



Dyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033

Preferred Strategy



November 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is responsible for preparing and keeping up to date the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP is the Council's land use plan that will establish where and how much development will take place in the County Borough. It will also identify which areas are to be protected from development. The current LDP was adopted in 2012 and covers the period 2006-2021. Whilst a replacement LDP is required for the period 2018-2033, it needs to and will build upon the first adopted LDP. Once adopted, the Council will be required to make development management decision in light of policies in the Replacement Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.2 The LDP has a direct and meaningful effect on the communities of Blaenau Gwent. The Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) is about shaping the future of Blaenau Gwent as a place to live, work and visit. The RLDP will respond to the needs of a growing and regionally important economy making provision for jobs, homes and infrastructure. It also ensures the well-being of its communities is maintained, and the impacts of the development and use of land are managed sustainably. It will guide funding and investment programmes, other plans and strategies whilst providing for the enhancement and protection of our environment and environment qualities. In doing so it provides a measure of certainty and confidence about what kind of development will, and will not, be permitted and at what locations during the Plan period.

1.3 The part of Blaenau Gwent which is within the Brecon Beacons National Park has its own separate development plan which is also currently being reviewed and is not part of the RLDP plan area.

1.4 In September 2017, a review was undertaken of the current LDP and a review report published. This review, whilst finding that many aspects of the adopted LDP are functioning effectively, also identified that there were issues requiring attention in relation to parts of the Plan and its strategy. The review report showed that parts of the strategy were not being delivered as intended with both the level and spatial distribution of growth requiring further consideration.

What is the LDP Preferred Strategy?

1.5 The **Preferred Strategy** is the first formal publication in the RLDP preparation process. It provides the strategic direction for the development and use of land until 2033. It also sets out how much development is needed and broadly where this is likely to be. It represents the completion of a period of pre-deposit plan preparation and engagement, the outcome of which has had a clear influence over the selection of the Preferred Strategy.

1.6 The overall purpose of the Preferred Strategy is to:

- Identify **Key Challenges and Drivers** for the County Borough
- Define an **LDP Vision** and set of overarching **LDP objectives** that respond to the key issues and drivers

- State the anticipated scale of future growth in population, housing and employment, based on the analysis of **Strategic Growth Options**
- Describe the overall spatial planning framework for the County, based on an analysis of potential **Spatial Options**
- Set out broad **Strategic Policies** that will deliver the Vision and Objectives

1.7 Site specific land use allocations and detailed development management policies are not put forward in this strategy document. Such detailed elements will form part of the Deposit Plan. However a list of development management policies is attached at appendix 1 setting out which are to be amended and which are to be retained.

Supporting Documents

1.8 The Preferred Strategy has been subject to an integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Well-being of Future Generations Assessment (WGFGA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) to assess the extent to which the emerging planning policies will help to achieve the wider environmental, economic and social objectives of the RLDP. The Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal of the Blaenau Gwent Preferred Strategy is published separately and is available on the Council's website alongside this document. It has also been screened under the Habitat Regulation Assessment which is also available on the Council's website.

1.9 Other supporting documents listed at Appendix 2 provide the rationale and evidence base for the Preferred Strategy. These focus in more detail on some of the key issues that are of particular significance for the County Borough and therefore the RLDP. They should be read alongside the Preferred Strategy, as only their main findings are highlighted in this document given the significant amount of data and background information they contain. These have been published separately and are available on the Council's website.

Stakeholder Engagement

1.10 During May and June 2019, a series of workshop sessions were held to build consensus in relation to the issues / challenges the County Borough faces and for the RLDP to address. The workshop sessions also sought to identify where we want to be by 2033 in the form of a Vision. This was known as Workshop 1. A full [report of consultation of Workshop 1](#) has been published and is available on the Council's website.

1.11 During July 2019, workshop 2 was held which consisted of a series of sessions in relation to identifying the preferred level of growth, spatial distribution of growth and settlement hierarchy to deliver the growth with a view to building consensus on a preferred spatial strategy for the RLDP that addresses the issues / challenges and meets the vision. A full report of consultation of Workshop 2 has been published and is available on the Council's website.

How to Comment on this Document

1.12 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council would welcome your views on the RLDP Preferred Strategy. A 6 week consultation period will run from XXXXX. The document is available on the Council's website XXXXX, and copies are available for inspection during normal office hours at the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, Anvil Court, Abertillery and all public libraries.

1.13 Please submit any comments on this document on the forms provided by email to planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or in writing to:

Development Plans Team

Civic Centre

Ebbw Vale

NP23 6XB

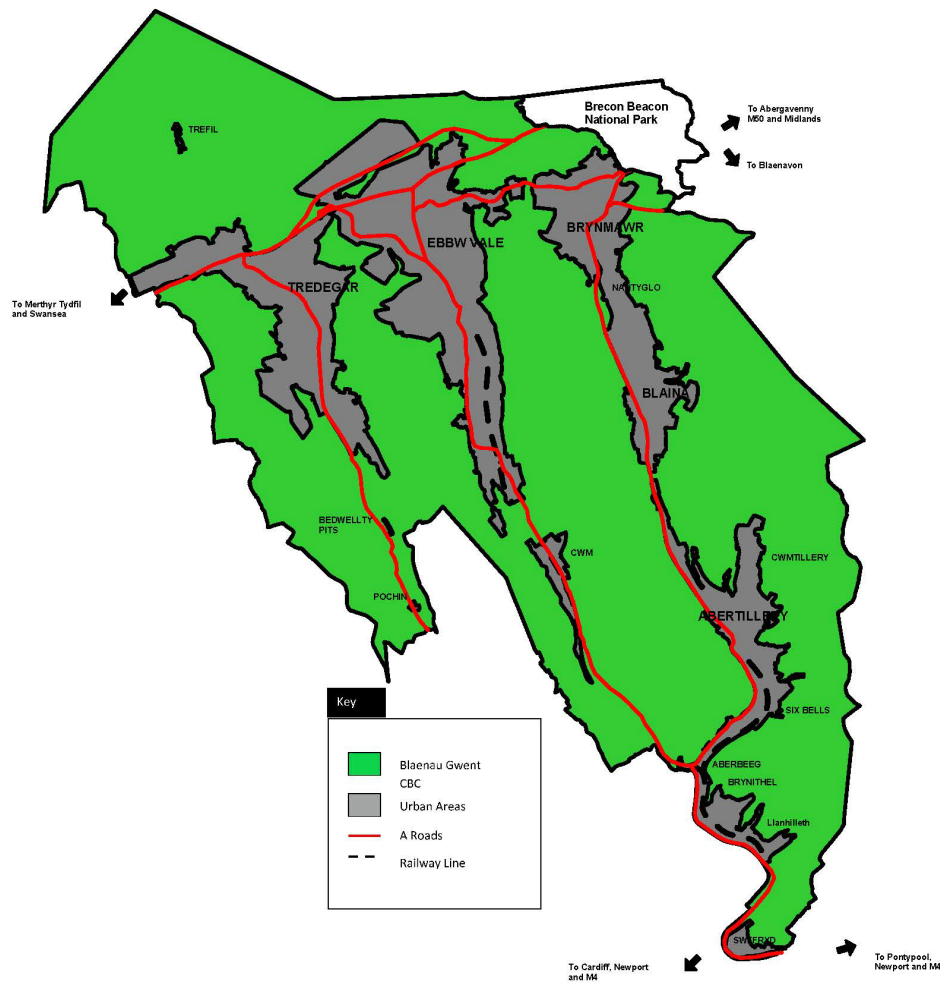
1.14 Further information and advice can be obtained from the Development Plans Team by email (planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) or telephone (01495 355538). Please note that this consultation relates to issues and topics discussed in the Preferred Strategy and is not an opportunity to make detailed comments on individual Candidate Sites. All comments should relate to the questions included at the end of each Section of the Preferred Strategy, which are designed to assist with your representation.

2.0 CONTEXT

Blaenau Gwent Context

2.1 Blaenau Gwent's location in the South East Wales region, 20 miles north of Newport and 20 miles north east of Cardiff offers opportunities to benefit from the Cardiff Capital Region. Blaenau Gwent covers an area of approximately 10,900 hectares and has an estimated population of 69,700 (2018). It has one of the highest population densities in Wales as most of the population is concentrated in 23% of the area; in the primary and main settlements of Ebbw Vale; Tredegar; Brynmawr / Nantyglo / Blaina; and Abertillery (including Cwmillery and Six Bells). As a result, Blaenau Gwent is characterised by a close association between densely urbanised (often linear) communities and large tracts of open countryside.

Settlement Context Plan



2.2 Blaenau Gwent's origins lay in the wide range of local and natural resources for making iron and steel. As a result, heavy industry came to fill much of the three main valleys of Sirhowy, Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr. Whilst the coal industry declined in the 1970's and 1980's, the steel industry remained a major employer up until the closure of Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002, leading to huge job losses. The manufacturing sector which grew around these industries continues to form an important part of the Blaenau Gwent economy today.

2.3 The loss of the coal and steel industries is highlighted by a population reduction. However, over the last decade, the population of the area has stabilised, although people continue to leave the area to find housing and employment elsewhere. Currently 49% of Blaenau Gwent's working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased.

2.4 Early and rapid economic and population growth led to major physical expansion with dense terraced houses built close to workplaces along the valley floors or clinging to the valley sides. These pre1919 terrace houses make up 52% of the current housing stock (census 2011).

2.5 The loss of heavy industries have resulted in many of these former sites benefitting from urban regeneration schemes. For example, redevelopment of the former Steelworks site (known as The Works) is well underway with the completion of a new hospital, learning zone, leisure centre and an extension of the Ebbw Vale rail link from Ebbw Vale Parkway to Ebbw Vale town.

2.6 The environmental degradation and pollution that were the by-products of rapid industrialisation has seen a dramatic improvement. The landscape has changed – spoil tips which once dominated the valleys have been removed or landscaped.

2.7 The way people live their lives has changed. The influence of technology has led to significant changes in the way people shop, communicate and enjoy themselves and benefit from services such as health, care and education. There have also been significant pressures worldwide with factors such as population growth and dependence on fossil fuels putting pressure on the environment. Climate Change is a threat to Wales' health, economy, infrastructure and natural environment.

Regional Context

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

2.8 The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) aims to develop and promote South East Wales as a great place to live, work and do business. A £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal will unlock significant economic growth across the Cardiff Capital Region which includes the ten local authorities of Cardiff, The Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Bridgend, Torfaen, Newport and Blaenau Gwent. In May 2018, a five year Strategic Business Plan to leverage maximum economic and social benefits has

been agreed by all 10 local authority partners, the plan specifies the regional strategic objectives of the CCR which are:

- Prosperity and Opportunity – building the capacity of individuals, households, public sector and businesses to meet challenges and grasp opportunity, creating a more productive economy;
- Inclusion and Equality – A vibrant and sustainable economy which contributes to the well-being and quality of life of the people and communities in the region now and in the future; and
- Identity, Culture, Community and Sustainability – Forging a clear identity and strong reputation as a City Region for trade, innovation and quality of life.

Neighbouring Planning Authorities

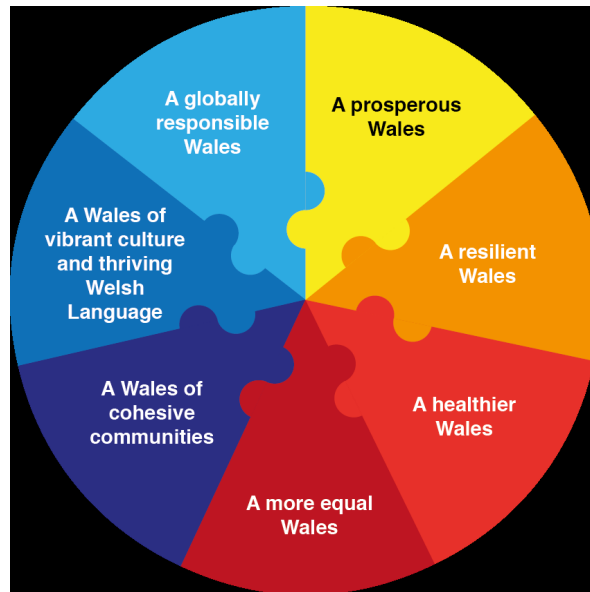
2.9 Monmouthshire County Council (CC), Torfaen County Borough Council (CBC) and Brecon Beacons National Park are all currently reviewing their Local Development Plans. Brecon Beacons National Park is further ahead in the process as they consulted on their Preferred Strategy in July – August 2019. The timetables of Monmouthshire CC and Torfaen CBC are fairly aligned with that of Blaenau Gwent as all are expected to publish their preferred strategy in October / November 2019. Caerphilly County Borough Council are to commence preparation of a Replacement Plan shortly. Blaenau Gwent CBC is committed to working collaboratively with its neighbouring authorities and a number of joint pieces of evidence base have been produced, with further joint research currently commissioned. All neighbouring authorities have attended the pre deposit participation engagement and regular meetings are held on the emerging RLDPs.

Legislative Context

2.11 The Preferred Strategy has been prepared in the context of several key pieces of legislation, which set out the requirements for the emerging RLDP. A summary is provided below for reference.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

2.12 The Well-being of Future Generations (WBFG) Act (Wales) 2015 is a key piece of legislation which aims to further improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales now and in the longer term. The Act puts in place a ‘sustainable development principle’ which is a duty for public bodies to “act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The Act is underpinned by seven ‘well-being’ goals, which public bodies must work to achieve:



2.13 Due consideration to these goals and the broader sustainable development principle will be demonstrated at each stage of plan preparation through the five ways of working contained in the Act. These require consideration of involvement, collaboration, integration, prevention and long term balancing factors in the decision making process, all of which have formed and will continue to form an intrinsic part of the LDP's development. Each strategic policy will closely link with and reference the goal(s) which relate most to its purpose and implementation, with emphasis on maximising social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits to ensure that the Council has carried out its sustainable development duty.

2.14 An assessment of the compatibility of the RLDP objectives against the WCFG Act and Local Well-being Plan goals and objectives is set out in the Vision and Objectives Supporting Document.

Planning (Wales) Act 2015

2.15 The Planning (Wales) Act sets out a series of legislative changes to deliver reform of the planning system in Wales, to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development. The Act addresses 5 key objectives including strengthening the plan led approach to planning by introducing a legal basis for the preparation of a National Development Framework (NDF) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP), discussed in further detail below.

2.16 The NDF is a 20 year land use framework for Wales and will be the national development plan for Wales and replace the current 'Wales Spatial Plan. The NDF will:-

- set out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the planning system nationally, regionally and locally can deliver it;
- provide direction for SDPs and LDPs and support the determination of Developments of National Significance;
- sit alongside Planning Policy Wales, which sets out the Welsh Government's planning policies and will continue to provide the context for land use planning;
- support national economic, transport, environmental, housing, energy and cultural strategies and ensure they can be delivered through the planning system; and

- be reviewed every 5 years.

2.17 Further information on the draft NDF is set out below.

2.18 SDPs are intended to provide a regional spatial framework for the future development and use of land within a defined region. In this case, Blaenau Gwent forms part of the Cardiff Capital Region and there is broad agreement that this will be taken forward as the basis for the footprint of a SE Wales SDP (excluding the BBNP). This will allow larger than local issues, such as housing and infrastructure, which cut across Local Planning Authorities boundaries, to be considered in a comprehensive way. Whilst the Council is proceeding with a RLDP, simultaneous collaborative working will be undertaken with neighbouring authorities and the broader region to prepare an SDP. A joint evidence base will also be shared wherever possible to this end.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

2.19 The Environment (Wales) Act puts in place the legislation to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up way. It includes an enhanced biodiversity duty which requires public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and to promote the resilience of ecosystems.

Active Travel (Wales) Act, 2013

2.20 The Active Travel (Wales) Act aims to promote walking and cycling as an attractive mode of transport for purposeful journeys (i.e. to access work, school or shops and services). It seeks to instil a lasting transformation of how developments are planned to incorporate walking and cycling infrastructure from the outset as well as encouraging long-term behaviour change.

Policy Context

2.21 The Preferred Strategy has been prepared in the context of a wide range of plans, programmes and strategies at a range of spatial scales. Some of the key documents are summarised below for ease of reference.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, 2018

2.22 Edition 10 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) sets out the land use planning policies and overarching sustainable development goals for Wales, revised to contribute towards the statutory well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. PPW10 requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development and considers a plan-led approach to be the most effective means of securing sustainable development through the planning system. PPW10 has a strong focus on promoting placemaking, which is considered instrumental to achieving sustainable places, delivering socially inclusive development and promoting more cohesive communities. Placemaking is deemed a holistic approach that

“considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings” (PPW10, 2018, p.16).

2.23 In order to inform the spatial strategy, PPW10 requires development plans to “include a spatial strategy covering the lifetime of the plan which establishes a pattern of development improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being” (PPW10, 2018, para 3.38). The link between the number of homes due to be provided and the expected job opportunities is clearly emphasised, as is the location of any new development in relation to existing or planned infrastructure. This is held important to minimise the need to travel, reduce private car reliance and increase opportunities for cycling, walking and the use of public transport. Development plans are deemed to “provide the main means for achieving integration between land use and transport planning” (PPW10, 2018, para. 4.15).

2.24 PPW10 specifies a well-defined search process to identify development land. Sustainable previously developed land and/or underutilised sites within existing settlements should be reviewed first before suitable, sustainable greenfield sites within or on the edge of settlements are considered. In either case, “a broad balance between housing, community facilities, services and employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas should be promoted to minimise the need for long distance commuting” (PPW10, 2018, para. 3.46). Significant weight is attached to developing active and social places in the form of well-connected cohesive communities.

National Development Framework 2020-2040 Consultation Draft (WG, August 2019)

2.25 The draft National Development Plan Framework (NDF) sets out 11 outcomes which collectively are a statement of where Wales want to be in 20 years time. The NDF aims to develop:

A Wales where people live....

1. and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
2. in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
3. in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
4. in places with a thriving Welsh language
5. and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
6. in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
7. in places where travel is sustainable
8. in places with world class digital infrastructure
9. in places that sustainable manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
10. in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
11. in places which are decarbonised

2.26 The draft NDF requires Growth and new development to be in the right place, undertaken in the right way and make more efficient use of our natural resources to achieve the NDF outcomes. Its spatial strategy has three components:

- where in Wales growth should be focussed;

- how growth should be planned; and
- how we should power and heat places using renewable energy.

2.27 Under the section, “Where Wales will grow”, Blaenau Gwent is in ‘the Valleys’ **growth area** though is not identified as a regional centre to accommodate growth.

2.28 Under the section, “how growth should be planned”, the focus of policy is around achieving **sustainable urban growth in towns and cities that are compact and orientated around urban centres and integrated public transport and active travel networks**. Higher density and mixed use development on sites with good access to urban centres and public transport hubs, including new and improved Metro stations are being promoted. The NDF also encourages new public service facilities of a significant scale to be located in town and city centres. Publicly owned land must be reviewed to identify potential sites for development, including for mixed use and affordable housing developments to support the creation of sustainable places. Affordable housing is also a priority and LDPs are required to include targets based on regional and local housing needs, identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing. There is an emphasis on increasing mobile phone coverage and a move towards ultra -low emission vehicles including the creation of a network of rapid charging points. An emphasis is also placed on safeguarding ecological networks and maximising green infrastructure. Cumulative action towards achieving the enhancement of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems should be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment. There is also a plan to develop a national forest with a target to increase woodland cover by 2,000 ha per annum.

