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







## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Consultation Report illustrates:

- Conformity with the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS);
- Who and how people were engaged during the Local Development Plan process and consultation;
- The main issues raised through consultation; and;
- How responses have affected the policies and proposals in the Deposit Plan.

1.2 Throughout this report, reference is made to other reports and documents which have collectively helped shape the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP). These are not included in any appendices to this report as they are too lengthy, but copies are provided on the council website or by request by contacting the Planning Policy Team on 01495 354740/ 355538/ 355544 or [planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

## 2.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCHEME

2.1 The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Delivery Agreement (DA) was formally agreed by the Council and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in its Local(WAG) in)T33

**Table 1: Community Involvement Scheme - Pre- Deposit Plan Community Involvement Actions**

Purpose	Involvement	Consultation Mechanism
<b>Pre-Deposit Participation</b>		

To seek dialogue and consensus on:

- Issues Paper (Consultation Document)
- Issues and Vision (workshop)
- Vision and Strategy (workshop)
- SA/SEA Scoping Report (Consultation Document)
- Candidate Sites (Invitation for Expressions of Interest)

## 3.0 WHO WAS ENGAGED AND HOW?

- 3.1 All consultation organisations listed in Appendix 1 have been kept informed throughout the various stages of the Plan preparation process. Appendix 2, 3 and 4 lists each individual, organisation or representative that was invited to attend the different stages of the LDP process.
- 3.2 The Council has an LDP Consultation Database which contains a continually updated list of stakeholders, respondents and interested parties ranging from national umbrella organisations to local members of the public. Throughout the process all consultees on the database have been kept informed of the Plan preparation process.
- 3.3 There are approximately 500 consultees on the database, including 52 members of the public not associated with any stakeholder group or organisation. The methods used to raise awareness at both pre-deposit participation and consultation stages are identified above in Table 1 and are explained further in sections 3 and 4 below.
- 3.4 Table 2 below shows a general overview of the number of representations received

- Environment
- Leisure
- Tourism

**Table 2: General Overview of the Number of People Consulted With and of Representations Received at each Stage of LDP Preparation**

- 3.8 The document was subsequently made available to other interested parties and members of the public via the Council's website. The Issues Paper Report of Consultation (September 2007) summarised the responses received, this information was then taken into account in the preparation of the options, and in determining the detail of the preferred strategy and Deposit Plan.

**Issues and Vision Workshop**

- 3.9 A workshop session was held during July 2007, to discuss the issues, that is the problems the area faces, and to identify a vision of what Blaenau Gwent should look like in 2021. The responses to the Issues paper questionnaire as well as the

were asked to write a Vision of what Blaenau Gwent should be like in 2021.

## Vision and Strategy Options Workshops

- 3.12 The Vision and Strategy Options workshops were held on three separate occasions with the following attendees (see appendix 4):
- Key Internal Officers
  - Statutory Consultees
  - Other Consultees
  - LDP Forum
  - Local Councillors
  - Community Groups
- 3.13 The first aim of the workshop was to agree a vision of what Blaenau Gwent should look like in 2021. The second aim was to agree the best way to achieve this
- 3.14 The first task provided the opportunity to amend the draft vision. Each group were then asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three strategy options which had been prepared by Planning Policy. They were also given the opportunity to identify a further option. From the advantages and disadvantages identified the Council were able to identify the Preferred Option.
- 3.15 Two separate reports entitled; Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Visioning Report (March 2008) and Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan Preferred Options Report (March 2008) along with a record of each workshop, is available on the Blaenau Gwent website at [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

**Table 3: Times and Dates of the Meetings and Area Workshops held as part of the Pre- Deposit Participation (Vision, Key Issues and Strategy Options Stage)**

