

SD21

Local Development Plan

Vision & Strategy Options
Workshop

30th November 2007

Draft Report of Consultation

March 2008

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Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 2: Growth and Regeneration	Population increase House build rate of 200	Heads of Valleys emphasis	Heads of Valleys emphasis - broadening offer	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles

Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 3: Balanced and inter-connected communities	Population stability House build rate of 157	Borough wide (equalising growth – new allocations in Ebbw Fach Valley)	Borough wide (equalising growth de-allocating sites in north)	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles

The findings from the workshop will be used by the Council to develop the draft Vision and draft Preferred Strategy for the LDP, which will be formally consulted on in the autumn 2008.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2006, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council made the decision to cease work on the Unitary Development Plan and start work on the Local Development Plan. The timetable for the various statutory stages of production of the Local Development Plan is set out in the Delivery Agreement (May 2007).
- 1.2 The first step in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan was to draft and formally consult on the Issues Paper. The Issues Paper was prepared as a discussion document intended to promote debate on the issues of strategic significance for the authority. Alongside this, an Issues and Vision Workshop was held on the 27th July 2007, at the ViTCC, Tredegar. A full record of the workshop is set out in the Issues and Vision Workshop Report of Consultation (August 2007) which is available from the Planning Policy Team or from the planning policy pages of the council's website www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.
- 1.3 Building on the opinions and views expressed at the Issues and Vision Workshop, a second set of workshops was held to discuss the Vision and the Strategic Options for the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan. This workshop was repeated on three dates, 19th October 2007 at the ViTCC, Tredegar and the 22nd and 30th November at the Learning Action Centre, Ebbw Vale.

Purpose of the report

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to record and analyse the information gathered at the 30th November 2007 Vision and Strategy Options Workshop and to provide the Council with a clear indication of the views and wishes of those attending the workshop.

2.0 The Workshop

- 2.1 The purpose of the workshop was to:
- Share information on the Local Development Plan Vision and Strategy Options;
 - Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to share views on the Vision;
 - Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the Council's preferred strategy and;
 - Address any queries and questions.
- 2.2 Invitations were sent to a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including various local interest groups and organisations from Blaenau Gwent and neighbouring authorities, of which 36 attended. Appendix A provides a list of stakeholders who invitations were sent to. In addition to Appendix A Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) sent 30 invitations to other voluntary organisations from Blaenau Gwent. A list of all attendees is provided in Appendix B.

- 2.3 As an introduction to the workshop, Lynda Healy (Development Plans Manager) provided an update on progress of the Local Development Plan (LDP). This was followed by a presentation by Hayley Spender, Planning Policy Officer, who explained the process of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Local Development Plan. Lynda Healy gave a further presentation outlining the purpose of the workshop. Appendix C displays the slides used in the presentations. It should

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; ~~through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby~~ creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; ~~through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. with services accessible to all based on a diverse and historical environment. Promoting its Its~~ unique environment, cultural and historic identity ~~will be protected~~, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Green Group

3.15 The green group agreed that the Vision was a succinct statement of intent and a point of reference for all parts of the plan. Some participants believed that the vision could be applicable to other local authorities in south Wales as it was recognised that other local authorities experience similar problems. Overall they considered it to be as distinctive to the area as possible, as the vision took into account the main issues associated with the area. (These requirements were set out in LDP training from the Welsh Assembly Government).

3.16 The facilitator then outlined the second task, which was to allow the attendees to suggest improvements to the draft Vision.

3.17 The green group suggested the following improvements:

- Blaenau Gwent will 'be' not 'become' a network of sustainable healthy vibrant valley communities.
- Health is an important issue and should be incorporated in the vision

4.2 Option 1: Regeneration (continuation of UDP strategy)

This option maintains the current strategy contained within the Blaenau Gwent adopted Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011), with the following features:

- Population decline from 2006 level
- No new housing allocations – urban containment
- Continue with existing employment allocations and strategy
- Main towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery focus of shopping, commercial, cultural, social and leisure activity
- Main expansion of services will be in Ebbw Vale

Red Group

Advantages

The red group considered that the option may encourage the development of previously developed land, protecting the rest of Blaenau Gwent, including important areas of Greenfield land, against major development, resulting in less environmental impacts.