2.29 As part of powering and heating places with renewable energy and district heating networks, targets are set to produce 70 per cent of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030. It also includes targets for local ownership of some of this energy. The draft NDF sets out a clear traffic light based approach to its policy on large scale wind and solar renewable energy projects. Green is priority areas for Solar and Wind Energy where there is a presumption in favour of development and where the principle of landscape change is accepted. **A significant part of Blaenau Gwent is in a priority area for Solar and Wind Energy. The NDF also sets out priority areas for District Heating networks and in this case none are identified in Blaenau Gwent.**

2.30 The NDF sets out strategies for the three regions of Wales. **Blaenau Gwent is in the South East Region. Here the focus of growth is focussed on Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.** Cardiff is to retain and extend its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance. Newport is a focus for regional growth and investment and this emerging policy document aspires to see the City play an increased strategic role. **The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Heads of the Valleys area to increase prosperity and address social inequalities.** Welsh Government central estimates identify a need for 71,200 additional homes until 2038 and over the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) 48% of the additional need should be affordable homes. These estimates form part of the evidence and context

on which Housing Requirements for Strategic Development Plans can be based and should be considered at the regional level and not on the basis of the individual local planning authorities. A Green Belt is identified around Newport and the eastern part of the region. Growth is to be focussed in places with good active travel and public transport connectivity. Land close to metro stations should be the focus of development. There are plans for the growth of Cardiff airport to increase capacity and improve transport links. Welsh Government supports the establishment of the Valleys Regional Park and LDPs are required to embed its principles into planning frameworks.

Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, 2019

2.31 This Plan sets the foundations for Wales to transition to a low carbon nation; setting out the Welsh Government's approach to increasing efficiency and cutting emissions of greenhouse gasses by at least 80% by 2050. This is vital to meet the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, thereby contributing to a fairer and healthier society. The five ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 guide Wales's decarbonisation action, ensuring effective collaboration and involvement with stakeholders to integrate decarbonisation, limit further effects of climate change and maximise all 7 national well-being goals.

2.32 The planning system has an important role in facilitating decarbonisation. Planning Policy Wales' focus on placemaking encourages well-designed development that ensures communities have all the services they need within easy reach. A wide plethora of other planning related priorities also encourage lower carbon emissions whilst simultaneously creating places people can live well. These include promoting renewable energy developments, restricting the use of fossil fuels and incorporating active travel principles (walk and cycling) into new developments. Low carbon infrastructure can ultimately help increase efficiency through the way energy is produced and transmitted, the design and construction of buildings and the transportation of people and goods. All development plans must ultimately support these strategic decarbonisation goals to facilitate clean energy and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2018-2022

2.33 The Corporate Plan is the Council's roadmap setting out a vision, values and priorities for the period 2018-2022. It outlines clearly what the people of Blaenau Gwent can expect from the Council but equally, what is being asked of Blaenau Gwent's citizens and partners.

2.34 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's core vision set out in the Corporate Plan is "Proud Heritage, Stronger Communities, Brighter Future." This is intrinsically linked to land use planning and is therefore key to the delivery of the RLDP. The five core values are: 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 RLDP are: Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities; and Economic Development and Regeneration.

Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan – The Blaenau Gwent We Want (2018-2023)

2.35 The Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan was endorsed in April 2018 and is a long term vision for the area over the next 35 years.

2.36 The Plan outlines objectives for improving well-being in Blaenau Gwent and meeting duties under the Well-being and Future Generations Act 2015. It is the result of an extensive process of ongoing conversations with the public through the Blaenau Gwent We Want engagement programme, close work with partner organisations and analysis of the evidence to build up a detailed picture of what well-being looks like and how it can be improved.

2.37 The 5 objectives in the plan have been developed to reflect that Blaenau Gwent wants...

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the natural environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage healthy lifestyles

2.38 A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places. The RLDP will be an integral means of maximising the well-being of Blaenau Gwent's residents and its communities; thereby ensuring that these five objectives are balanced and integrated into the core of the Plan, whilst shaping each stage of plan preparation.

South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (January 2015)

2.39 The five South East (SE) Wales Valley local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen have jointly developed a Local Transport Plan.

2.40 The LTP sets down the vision and objectives for transport in the SE Wales Valleys area and provides a short and long term programme of interventions to work towards achieving these goals. The short-term programme sets down those schemes that are priorities for the next 5 years up to 2020. The longer-term programme identifies aspirations up to 2030.

2.41 The Local Transport Plan focuses on targeting investment in transport that will support the following Welsh Government priority areas:

- Support economic growth and safeguard jobs across Wales, but with a particular focus on the City Regions, Enterprise Zones and local growth zones;
- Reduce economic inactivity by delivering safe and affordable access to employment sites across Wales;

- Maximise the contribution that effective and affordable transport services can make to tackling poverty and target investment to support improvements in accessibility for the most disadvantaged communities; and
- Encourage, safer, healthier and sustainable travel.

2.42 Transport has always had an integral relationship with sustainable spatial planning and the RLDP will continue to link transport with the full plethora of strategic planning themes. These include the economy, employment, the environment, health and social care, education and physical activity. In addressing these links, transport can be used as a tool to promote equality, improve welfare and deliver an inclusive, fairer society.

3.0 KEY CHALLENGES AND DRIVERS

Challenges

3.1 The following key challenges have been identified for the RLDP to address. These have been influenced by stakeholders at a series of engagement events, the Council's review report and other supporting documents. At the engagement event, the current LDP challenges for the adopted plan were evaluated and reviewed. A full report of consultation of the Issues and Vision Workshops is available to download on the Council's website. A Background Paper on the Issues, Vision and Objectives is also available.

3.2 The key challenges have been grouped under the headings of economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects which are illustrative of the broad spectrum of areas where the Plan can affect change.

Economic
<p>Challenge 1: Economic growth The area suffers from high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, high benefit dependence and limited quality employment opportunities, which together result in low household incomes. A key challenge for the area is to reduce inequalities with the rest of Wales and secure jobs for the future. This will mean increasing the proportion of jobs in sectors with good growth prospects, such as, new technologies and advanced manufacturing, IT and cyber security, tourism, low carbon sustainable technologies and the foundation economy. The challenge is to provide land, services and environments that will enable economic growth.</p>
<p>Challenge 2: New roles for town centres Town centres are suffering as a result of a change in people's shopping habits. A key issue is that town centres need to diversify and broaden their offer to create footfall. Town centres need to have clear roles so that they don't compete against each other. The challenge is to provide a more flexible policy approach and identify clear roles.</p>
<p>Challenge 3: Improving education attainment and skills A high proportion of adults have no qualifications and education attainment is generally low. Whilst education attainment has improved considerably, lately, more needs to be done in this area. People have limited and low skill levels to gain good quality jobs. The challenge is to ensure that skills and training match the economic growth sectors and the infrastructure is put in place so that facilities can be accessed by all.</p>
Social
<p>Challenge 4: Population growth and improving housing offer The area has stabilised its population, although people are still leaving the area to find housing and employment elsewhere. One of the problems with out-migration is that it tends to be biased towards those more mobile and economically active. The challenge is to provide land for housing and provide the jobs to retain people in the area.</p> <p>There is a shortage of flats, bungalows and detached properties to meet housing requirements. The quality of existing private housing stock is an issue in terms of modern living and efficiency requirements particularly in the rental sector. Affordability remains an issue. The challenge is to ensure new developments contain a mix of house types and</p>

tenure; managing the number of vacant properties; and improving the quality of the private housing stock.

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

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

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

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

Environmental

Challenge 8: Creating a place which supports its green environment Blaenau Gwent, sits at the head of the South Wales Valleys on the fringe of the Brecon Beacons with its dramatic uplands in the north and steep sided valleys to the south. This landscape is a major asset which needs to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The natural environment with its variety of wildlife is valuable in its own right but can also contribute to the economic and social well-being of the area. Climate change and disrespectful activities are a threat to this. The challenge is to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems.

Challenge 9: Sustainable use of natural resources Responsible use of the area's physical resources is a key part of a better future. The challenge is to promote the circular economy by reducing waste generation and maximising reuse and recycling, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the provision of an adequate supply of minerals.

Challenge 10: Environmental Quality Air and water pollution, noise, land contamination and dereliction have long blighted the area and affected people's health and well-being and whilst this has improved in reality there is still room for improvement. Climate change means that the areas subject to the risk of flooding are growing. The challenge is to help ensure that the physical environment is safe and healthy; and that land is used efficiently.

Challenge 11: Sustainable design and the provision of renewable energy Blaenau Gwent has the potential to generate much more of its own energy by sustainable means that reduce carbon emissions. The design and layout of buildings could contribute to a reduction in the consumption of energy and emission of greenhouse gases. Meanwhile, some change in climate is certain to occur and it will be necessary to adapt to this in the future development of the area. The challenge is to help, through the development process, to achieve the potential for reducing greenhouse gases and impacts of climate change.

Cultural

Challenge 12: Creating places with a distinctive sense of identity Blaenau Gwent has a distinctive, location, history and townscape and this is a further potential key to the area's transformation. This will mean bequeathing to future generations the best of the legacy of the past, including the heritage as an iron, coal and steel producer, the links with the Chartist movement and the birthplace of Aneurin Bevan. The challenge is to protect, conserve and enhance the best of the buildings and townscape.

The Welsh language is integral to the character, culture and history of Wales. Whilst Blaenau Gwent does not have a large Welsh speaking population as found in other parts of Wales, the challenge is to ensure that the spatial planning system protects and enhances Welsh culture and language where possible.

Key Drivers

3.3 Having identified the key challenges the County Borough faces up to 2033 and which the RLDP needs to address, this section seeks to identify the key drivers to realising some of the challenges and to assisting in delivering the changes required.

Cardiff Capital Region

3.4 The overarching economic objectives of the City Deal are to create 25,000 new jobs and leverage £4 billion in private sector investment across the region. Key themes have been identified to focus the approach: Connecting the Region; Regeneration and Infrastructure; and Skills and employment. These strategic themes have key implications for the Blaenau Gwent RLDP.

3.5 **Connecting the Region** – the digital strategy will help to make the area a smart region, driving innovative and disruptive solutions to attract private sector partnership and investment, including Welsh and regional connectivity, regional and community fibre connectivity, mobile 5G access and maximising open data.

3.6 A key project is the £738million Metro project, which aims to extend the transport networks to improve access to new and existing activities for work, training, education, culture, retail and leisure in South East Wales. The development of a 3-4 mile rail link from Abertillery to Ebbw Fawr Valley at Aberbeeg has been proposed as part of the scheme. This will also include a park and ride for 100 vehicles. An increase in the frequency of services to 4 per hour is also being investigated.

3.7 The key outcome of the Metro project is to create an integrated transport infrastructure which will enable the social and economic objectives of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. An additional rail link at Abertillery and Aberbeeg, in combination with a more reliable and frequent service, would help improve the economic prosperity for Blaenau Gwent.

3.8 Regeneration and Infrastructure – the Housing Investment Fund has been proposed to support the need for more homes to be built across the region. The fund will support house building ranging from larger builders and developers on stalled housing sites on former industrial sites through to small builders, community builders, custom builders and regeneration specialists on small sites across the region. The fund will also help to help stimulate the SME building sector across the region by providing loan development finance and launching a Customer Build Scheme releasing smaller plots of public sector land with a full package of support for SMEs to deliver new homes in the community.

3.9 Skills and Employment – the Skills for the Future project supports provides region-wide school engagement with pupils and parents to offer careers advice and guidance, support for businesses to address barriers of participation, including a skills investment fund and a commitment to support delivery of over 10,000 additional apprenticeships, graduate internships and upskilled employees in the private sector.

Our Valleys Our Future (WG 2018 Delivery Plan)

3.10 A ministerial taskforce for the South Wales Valleys are working to improve the prosperity in the South Wales valleys. They have published a high-level plan which outlines its priorities for the future. These are:

- **Good quality jobs and the skills to do them**

3.11 The vision is ‘to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales. This means helping 7,000 people into work, further creating thousands of new fair, secure and sustainable jobs across the Valleys’. Ebbw Vale has been identified as a strategic hub which is the focus of public sector investment. Proposals include: Tech Valleys – automotive and technology, employment space, residential development and digital. There is also a focus on the foundation economy to be supported to create additional jobs. The sectors being targeted are food, health, construction, retail, social care and child care. Maximising regional potential of the A465 is another area the Taskforce is exploring.

- **Better public services**

3.12 The vision is ‘Public services will be working with the third sector and local communities to respond to people’s needs. Support will be available to help people lead healthier lifestyles, improving well-being and addressing health inequalities; public transport will be joined-up, affordable and help people get to work, school or training and to leisure

facilities; we will improve education outcomes for all children and close the attainment gap'. A number of actions are put in place to achieve this.

- **My local community – Valleys Regional Park**

3.13 The Vision is 'A valley's Landscape Park will have been set up to help celebrate and maximise the use of their natural resources and heritage; Valley town centres will be vibrant places, with attractive green spaces which support local economies; and the Valleys will be a recognised tourist destination, attracting visitors from across the UK and beyond'. A number of actions are put in place to achieve this. The Valleys Regional Park is to sustain the improvement and management of a highly-visible network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves and country parks, rivers, reservoirs and canals, heritage sites and attractions across the Valleys, linking with our towns and villages.

Enterprise Zones

3.14 The Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone is one of eight enterprise zones launched in Wales by the Welsh Government in 2012. The Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone focuses primarily on the advanced materials and manufacturing sector. The Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone comprises of four areas totalling 40 hectares of developable land. The main objectives for Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone is business growth and job creation. The incentives available are of a fiscal nature with a planning scheme that offers a fast track application service and no pre-application advice fee. A Strategic Plan for the Enterprise Zone was produced in 2018 which makes recommendations for future direction and strategy. The responsibility of the Enterprise Zone lies with the Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Board.

Tech Valleys

3.15 In 2017, Welsh Government announced it would invest £100m in the Tech Valleys project over ten years. Tech Valleys refers to the proposed automotive technology park in Ebbw Vale. The investment will support the creation of more than 1,500 jobs, predominantly within new technologies and advanced manufacturing. Welsh Government have announced £25m over the next three years (2018-2021) as part of this commitment.

3.16 The Welsh Government have published a Tech Valleys Strategic Plan (April 2018) to set out how innovative technologies will be attracted to Ebbw Vale and the South Wales Valleys. The plan also includes how it will complement other initiatives and the expected economic benefits.

Circuit of Wales

3.17 In September 2013, planning permission was granted for the Circuit of Wales which would be a world class automotive cluster, centred around a performance circuit designed to host international motor sport events such as MotoGP, World Superbikes, World Motocross and World Touring Car and provide a major addition to the UK's portfolio of leading motor sports facilities. In 2017, the Welsh Government announced the decision not

to support the project. A planning application has been submitted to renew the permission which is currently being considered by the Local Planning Authority. The situation remains uncertain and therefore needs to be monitored.

4.0 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Replacement LDP Vision (2018-2033)

4.1 An exciting and challenging Vision of what the area should look like in 15 years-time has been developed and will guide the future development of Blaenau Gwent. The LDP Vision has been developed to take into account the policy context, key challenges and drivers for change.

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; and
- residents living in **well connected**, healthy and safe communities, in a range of good quality homes with better access to services;
- its **distinctive natural environment**, cultural and historic identity is protected and enhanced creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Replacement LDP Objectives (2018-2033)

Delivering the Vision

4.2 The RLDP Vision has been broken down into four outcomes and these are considered central to the delivery of the RLDP vision as they embrace the principles of sustainable development and the concept of placemaking and embed the duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

- **Outcome 1:** Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)
- **Outcome 2:** Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities
- **Outcome 3:** Create Opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills
- **Outcome 4:** Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment

4.3 Under the four key Outcomes sit 19 objectives which have been identified to address the challenges facing the County Borough and to reflect updated national policy and legislation. The 19 objectives have been formulated to create the right conditions to address the various social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being outcomes. The draft vision and objectives will continually be refined during the process to reflect the development of the evidence base.

4.4 The objectives are set out below according to the theme under which they sit. They are also cross referenced to the relevant Revised LDP challenge listed in section 3.0.

LDP Objective Number	Headline	LDP Objective
Outcome 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)		
1	Spatial Strategy	To promote the 4 main settlements of the County Borough as the focus for major employment, commercial and residential development
LDP Challenges Addressed:		1, 2, 4, 5, 6
2	Demography	To increase opportunities for people to live and work within Blaenau Gwent resulting in population growth.
LDP Issues Addressed:		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3	Placemaking	All developments should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, safe and sustainable places which enhance the community in which they are located whilst having regard to the natural, historic and built environment and supporting and safeguarding the welsh language.
LDP Issues Addressed:		7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
4	Climate Change	To minimise climate change impacts through reduced emissions of greenhouse gases in both new and existing developments, and to adapt to climate change through considerations of its effects through the design and location of new developments This can be achieved by: Maximising the use of previously developed land; Promoting the re-use and restoration of derelict land and buildings; By focussing development away from areas vulnerable to flooding; By increasing the supply of renewable energy; Encouraging balanced job and population growth to reduce out commuting; Provision of broadband connectivity to reduce the need to travel; Provision of ultra-low emission vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce emissions and improve air quality; and Provision of quality green infrastructure.
LDP Issues Addressed:		6, 8, 9, 10, 11
Outcome 2: Create Opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills		
5	Economic Growth	To support economic growth through the creation of a thriving, well-connected, diverse economy which provides a range of good quality employment opportunities to enable indigenous business growth, attract inward investment and competitive innovative businesses in appropriate growth sectors.
LDP Issues Addressed:		1

LDP Objective Number	Headline	LDP Objective
6	Education and Skills	To contribute to the improvement of the education and skills infrastructure through ensuring that skills and training match economic growth sectors and facilities can be accessed by all.
LDP Issues Addressed:		3
7	Minerals / Waste	To meet the County Borough's national, regional and local requirements to manage and dispose of its waste and to safeguard and to use its mineral resource in a sustainable manner.
LDP Issues Addressed:		9
8	Circular Economy	Promote the circular economy and make the best use of material resources for the benefit of both the built and natural environments.
LDP Issues Addressed:		9
9	Tourism	Develop a growing tourism economy to support sustainable and vibrant town centres recognising the role of the County Borough's proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park, local heritage and leisure opportunities.
LDP Issues Addressed:		1, 2, 12
Outcome 3: Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities		
10	Housing	To improve the range and quality of housing through ensuring new developments contain a mix of house types and tenures thus providing affordable, accessible and aspirational homes for existing and future residents.
LDP Issues Addressed:		4
11	Town Centres	To sustain and enhance a network of 4 town centres serving their own populations and valley catchments whilst recognising that the role of these centres is evolving.
LDP Issues Addressed:		2, 5
12	Sustainable Transport	To promote accessibility for all by prioritising walking and cycling (active travel) then public transport and finally motor vehicles thus reducing air borne pollution, the need to travel and dependency on private vehicles.
LDP Issues Addressed:		6
13	Accessibility	To create a network of well-connected settlements where services are easily accessible through improved integrated sustainable modes of transport
LDP Issues Addressed:		5
14	Infrastructure	To create an accessible network of green open spaces and high quality leisure and community infrastructure to contribute towards improving health and well-being.
LDP Issues Addressed:		7

LDP Objective Number	Headline	LDP Objective
Outcome 4: Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment		
15	Ecosystems	To protect, enhance and manage the ecosystems of Blaenau Gwent by enabling them to adapt to climate change through connecting existing areas by creating new linkages and stepping stones.
LDP Issues Addressed:		8
16	Green Infrastructure	Promote multi-functional green infrastructure with an emphasis on its integration with existing and new development.
LDP Issues Addressed:		7, 8
17	Landscape	To protect, enhance and manage the distinctive landscape of Blaenau Gwent to help foster sustainable tourism and community pride.
LDP Issues Addressed:		8, 9
18	Historic/ Cultural	To protect and enhance the historical and cultural environment of Blaenau Gwent to contribute to the regeneration of the area.
LDP Issues Addressed:		12
19	Environmental Quality	To safeguard the quality of water, air and soil and tackle all sources of pollution including noise.
LDP Issues Addressed:		10

Growth and Spatial Strategy Options

4.5 In order to deliver the objectives and meet the Vision the Council must consider how much growth is required for the lifetime of the Plan (2018-2033) and where it should be located. A number of different options of growth, how it should be distributed across the Borough and the Settlement Hierarchy for its delivery have been considered. Following extensive engagement with Stakeholders (a report of consultation of the strategy options is available) and consideration of key evidence including supply factors a preferred option has been developed. The background to the identification of the Preferred Strategy is set out in Appendix 3: Strategy Options and a more detailed consideration of the options is set out in a supporting paper on Strategic Options.

