size of grant needed.</i></p>
4.6	If funding is awarded, please identify a lead and senior officer who will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the scheme.	<p><i>Please provide their name and role within your organisation.</i></p>
4.7	Please outline the main risks to the project as a whole along with the corresponding mitigating steps that you will take to minimise these risks.	<p><i>Please provide a project risk matrix for the overall site, with specific reference to resolving the viability constraint – including risks and issues (quantified where appropriate), and their proposed mitigation</i></p>



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CCRC D Viability Gap Fund; BG shortlist of sites

Site	Within CCRC D Region	Dwelling Number (40-250)	Connectivity			Regional Employment Centre	Other funding exhausted	Known Viability Gap	Deliverability (within 12 months)	Comments
			Public (rail/bus)	Road	Active Travel					
Ashvale	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	Potentially	Private developer engaged, initial SI works identifying a grouting requirement, public/private land ownership/interest. Sec 106 may be a further consideration to viability. The viability work should be known within the timelines, to support any application. Proceed as a potential gap fund site	
Rhyd Y Blew	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Private ownership, Sec 106 a previous constraint to the development, land owner aspiration around value unknown. CCRC D promotion may stimulate engagement.	
Six Bells	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	Potentially	BGCBC ownership, no Sis for the site, anticipate abnormal s, options appraisal being prepared on the approaches available. Not to proceed through CCRC D, explore alternative routes to development.	
Warn Turn	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Private ownership, development aspirations, potentially not within the available timeline, no active engagement. Call for interest may generate re-engagement.	
Park Hill	Yes	Potentially				Unknown			Call for interest may generate re-engagement.	
Welsh School Site, Brynmawr	Yes	No*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Enquiries being made with City Deal; Current proposal is social rent, Number of units is too low for City Deal investment (double checking). Also the proportion of 10% SME development may be a factor (informal discussion with RSL to determine) significant grant requirement due to abnormal s and infrastructure. Charitable land matter to resolve. Social Housing Grant still being pursued as an alternative funding stream. Proceed as a potential gap fund site, subject to eligibility checks with CCRC D	

CCRC D Viability Gap Fund - Assumptions:

- Sites capable of delivering between 40 and 350 housing units.
- Above the minimum funding request of £1m.
- Able to demonstrate a Viability-Gap.
- Deliverable within 36 months of the funding award (at least for the phase of development supported by the Viability-Gap Funding), with all funding support drawn-down within this period.
- Able to commit to implement an overage arrangement where 'excess profit' conditions are met.
- Able to commence housing delivery (i.e. first unit commencements) within 12 months of funding award.
- Able to complete all required due diligence and demonstrate that the site is capable of development.

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