It was also considered that this approach would sustain existing communities, where all town centres would have equal status and that change wouldn't have to be managed.

Disadvantages

Participants pointed out that population loss would continue and could promote further decline in all the town centres.

It was also considered that this was a negative approach for Blaenau Gwent, as it doesn't fit in with what is happening at a national, regional and local level particularly in terms of the health service plans.

It was also considered that there would be a population imbalance as this approach would result in an ageing population, which would put more pressure on services and there would be a decline in the working population, which would mean that there would be less people working. The population imbalance would also have an impact on schools as it was considered that there would be a declining school roll.

As this option focussed on urban containment, it was recognised that there could be a loss of accessible green space in the defined urban area due to pressure to build on the green space land.

One of the other features of this option was that the existing employment allocations of the UDP would remain the same. It was considered that the employment allocations in the UDP do not effectively address the needs of today especially in terms of the declining manufacturing sector and the shift towards the service sector economy.

It was also considered that there would be increased pressure on transport.

Yellow Group

Advantages

The yellow group considered that the option may encourage the development of previously developed land, protecting the rest of Blaenau Gwent, including important areas of Greenfield land, against major development, resulting in less environmental impacts.

It was also considered that this approach would sustain existing communities, where all town centres would have equal status and that change wouldn't have to be managed.

The group also pointed out that there would be less pressure on services due to the population loss associated with this strategy.

Disadvantages

Respondents considered that this option would produce an ageing housing stock and it was felt that this would discourage people from moving into the area, especially with no new housing allocations.

Participants pointed out that population loss would continue and correspondingly less money would be received from the Welsh Assembly Government.

It was also considered that there would be a population imbalance as this approach would result in an ageing population, which would put more pressure on services and there would be a decline in the working population, which would mean that there would be less people working.

Another key issue was that there would be further decline in the area if this option were followed. For instance, there would be a lack of inward investment.

Green Group

Advantages

The only advantage identified was that there would be a decline in the area if this option were followed. For instance, there would be a lack of inward investment.

Disadvantages

A key issue raised was that there would be further decline in the area if this option were followed. For instance, there would be a lack of inward investment.

Some stakeholders highlighted that this option is not market-led and it results in an over-allocation of land-uses and the allocation is also inefficient in that some sites are not deliverable.

Participants pointed out that the population loss would continue and correspondingly less money would be received from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Others indicated that this option would not ensure enough houses are built to meet the demand identified in the Hou ,4N 0b64NnbIAN r9b'N bI494NN ,4N 0L4NhbIAN 9Nl bxleng343'40N bT j 0TE0 [N%6b4NoblANSIAN ,4N 0b64NnbIAN r9b30b64N Ns69b9N

As town centres would be given specific roles there would be an increased opportunity to incorporate tourism etc into broadening the role of the town centres and this option would arrest their decline.

Disadvantages

Challenge in enforcing the new brand/ role on the town centres.

In addition, it was also identified that this option could result in possible alienation for the South of the borough, with the growth being focussed on the Heads of the Valleys region. It was recognised that an action plan for the regeneration of the South be devised.

As part of this Strategy Option, Blaina town centre will become a local shopping centre. The group expressed concern that reducing the status of Blaina to a local shopping centre could result in further decline and the Blaina and Nantyglo communities will be unable to access goods and services.

There were also concerns that to accommodate the level of growth contained in this option there would be pressure on developing greenfield sites, resulting in environmental impacts.

Green Group

Advantages

It was considered that this option was market-led and focused on deliverability but that it was important that the infrastructure needed to be improved to link the south to the north.

4.4 Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

This option is trend based characterised by the following:

- Stems out-migration and stabilises population at 2006 levels.
- The emphasis is to spread growth according to the share of population, which would mean de-allocating some employment sites in the north and relocating them borough wide.
- The house build rate would be 157 per annum.
- No retail hierarchy but the number of town centres in the borough would be reduced from five to four (Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar) by excluding Blaina.
- New roles for the town centres, for example, one town may specialise in tourism.

Red Group

Advantages

The group considered that the house build rates proposed in this option were more realistic.

Stakeholders recognised that if new employment sites were located in close proximity to the town centres, it would be more sustainable.