4.6 In summary four options were prepared and considered. The first **Option 1: Growth and Regeneration** was based on the current LDP and involved a medium level of growth; with a north south divide and a focus of growth on Ebbw Vale; and a settlement hierarchy based on an analysis of the roles of towns. Details of this are set out below.

Option 1: Growth and Regeneration (Current LDP)		
Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
Medium Growth Population: 162 to 846 gain (0.2 to 1% growth) Housing: 79-99 per annum (Total 1,185-1,485) Employment: loss of 48 to 64 per annum (Total loss of between 720 to 960)	North / South split with most of the growth in the north and with a focus of growth in Ebbw Vale	Principal Hub: Ebbw Vale District Hubs: Tredegar Brynmawr Abertillery Local Hub: Blaina

4.7 **Option 2: Balanced and Interconnected Communities** involved a low level of growth; with equal distribution across the borough; and based on using the sustainable assessment of settlements to distribute this growth. Details of this are set out below.

Option 2: Balanced and Interconnected Communities		
Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
Low Growth Population: loss of between 587 to 1,815 (-0.8% to 2.6% loss) Housing: 19-54 per annum (Total: 285-810) Employment: loss of 106 to 71 per annum (Total loss of – 1,065 to 1,590)	Balanced Growth Equally distributed across the borough	Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil, Pochin, Bedwellty Pits and Swfrydd

4.8 **Option 3: Economic Growth Strategy** involved high growth; with a north south split based on opportunities for growth along the Heads of the Valleys; using the sustainable assessment of settlement to distribute the growth. Details of this are set out below.

Option 3: Economic Growth Strategy		
Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
High Growth Population: 1,996 to 5,009 gain (2.9% to 7.2% growth) Housing: 141-226 per annum (Total 2,115 - 3,390) Employment: loss of 16 to a gain of 61 per annum (Total loss of 240 to gain of 915)	North / South split based on opportunities for growth along the Heads of the Valleys	Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil, Pochin, Bedwellty Pits and Swfrydd

4.9 The final option, **Option 4: Sustainable Economic Growth** was the same as option 3 but spread the growth equally across the Borough. Details of this are set out below.

Option 4: Sustainable Economic Growth		
Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
High Growth Population: 1,996 to 5,009 (2.9 to 7% growth) Housing: 141 to 226 per annum (Total 2,115 to 3,390) Employment: -16 to 61 per annum (Total -240 to plus 915)	Balanced Growth Equally distributed across the borough	Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil, Pochin, Bedwellty Pits and Swfrydd

4.10 The Preferred Growth and Spatial Strategy is **Option 5: Sustainable Economic Growth** but includes a **slightly lower growth level** than originally identified following an assessment of supply factors in relation to delivery and viability. It also includes a **more refined Settlement Hierarchy** to ensure that growth is directed to the most sustainable communities. This change was made to address concerns raised through the Initial Sustainability Appraisal of the options and Welsh Government's concerns that the settlement hierarchy was contrary to PPW, the principle of delivering sustainable development, promoting Active Travel, placemaking and the evidence.

Option 5: Sustainable Economic Growth		
Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
High Growth Population: 1,471-1,996 to (2 to 2.9% growth) Housing: 117-141 per annum (Total 1,755 to 2,115) Employment: loss of 28 to 16 per annum (Total loss of 420 to 240) With UR reducing & EA adjusted + CR Reducing 210 to 225 per annum (Total of 3,150-3,375)	Spread across the Borough based on Sustainable Settlement Assessment	Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Primary Settlement Ebbw Vale Tier 2: Main Settlements Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo / Blaina Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six Bells) Tier 3: Secondary Settlements Cwm Aberbeeg / Brynithel / Llanhilleth Tier 4: Villages Swfrydd Tier 5: Hamlets Trefil, Pochin and Bedwellty Pits

The Preferred Growth and Spatial Strategy

4.11 The new strategy is one of **Sustainable Economic Growth** and includes the following three elements:

- Growth Level – How much housing and jobs are planned
- Spatial Distribution Strategy – Sets out where the growth will be located

- Sustainable Growth Outcomes – Details how the outcomes meet the key Planning Principles and national placemaking outcomes that should be followed to achieve the objective of sustainable places.

4.12 The strategy has an economic focus with an 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 will be achieved **by enabling good quality, secure and sustainable jobs**. All this can be delivered through maximising opportunities from the City Deal, Valleys Task Force, Tech Valleys, Enterprise Zone and Metro proposals.

4.13 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. This has its challenges as the younger population is declining and the older population is increasing. It must strike a balance by 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. The Plan makes provision for **2,115 new homes** which supports **household growth of 6.5%** and a **population growth of 2.9%**. The strategy has had to consider deliverability by reviewing what has been delivered in the past and identifying what can be delivered in the future

4.14 **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 opportunities in and around settlements. Further information on how this has been undertaken can be found in the supporting paper Sustainable Assessment of Settlements.

4.15 Strategic Policy 1 below sets out the strategy.

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Economic Growth

In order to deliver sustainable economic growth:

1. Provision will be made for the delivery of at least 1,500 jobs with an aspiration to deliver 3,375. To enable this 46 ha of employment land will be allocated.
2. Provision will be made for the delivery of 2,115 homes to deliver a housing requirement of 1,755 of which at least 456 will be affordable.
3. The new homes will be distributed across the borough in line with the settlement hierarchy with 45% all of the homes being directed to the Primary Settlement, 50% to Main Settlements and 5% to Secondary Settlements, Villages and Hamlets.

Settlement Tier	Name	Number (Share %)
Tier 1: Primary	Ebbw Vale (Ebbw Fawr)	952 (45%)
Tier 2: Main	Tredegar (Sirhowy)	423 (20%)
Tier 2: Main	Brynmawr / Nantyglo / Blaina (Upper Ebbw Fach)	423 (20%)
Tier 2: Main	Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six Bells) (Lower Ebbw Fach)	211 (10%)
Tier 3: Secondary Settlements, Tier 4: Villages & Tier 5: Hamlets	Tier 3: Cwm and Aberbeeg / Brynithel / Llanhileth Tier 4 Swfrydd Tier 5: Trefil, Pochin and Bedwellty Pits	106 (5%)

4. Strategic Mixed-Use Sites are identified at:

- a. The Works, Business Hub, Ebbw Vale (3.5 ha of employment land) and 220 homes
- b. Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor - Rhyd y Blew (13.2 ha of employment land) and Bryn Serth (10 ha of employment land) and 805 homes
- c. Former Nantyglo Comprehensive School Site (220 homes) and other uses

5. Sustainable growth will be achieved through delivering the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)
Outcome 2: Create Opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills
Outcome 3: Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities
Outcome 4: Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment

LDP Objectives	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner Creating and Sustaining Communities

Growth Level

4.16 The Growth level identified allows the Borough to deliver a sustainable level of housing growth whilst at the same time supporting economic growth. It should be noted

that the level of population growth does not actually increase the number of people in the working age population and indeed even under the aspirational level it leads to a total loss of 240 people over the Plan period. However, the growth in the workforce is expected to come from increasing the activity rate, reducing economic inactivity and reducing out-commuting of the current population. If the intention to reduce inequalities with the rest of Wales is achieved and bring out-commuting levels to more sustainable levels then there would be 3,375 more people in the workforce based on the provision figures. The lower figure of 1,500 jobs identified in the policy is based on the Tech Valleys initiative and is backed by funding made available from Welsh Government.

Scenario	Change 2018–2033				Average per year		
	Population Change	Population Change %	Households Change	Households Change %	Natural Change	Net Migration	Dwellings
Provision	1,996	2.9%	2,020	6.5%	6	127	141
Requirement	1,471	2.1%	1,671	5.4%	14	84	117

4.17 As identified above the level of growth is based on making provision for a 2.9% growth in population that is 1,996 more people resulting in a population of 71,733 by 2033. Although the housing requirement figure set delivers a 2.1% growth in the population of 1,471 increasing the population from 69,435 in 2018 to 70,906 by 2033. The housing requirement figure would result in a population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 87 and a population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,668. Whereas the provision figure would result in a population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 196 and a population increase in the 60+ age group of 5,088. Actual changes are likely to lie somewhere between these figures as they are only estimates of what might happen.

4.18 In terms of household growth provision is made for 6.5% that is 2,020 more households whilst the requirement figure would result in 5.4% growth that is 1,671 more households. To meet the household growth identified the household growth figures are converted into dwelling requirement figures. The Plan makes provision for 2,115 homes to enable the delivery of 1,755 this equates to a 21% flexibility to enable sites that do not come forward or to enable the higher aspirations for the area if all of the sites were to be delivered. It is currently estimated that at least 456 of the homes will be affordable details of this can be found in the Housing Background Paper.

Spatial Distribution

4.19 An assessment of the roles and function of settlements undertaken for the current LDP led to the creation of valley areas with each having a district town centre or in the case of Ebbw Vale a sub-regional town centre. This is largely led by the physical characteristics of the area which naturally divides the area into 3 valleys the Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and the Ebbw Fach. The size of the Ebbw Fach and the fact that it had two district town centres led to it being split into Upper and Lower Ebbw Fach.

4.20 Within these valley areas the Strategy guides the location of growth to the most sustainable locations based on an assessment of settlements and creation of a Settlement Hierarchy.

Hierarchy	Settlements
Tier 1: Primary Settlements	Ebbw Vale
Tier 2: Main Settlements	Tredegar
	Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina
	Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six Bells)
Tier 3: Secondary Settlements	Cwm
	Aberbeeg / Brynithel / Llanhilleth
Tier 4: Villages	Swfrydd
Tier 5: Hamlets	Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits

4.21 The strategy focuses 45% of this growth in the Tier 1: Primary Settlement and 50% in Tier 2: Main Settlements with 5% in all other settlements. This growth split is based on directing growth to the most sustainable settlements that have the capacity to deliver.

Strategic Mixed-Use Sites

4.22 In order to offer some certainty of where development is taking place Strategic Mixed-Use Sites, that is sites of over 100 homes, that include a mix of uses are identified. These Sites have been taken through the Candidate Site Assessment Process and judged to be suitable for development. These sites have sufficient evidence of viability and deliverability.

4.23 **The Works** – is the regeneration of the former steelworks site in Ebbw Vale which aims to transform the site into a vibrant and distinctive area. It is a sustainable regeneration project driven by four objectives: economic, social, resources and environmental. The project aimed to create new places for learning, working and recreation. It is integrated into the town centre to make stronger connections and links to important landmarks. The scheme has already delivered a primary and special education needs school, hospital, a learning zone, leisure centre, playing pitches, a central Valley Wetland Park, cycleway, an extension to the railway and a mechanical link to the town centre. The site now needs to deliver (B1) office accommodation, commercial floor space, 220 homes and employment land. An opportunity exists to create an exciting business hub close to the rail station.

4.24 The supporting Masterplan needs to be updated to reflect the current position of development at the site and some amendments to the uses of some sites. The Masterplan is also supported by design codes and an energy statement. Planning permission has been granted for parts of the business hub and one of the parcels of land has already been sold for residential development. See appendix 5 for a map of the site.

4.25 **Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor** – The site fans out from the town centre in a north westerly direction to the Heads of the Valleys Road. The Vision for the site is to create a

series of developments that complements and enhances the vibrancy of Ebbw Vale as a sustainable community. Key aspects of the corridor will be to support a vibrant town centre with sustainable residential development and provide improved economic opportunity and leisure facilities centred to the north capitalising on the opportunities presented by the Heads of the Valleys dualling. It is intended that all the developments will achieve high sustainability and urban design standards. The development will capitalise on the opportunities presented by the environmental setting of the area through high quality public realm and green infrastructure. A key focus will be to complement the educational opportunities presented at 'The Works' with suitable employment space and create additional opportunities in market sectors such as tourism.

4.26 Development of the site is currently guided by the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Development Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance document. The framework has assessed the development potential of the area and identified the following elements:

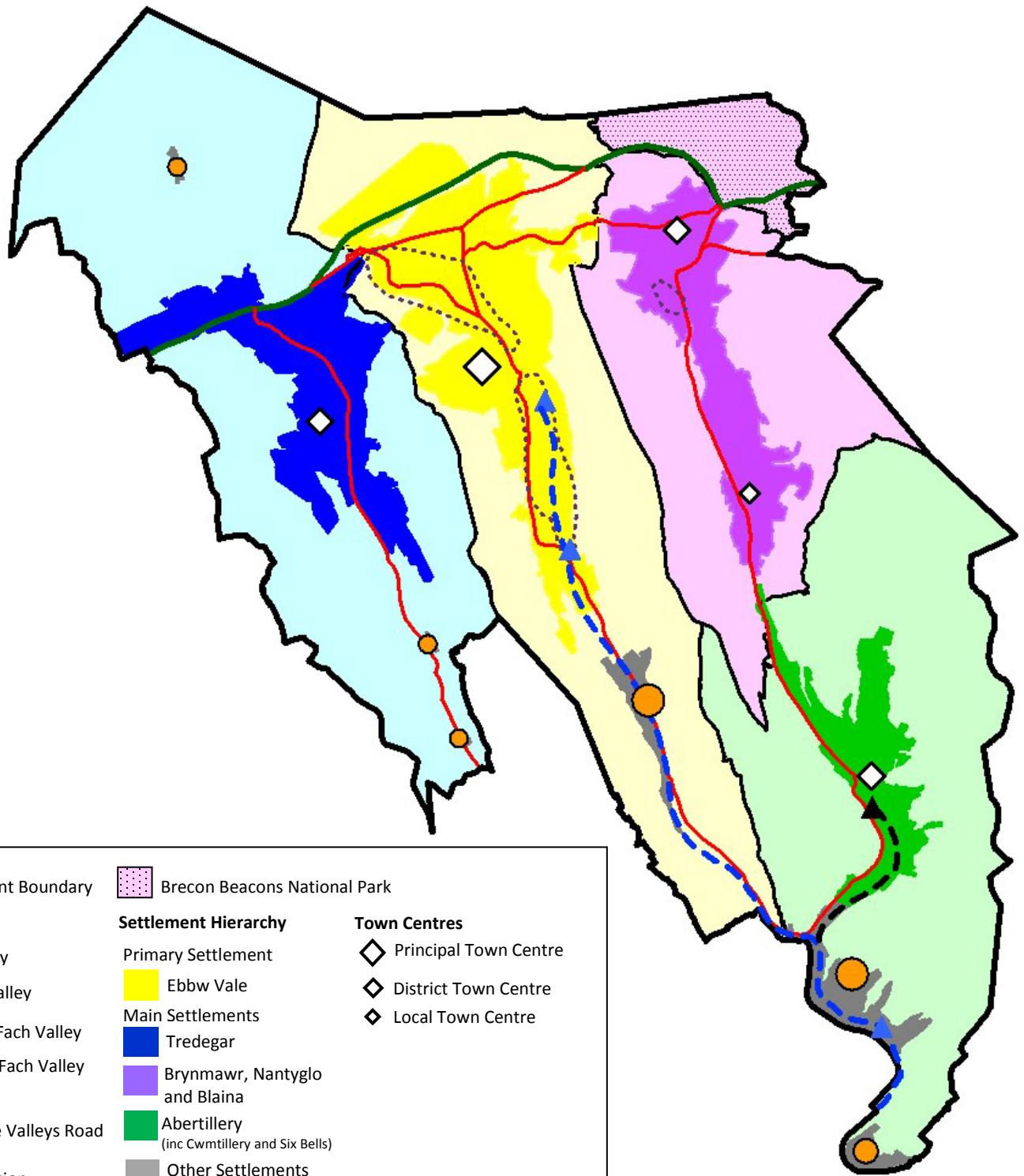
- Strategic mixed-use employment site – on land at Rhyd-y-Blew (29.8 ha of which 13.2 ha is the indicative developable area);
- Employment and road side services - at Bryn Serth (22.8 ha of which 10.5 ha is the indicative developable area);
- Commercial leisure hub – commercial leisure and associated A3 uses (4 ha);
- Residential - 805 homes including 10% affordable housing on three parcels of land (23 ha) (It should be noted that not all of the existing facilities are required to relocate to enable the provision of 805 homes); and
- A network of green links – to allow the effective integration of the SINC's and other key habitat areas.

4.27 This will be reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and reflects current guidance. In light of delivery rates it is unlikely that the full 805 homes will be delivered in the Plan period. Based on an average of 30 per annum it is anticipated that at least 450 homes will come forward from this site during the Plan period. One part of the site already has planning permission for housing (100) and another part has planning permission subject to the signing of a S106 Agreement (250). See appendix 5 for a map of the site.

4.28 Former Nantyglo Comprehensive School - the closure of the school and leisure centre has created an opportunity for a strategic mixed-use site. A masterplan is being prepared to create a well-designed, aspirational place to live with leisure space and good pedestrian / active travel linkages throughout. The site can accommodate in the region of 220 new homes but the exact figure and mix of uses will be identified in the RLDP. See appendix 5 for a map of the site.

Key Diagram

4.29 The Key Diagram illustrates the Preferred Strategy.



Key

Blaenau Gwent Boundary	Brecon Beacons National Park	
Valley Areas	Settlement Hierarchy	Town Centres
Sirhowy Valley	Primary Settlement	Principal Town Centre
Ebbw Fawr Valley	Ebbw Vale	District Town Centre
Upper Ebbw Fach Valley	Main Settlements	Local Town Centre
Lower Ebbw Fach Valley	Tredegar	
	Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina	
Transport	Abertillery (inc Cwmtillery and Six Bells)	
Head of the Valleys Road	Other Settlements	
A Roads	Secondary Settlement	
Railway Station	Village	
Railway Line	Hamlet	
Proposed Railway Station	Strategic Mixed Use Sites	
Proposed Railway extension		

Outcomes

4.30 The outcomes set out in the strategy not only deliver the vision of the Plan and meet the objectives set but also embrace key planning principles and sustainable placemaking outcomes identified in Planning Policy Wales and will thus ensure the delivery of sustainable development. In order to demonstrate this cross references are made within the strategic policies (set out in section 5) to the Welsh Government’s key planning principles and this is also summarised below. In addition appendix 4 cross references all the Strategic Policies against the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

Preferred Strategy Outcomes	National Planning Principles				
	Growing our economy in a sustainable manner	Making best use of resources	Facilitating accessible and healthy environments	Creating and Sustaining communities	Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental
Outcome 1: Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)	●	●	●		
Outcome 2: Create Opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills	●	●		●	●
Outcome 3: Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities	●	●	●	●	
Outcome 4: Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment		●			●

4.31 The following Strategic Policies deliver the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy.

5.0 STRATEGY DELIVERY

Strategic Policies

5.1 This section sets out the strategic policies which form the framework for implementing and delivering the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). The format and structure reflect the outcomes identified from the vision.