Event	Time and Date
<b>Workshop: Issues and Visioning</b>	
Internal County Borough Council and External Stakeholder Panel	9: 30am – 12:15 pm 27 July 2007
<b>Workshops: Vision and Strategy Options</b>	
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Councillors	9:45am – 12:55pm 19 October 2007
Internal County Borough Council and External Stakeholder Panel	12:15am – 16:00pm 22 November 2007
Internal County Borough Council and External Stakeholder Panel	9:45am - 13.00pm 30 November 2007

## b) Pre Deposit Consultation (Regulation 15 and 16) the Preferred Strategy

- 3.16 The principal aim of this stage was to formally consult on the 'Preferred Strategy',



which set out:

- The vision, key objectives and overriding principles for development;
- The preferred housing and employment development options;
- Areas of development and areas of protection;
- The strategic policies;
- The key diagrams, showing the areas in the County Borough that will be affected; and
- The monitoring system.

### **Consultation**

- 3.17 There are over 500 contacts on the Blaenau Gwent consultation database that have received information during the LDP process. A further 2,000 Blaenau Gwent local authority employees also received e-mail notification of consultation on the LDP.
- 3.18 The statutory 6-week consultation period was undertaken between Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November and Friday 19<sup>th</sup>

- 3.21 Notification letters, a Draft Preferred Strategy Summary Leaflet and a Comment Form were sent to Other Consultees on the consultation list (see Appendix 1).
- 3.22 Copies of the Preferred Strategy were also sent to 57 Officers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council via email and a hard copy of the Draft Preferred Strategy

**Table 4: Pre Deposit Consultation Exhibition Times and Dates Carried Out as part of the Pre Deposit Consultation**

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**Table 5: Poster Delivery Information for Exhibition Dates and Venues**

Exhibition Date and Venue	No. of Posters Displayed in Ward
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> November - Brynmawr Library	19
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> November - Venue 1 (Kidz R Us), Park Place, Georgetown	18
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> November - Swffryd Community Centre	12
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> November - Tesco, Abertillery	10
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> November - Tesco, Ebbw Vale	20
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> November - Cwm Info Shop <sup>147dayary</sup>	10
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> November - Abertillery Leisure Centre	16
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> November - Llanhilleth Institute	7
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> November - Parc Bryn Bach	17
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> November - Blaina Integrated Children's Centre	14
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> November - Rassau Community Centre	14
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> November - Six Bells Community Centre	14
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> November - Ebbw Vale Library	15 Library

week period between 9 November 2007 and 14 December 2007.

3.32 The stakeholders engaged during this stage were:

- Statutory Consultees
- Adjoining Local Authorities
- Environmental Organisations
- Town and Community Councils
- Other Interested Parties (e.g. NHS Trust, Voice of Industry, Local Chambers of Commerce)
- LDP Forum – a representative group comprising private and public sector housing; voluntary groups; Local Health Board; Private Sector Enterprises; Private Sector Companies; and Education.

3.33 A workshop was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009 with the SA/SEA working group to discuss/agree the changes to the SA/SEA report as a result of consultation.

3.34 Subsequently an Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report was produced and was issued for consultation alongside the LDP Preferred Strategy from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008 to 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The stakeholders engaged during this stage are listed in Appendix 1. A copy of this report was made available to the public and is available on the council website.

## 4.0 KEY FINDINGS OF EACH STAGE

### a) Pre Deposit Participation

#### Issues Paper

4.1 This section summarises key findings from the consultation exercise on the Issues Paper:

- An overwhelming majority of respondent



- The need to find a role / function for town centres;
- The need to create a more balanced population stemming out migration; and
- The need to provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations, including the need for affordable housing.

4.5 The development options were based around these main issues.

4.6 The next stage of the workshop was to identify a 'Vision' for the area. All 3 groups agreed that a new Vision was required and each group drafted a Vision. From these three Visions the Planning Policy Team prepared one Vision.

### **Vision and Options Workshops**

4.7 Participants were given the opportunity to amend the draft Vision. From these revisions the Planning Policy Team prepared a new version.