Disadvantages

This option was criticised for being too planned and not in line with market forces and was considered an unrealistic strategy

Stakeholders recognised that if new employment sites were located in close proximity to the town centres, it would be more sustainable.

The group considered that the house build rates proposed in this option were more realistic, than those proposed in option 2. The group viewed this strategy option as the middle ground out of the 3 strategy options.



Disadvantages

Some felt that there would be unrealistic employment goals in that businesses would continue to be attracted to locations with existing transport infrastructures such as in the north, around the heads of the valleys, instead of locating elsewhere in the borough – this approach was considered to be not market led.

It was also considered that deallocating employment sites in the North of the Borough would offer limited options to the location of new businesses, and thus new businesses could be lost to other authorities with greater options.

As the level of growth is not considerable in this option, the group identified that there would not be as much opportunity for affordable housing as in Option 2.

Green Group

Advantages

Stakeholders believed that this option would be less divisive than option 2 as growth would be better spread and that it may stimulate more investment in the transport structure in the south.

It was felt that this option was flexible in that all communities would benefit, as there would be investment in town centres with employment and services located near town centres.

Disadvantages

Attendees pointed out that this option depends on a transport infrastructure which does not exist (in the south) and that development in the south could

have a potentially detrimental environmental impact because the shortage of land could result in the development of greenfield sites.

Others felt that this was a tentative option, especially in contrast to the bolder approach of Option 2 and indicated that it failed to meet the housebuilding need identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.

Conclusion

Although the participants considered this a better alternative to the existing UDP strategy, they still favoured option 2.

5.0 The Alternative Option

5.1 The aim of this workshop was to give stakeholders the opportunity to propose an alternative option to the 3 options already identified.

Red Group

The table below summarises the alternative option that was devised by the red group:

Option Name	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Issues
	Population increase Slightly lower growth level than option 2 but more than option 3	As option 2	Employment – flexibility towards locating employment sites around the town centres Integrated public transport system Education and community facilities



5.2 One of the disadvantages identified when assessing the options in workshop 2 was that the level of growth was too ambitious, therefore the group proposed that the growth level should be lower than that proposed in option 2, but higher than the growth level proposed in option 3.

5.10 Although the red group emphasised the need for a high level of growth, the group also pointed out that there is a need to protect, enhance and utilise biodiversity and the environment.

Green Group

5.11 Participants considered Option 2 as generally being acceptable, although some did suggest a higher growth level than option 2, with growth being back loaded until 2016. An alternative spatial spread was proposed in that the focal point of growth could be along the new railway network.

6.0 What Next?

6.1 The Workshop was useful to improve the draft Vision and for discussing the

Appendix A – Invitations sent to stakeholders

Name	Organisation/Section
Elaine Townsend	
G Bartlett	Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
Ernie Pitt	Base Handling Products
Dennis Owens	BGCBC
Alan Reed	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alison Hoskins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alun Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alwyn Hughes	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Name	Organisation/Section
	United Welsh
Greg Paulsen	Co-ordinator for Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Gwyn Smith	Sustrans
Hayley Selway	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Heidi Carter	Secretary of the Youth Forum
Helen Madden	Co-ordinator for Blaina Partnership
Helena Hunt	Community Safety
Huw Lewis	GAVO
Huw Lewis	Vice Chair, Rassau & Garnlydan Communities First
J Morgan	Tredegar Town Council
J P Williams	Rhymney Community Council
James Eades	Linc Cymru
Jane McNeil	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Janice Tse	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Jayne Nicholas	Chair Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy Partnership
Jeff Harris	ARPP
Jeremy Gass	University of the Valleys
Jessica Daley	Chair of the Youth Forum
Jessica Osbourne	Co-ordinator for Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy Partnership
Jim Allen	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
John Davies	Ebbw Vale & District Development Trust
John Howells	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
John Millard	Melin Housing Association
John Morgan	Vice Chair, Communities First Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy
John Wedlock	Vice Chair, Ebbw Vale North & South Communities First
Julian Bosley	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Karin Lamb	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Kate Terrell	Chair St Illtyds Partnership
Kayna Tregay	Environment Agency
Keith Dykes	Chair Abertillery Partnership
Keith Rogers	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Kelsey Watkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Keren Bender	Chair Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Kerry Diamond	Continental Teves
Leanne Connor	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Louise Horner	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Lyn Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Lyn Harber	Vice Chair, Six Bells Communities First
Lyn Maloney	Vice Chair, St Illtyds Communities First
Lynn Phillips	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
M Phillips	Ebbw Vale Trades Council
Mair Sheen	Co-ordinator for Six Bells Partnership
Margaret Retallick	Tredegar Town Council
Mark Hopkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Mark Price	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Michelle Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Appendix B – Workshop Attendees