- **Outcome 1:** Create a Network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)
- **Outcome 2:** Create Opportunities for a Prosperous, Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills
- **Outcome 3:** Create Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities
- **Outcome 4:** Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment

5.2 Each of these four outcomes includes key subject areas (e.g. employment, tourism, housing, environment, etc) and their strategic policies. The structure of the Strategic Policies allows them to cross reference to: the objective; the national Well-being goals; local Well-being objectives; and the 5 key planning principles set out in Strategic Policy 1.

Outcome 1: Deliver a Network of Vibrant Valley Communities (Placemaking)

5.3 These policies focus on delivering placemaking and ensuring that our communities are sustainable in the long-term. Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Economic Growth plays a major part of delivering this network of vibrant valley communities and is supported by the following policies on Sustainable Placemaking and Design and Climate Change.

Strategic Policy 2: Sustainable Placemaking and Design

To deliver a Network of Vibrant Valley Communities we need to create sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise thus the design of new developments needs to deliver:

1. Inclusive design that offers choice and ease of access for all;
2. Environmental Sustainability in terms of maximising energy efficiency, making efficient use of resources, preventing the generation of waste and pollution, and consideration of ecosystems services;
3. Sustaining or enhancing local character in terms of the layout, form, scale and visual appearance of development;
4. The reduction of crime and disorder, where appropriate; and
5. Reduce reliance on the car by integrating the development with the wider public transport routes and active travel routes.

RLDP Objectives	3, 4, 12, 13
Well-being of	A More Equal Wales

Future Generations Act (Wales) (WBFG Act)	A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
Local Well-being Plan (LWBP)	Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments

5.4 Good design must be inclusive and this can be addressed through placing people at the heart of the design process. Through providing choice by ensuring that where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users flexibility is built into the building. Acknowledging diversity and difference by making provision to meet the needs of people with sensory, memory, learning and mobility impairments, older people and people with young children will lead to more usable environments. Good design also needs to address the inequality of access to services, education and employment experienced by people without access to the car which is an issue for Blaenau Gwent.

5.5 Good design should promote environmental sustainability. Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), minimise the use of non-renewable resources and prevent the generation of waste and pollution. In addition to considering landscape and green infrastructure and ecology, consideration should be given to all features of the natural environment and how these function together to contribute towards the quality of places. This embraces the principles of 'ecosystems services' and sustainable management of natural resources.

5.6 The special characteristics of the area should be considered in the design of the development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance are important planning considerations and a clear rationale for design decisions will be required. These should be based on site and context analysis, a strong vision, performance requirements and design principles and should be provided to accompany planning applications, or where appropriate included in a design and access statement. Where an area is not recognised for its character, developments will be required to contribute to the areas transformation.

5.7 Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations that need to be taken into consideration by the development plan and in taking planning decisions. The aim in all developments should be to produce safe environments that do not compromise on design quality.

5.8 New development should avoid creating car-based developments and contribute to minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys. Existing infrastructure should be utilised where possible. Where new infrastructure is required it should be integrated within and beyond the development boundary. This could include works to connect to active travel routes or provision of bus priority measures on highway corridors serving new developments.

Strategic Policy 3: Climate Change

All development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution towards addressing the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Means of achieving this may include:

1. Having low/zero carbon energy requirements by reducing energy demand, and promoting energy efficiency;
2. Supporting the development of renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation;
3. Supporting development proposals that incorporate district energy network development and expansion of The Works district heating network;
4. Promoting efficient use of land through giving preference to brownfield land and development at higher densities on sites located close to transport corridors or town centres, thereby reducing the overall need to travel;
5. Utilising local materials and supplies (adopting circular economy principles); and
6. Avoid, or where appropriate, minimise the risk of flooding including the incorporation of measures such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and flood resilient design.

RLDP Objectives	3, 4, 8, 12
WFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To look after and protect the natural environment
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact Making the Best use of Resources

5.9 One of the themes embodied in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act is the need for ‘a resilient Wales’ whereby there is capacity to adapt to change such as climate change. A key principle of sustainable development, as recognised in PPW is ‘tackling climate change by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change and ensuring that places are resilient to the consequences of climate change’. Welsh Government advises that ‘climate change will have potentially profound environmental, economic and social justice implications and failure to address it will make planning for sustainability impossible’.

5.10 Climate change is being experienced in many forms. Typical ‘events’ include increasingly intense rainfall, more severe storms, rising sea levels and increasing average temperatures. These have a number of effects including flash flooding and storm damage, changes to landscape and wildlife habitats and the health impacts of increasing average temperatures.

5.11 The principles of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy provision are now incorporated into Building Regulations and proposed changes due to be out for consultation in Autumn 2019 will be looking to increase efficiency. However, the LDP needs to ensure that new development has regard to broader principles of sustainable design in order to significantly reduce energy usage and carbon emissions. Passive building techniques can help achieve these principles through design that makes best use of orientation and shading to facilitate solar gain and passive cooling to optimise thermal comfort. Such policy approaches can also help ensure that new development is designed to be resilient to future climate change effects.

5.12 The Plan will also support renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation technology as part of decarbonising our energy supply and meeting Welsh Government's target of 70 per cent of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030. The draft National Development Framework (NDF) identifies parts of Blaenau Gwent as priority areas for Solar and Wind Energy where there is a presumption in favour of development and where the principle of landscape change is acceptable. This and an assessment of the potential for renewable energy generation, using the Welsh Government Toolkit and the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus (2019), will inform the Deposit Plan in terms of identifying areas of search or the potential for particular types of renewable and low / zero carbon energy.

5.13 The Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus identifies the opportunity for development proposals to incorporate district energy network development and expansion of The Works district heating network.

5.14 The planning system has a role to play in planning to minimise the underlying causes of climate change and planning for the consequences of climate changes. New development should be located to make use of existing infrastructure, services and amenities, with increased densities on mixed use sites and sites with access to local facilities and public transport. The development of brownfield land should be promoted, where suitable as it can also reduce the need for greenfield sites to be developed.

5.15 As set out above a key effect of climate change is the risk of flooding and this brings with it issues relating to the likelihood of flooding as well as the intensity of flooding. The Development Advice Maps accompanying Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Flood Risk (WG 2004) identifies the flood risk zones as set out in the TAN. This information will have an important influence on where development allocations will be located, along with the type of development, and will also inform policies on flood risk whereby subsequent development proposals, in the form of planning applications can be assessed. The approach of the Plan will be to steer highly vulnerable development away from flood risk areas, to assess the implications of development in areas at risk of flooding and to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5.16 Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) established Sustainable Drainage Approval Bodies (SAB). The SAB is established to evaluate and

approve drainage applications for new developments where construction work has drainage implications, and adopt and maintain surface water drainage systems according to the Act. SAB consent must be in place for development to commence and could result in a potential change in site layouts and lower densities.

5.17 A Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment will be prepared for the Deposit Plan and will inform the identification and assessment of subsequent allocations.

Outcome 2: Deliver opportunities for a Prosperous Low Carbon Economy and Promote Learning and Skills

5.18 This outcome covers the economic components of the strategy which is an important part but also complements the other outcomes, which collectively come together to deliver sustainable economic growth strategy. This section sets out the strategic direction for Sustainable Economic Growth, Tourism, Minerals and Waste.

Strategic Policy 4: Employment and Skills

Opportunities for sustainable economic growth will be delivered by directing employment generating development to the most appropriate and sustainable locations, supporting expansion of existing businesses and ensuring spatial alignment between housing and employment growth. The Employment Land Review identifies 46 ha hectares of land for employment and business purposes should be retained to accommodate at least 1,500 new jobs over the plan period. This will be delivered by:

1. Allocating 46 ha of land for employment purposes (The proposed employment site allocations required will be confirmed at the LDP Deposit stage).
2. Retaining and safeguarding the following strategic sites for employment purposes:
 - a. The Works, Business Hub, Ebbw Vale (3.5 ha); and
 - b. Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor, Ebbw Vale (Rhyd-y-Blew (13.2 ha) and Bryn Serth (10 ha)).
3. Supporting the development of land close to the proposed Metro station at Abertillery.
4. Capitalising on the key economic drivers and allocated funding in place for Blaenau Gwent in the form of the Enterprise Zone designation, Tech Valleys, Valleys Task Force and the Cardiff Capital Region.
5. The employment roles of major industrial areas will be identified to assist in the diversification of employment and support the growth in good growth sectors such as new technologies and advanced manufacturing, IT and cyber security, tourism, low carbon sustainable technologies and the foundation economy.

6. A first class learning infrastructure being put in place to ensure that residents gain the skills they require to match the economic growth sectors.	
7. Local labour market agreements being negotiated with developers to enable local employment to secure employment and skills development.	
RLDP Objectives	1, 2, 5, 6
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner

5.19 The LDP Strategy recognises that, in order to address some of the serious socio-economic problems in Blaenau Gwent, a progressive approach must be taken in the development of land for economic purposes. The Employment Land Review identifies that the LDP allocates 46 ha of land for employment and business purposes which will enable the delivery of at least 1,500 new jobs across the plan period. The scale of jobs provided is based on the Enterprise Zone (Tech Valleys) and Valleys Task force plans for the area and aims to lower the unemployment rate, increase the economic activity rate and decrease out-commuting.

5.20 The Blaenau Gwent economy has experienced major structural change moving from dependence on heavy industries that historically dominated the local economy. Blaenau Gwent should support the growth in good growth sectors such as new technologies and advanced manufacturing, IT and cyber security, tourism, low carbon sustainable technologies and the foundation economy. The designation of the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Zone primarily focuses on the advanced materials and manufacturing.

5.21 The baseline evidence base shows that skill levels and education attainment has improved in Blaenau Gwent. However, more progress needs to be made. The RLDP should contribute to the improvement of the education and skills infrastructure through where appropriate securing through S106 agreements skills and training match the economic growth sectors and supporting infrastructure provision.

5.22 The LDP will seek to safeguard existing sites and premises where appropriate and necessary. This will ensure retention of the employment land portfolio, prevent economic growth being constrained by a lack of land and help to meet the employment needs of the local and wider economy. The Employment Land Review will however inform decisions on the possible deallocation of some of the existing employment protection areas that are no longer considered to be viable, suitable or required to meet identified employment needs in the Deposit LDP.

5.23 The regeneration opportunities in Blaenau Gwent continue to present local employment opportunities in the construction sector. The development opportunities at

the strategic sites of The Works and Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor could allow for planning obligations to be used to secure local employment in the growing construction sector.

Strategic Policy 5: Growing Tourism	
To deliver a growing tourism economy the Plan will support:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major destination attractions that would draw large numbers of people to the area and provide a significant number of jobs; 2. High quality accommodation, venues, businesses, events, attractions, cultural tourism, rural enterprise, activity tourism and a diverse and attractive food and drink sector; and 3. The establishment of the Valleys Regional Park. 	
Providing developments avoid unacceptable, adverse environmental or amenity impacts and are supported by adequate existing or new infrastructure provision.	
RLDP Objectives	1, 2, 5, 6, 11
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant culture and Welsh language
LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity To look after and protect the natural environment
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner Creating and Sustaining Communities

5.24 A major destination attraction would be a game changer in the perception and role that tourism plays in the Blaenau Gwent economy. Being well located in terms of access to rail connections, the Heads of the Valleys Road and the Brecon Beacons National Park there is potential for an attraction that could draw large numbers of people to the area and provide a significant number of jobs. Planning permission has been granted for such a facility (Circuit of Wales) and a further application made to extend the life of this application. However, at present there is no certainty around the delivery of this proposal. This strategy also recognises the role smaller developments can make in supporting the tourist economy.

5.25 The LDP Strategy recognises the importance of tourism and the tourist industry to the economy of the County Borough. By attracting more visitors to the area it will also enable us to support sustainable and vibrant town centres. The LDP will provide the framework for the provision and protection of well-located, good quality, tourism, sport, recreation and leisure facilities and to diversify tourism in the County. The LDP will seek to ensure that proposals for new tourism related development are located in sustainable and accessible locations and that local communities are not adversely affected.

5.26 The Valleys Regional Park seeks to maximize the social, economic and environmental potential of the Valleys’ natural and cultural assets and it is important that the concept is developed in Blaenau Gwent. The Park concept will help us sustain the improvement and management of our highly-visible network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves, country parks, rivers, reservoirs, heritage and attractions. The aim is to improve links from these areas to our towns.

5.27 The land-use planning system has a key role in ensuring that tourism related development maximises the economic and employment benefits that tourism can bring in a sustainable manner and protects those qualities in the natural and built environment upon which tourism depends. The LDP Strategy seeks to encourage high quality sustainable tourism based on the County Borough’s distinctive and valued natural environment, its historic features, the individual identity of its settlements and its cultural heritage. A number of Candidate Sites have been received for tourism proposals and there are also plans in place to improve the tourism offer at the Garden Festival Site in Ebbw Vale.

Strategic Policy 6: Sustainable Minerals Management	
Blaenau Gwent will sustainably manage its mineral resources by:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining a minimum 10 year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves throughout the plan period and meeting the apportionment identified in the most up to date Regional Technical Statement. This will require the identification of preferred areas for future working in relation to a potential lateral extension at Trefil Quarry (Limestone) and/or a new quarry at Land South East of Cwm (Pennant Sandstone); 2. Encouraging the efficient and appropriate use of high quality minerals and maximising the potential for the use of secondary and recycled aggregates as an alternative to primary land won resources; 3. Safeguarding areas underlain by non-energy minerals of economic importance where they could be worked in the future to ensure that such resources are not unnecessarily sterilised by other forms of development; 4. The use of buffer zones to reduce the conflict between mineral development and sensitive forms of development; 5. Ensuring that minerals proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment and amenity; and 6. Securing appropriate restoration and after uses for mineral sites which can deliver specific environmental and community benefits. 	
RLDP Objectives	5, 7, 8
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To forge pathways to new prosperity

Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact Making the Best use of Resources Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner
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5.28 Minerals are a finite resource and can only be worked where they occur. Blaenau Gwent has a variety of mineral resources which are broadly found in the following locations: an outcrop of Limestone in the north of the County Borough; outcrops of coal across the central area; and an extensive resource of Pennant Sandstone in the south. Non-energy mineral resources will be protected from other types of permanent development through the identification of mineral safeguarding areas based on the British Geological Survey (BGS) Resource Maps. No individual circumstances have been identified that require the safeguarding of any primary coal resource.

5.29 The latest South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) Annual Report (2018) establishes that at the end of 2018 Blaenau Gwent had 6 years supply of aggregates. The current planning permission for quarrying of limestone at Trefil Quarry also expires in 2024. As such, there isn't a sufficient supply of minerals and the Plan must therefore either make an allocation or identify Preferred Areas in order to achieve a 10 year supply at the end of the Plan period.

5.30 The South Wales Regional Technical Statement (RTS) (2014) sets out the contribution that each constituent local authority should make towards meeting the regional demand for aggregates. A revised RTS is currently being prepared and is due to be published early in 2020. The revised RTS will make recommendations for any apportionments necessary to ensure an adequate supply of crushed rock, including the nationally recommended minimum provision of 10 years, are available for the entire duration of the RLDP. This will require the Council to make provision which will require the identification of potential resources. Two candidate sites have been submitted one at Trefil Quarry (Limestone) and another Land South East of Cwm (Pennant Sandstone). Consideration will need to be given to allocating or identifying preferred areas at one or both of these sites in the RLDP.

5.31 The strategy is also about promoting the increased use of alternatives to naturally occurring minerals. The re-use and recycling of construction and demolition material and industrial wastes serves not only to reduce the amount of waste produced but also conserves scarce resources and minimises environmental damage. The current and emerging RTS makes an allowance for this source before setting the contribution each constituent local authority needs to make.

5.32 The strategy aims to balance the need for the safeguarding of nationally important mineral resources and ensuring their appropriate extraction against the potential impact of such development on residential occupiers, the landscape, and on sites of nature conservation or geological interest. These are key considerations that will inform consideration of the two candidate sites at Trefil Quarry and Land East of Cwm.

5.33 When determining planning applications for minerals, consideration needs to be given to securing appropriate restoration and after uses which can deliver specific environmental and community benefits.

Strategic Policy 7: Sustainable Waste Management

To deliver sustainable waste management the Plan will:

1. Ensure that all proposals conform to the principles of the waste hierarchy supporting those that move waste up the hierarchy;
2. Create an integrated and adequate network of waste recovery and disposal installations that has regard to the nearest appropriate installation concept and self-sufficiency principles;
3. Encourage the provision of in-building treatment facilities on B2 employment sites with sufficient amounts of available vacant buildings and land, subject to there being no unacceptable adverse effect on the environment or the amenity of adjacent users and communities that cannot be mitigated;
4. Support the co-location of facilities to enable the development of heat networks where appropriate; and
5. Support the circular economy by encouraging the minimisation of the generation of waste and the use of reused and recycled waste materials in the design, construction and demolition stages of development.

RLDP Objectives	4, 5, 7, 8
WCFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To look after and protect the natural environment To forge pathways to new prosperity
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Making the Best use of Resources Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner

5.34 The Planning system has an important role to play in facilitating sustainable waste management. The Welsh Government's Policy for waste management is set out in – Towards Zero Waste' (2010) and associated Sector Plans. The waste hierarchy provides the starting point for consideration of waste management proposals. Waste prevention and re-use is at the top of the hierarchy, followed by preparation for re-use, recycling, recovery and finally disposal. As far as possible, waste should be driven up the waste hierarchy.

5.35 The Collections, Infrastructure and Markets (CIM) Sector Plan requires the provision of an integrated network of facilities and indicates a move away from the reduction of disposal and recovery options for treating waste and a move towards high volume source segregated collection followed by reprocessing as well as preparation for re-use and prevention. The 'Nearest Appropriate Installation' concept and the principle of self-sufficiency will only be applicable in relation to mixed municipal wastes (covered by Article 16 of the revised Waste Framework Directive).

5.36 The most recent Waste Planning Report for South East Wales was published in April 2016 and concludes that there is currently no need for additional landfill capacity within the region. In addition, the report advises that any new proposal for further residential waste treatment should be carefully assessed to ensure that overprovision does not occur within the region. As such, no specific need for such waste management facilities has currently been identified at a regional level.

5.37 At a more local level, Blaenau Gwent CBC is a member of Tomorrow's Valley, a residual waste procurement partnership, which has entered into a 25 year contract with Viridor Waste Management Ltd to treat municipal residual waste at their Energy from Waste Facility at Trident Park in Cardiff. Planning permission has also been granted for an additional household waste recycling centre which will serve residents in the southern half of the County Borough and no further supporting waste management infrastructure, such as waste transfer stations, is considered necessary to deal with municipal waste. In terms of organic waste Blaenau Gwent CBC has awarded a 15 year contract with an option for a 3 year extension.