***Through collaborative working, by 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities, where people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life and residents will live in safe, healthy and thriving communities, with access to a range of good quality affordable homes and thriving town centres. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected and enhanced to create a place where people want to live, work and visit.***

4.8 This workshop also discussed and identified the Preferred Strategy. Attendees were given the opportunity to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options and to identify a fourth option.

4.9 Option 2 was the preferred option but attendees decided the following changes were needed:

- The level of growth will now identify a range of 150 to 250 and that this growth will be back-loaded (150 first 5 years, 200 next 5 year period and 250 in the final 5 year period) to the end of the Plan period.
- To address concern with protecting Greenfield sites, a specific objective will be included to develop Brownfield sites in preference to Greenfield sites.
- Option 2 will be amended to ensure that the new roles for the town centres will be complementary.
- In developing Option 2 to create the Preferred Strategy, the issues considered to be missing such as; integrated transport, tourism, health, education and community facilities will be fully addressed.

4.10 The revised preferred option, following amendments was:

#### **Option 2: Growth and Regeneration**

- This is a growth strategy, which has the following aspects:
- Emphasis of growth would be in the Heads of Valleys and a regeneration focus in the south of the borough
- Stems out-migration leading to an increase in population to 71,000
- A house build rate of **150-250 per annum (back-loaded)**
- New employment opportunities to broaden offer
- A new hierarchy of town centres, with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre,

and Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery becoming district shopping centres. Blaina would become a local shopping centre.

- Specific **complementary** roles would be identified for town centres, which are currently in decline, in an attempt to encourage their growth.

## b) Pre Deposit Consultation

### The Preferred Strategy

- 4.11 This was the key stage for communities to help shape the Deposit Plan and the main thrust of community involvement took place during this time. Members of the Public were requested to make representations in respect of the Preferred Strategy to the Council in writing.
- 4.12 There was no fundamental challenge or presentation of new evidence against the Preferred Strategy that significantly undermined it. When asked if respondents broadly agreed with the Preferred Strategy (option 2) 80% agreed. Wherever possible all issues/comments raised through consultation have been dealt with in the Deposit Plan.
- 4.13 In total 414 representations from 58 respondents were received in respect of the Preferred Strategy. Of the total, 278 representations offered comment, 136 were expressing support. The following section of the report summarises the nature of the comments received.
- 4.14 The key findings to emerge from the public consultation stage are presented in more detail in the Preferred Strategy Report of Findings (February 2009) but are summarised below.

**Table 6: Key Findings**

Issue	Influence on the Deposit Plan
<b>Location/Distribution of Development</b>	
<p>Respondents were concerned that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy would result in a North South divide</li> <li>• There is a bias towards Ebbw Vale</li> <li>• It would have a detrimental effect on Abertillery and the Ebbw Fach Valley</li> </ul>	<p>The strategy now places less emphasis on the North/South divide and more emphasis on regenerating the area through the hub and spoke approach, though there remain fewer opportunities for development in the south due to topographical constraints. The creation of an integrated network of modern and revitalised hubs will provide a mechanism in which to co-ordinate investment and ensures that the benefits are shared widely to transform the whole Borough.</p>



## Renewable Energy

The Welsh Assembly Government were concerned that:-  
The Preferred Strategy did not appear to have followed the approach of the MIPPS and TAN 8 in that;

- There is little consideration of the role and impact of renewable energy
- It does not appear to form part of the core strategy plan

The Council does not agree with this as the role and impact of renewable energy was considered during the preparation of the Preferred Strategy. Ne

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# INITIAL CONSULTATION REPORT

## APPENDIX 2: INVITATION LIST FOR THE ISSUES PAPER JULY 2007

Name	Organisation
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	
Alan Reed	Highways Division
Alison Hoskins	Social Services
Alun Evans	Technical Services - Transport
Alwyn Hughes	Regeneration – Business Services