Name	Organisation
Jessica Osbourne	Co-ordinator for Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy Partnership
Tracy Nettleton	Brecon Beacons National Park
Alan Reed	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Alison Hoskins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Bethan Cartwright	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Eirlys Hallet	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Julian Bosley	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Karin Lamb	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Kelsey Watkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Lynn Phillips	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Tony Chivers	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Richard Jones	Countryside Council for Wales
Dr Jayne Layzell	Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board
Brian Kember	Tredegar Development Trust
Mike Johnson	The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Newport & Valleys)
Rob Murray	Torfaen County Borough Council
John Millard	Melin Housing Association
Vic Parkin	Chair of Nantyglo Partnership
Sharon Hill	Co-ordinator for Nantyglo Partnership
Darren Lewis	Co-ordinator for Rassau & Garnlydan Partnership
Rob James	Co-ordinator for Ebbw Vale N & S Partnership
Helen Madden	Co-ordinator for Blaina Partnership
Deborah Beeson	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Edward Robinson	Blaina Senior Citizens
Councillor David Britton	Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council
Trevor Neatherway	Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board
Andrew Parker	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Neil Maylan	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
Councillor John Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Reg Arnold	BGBC Compact
John Davies	Ebbw Vale and District Development Trust
Richard Price	Home Builders Federation
Hayley Spender	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer)
Brian Swain	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer and Facilitator)
Lynda Healy	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Development Plans Manager)
Jane McNeil	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Facilitator)
Huw Lewis	GAVO (Facilitator)

Appendix C – Presentation



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Environment




Where we are at in the SA/SEA process?

Atkins Consultants have been commissioned to carry out the SA/SEA work

Stage A: Setting Context and Scope

Output of Stage A = Scoping Report

SA/SEA



Environment

Draft Scoping Report

Establishes scope and method for undertaking Sustainability Appraisal of LDP

- Reviews relevant plans, policies and programmes
- Identifies baseline information
- Identifies key sustainability issues for Blaenau Gwent
- Establish the Sustainability Framework of the LDP

The draft Scoping Report is currently out for a 5 week public consultation exercise.



SA/SEA




Environment

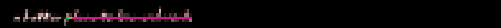
Sustainability Appraisal Framework

The Sustainability Framework identifies:

- 18 Key Issues
- 25 SA Objectives
- Identifies Indicators and Target



SA/SEA



The Essentials of making a Plan

What have we got?	(Issues)
Where do we want to get to?	(Vision)
How do we get there?	(Strategy)

Using the matters over which the plan has influence

With a Process that :

- Is understandable
- Engages stakeholders and the community

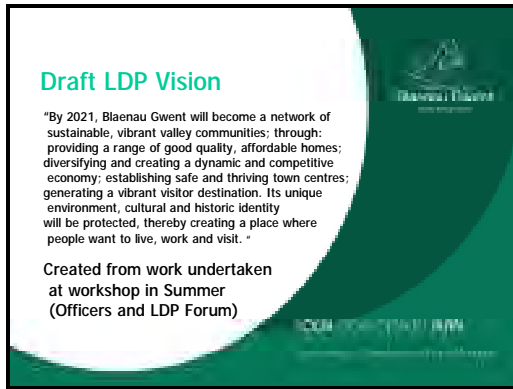
Why are we here this morning?