5.38 Whilst no candidate sites have been put forward for future waste sites to serve commercial and industrial sectors, the Borough does have enquiries for waste management facilities on existing general employment sites. Such sites are broadly considered to be suitable locations for in-building waste management facilities, due to their similarities with the appearance of industrial buildings, the type of industrial processes involved and the nature of the impacts. As such, employment sites that allow B2 uses such as the Primary and Secondary employment sites identified in the current Plan are considered appropriate locations for new waste management facilities. The appropriateness of any unforeseen new waste proposal will be subject to minimising adverse environmental impacts and avoiding risks to human health; protecting areas of designated landscape and nature conservation; and protecting the amenity of residents and other land uses and users. A Waste Planning Assessment will be required for all applications for a waste facility classified as a disposal, recovery or recycling facility. This will ensure all such proposals have proper consideration of the principles contained in Technical Advice Note 18: Waste (WG 2017). The assessment should be appropriate to the nature scale and size of the development proposed.

5.39 The Council has moved from disposal of waste to landfill to high volume source segregated collection followed by reprocessing as well as preparation for re-use and prevention. The latest recycling figures for Blaenau Gwent indicates that the Council have reached the 58% target set for 2016 but have improvements to make to meet the target of 64% by 2021. As indicated above, planning permission is in place for a household waste recycling centre in the south of the Borough to help to deliver this requirement.

5.40 The siting of energy from waste installations should consider locating in proximity to energy users. Likewise, site energy users should choose to locate in proximity to existing operational energy from waste facilities. This enables developments to benefit from heat being created.

5.41 Waste prevention and approaches towards encouraging reuse and recycling should be considered at an early stage as part of materials choices and design. The cut and fill balance of materials excavated as part of any development should be assessed to avoid the creation of waste. This will support the circular economy and contribute to greenhouse gas reductions.

Outcome 3: Deliver Well-Connected, Active and Healthy Communities

5.42 This outcome seeks to deliver well connected active and healthy communities for all sectors of society. This will be achieved by enabling everyone to have access to good quality affordable homes, services and recreation facilities. The section sets out policies on Housing, Gypsy and Travellers, Town Centres, Transport, Infrastructure and Health and Well-being.

Strategic Policy 8: Delivery of Homes

To ensure local housing need is met and sustainable communities are created:

1. The Plan makes provision for 2,115 homes to deliver a housing requirement of 1,755 homes of which at least 456 will be affordable.
2. In order to meet this an allowance for completions to date, existing commitments, windfall contributions from small and large sites totalling 1,282 homes is made leaving 833 homes to be allocated in the Plan.

Settlement Tier	Total from completions, commitments, small and large windfall	Strategic Mixed use Allocations (identified)	Number of homes to be allocated	TOTAL
Tier 1: Ebbw Vale	677	675 (320*)	0	952 (+45)
Tier 2:Tredegar	206	0	217	423
Tier 2:Brynmawr / Nantyglo/ Blaina	231	220	0	423 (+28)
Tier2: Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six Bells)	62	0	149	211
Tiers 3,4 and 5	106			106
	1,282	540*	366	2,115 (+73)

*denotes number to be delivered in the Plan period

(a further breakdown of this table is provided at Appendix 6 and further explanation is provided in the Housing Supply Supporting Document)

3. In allocating housing sites priority will be given to previously developed (brownfield) land within existing settlements, then previously developed land on the edge of existing settlements and then greenfield sites within or on the edge of settlements;
4. A range of sizes of sites will be made available to support self-build, and the small

and medium house builders; and	
5. Proposals to bring empty properties back into use will be supported.	
RLDP Objectives	1, 2, 4, 5,
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	Safe and friendly communities
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments Making the Best use of Resources Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner Creating and Sustaining Communities

5.43 The Preferred Strategy (Strategic Policy 1) provides a framework for the provision of 2,115 to enable the delivery of 1,755 homes in Blaenau Gwent over the Plan period.

5.44 Of major importance to the Strategy is the delivery of sustainable linked communities, so development must include a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenure. The Local Housing Market Assessment (March 2019) identifies that 26% affordable properties are required over the Plan period and the need is for 1 and 4 bed properties. The report also highlights the need for a further 650 units for older people made up of a mix of traditional sheltered, extra care, dementia and leasehold schemes for the elderly. The RLDP aims to deliver at least 456 affordable homes (26% of 1,755). To meet the need a number of affordable led sites will need to be identified in the Plan. The Plan will look to predominantly deliver these on publicly owned sites, where financially viable.

5.45 The Delivery of this growth is being distributed across the borough in line with the settlement hierarchy set out in Strategic Policy 1. This policy provides the detail on the source of this delivery and the extent of land that remains to be allocated in each area. An allowance is made for sites completed, sites under construction, large and small windfall sites (sites that normally involve the re-use of a building or development of sites that become vacant within the settlement boundaries); and land with existing planning permission known as commitments. Commitments have been discounted through an assessment of sites that sit outside the existing 5-year land supply identified in the Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2019). Detail of this process and the workings of all these figures are set out in the Housing Supply Paper. It should be noted that with the inclusion of the proposed strategic sites there is a surplus of land in Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr.

5.46 In considering which sites are to be allocated in the RLDP a search sequence will be followed, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within settlement boundaries defined by the adopted LDP; followed by brownfield land on the edge of settlements; and finally on greenfield sites within and or on the edge of settlements. As already identified in Strategic Policy 3 developments will be encouraged to include higher densities on sites located close to transport corridors or town centres, thereby reducing the overall need to travel.

5.47 To support self-builders and local small and medium sized builders a range of sizes of sites will be made available in the Deposit Plan. A list of small sites will also be made available and updated annually alongside the Joint Housing Land Availability Study.

5.48 Although the number of empty properties in the Borough has reduced there is still an issue with long-term empty properties and plans are in place to bring back into use 20-40 per annum over the next five years. Though these sites are not counted in the housing requirement they will contribute to the provision of homes in the Borough and enable greater flexibility.

5.49 The deposit plan will include 2 new policies. One will cover the location and design of new homes and will look to address space standards in new development. The other will address houses of multiple occupation which has recently become an issue in Blaenau Gwent.

Strategic Policy 9: Gypsy and Travellers	
Land will be made available to accommodate any future unmet gypsy and traveller accommodation needs.	
RLDP Objectives	2
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	The best start in life for everyone Safe and friendly communities
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments Creating and Sustaining Communities

5.50 The latest Gypsy & Traveller Housing Needs Assessment (2015) identified an unmet need of 12 units in the Borough. Since this time two permissions have been granted totalling 5 units thus leaving a demand for a further 7 units. This is in addition to the land already identified in the current LDP which was taken into account in the needs assessment. There are plans in place to replace the existing Gypsy and Traveller Site with modern facilities and meet the shortfall identified. However, an updated Gypsy & Travellers Needs Assessment will be undertaken and if a need is required land will be identified to meet this additional need in the RLDP.

Strategic Policy 10: Retail Centres and Development
1. To sustain and enhance a network of town centres, the current retail hierarchy will be reviewed and a new hierarchy will be identified in the deposit plan based on evidence from a Retail Study.

<p>2. To support and sustain the town centres new roles will be explored as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Abertillery will explore complimentary roles around culture, leisure and tourism; b. Brynmawr will explore opportunities to develop complementary roles around tourism and leisure; c. Ebbw Vale will expand its role as the main administrative and service centre for the Borough; and d. Tredegar will expand its tourism offer through maximising the benefits of local heritage. <p>3. In order to maintain or enhance the vibrancy, vitality and attractiveness of the town centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shops, offices and other commercial premises where appropriate, will be upgraded by means of refurbishment and redevelopment; b. Appropriate comparison and convenience retail office, leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities will be supported; c. Opportunities will be sought to improve access to, and within, retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, prioritising walking, cycling (Active Travel) and public transport. <p>4. Given the evolving role of town centres, the town centre and primary retail area boundaries will be reviewed and drawn in recognition of the need for a degree of flexibility in maintaining occupancy and footfall, and to enable a tailored approach to be taken for each centre having regard to health checks and masterplans.</p> <p>5. If appropriate, land will be made available to accommodate future local retailing need.</p>	
RLDP Objectives	1, 5, 9, 11,
WCFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner

5.51 To sustain and enhance a network of town centres, the current retail hierarchy will be reviewed and a new retail hierarchy will be identified in the deposit plan based on evidence from a retail study. A retail study will be commissioned to provide the evidence for a retail hierarchy of town centres, through an assessment of: key market trends; shopping patterns: and quantitative and qualitative retail need. If appropriate, land will be identified in the deposit plan for future retailing needs.

5.52 The role of town centres has been identified as a key issue by stakeholders. The strategic policy explores new roles for the town centres in order for them to benefit from

planned tourism and leisure growth. The retail study which will be commissioned for the deposit plan will review the identified roles.

5.53 Ebbw Vale will expand its role as the main administrative and service centre for the Borough. There are also opportunities to develop its cultural role based on its iron and steel history.

5.54 Abertillery has opportunities to develop complementary roles around culture, leisure and tourism. The Guardian at Parc Arreal Griffin is a popular tourist attraction which Abertillery should look to benefit from. One of the strengths of Abertillery district town centre is the position of the centre relative to woodland and upland landscapes. There are opportunities to develop new infrastructure to enable people to use these environments and to explore the scope of 'opening up' the natural setting of the town. The Metropole, the Llanhileth Institute and Ty Ebbw Fach offer opportunities around culture and links need to be forged with the town centre.

5.55 Tredegar will expand its tourism offer through maximising the benefits of local heritage. Recent and planned investment at Bedwellty Park and Gardens and Bryn Bach Park provides opportunities to attract visitors and for the town to benefit by catering for the needs of the visitors. The historical legacy provides opportunities to build tourism opportunities around heritage trails such as the Aneurin Bevan Trail and Iron makers trails.

5.56 The location of Brynmawr, at the gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Valleys Regional Park and Blaenavon World Heritage Site provides opportunity to service visitors either through providing facilities or encouraging them to stay over in Brynmawr. New development opportunities enable it to offer leisure and tourism facilities.

5.57 The low car ownership rates in Blaenau Gwent together with high levels of deprivation means that the Council needs to ensure that all members of the community can access the retail areas. This relates to all modes of transport, prioritising walking, cycling (Active Travel) and public transport.

Strategic Policy 11: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

1. To deliver sustainable transport and accessibility the Council will work with partner organisations to:
 - a. Deliver the Metro Improvements including the proposed extension of the rail service to Abertillery, the increase in frequency of rail services on the Ebbw Valley Railway and integration of public transport services and active travel routes across the South East Wales Region.
 - b. Deliver the key transport measures and schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan.
2. To improve sustainability, developments should be located and designed to minimise

travel, reduce dependency on the private car and enable sustainable access to employment, local services and community facilities. Depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal the development will be required to:

- a. Accord with the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy;
- b. Safeguard, enhance and expand on the active travel networks identified in the Council’s Existing Routes Map and Integrated Network Map, including links to the networks as a means of improving connectivity;
- c. Be designed to provide safe and efficient access to the transport network, which includes active travel routes, public transport routes and the strategic highway network; and
- d. Provide vehicle charging infrastructure.

RLDP Objectives	4, 5, 12, 13
WBFG Act	A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity To encourage healthy lifestyles
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments

5.58 A key part of the strategy is to create a network of well-connected communities which is currently not in place. This relies on the provision of a network of active travel routes that links homes to local services, employment and green spaces and an efficient and integrated public transport network. The Metro proposals will enable Blaenau Gwent to deliver an efficient and integrated public transport network through: increasing the frequency of rail services on the Ebbw Valley Railway to 4 per hour (2 to Ebbw Vale and 2 to Abertillery); providing a new rail link to Abertillery; and the delivery of an integrated public transport service. These proposals are planned to be delivered by 2023.

5.59 The provision of a choice of transport modes that offer realistic travel alternatives to the private car is fundamental to creating sustainable communities. Sustainable travel options support healthy living and active lifestyles, and help to alleviate problems caused by over dependence on the car. Where cars are to be used there needs to be a move away from petrol and diesel vehicles to ultra-low emissions vehicles. It is important that new developments plan for the charging infrastructure required.

Strategic Policy 12: Social and Community Infrastructure

In order to maintain and improve the quality of life and health and well-being of residents the RLDP will:

1. Protect community facilities;

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Allocate land for new schools, where required and support the development of the Welsh Language; 3. Allocate land for new health facilities, where required. 4. Allocate land for burial grounds to meet identified need; 5. Protect outdoor recreation space and open space; 6. Protect allotments from development; and 7. Support improved mobile phone coverage. 	
RLDP Objectives	6, 14
WBFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	The best start in life for everyone Safe and friendly communities To look after and protect the natural environment To encourage healthy lifestyles
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments

5.60 Community facilities are important to creating social and active communities. The term community facilities includes education facilities, cultural facilities, health services, libraries and places of worship. They can be owned by the public, private or community groups. The RLDP needs to take a strategic and long-term approach to the provision of community facilities, ensuring that the requirements of the community are met. The RLDP makes provision for a modest amount of growth to avoid putting pressure on existing services. However, where new house building does create a need that cannot be accommodated the development will need to make sure that the needs of the new residents are met.

5.61 The Council is currently working on delivering the 21st Century Schools Programme. Band A is nearing completion with the opening of the Six Bells school this year. Band B planning is underway and covers the period 2019-2024 with bands C and D to follow. Land will be allocated in the RLDP where required. The capacity of schools proposed under the 21st Century Schools Programme, where possible in line with financial and programming capabilities, will reflect any new growth in school places caused by the RLDP. The change in the population of children proposed in the RLDP and the potential impact on the capacity of primary and secondary schools will be assessed and where required mitigated for, when allocating residential sites.

5.62 The Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20 is directly aligned to both the Welsh Government's and the Council's Welsh Language strategic frameworks. The strategic priorities within the current plan, which is set for review in 2020 are as follows:

- Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education across the County Borough by 2020, to contribute to the vision for one million speakers by 2050.
- Increase the early year's provision offer to stimulate parental demand to enable growth across the County Borough.
- Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg by 50% in 2020.
- Work regionally with South East Wales Local Authorities to secure places for Blaenau Gwent learners in Welsh-medium secondary provision.

5.63 The Council will continue to invest in the growth and development of Welsh-medium early years and education provision, this will be a key area of focus moving forward, in relation to both the 21st Century Schools Programme and associated Welsh Government capital schemes.

5.64 Primary and secondary health care facilities will need to be fit for purpose and able to accommodate the changing population over the RLDP period. The Aneurin Bevan Health Board's medium term plans include the provision of primary care resource centres to serve Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. Allocations will be made for these facilities in the RLDP. Our population is ageing, which will put different pressures on the health service.

5.65 Two of the three cemetery extensions in the current LDP have been implemented with the third at Dukestown due to be delivered in 2021. The existing allocation at Dukestown will be taken forward and any new need will also be addressed in the RLDP.

5.66 Recreational spaces serve a dual role of providing a place for play, sport, activity and relaxation but they also promote nature conservation and biodiversity and contribute towards the areas of green infrastructure. They encourage physical activity, which contributes to health and well-being. A new open space assessment will be undertaken to ensure that quality issues are also addressed and a new provision standard will be set that acknowledges the difficulty the area has in meeting the Fields in Trust Standard. The Exegesis assessment of openspace/greenspace has been updated and will feed into the RLDP. The RLDP will look to identify the greenspaces that it seeks to protect.

5.67 Allotments are an important community resource and have a wide range of community benefits. Allotments will be retained and protected particularly where they are an important part of the green infrastructure or have community value. The assessment of demand will be updated and provision will be made for any unmet demand.

5.68 Mobile phones are an essential tool in everyday lives and good mobile communication coverage is important to economic well-being. We will work with

telecommunication operators to improve mobile coverage in the area through providing clear policy advice on location.

Outcome 4: Protect and Enhance the Distinctive Natural and Built Environment

5.69 This section covers the Natural and Built Environment of Blaenau Gwent and aims to protect it for the current and future generations to enjoy. There is a need to future proof our assets both in response to the challenges presented by climate change and also in promoting low carbon solutions. Protecting species, habitats and landscapes; enabling opportunities for connecting with the natural environment and encouraging healthier lifestyles have the benefits of improving physical and mental health and well-being. This section sets out the strategic direction for the natural and historic environment.

Strategic Policy 13: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

Blaenau Gwent’s distinctive natural environment and landscape will be protected and where possible enhanced through:

1. Protecting the countryside from inappropriate development;
2. Protecting and enhancing important landscapes such as the nationally designated Brecon Beacons National Park and locally designated Special Landscape Areas;
3. Ensuring that development does not have a significant effect on neighbouring Special Areas of Conservation (SAC’s);
4. Protecting nationally identified Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI’s);
5. Ensuring that the network of locally identified Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC’s) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR’s) are protected from inappropriate development and enhanced;
6. Protecting those attributes and features which make a significant contribution to the character, quality and amenity of the landscape;
7. Building resilience into the existing ecosystems through creating a network of green infrastructure and local wildlife sites linked by wildlife corridors and stepping stones;
8. Ensuring development seeks to produce a net gain for biodiversity ecosystem resilience by following the ‘Step-Wise’ approach and ensuring links are created to the green infrastructure network; and
9. Supporting woodland planting.

RLDP Objectives	3, 4, 14, 15, 16
WBFG Act	A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales

LWBP	To forge new pathways to prosperity To encourage healthy lifestyles
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact

5.70 The natural environment of Blaenau Gwent has seen considerable improvements over the past 40 years but now needs to adapt to threats from climate change and pressure from development. The LDP Strategy aims to protect and enhance the local landscape, ecosystems and geodiversity. This is to be achieved through protecting land outside settlement boundaries from inappropriate development. The existing settlement boundaries identified in the current LDP will be reviewed to ensure consistency with a South East Wales agreed methodology and will be identified on the proposals map of the Deposit Plan.

5.71 The national and local landscape of the borough and the surrounding area needs to be protected. Given the close proximity of the Brecon Beacons National Park development proposals within Blaenau Gwent have to have regard to the Nationally important designation and should not have an unacceptable impact on the setting of the Park. The local landscape is currently protected through locally designated Special Landscape Areas identified in the current Plan. These are to be re-assessed to ensure consistency with neighbouring authorities. The duly amended SLAs will be identified on the proposals map of the Deposit Plan and will be protected from development by an amended Development Management Policy.

5.72 Blaenau Gwent does not have any European Protected Sites within the borough however there are a number within close proximity and it is important to ensure that development does not have a significant effect on such sites. The sites in close proximity include the Usk Bat Site, Cwm Clydach Woodlands, Aberbargoed Grasslands, Sugar Loaf Woodlands, Brecon Beacons, Langorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan, Coed y Cerrig, Cwm Cadlan, Blaen Cynon and the River Usk.

5.73 It is also important to protect, enhance and manage the three nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the Borough at Cwm Merddog Woodlands/Coed Ty'n y Gelli, Brynmawr Sections and Mynydd Llangynidr. Development that affects a site of national importance for nature conservation will be subject to particular scrutiny to establish any potential or indirect effects upon such sites. Where potential impacts remain unknown, a 'precautionary approach' will be taken.

5.74 Since adoption of the current LDP a further 11 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) have been designated and 5 more Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). There are now a total of 155 SINCs and 12 LNRs. The aim is to protect these sites from development and enhance them where possible. The new SINCs will be added to the list in the Deposit Plan and the proposals map and the current development management policy is to be revised.

5.75 The impacts of climate change means that we need to build resilience into our ecosystems by protecting ecological networks and landscape features that are important

for biodiversity to promote the six attributes of: resilience; diversity; extent; connectivity; condition; and adaptability. This is to be achieved by: enhancing the green infrastructure network by identifying protecting and linking designated sites and ecological corridors. Natural Resources Wales is currently preparing an Area Statement for South East Wales due in March 2020. A major part of this work is looking at habitat connectivity mapping to inform and strengthen the importance of key connections. The Area Statement must be given regard in the RLDP in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This work will inform the preparation of: a Green Infrastructure Assessment; a Green Infrastructure Plan; a revised Development Management Policy on Green Infrastructure; and Supplementary Planning Guidance to support the implementation of the revised policy.

5.76 New development will be encouraged to provide for a net improvement in terms of biodiversity by taking account of it as part of the design. This is to be achieved by following the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Step Wise approach which involves the following steps: identify and safeguard any existing, or potential, important habitat/species and ecological connectivity; avoid loss of any existing or potential important habitats or species; or fragmentation of ecological connectivity; design biodiversity into applications/projects (e.g. landscaping, SUDs, site layout, living roofs and facades etc.); mitigate for any unavoidable harm or loss to important habitat/species or fragmentation of ecological connectivity; compensate for any unmitigatable habitat/species losses that can be justified; and lastly enhance and increase the biodiversity of the site or off-site, if on-site cannot accommodate such requirements.

5.77 The NDF sets a target to increase woodland cover by at least 2,000 ha per annum to help build the resilience into our ecosystems, to secure the delivery of climate change and decarbonisation aspirations, and to ensure the productive potential of Welsh woodlands is maintained. Blaenau Gwent will support such initiatives.

Strategic Policy 14: Preservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

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

1. The protection and sustainable management of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site setting and buffer zone;
2. Preservation and enhancement of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Remains;
3. Preserving Listed Buildings and their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest;
4. Preserving and enhancing the Tredegar Conservations Areas;
5. Protection and conservation of the Bedwellty House Historic Park and Garden and its setting;

6. Protection of the Historic Landscapes at Brynmawr/Clydach Gorge and Blaenavon;	
7. Preservation and enhancement of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest; and	
8. The promotion of heritage tourism.	
RLDP Objectives	3, 5, 9, 18
WCFG Act	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	Safe and friendly communities
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact Making the Best use of Resources Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner Creating and Sustaining Communities

5.78 Blaenau Gwent’s historic environment reflects its distinctive archaeological and social history and needs to be preserved and enhanced. As part of the buffer zone of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site is located in Blaenau Gwent, it is important that we ensure that it is protected and sustainably managed. We are working in collaboration with Torfaen and others to prepare and adopt Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide consistent planning guidance on further details to be taken into account in guiding future development.

5.79 There are 13 scheduled ancient monuments located in Blaenau Gwent. When considering development proposals that affect them or nationally important archaeological remains, there will be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ* that is there would be a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or would have a significant adverse impact causing harm within the setting of the remains.

5.80 One further Listed Building has been identified at: the Pack Horse Bridge, Aberbeeg since the current Plan was adopted. This will need to be added to the appended list in the RLDP. There are now 54 Listed Buildings and Structures in Blaenau Gwent and special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving the buildings, their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Any application for Listed Building Consent will need to be accompanied by a Heritage Impact Statement.

5.81 There are two Conservation Areas in Blaenau Gwent; one is based around the Bedwellty House and Gardens. The other adjacent to this covers the southern area of Tredegar town centre. This is supported by a Tredegar Townscape Initiative Conservation Area Appraisal and Design Guide which sets out detailed advice for developers when submitting planning applications, Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent (including consent of advertisements and demolition works). Special attention must be

given to preserving or enhancing conservation areas when making planning decisions. Development proposals will be judged against their effect on the character or appearance of a conservation area as identified in the above guide. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. There is also a special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of a tree preservation order. Any application for Conservation Area Consent will need to be accompanied by a Heritage Impact Statement in accordance with the (Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016). Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has supported historic building improvement to aid regeneration works across the conservation area and has supported a number of buildings being brought back into use for tourism purposes.

5.82 The Bedwellty Historic Park and Garden and its setting will be protected and preserved. It is for an applicant to show they understand the significance of the registered park and garden and the likely impact on the local authority to determine whether the impact is likely to be unacceptably damaging.

5.83 There are parts of 2 Historic Landscapes on the Register of Historic Landscapes in Wales in Blaenau Gwent. One based around Blaenavon but extends into Blaenau Gwent and the other at Brynmawr/Clydach Gorge. Whilst this is a non-statutory advisory register it is used to make decisions at a strategic level about the historic importance of areas identified and also where development proposals require an Environmental Impact Assessment or if there is more than a local impact on the historic landscape.

5.84 Heritage buildings and structures which have a particular architectural or historic interest in the local context, while not meeting the strict quality standard for inclusion on the statutory list of Listed Buildings, can still contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the local character. The Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance which includes a list of local buildings and will be consulting on this alongside the Deposit Plan.

5.85 The historic built environment is a valuable resource that should be preserved in line with national planning policy. There is potential to harness this resource in a sustainable manner, for example, through promoting heritage tourism, for the purposes of regeneration. The Blaenau Gwent Tourism Strategy (2009) set out plans to develop heritage sites as tourism attractions, by developing tourism trails to heritage locations, providing on site interpretation and improving the marketing of the sites. The Destination Management Plan 2016-2019 recognises that the heritage and culture of the area is the stand out reason for visitors coming to the area. 'The special and proud history, a landscape that tells of the earliest settlers in the area and the wealth of historical sites, museums and archives draw in visitors on a daily basis. It is essential that we not only protect and maintain but also capitalise on this valuable asset'. The RLDP will ensure that a framework is put in place to support tourism opportunities.

Environmental Protection will be achieved through requiring development to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and where appropriate improve the water environment and water resources, including quantity and quality; 2. Reduce exposure to air and noise pollution; 3. Balance the need for lighting with: the protection of the natural and historic environment; preventing glare to neighbouring uses and the need to reduce carbon emissions; and 4. Take a precautionary approach to the location of potentially polluting development. 	
RLDP Objectives	19
WBFG Act	A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
LWBP	To look after and protect the natural environment
Key Planning Principles (PPW10)	Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact Making the Best use of Resources

5.86 The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) established a strategic approach to water management and a common means of protecting and setting environmental objectives for all ground and surface waters. It aims to protect and restore clean water and ensure its long-term sustainable use. At present 50% of rivers and 30% of groundwater reach the 'Good Status'. This is due to sewer outflows, pollution from industrial estates and old mines and issues with fish migration. The Council is proactively working to help clean, protect and preserve Blaenau Gwent's rivers through a number of environmental projects. Development will only be allowed where adequate provision is made for the necessary infrastructure to secure the protection of water quality and quantity and, wherever practicable, improve water quality.

5.87 Development likely to result in emissions to air of any of the pollutants identified in the UK's National Air Quality Strategy and/or any other pollutant which may have an adverse impact upon the air quality within the Borough or has the potential to cause harm to human health and/or the environment should therefore provide a full and detailed assessment of the likely impact of these emissions. This should also demonstrate that there has been consideration of the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution within the vicinity of the proposed development. Development will not be permitted where it is considered that the resultant emissions to air will have an unacceptable impact on the existing and/or future air quality within the Borough or where there will be an unacceptable adverse impact on public health and/or the environment, taking into account the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity.

5.88 Potential sources of disturbance such as noise, vibration, odour or light can potentially have a significant effect on the quality of life of those living or working close

by or on protected species. Where a proposed development may adversely affect local amenity or protected species the applicant may be required to include both an assessment of the likely impact and proposed remedial or mitigatory measures to minimise the impact. In order to minimise light pollution and increase energy efficiency, the Council will need to be satisfied that any external lighting scheme is the minimum required for security and working purposes.

5.89 In considering the location of potentially polluting development a precautionary approach will be taken.

6.0 NEXT STAGE

Candidate Sites

6.1 Candidate Sites are sites suggested by the public for inclusion in the LDP, either as land for development, or for protection from development. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council issued a call for Candidate Sites between 15th November and 24th January. A Candidate Sites' Register has been prepared and is published alongside this document for information.

6.2 Assessment work has commenced and all sites received to date have been subject to a Stage 1 filtering exercise which discarded sites that failed the submission criteria i.e. below the minimum size threshold for allocations; sites suggested for protection; development remote from urban areas; insurmountable constraints such as located within statutorily protected areas or on fundamentally constrained land, such as significant flood risk area. A total of 17 sites were ruled out as a result of this assessment. The next stage is for the sites to be assessed against the Preferred Strategy to determine which sites go through to stage 3 assessment.

6.3 Following publication of this Preferred Strategy a further call will be made for more sites and detailed information on some existing candidate sites (January to March 2020). This will involve a request for the site proposer to submit detailed information, (where the information was not submitted at stage 1 call for sites) for sites that are compatible with the strategy. The Candidate Site Submission form will need to be completed in full. There will also be an invitation to submit new candidate sites which are compatible with the Preferred Strategy. Site promoters may be required to submit detailed viability information in order to support their submissions, should the Council require this.

6.4 The stage 3 assessment is split into two sections. Stage 3A will involve a more detailed assessment of candidate sites at an officer level using a 'traffic light' coding system. Stage 3B will then involve the assessed sites going through consultation with internal officers and external consultees. Sites will also be assessed on their impact on sustainability. The aspiration is that the Council will have at this stage a list of viable, deliverable, sustainable sites for potential inclusion in the Deposit RLDP.

6.5 In terms of Strategic Mixed –Use Sites i.e. sites with over 100 homes and a mix of other uses have been taken through to stage 3, sites have been judged against the Preferred Strategy and internal and external consultation undertaken to assess their suitability. Those that have sufficient evidence of viability and deliverability are identified in the Preferred Strategy.

Future Stages

6.6 Following consultation on this Preferred Strategy, all comments received will inform the preparation of the Deposit Plan. The Deposit Plan is a full draft of the Local

Development Plan, which includes all policies as well as draft settlement boundaries and land allocations. The Council anticipates consulting on this in the Autumn of 2020.

List of Current LDP Policies that require revision or deletion:

Policy	Justification
Development Management Policies	
DM1 New Development	Revise to reflect changes in national policy, improve clarity and achieve consistency with Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
DM2 Design and Placemaking	Revise to include minor amendments required to improve clarity.
DM3 Infrastructure Provision	Revise to prioritise different types of infrastructure provision.
DM4 Low and Zero Carbon Energy	Revise to reflect the need to change specific criterion and address standalone low and zero carbon energy developments.
DM5 Principal and District Town Centre Management	Revise to reflect any change in approach to town centres.
DM6 Management of Blaina Town Centre	Revise to reflect any change in approach to town centres.
DM7 Affordable Housing	Revise as part of the reconsideration of housing allocation viability and affordable housing requirements and improve effectiveness in addressing extensions to housing sites.
DM8 Affordable Housing Exceptions	Revise to reflect new settlement hierarchy.
DM9 Caravan Site for Gypsies and Travellers	Revise to improve clarity.
DM10 Use Class Restrictions	Revise as part of the reconsideration of the degree of flexibility in the type of uses allowed on primary and secondary employment sites.
DM11 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities	Revise to include further guidance and clarity.
DM12 Provision of Outdoor Sport and Play Facilities	Revise as part of the reconsideration of development thresholds and reassessment of local standards.
DM13 Protection of Open Space	Revise to include further guidance and clarity.
DM14 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement	Revise to include newly designated sites and improve policy clarity
DM15 Protection and Enhancement of the Green Infrastructure	Revise to improve effectiveness.
DM16 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows Protection	Revise to improve clarity.
DM17 Buildings and Structures of	Revise to include further guidance and clarity

Local Importance	
DM18 Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Applications	Revise to bring in line with national policy and advice.
DM19 Mineral Safeguarding	Revise to bring in line with national policy and improve clarity.
DM20 Waste	Revise to bring in line with national policy and advice.
Allocations and Designations	
SB1 Settlement Boundaries	Revise to provide greater clarity on appropriate types of development in the countryside and reflect a review of the settlement boundary.
MU1 Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor	Revise to ensure that development remain deliverable.
MU2 'The Works	Revise – certain allocations have been delivered and undelivered allocations should be reviewed to ensure that they remain deliverable.
MU3 NMC Factory and Bus Depot	Revise – to reflect a new masterplan being prepared for the area.
AA1 Action Area	Revise - to ensure that allocations remain deliverable and take into account updated retail requirements.
R1 Retail Allocations	Revise - should be reviewed in the context of the potential loss of commitments, the need for allocations to remain deliverable and updated retail requirements.
H1 Housing Allocations and H2 Housing Commitments	Revise – certain housing sites have been delivered and a review of undeveloped allocations and commitments is required taking into account updated housing requirements.
GT1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	Revise - to address updated Gypsy and Traveller need Assessment and if necessary identify a new site.
T1 Cycle Routes	Revise – certain cycle routes have been delivered, a review of undelivered routes is required and new cycle and active travel routes need to be added.
T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements	Revise – certain rail improvements have been delivered and a review of undelivered rail improvements is required.
T3 Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure	Retain.
T4 Improvements to Bus Services	Revise – certain bus improvements have been delivered, a review of undelivered bus improvements is required and new bus improvements need to be added.
T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development	Delete – new roads delivered.
T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements	Revise – certain highway improvements have been delivered and a review of undelivered highway improvements is required.
EMP1 Employment Allocations	Revise – an employment allocation has been delivered and a review of undelivered employment allocations is

	required taking into account updated employment land requirements.
EMP2 Employment Area Protection	Revise - to reflect any change in the status of sites within the employment hierarchy.
ED1 Education Provision	Revise – one education allocation has been delivered, another is nearing completion and any new education provision needs to be added.
CF1 Community Centre	Delete – planning permission has been granted and the facility is now in operation.
TM1 Tourism and Leisure	Revise – tourism related activities have been delivered on certain sites and a review of undelivered allocations is required.
L1 Formal Leisure Facilities	Revise – this undelivered allocation needs to be reviewed to determine whether it remains deliverable.
ENV1 Green Wedges	Retain – though a review is required to strengthen.
ENV2 Special Landscape Areas	Revise – an overall review is required to reflect updated Landmap information and a need for greater cross boundary consistency with neighbouring authorities.
ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	Revise – new SINCS to be added and SINC boundary changes required as a result of development.
ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes	Revise - undelivered allocations need to be reviewed to determine whether they are deliverable.
ENV5 Cemeteries	Revise – certain cemetery extensions have been delivered, undelivered extensions need to be reviewed and any new cemetery provision needs to be added.
M1 Safeguarding of Minerals	Revise – Coal Safeguarding areas to be deleted to reflect national policy.
M2 Minerals Buffer Zone	Revise - to reflect up-to-date planning permissions and the ceasing of mineral operations.
M3 Areas where Coal Working will not be Acceptable	Delete - to reflect national policy.
M4 Preferred Areas	Revise - should be reviewed in the context of meeting regional and national requirements and reflect decisions on planning applications.
W1 Land for Waste Management	Delete – to reflect updated position and lack of need for regional facility.

Suggested New Development Management Policies covering the following issues:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses in Multiple Occupation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location and design of new homes and will look to address space standards in new development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in the countryside

List of Supporting Documents

There are a number of supporting technical documents that have been produced to inform the Preferred Strategy. These are listed below along with their role and purpose and should be read alongside the Preferred Strategy.

Supporting Document	Purpose
Candidate Site Register	A log of sites submitted by land-owners, developers and the public as part of the call for sites. The Register is for information purposes only.
Employment Land Review	The purpose of the employment land review is to quantify the future employment land requirements of Blaenau Gwent and is based on the Welsh Government Practice Guidance for Economic Development.
Larger than Local Employment Study	The Larger than Local Employment Study comprises the combined area of the five local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The aim of the study is to develop a broad overview of the whole economy, identifying higher level statistics and key indicators to inform the RLDP.
Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report	This report details the HRA Screening for Blaenau Gwent RLDP Draft Preferred Strategy. It sets out the methods and findings and the conclusions of the Screening Assessment.
Housing Background Paper – Housing Supply	Provide supporting information regarding the housing supply identified in the Preferred Strategy.
LDP Demographic Evidence – Edge Analytics	To provide demographic evidence, including a suite of population, housing and economic growth outcomes to inform the Spatial Strategy Options paper for consideration in the formulation of the RLDP.
LDP Review Report	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.
Local Housing Market Assessment	Desk-top analysis and assessment of housing need and demand of the housing markets that operate across the borough to explore both the nature and extent of housing requirements in Blaenau Gwent.
Pre-Deposit Engagement Paper	This is a live paper and will be updated as the LDP progresses. It sets out who and how people were engaged during pre deposit consultation, the main issues raised and how responses have affected the development of the RLDP. It also illustrates conformity with the community involvement scheme.
Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement	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.
Report of Consultation – Issues/Challenges and Vision	The purpose of the report is to record all of the information gathered across the series of issues and vision workshop events.
Report of Consultation – Spatial Strategy Options	The purpose of the report is to record all of the information gathered across the series of spatial strategy options workshop events.
SA/SEA Scoping Report	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 LDP Review.
Spatial Strategy Options Paper	This paper has been produced to provide background information on spatial strategy growth options for the RLDP. The paper sets out the proposed options for growth and how these will potentially affect the population totals and structures, dwelling requirements, housing mix and jobs.
Sustainable Settlement Assessment	The purpose of this assessment is to identify those settlements which are potentially suitable to accommodate future growth in terms of their location, role and function. This involves an assessment of the current role and function of settlements, as well as an understanding of the relationships between settlements and their potential future roles.
Viability Assessment of Strategic Sites	The focus of this report is to assess viability and deliverability issues associated with taking forward strategic site allocations to deliver residential development in Blaenau Gwent.

Strategy Options

Growth and Location of growth Options

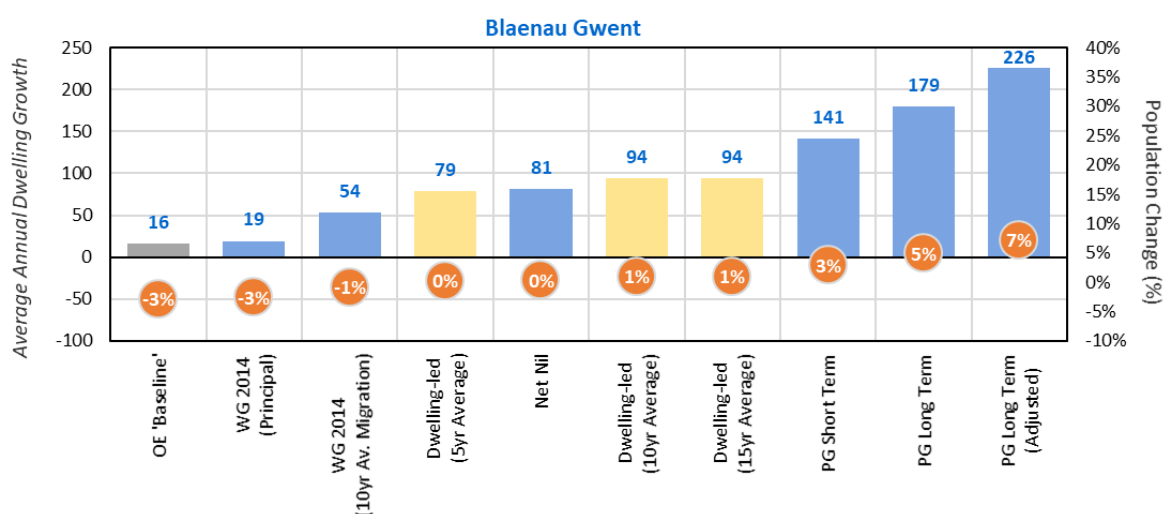
1.1 To identify the level of growth, the Council jointly with Monmouthshire and Torfaen commissioned Edge Analytics to prepare a range of population, household and employment led growth scenarios to inform the growth options. The findings of this work are set out in a Technical Paper Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen LDP Demographic Evidence (October 2019).