Build Consensus on:

- Where we want to go?
- Vision Workshop
- Establish best way to get there?
- Options workshops

Questions

Workshop 1: Vision



Draft LDP Vision

"By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities; through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit. "

Created from work undertaken at workshop in Summer (Officers and LDP Forum)



Workshop 1: Vision

Task 1
Judge if draft vision provided meets the requirements for a vision

Task 2
Suggest minor improvements to draft vision



Retail

Do we need a retail hierarchy?
 Option 1 (UDP) – no (all 5 equal)
 Option 2 (Growth) – yes
 Option 3 (Balanced) – no

Should we have 5 town centres?
 Option 1 (UDP) – yes (includes Blaia)
 Option 2 (Growth) – no
 Option 3 (Balanced) – no

Should we look for new roles?
 Option 1 UDP – no (broaden)
 Option 2 Growth – yes
 Option 3 Balanced – yes



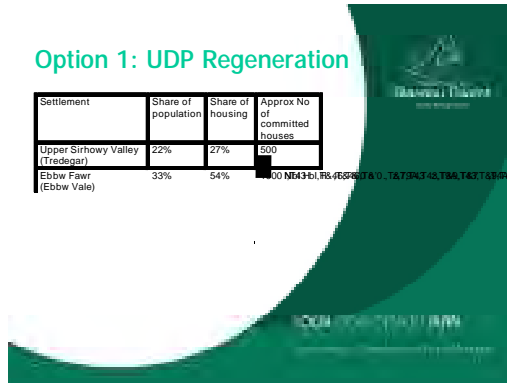

Strategic Options

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 1: UDP	Population loss House build rate of 117	Borough wide (though more in Sifhowy and Ebbw Fair Valleys)	Borough wide	5 centres No hierarchy Broad role
Option 2: Growth and Regeneration	Population increase House build rate of 200	Heads of Valleys emphasis	Heads of Valleys emphasis - broadening offer	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles
Option 3: Balanced and inter-connected communities	Population stability House build rate of 157	Borough wide (equalising growth - new allocations in Ebbw Fach Valley)	Borough wide (equalising growth - new allocations in north)	4 centres No Hierarchy Specific roles



Option 1: UDP Regeneration

Settlement	Share of population	Share of housing	Approx No of committed houses
Upper Sirhowy Valley (Tredregan)	22%	27%	500
Ebbw Fair (Ebbw Vale)	33%	54%	1000



Alternative Option

Task
To identify an alternative Option

Variables
Growth
Location
Issues (Employment, Retail)

Blaenau Gwent Council
2008-2011 Local Development Plan

What Happens Next?

Prepare a Report of the Workshops
Consider the findings of both workshops to help us identify the preferred strategy - inside 20M...884m... deed

Blaenau Gwent Council
2008-2011 Local Development Plan

Appendix D – Workshop Agenda

9.45 – 10.00	Registration with Tea and Coffee
10.00 – 10.05	Welcome and Introduction Gareth Jones – Chief Regeneration Officer
10.05 – 10.15	Presentation – LDP Update Lynda Healy – Development Plans Manager
10.15 – 10.25	Presentation - LDP Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Hayley Spender – Planning Policy Officer
10.25 – 10.35	Presentation – LDP Process Lynda Healy – Development Plans Manager
10.35 – 10.45	Questions and Answers
10.45 – 10.50	Presentation - Introduction to Workshop 1- Vision Lynda Healy– Development Plans Manager
10.50 – 11.05	Workshop 1 – Vision
11.05 – 11.20	Break – Tea and Coffee
11.20 – 11.35	Presentation – Introduction to Workshop 2 – LDP Strategy Options Lynda Healy– Development Plans Manager
11.35 – 12.35	Workshop 2 – LDP Strategy Options (including short presentations to introduce each option) Stakeholders to discuss the following options (20 minutes per option) Option 1: Regeneration (continuation of UDP Strategy) Option 2: Growth and Regeneration Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities
12.35 – 12.55	Workshop 3 - Alternative Option?

Appendix E – Workshop Groups

Yellow Group

Name	Organisation
John Millard	Melin Housing Association
Deb Beeson	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Andrew Parker	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Julian Bosley	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Tracy Nettleton	Brecon Beacons National Park
Brian Kember	Tredegar Development Trust
Councillor John Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Huw Lewis	GAVO (Facilitator)
Bethan Cartwright	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Darren Lewis	Co-ordinator for Rassau & Garnlydan Partnership
Rob James	Co-ordinator for Ebbw Vale N & S Partnership
Kelsey Watkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC

Red Group

Name	Organisation