1.2 In addition to identifying the level of growth required over the lifetime of the Plan a decision needs to be made in term of where that growth should be located.

Growth Options

1.3 A total of 10 different scenarios have been generated for Blaenau Gwent. The scenarios prepared for Blaenau Gwent showed quite significant variations in terms of the impacts on the population and dwelling growth with each one having different impacts in terms of demographics. The scenarios along with a summary of their impacts are set out below.

Table 1: Annual Dwelling Growth and percentage Population Change



WG 2014 Principal

1.4 Planning Policy Wales advises that the starting point for the analysis of future growth is the latest Welsh Government principal projection which is currently the (WG) 2014 Principal Projection. This incorporates the ONS 2014 mid-year population estimate, plus fertility, mortality and migration assumptions based on a historical five-year period prior to 2014. These were notably lower than the previous WG projections as they were based on a 5 year period of recession where in migration was lower and household sizes had not decreased as quickly as previously considered.

1.5 This scenario projects a population decrease of 1,815 (-2.6%) with an increase of 275 households (0.9%) over the plan period. This scenario is the second lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 19 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 285). The figure of 19 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 and also lower than the average completions achieved over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.6 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of -966 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,174.

1.7 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 1,590 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 1,800 more people in employment over the Plan period.

OE Baseline

1.8 This differs from the other 9 scenarios in that it is an employment-led scenario. Instead of estimating the level of employment that the relevant forecast population growth projection could support, it considers the potential impact of employment change on population and housing growth. It is based on an Oxford Econometrics forecast, informed by a population growth outcome that is similar to that presented in the **WG 2014 Principal** scenario (population decline by 2033).

1.9 This scenario projects a population loss comparable with the WG 2014 Principal scenario that is a population decrease of 1,815 (-2.6%) with an increase of 275 households (0.9%) over the plan period. This scenario is the lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 16 dpa over the Plan period (total of 240). The figure of 16 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 and also much lower than the average completions achieved over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.10 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 1,080 over the plan period. This is lower than the WG Principal scenario suggests. No assumption on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average were considered.

WG 2014 (10 yr Average)

1.11 This scenario is based on 10 year average migration figures prior to 2014 (i.e 2004/05-2013/14), a period that covers a more diverse range of economic conditions than the WG principal.

1.12 The scenario projects a population loss of 585 (-0.8%) with an increase of 765 households (2.5%) over the plan period. This scenario is the third lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 54 dpa over the Plan period (total of 810). The figure of 54 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 and also lower than the average completions over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.13 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of -711 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,232.

1.14 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 1,065 over the plan period assuming no change in the unemployment or economic activity rate. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 2,380 more people in employment over the Plan period.

Dwelling – led (5yr Average)

1.15 This scenario is based on annual dwelling growth applied from 2019 onward, based on the last five years completions (2014/15-2018/19). An annual dwelling growth of 80 pa has been applied.

1.16 The scenario projects a population increase of 162 (0.2%) with an increase of 1,127 households (3.6%) over the plan period. This scenario is the fourth lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 79 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 1,185). The figure of 79 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233, slightly lower than the average completions over the last 5 years and lower than the average completions over the past 10 years (96).

1.17 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 373 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,528.

1.18 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 930 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 2,550 more people in employment over the Plan period.

Net Nil

1.19 This scenario is based on internal and international migration flows being balanced between in and out flows, resulting in zero net migration.

1.20 The scenario projects a population increase of 238 (0.3%) with an increase of 1,162 households (3.7%) over the plan period. This scenario is the fourth lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 81 dpa over the Plan period (total of 1,215). The figure of 81 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 is slightly higher than the past 5 year (80) completion rate but is below the 10 years average completion rate (96).

1.21 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 299 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,570.

1.22 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 960 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates

reduced to 1.20 then there would be 2,535 more people in employment over the Plan period.

Dwelling – led (10yr Average)

1.23 This scenario is based on annual dwelling growth applied from 2019 onward, based on the last ten years completions (2008/09-2018/19). An annual dwelling growth of 96 pa has been applied.

1.24 The scenario projects a population increase of 675 (1.0%) with an increase of 1,340 households (4.3%) over the plan period. This scenario is the fifth lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 94 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 1,410). The figure of 94 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233, higher than the average completions over the last 5 (80) and is slightly lower than the 10 year average completions (96).

1.25 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 204 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,615.

1.26 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 735 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 2,790 more people in employment over the Plan period.

Dwelling led (15 yr Average)

1.27 This scenario is based on annual dwelling growth applied from 2019 onward, based on the last fifteen years completions (2004/05-2018/19). An annual dwelling growth of 102 pa has been applied.

1.28 The scenario projects a population increase of 690 (1.0%) with an increase of 1,346 households (4.3%) over the plan period. This scenario is the fifth lowest household growth range identified estimating an average of 99 dpa over the Plan period (total of 1,410). The figure of 99 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233, higher than the average completions over the last 5 (80) and last 10 years (96).

1.29 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 237 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,597.

1.30 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 720 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 2,790 more people in employment over the Plan period.

PG Short Term

1.31 This scenario is based on internal migration rates and international migration flow assumptions based on a six year period (2011/12-2016/17). This is a similar time to the WG Principal projection (i.e 5-6 years) but includes the latest three years of population statistics.

1.32 This scenario projects a population increase of 1,996 (2.9%) with an increase of 2,220 households (6.5%) over the plan period. This scenario is the third highest household growth range identified estimating an average of 141 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 2,115). The figure of 141 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 but is higher than the average completions over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.33 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 196 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 5,088.

1.34 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 240 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 3,375 more people in employment over the Plan period.

PG Long Term

1.35 This scenario is based on internal migration rates and international migration flow assumptions based on a sixteen- year period (2001/02-2016/17).

1.36 This scenario projects a population increase of 3,400 (4.9%) with an increase of 2,558 households (8.2%) over the plan period. This scenario is the second highest household growth range identified estimating an average of 179 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 2,685). The figure of 179 dpa is below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 but is well above the average completions over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.37 Under this scenario there would be population increase in the 0-14 age groups of 231 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 5,068.

1.38 The number of people in the working age range would increase by 300 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 4,005 more people in employment over the Plan period.

PG Long Term (Adjusted)

1.39 This scenario is based on internal in-migration rates adjusted to reflect higher in-migration (based on the last 5-years) from Bristol and South Gloucestershire, following the removal of the Severn Bridge toll. All other migration flow assumptions are consistent with the PD Long Term scenario. This results in an extra 92 people coming to Blaenau Gwent from this area per annum.

1.40 This scenario projects a population increase of 5,009 (7.2%) with an increase of 3,231 households (10.4%) over the plan period. This scenario is the highest household growth range identified estimating an average of 226 dwellings per annum (dpa) over the Plan period (total of 3,390). The figure of 226 dpa is slightly below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233 but is well above the average completions over the past 5 (80) and 10 years (96).

1.41 Under this scenario there would be population gain in the 0-14 age groups of 656 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 5,299.

1.42 The number of people in the working age range would increase by 915 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 4,710 more people in employment over the Plan period.

1.43 These Growth Options were placed into three options of low, medium and high as shown in table follows:

Growth Option	Level of Housing & Employment
Option 1 – Low growth (based on WG latest 2014 projections principal and 10 yr migration and OE baseline)	Population: loss of between 587 to 1,815 (-0.8% to 2.6% loss) Housing: 19-54 per annum (Total: 285-810) Employment: loss of 106 to 71 per annum (Total loss of – 1,065 to 1,590)
Option 2 – Medium growth (based on 3 dwelling led projections (5,10 & 15 yr average) and Net nil migration)	Population: 162 to 846 gain (0.2 to 1% growth) Housing: 79-99 per annum (Total 1,185-1,485) Employment: loss of 48 to 64 per annum (Total loss of between 720 to 960)
Option 3 – High growth (based on PopGroup short term, long term, and long term adjusted)	Population: 1,996 to 5,009 gain (2.9% to 7.2% growth) Housing: 141-226 per annum (Total 2,115 - 3,390) Employment: loss of 16 to a gain of 61 per annum (Total loss of 240 to gain of 915)

Location of Growth

1.44 As well as identifying the overall level of growth needed over the plan period, the Plan must put forward a clear spatial strategy for where this development should take place. As part of the Councils engagement 3 spatial options and two settlement hierarchy options were set out.

Spatial Options

1.45 Three spatial options were identified as follows:

Option 1 Current LDP – Based on a north south divide with the main focus of growth on Ebbw Vale.

- This option has the potential to reinforce and increase the role of Ebbw Vale as the main town (previously referred to as the hub), directing development to the most accessible location where the majority of services are available.

Option 2: Heads of the Valleys – Most growth along the Heads of the Valleys settlements

- This option has the potential to spread the growth along the Heads of the Valleys where there are greater opportunities to accommodate the growth in a fairer manner and placing less pressure on services in Ebbw Vale.

Option 3: Balanced Growth – Growth equally distributed according to sustainability assessment of settlements.

- This option has the potential to spread growth equally across the Borough and sustain local services. Use of the sustainability assessment of settlements will ensure that a greater amount of development will be directed to the most sustainable settlements.

Settlement Hierarchy

1.46 Draft guidance from Welsh Government (Development Plans Manual (Editions 3) paras. 5.15-5.18) requires us to identify a settlement hierarchy and a growth split based on a robust understanding of the role and function of places. Two options were put forward the first is the current LDP hierarchy which was based on an assessment of the role and functions of settlements. Option 2 is based on a sustainable assessment of settlements as set out in Paper on: Sustainable Assessment of Settlements. The identified hierarches are as follows:

Option 1: Current LDP

Principal Hub:	District Hubs	Local Hub
Ebbw Vale	Tredegar Brynmawr Abertillery	Blaina

Option 2: Based on Sustainable Assessment of Settlements (based on LDP boundaries)

Tier 1: Principal Settlements	Tier 2: Secondary Settlements	Tier 3: Village and Hamlets
Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr / Nantyglo/ Biana) Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells/ Brynithel/ Llanhilleth and Aberbeeg/	Cwm	Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits Swfrydd

Spatial Strategy Options

1.47 From these three elements of growth level, spatial distribution and settlement hierarchy three Spatial Strategy Options were created as follows:

Option 1: Growth and Regeneration (Current LDP)

Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
<p>Medium Growth Population: 162 to 846 gain (0.2 to 1% growth) Housing: 79-99 per annum (Total 1,185-1,485) Employment: loss of 48 to 64 per annum (Total loss of between 720 to 960)</p>	<p>North / South split with most of the growth in the north and with a focus of growth in Ebbw Vale</p>	<p>Principal Hub: Ebbw Vale District Hubs: Tredegar Brynmawr Abertillery Local Hub: Blaina</p>

1.48 This option is based on the current LDP taking into account that it aimed to stabilise the population.

Option 2: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
<p>Low Growth Population: loss of between 587 to 1,815 (-0.8% to 2.6% loss) Housing: 19-54 per annum (Total: 285-810) Employment: loss of 106 to 71 per annum (Total loss of – 1,065 to 1,590)</p>	<p>Balanced Growth Equally distributed across the borough</p>	<p>Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits Swfrydd</p>

1.49 This option aimed to create sustainable balanced communities acknowledging that they needed to be well connected to make the option sustainable. The option considered that a low growth level would be required to enable equal distribution of growth given the lack of opportunities in the south of the Borough.

Option 3: Economic Growth Strategy

Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
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<p>High Growth Population: 1,996 to 5,009 gain (2.9% to 7.2% growth) Housing: 141-226 per annum (Total 2,115 - 3,390) Employment: loss of 16 to a gain of 61 per annum (Total loss of 240 to gain of 915)</p>	<p>North / South split based on opportunities for growth along the Heads of the Valleys</p>	<p>Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits Swfrydd</p>
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1.50 This option aimed to deliver economic growth which is one of the main issues raised by stakeholders and is a priority for the Council. It was considered that spreading this growth along the Heads of the Valleys would be more equitable than focussing it all in Ebbw Vale.

1.51 Following engagement with Members of the Council a fourth option was included as follows:

Option 4: Sustainable Economic Growth

Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
<p>High Growth Population: 1,996 to 5,009 (2.9 to 7% growth) Housing: 141 to 226 per annum (Total 2,115 to 3,390) Employment: -16 to 61 per annum (Total -240 to plus 915)</p>	<p>Balanced Growth Equally distributed across the borough</p>	<p>Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Principal Settlements Ebbw Vale Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo/Blaina Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg Tier 2: Secondary Settlements Cwm Tier 3: Hamlets Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits Swfrydd</p>

1.52 Members were supportive of an approach which distributed the growth across the Borough. Whilst they considered high growth should be the aspiration they had concerns as to whether this level of growth could be achieved.

Stakeholder Consultation

1.53 Consideration of the options was undertaken with a range of Stakeholders by way of a number of workshops held in July-August 2019. A summary of the feedback received is published as part of the evidence base.

Consideration of Growth Options

1.54 Stakeholders generally supported the high growth option (71%) with the remainder supporting the mid growth (29%) option. Option 3 had no support. Of those that chose a specific option (35 out of 40) within the higher growth scenario there was a more even split across the three scenarios although the PG Long Term adjusted came out as the most popular (42%) with the other 2 scenarios receiving (29% each).

Consideration of Spatial Distribution

1.55 Stakeholders were also asked to identify a preference for the Spatial Distribution of the Growth. Option 3: Balanced Growth was the favoured option with 63% choosing this option. Almost a third of people chose Option 2: Heads of the Valleys (30%) and only 7% choose Option 1: Current LDP (north south divide with an emphasis of growth on Ebbw Vale).

Consideration of Settlement Hierarchy

1.56 When asked to identify the preferred settlement hierarchy most stakeholders (84%) selected the option 2 based on the Sustainable Assessment of Settlements.

Consideration of the Strategy Options

1.57 Stakeholders were given the opportunity to identify their own preferred option by using the options given or through identifying an alternative. Although the favoured option was Option 4: Sustainable Economic Growth only 30% were in complete agreement with the option. The most common disagreement lay with the level of growth with a significant number favouring medium growth, distributed across the Borough and use of the sustainable settlement hierarchy. To address this issue it is suggested that the Preferred Option is amended to include a housing requirement figure at the lower end of the options. Another general concern was regarding the location of growth with over a third of stakeholders (34%) favouring the Heads of the Valleys. However, given that most of the principal settlements are located in the north of the Borough along the Heads of the Valleys there will be a natural weighting towards the Heads of the Valleys.

1.58 It is therefore proposed that the growth level included in options 4 is reconsidered to create the Preferred Strategy Option.

Consideration of Other Issues

1.59 In identifying a growth level need and demand must to be weighed against supply factors such as delivery and constraints. The main issue for Blaenau Gwent is delivery with both viability and deliverability being problematic. In terms of deliverability past completion rates would support medium growth of between 80 and 99. This is due to a lack of interest from the National Housebuilders due to viability concerns which has resulted in low delivery rates over the past ten years. Viability of sites is marginal with some areas not being able to

support affordable housing contributions or other S106 requirements. However, more recently the National Companies have returned to the area and there is now some optimism about housing delivery particularly in the Ebbw Vale area.

1.60 Supporting this positive stance is the Council's Growth and Investment Strategy which aims to grow the population and support economic growth. Other drivers for change include Heads of the Valleys dualling, investment from the Cardiff Capital Region, Tech Valleys, the Valleys Taskforce and the Metro.

1.61 It is proposed that the high growth level is moderated to a level that is deliverable. It is proposed that the PG Long Term Adjusted scenario is ruled out on the basis that it is highly unlikely to happen given that net migration levels would need to increase from current average losses of 31 per annum (Stats Wales 2011-2016) to increases of 297 per annum. In addition the housing delivery levels are considered to be undeliverable and unsustainable. Such growth would lead to pressure on existing schools and services which development would not be able to provide due to viability issues.

1.62 The PG Long Term scenario whilst desirable is also ruled out on the basis that it will be undeliverable. This would require a housing completion rate of 179 which is well above (86%) the past completion rate achieved over the last 10 years (96).

1.63 Given on the emphasis placed by Welsh Government on a viable and deliverable housing supply it is proposed to use the lowest level of the PG Short Term Scenario (144 homes) as the aspiration for the Plan and set a housing requirement figure slightly below this at 117 homes per annum which is an increase on what has been delivered over the past 10 years. The aspiration figure will be used to set the flexibility figure of the Plan (22%).

1.64 A new scenario has been created based on a dwelling led projection of 120 per annum. The details of which are as follows:

Dwelling led 120 per annum

1.65 This scenario is based on annual dwelling growth applied from 2019 onward, based on 120 pa being applied.

1.66 The scenario projects a population increase of 1,471 (2.0%) with an increase of 1,671 households (5.4%) over the plan period. This estimates an average of 117 dpa over the Plan period (total of 1,755). The figure of 117 dpa is well below the current LDP dwelling requirement of 233, though is higher than the average completions over the last 5 (80) and last 10 years (96).

1.67 Under this scenario there would be population decline in the 0-14 age groups of 87 and a substantial population increase in the 60+ age group of 4,668.

1.68 The number of people in the working age range would decrease by 420 over the plan period. However, if assumptions on the unemployment rate being reduced and the economic activity rate being increased to the Wales average; and commuter ratio rates reduced to 1.20 then there would be 3,150 more people in employment over the Plan period.

1.69 Issues raised by Welsh Government and the Initial Integrated Sustainable Appraisal led to the need to reconsider the distribution of growth. Whilst the principle is to spread the growth across the Borough the growth needs to be directed to the most sustainable settlements. Settlement Hierarchy to ensure that development is directed to the most sustainable settlements. This has involved the creation of more tiers and concentration of development on the most sustainable settlements. It has also led to the division of the Abertillery / Cwmtillery / Six Bells / Brynithel / Llanhilleth / Aberbeeg settlement into two settlements Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six bells) and Aberbeeg / Brynithel / Llanhilleth. This was to address concerns with the sustainability of these smaller settlements.

1.70 The following Option has been identified as the Preferred Option:

Option 5: Sustainable Economic Growth

Growth Level	Spatial Distribution	Settlement Hierarchy
<p>High Growth Population: 1,471-1,996 to (2 to 2.9% growth) Housing: 117-141 per annum (Total 1,755 to 2,115) Employment: loss of 28 to 16 per annum (Total loss of 420 to 240) With UR reducing & EA adjusted + CR Reducing 210 to 225 per annum (Total of 3,150-3,375)</p>	<p>Spread across the Borough based on Sustainable Settlement Assessment</p>	<p>Sustainable Settlement Assessment Tier 1: Primary Settlement Ebbw Vale Tier 2: Main Settlements Tredegar Brynmawr/ Nantyglo / Blaina Abertillery (including Cwmtillery and Six Bells) Tier 3: Secondary Settlements Cwm Aberbeeg/ Brynithel / Llanhilleth Tier 4: Villages Swfrydd Tier 5: Hamlets Trefil Pochin Bedwellty Pits</p>

Policy Assessment

National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes

National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13	SP14	SP15
1.Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact															
Resilient biodiversity and ecosystems													✓		
Distinctive and special landscapes													✓		
Integrated green infrastructure													✓		
Appropriate soundscapes															✓
Reduces environmental risks						✓	✓								✓
Manages water resources naturally															✓
Clean air															✓
Reduces overall pollution															✓
Resilient to climate change			✓										✓		
Distinctive and special historic environments														✓	
2.Facilitating Accessible and healthy environments															
Accessible and high quality green spaces											✓	✓			
Accessible by means of active travel and public transport											✓				
Not car dependent		✓									✓				
Minimises the need to travel											✓				
Provides equality of access											✓				
Feels safe and inclusive		✓													
Supports a diverse	✓							✓	✓		✓				

National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes															
	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13	SP14	SP15
population															
Good connections											✓				
Convenient access to goods and services	✓									✓	✓				
Promotes physical and mental health and well-being												✓			
3.Making the Best use of Resources															
Makes best use of natural resources						✓	✓								
Prevents waste		✓				✓	✓								
Prioritises the use of previously developed land and existing buildings			✓					✓						✓	
Unlocks potential and regenerates	✓							✓							
High quality and built to last		✓													
4.Growing our Economy in a Sustainable Manner															
Fosters economic activity	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
Enables easy communication												✓			
Generates its own renewable energy			✓												
Vibrant and dynamic				✓											
Adaptive to change		✓		✓											
Embraces smart and innovative technology				✓											
5.Creating and Sustaining Communities															
Enables the Welsh language to thrive												✓			
Appropriate development densities			✓												
Homes and jobs to meet society's	✓							✓	✓						

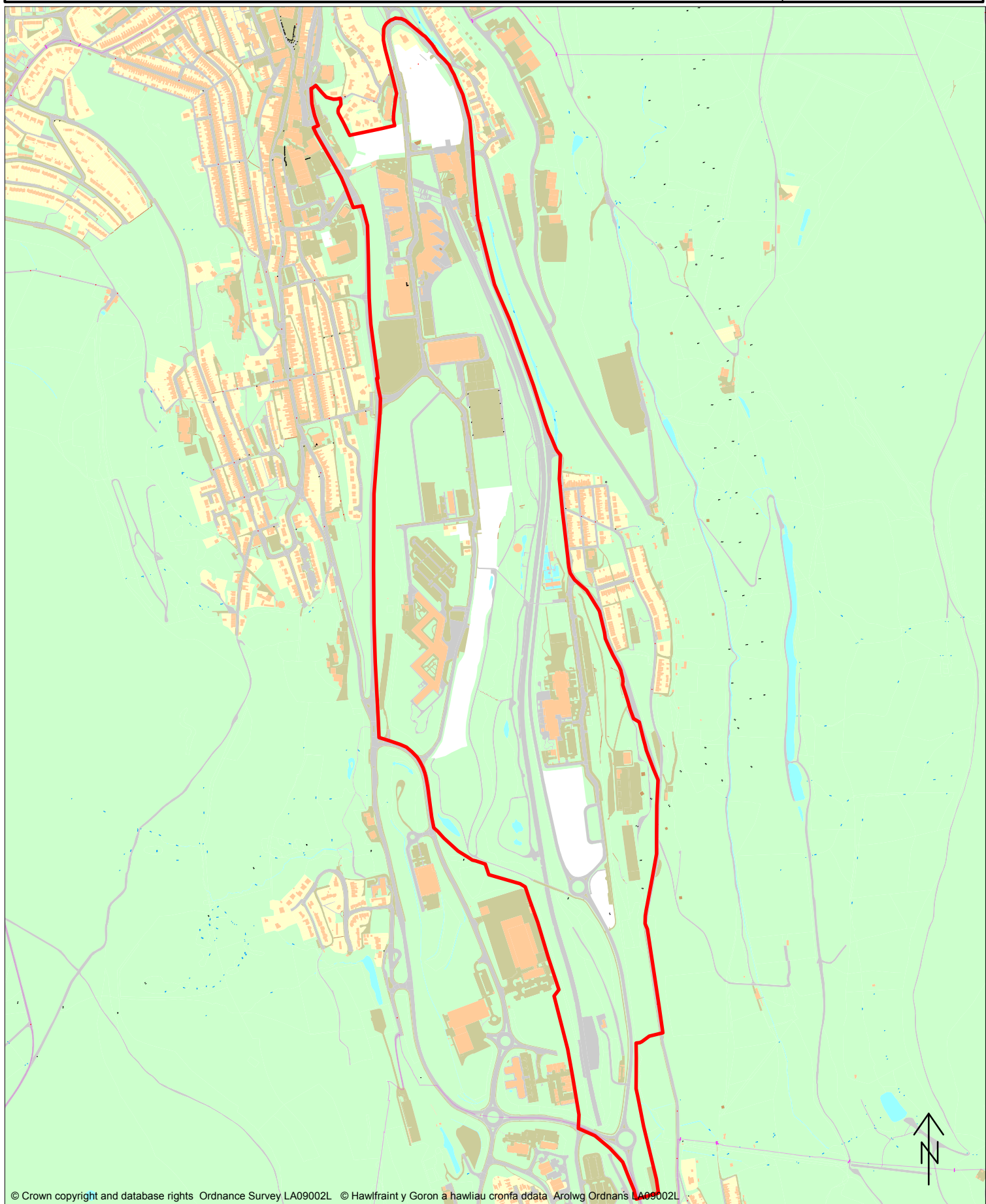
National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13	SP14	SP15
needs															
A mix of uses	✓														
Offers cultural experiences					✓								✓	✓	
Community based facilities and services										✓		✓			

Scale :
1:10600

Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan

Strategic Sites

The Works



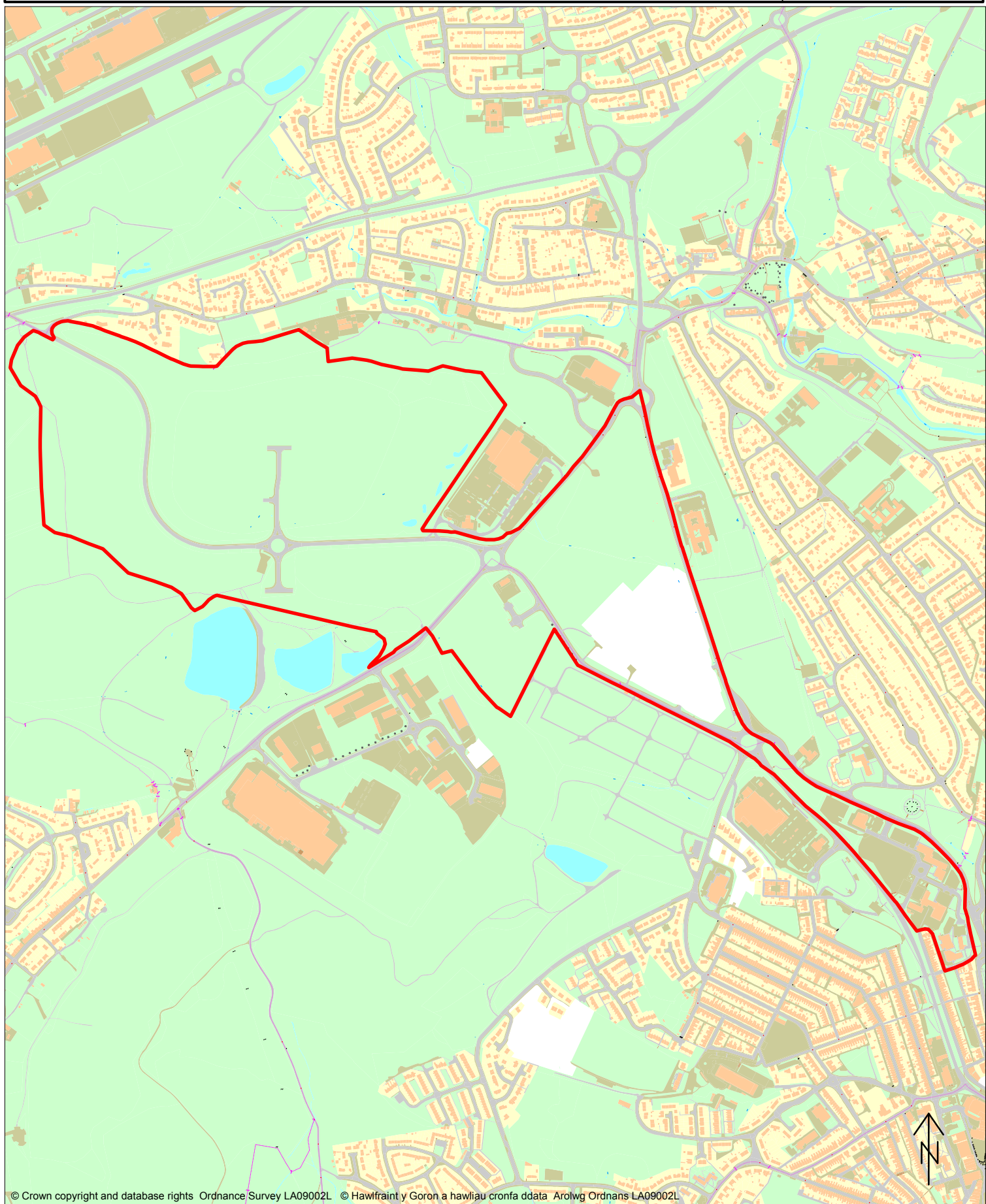
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Scale :
1:10500

Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan

Strategic Sites

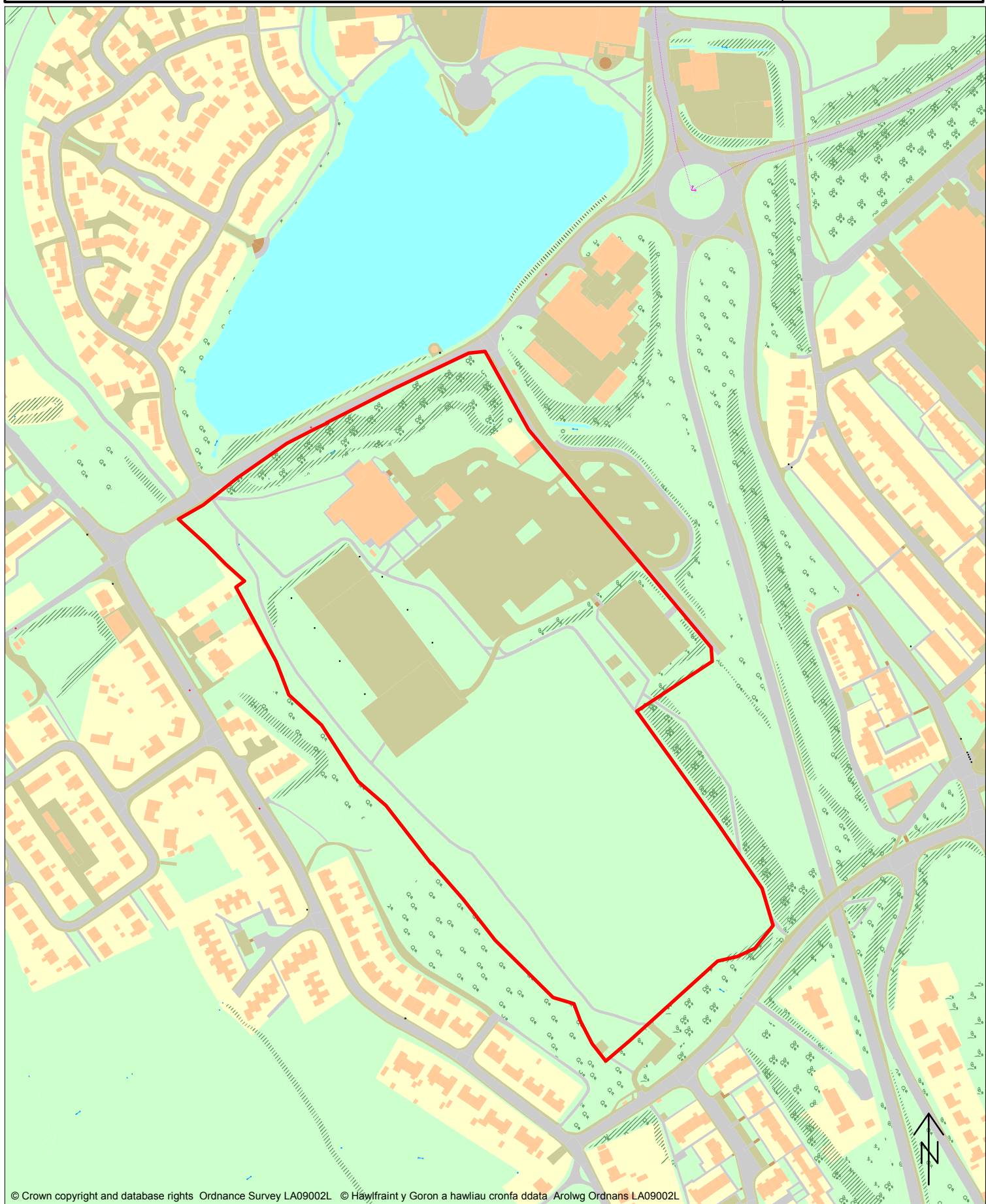
Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor



Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan

Strategic Sites

Former Nantyglo Comprehensive School



Housing Supply Breakdown of Completions, Commitments, small and large windfall sites

Strategy Area	Settlement	Completions	Commitments	Windfall Large (10+)	Windfall Small (under 10)	Strategic Mixed Use Allocations	Non-Strategic Mixed use Allocations	TOTAL
Ebbw Fach	Tier 1: Ebbw Vale	28	425	83	141	675 (320*)	0	952 (+45)
Sirhowy Valley	Tier 2:Tredegar	31	55	53	67	0	217	423
Upper Ebbw Fawr	Tier 2:Brynmaur / Nantyglo/ Blaina	14	97	53	67	220	0	423 (+28)
Lower Ebbw Fach	Tier 2: Abertillery (incl Cwmtillery and Six Bells)	2	0	26	34	0	149	211
	Tier 3: Cwm and Aberbeeg / Brynithel / Llanhilleth Tier 4: Swfrydd Tier 5: Trefil, Pochin, and Bedwellty Pits	0	28	51	27	0	0	106
TOTAL		75	605	266	336	540	366	2,115 (+73)

**denotes the number that is expected to be delivered in the plan period*

Further information on completions, commitments and large and small windfall sites can be found in the Housing Supply supporting document

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing	Housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers. Affordable housing may be broken down into two categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Rented Housing – consists of the stock provided by Councils and registered social landlords where rent levels have regard to the Welsh Government’s guideline rents and benchmark rents • Intermediate Housing – covers housing provision where prices or rents are above those of social rented housing but below market housing prices or rents. This can include shared equity schemes. Intermediate housing differs from low cost market housing, which the Welsh Government does not consider to be affordable for the purpose of the land use planning system.
Biodiversity	The richness and variety of living things (plants, birds, animals, fish and insects etc.) that exist in a given area, and the habitats which support them.
Brownfield Land	See Previously Developed Land
Candidate Site	Land submitted to the Council, as part of a formal process, for consideration as a potential site that might contribute to future development needs of the County Borough.
Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)	The CIS identifies how the LPA intends to involve consultation bodies and the public in the preparation of the LDP. The CIS is submitted to the Welsh Government as part of the Delivery Agreement for its agreement.
Deposit	The term referring to the process of publishing the detailed LDP policies and proposals for public consultation. Placing the plan “on deposit”.
Deposit LDP	The draft of the Local Development Plan which is submitted to the Welsh Government for public Examination
Development Plan	A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area.
District Centres	
Ecosystem Services	The multitude of resources and processes that are provided by natural ecosystems and utilised by humans. They include food and water provision, flood control, recreation and cultural benefits.
Equality Impact Assessment	The process of appraising the Plan to ensure its implementation will not discriminate against people who are categorised as being disadvantaged or vulnerable within society.
European Sites	These consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). All European sites are designated under European laws.

Green infrastructure	The network of multi-functional green space, encompassing both land and water (blue space). Areas included may be both new and existing, both rural and urban, which support the natural and ecological processes and deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Greenfield sites	Land which has never been built on, typically grassland, farmland or heath.
Habitat Regulation Assessment	This assessment is a tool developed by the European Commission to help competent authorities (as defined in the Habitats Regulations) to carry out assessment to ensure that a project, plan or policy will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site see definition above).
Local Development Plan (LDP)	The required statutory development plan for each local planning authority area in Wales under Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
LDP Adoption	Final stage of LDP preparation process where the LDP becomes the Statutory Development Plan for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
LDP Objectives	A set of overarching intentions that elaborate on the vision and that focus on the delivery of the Plan
LDP Delivery Agreement	A document comprising the Council's timetable for the preparation of the LDP, submitted to the Welsh Government for agreement.
Natural Resources	Materials that occur naturally that are useful to man. Includes minerals, timber, land, stone, ecosystems, etc.
Plan Period	The period of time a plan covers. The Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) covers the period up to 2033.
Preferred Strategy	A stage in the development plan document preparation process where the options for addressing key issues and meeting development requirements are identified and assessed and a chosen strategy to underpin the Plan is put forward.
Previously Developed Land	Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage of the development is included, as are defence buildings, and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development management procedures.
Public Consultation	A formal process in which individuals and organisations are invited to make representations on the RLDP.
Renewable Energy	Also known as 'Sustainable Energy' is the term used to cover those sources of energy, other than fossil fuel or nuclear fuel, which are continuously and sustainably available in our environment. This includes wind, water, solar, geothermal energy, and plant material often referred to as 'biomass'.
Scheduled Ancient Monument	Archaeological remains of national importance which have been given special status by the Welsh Government because they meet certain criteria.

Settlement Boundary	A settlement boundary is a planning tool which involves a theoretical line drawn on a map to identify the boundary to a settlement. Typically housing development is only permitted within this boundary and areas outside it are considered to be countryside.
Settlement Hierarchy	Settlements are classified within the hierarchy according to the population and level of services within the settlement. Some very small settlements with very limited or no services will fall outside the hierarchy and are defined as countryside.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features(basically, plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structure).
Spatial Options	The range of alternative broad geographical distributions of development required to accommodate the projected level of growth over the RLDP period.
Spatial Strategy	The broad geographical distribution of development to accommodate the projected level of growth over the LDP period.
Special Area of Conservation	A site designation specified in the Habitats Directive. Each site is designated for one or more of the habitats and species listed in the Directive. The Directive requires a management plan to be prepared and implemented for each SAC to ensure the favourable conservation status of the habitats or species for which it was designated. In combination with special protection areas (SPA), these sites contribute to the Natura 2000 network.
Special Landscape Area	A Local landscape designation that identifies areas of landscape importance within the County where special landscape policies will apply.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The SEA Regulations require a formal "environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use". (see also sustainability appraisal)
Strategic Policy	Overarching policies that set the tone of the LDP and provide guiding principles that underpin the formation of detailed policies and future decision making.
Strategic Mixed Use Site	Sites that can accommodate 100 or more houses and that include a mix of uses
Supplementary Planning Guidance	Supporting policy and guidance that may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific and that serve to provide further detail of policies and proposals in a development plan.
Sustainability Appraisal	A tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. economic, environmental and social factors). Each LPA is required by S62(6) of the 2004 Act to undertake a sustainability appraisal of its LDP. This form of sustainability appraisal fully incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive & Regulations.

**Sustainable
Development**

Enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities, achieving a better quality of life for our own generations in ways which:

- promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and
- enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits - using only our fair share of the earth's resources and sustaining our cultural legacy. Sustainable development is the process by which we reach the goal of sustainability.