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Name	Organisation
Simon Dobbs	Regeneration - Projects
Steve Smith	Public Protection - Planning
Tony Chivers	Technical Services - Engineering
<b>External Organisations</b>	
Elaine Ancrum	National Assembly for Wales
Jackie Walters	Environment Agency
Tracy Nettleton	Brecon Beacons National Park
Mr N Davies	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Mr R Murray	Torfaen County Borough Council
Mr Steve Bartlett	Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council
Dr J Evans	Tredegar Town Council
Richard Jones	Countryside Council for Wales
	Cadw
Mrs Rhian Kyte	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Powys County Borough Council
Mr G Bartlett	Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
Mrs A Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Mr J P Williams	Rhymney Community Council
Mrs D Gronow	New Tredegar Community Council
	Local Network Planning British Telecom
	NTL
	Virgin Mobile
	Lattice Property
	British Wind Energy Association
	Celtic Energy Ltd
Mr Rhian Deakin	Blaenavon Town Council
Mr Ryan Bowen	Hyder Consulting Ltd
	Mobile Operators Association
Richard Bevan	Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board
Mr Neil Dalley	British Gas (TRANSCO)
Mr K Ferguson	Coal Authority
	Confederation of UK Coal Producers
Dr Emma Wilson	Innogy plc
Mr Ed Wallace	Powergen
	SWALEC
	Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
	Department for Transport
	The Home Office
Mr Jonathon Jones	Wales Tourist Board
	National Grid Transco plc
	RWE npower
	Western Power Distribution
	Wales and West Utilities
	Department of Trade & Industry
Mr Allan Fogg	Defence Estates
	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
Stuart Newland S.	East Wales Regional Waste Group









# INITIAL CONSULTATION REPORT

## APPENDIX 3: INVITATION LIST FOR THE ISSUES AND VISION WORKSHOP



Name	Organisation
Chris Engel	Regeneration - Projects
Clive Rogers	Technical Services
Colin Cheesman	Regeneration - Biodiversity
Dave R Cook	Public Protection
Dave Thompson	Public Protection - Grants Policy & Operations
Dave Watkins	Leisure Services
Deborah Beeson	Regeneration - Biodiversity
Eirlys Hallett	Public Protection – Planning Control
Frank Olding	Leisure - Heritage
Ged Mchugh	Regeneration – Economic Policy
Hayley Selway	Housing
Jane McNeil	Communities First
Jenny Turner	Environment
Jim Allen	Technical Services – Architecture and Business Dev
Joanna Rhead	Accountancy & Financial Policy
John Howells	Education – School Services
John Parsons	Environment – Corporate Director
Julian Bosley	Regeneration – Business Services
Keith Chaplin	Environment
Keith Rogers	Regeneration – Access and Conservation
Leanne Connor	Environment – Corus Project Team
Louise Horner	Estates - Legal
Lyn Evans	Environment
Lynn Phillips	Leisure Services
Mark Hopkins	Technical Services - Engineering
Mark Price	Community Regeneration
Michelle Evans	Education
Nick Landers	Regeneration - Projects
Paul Miles	Legal & Estates Division
Phil Hodgson	Social Services
Phillip Hackling	Housing
Richard Crook	Corus Project Team
Roderic Jenkins	Transport
Ruth Sinfield	Social Services
Sharn Annett	Education – Children and Young People
Simon Dobbs	Regeneration - Projects
Steve Smith	Public Protection - Planning
Tony Chivers	Technical Services - Engineering
<b>Other</b>	
Gemma White	NHS Local Public Health
Will Beer	NHS Local Public Team



# INITIAL CONSULTATION REPORT

## APPENDIX 4: INVITATION LIST FOR VISION AND STRATEGY OPTIONS WORKSHOPS 2007

Name	Organisation
Elaine Townsend	
G Bartlett	Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
Ernie Pitt	Base Handling Products
Alan Reed	BGCBC - Highways
Alison Hoskins	BGCBC - Social Services
Alun Evans	BGCBC - Technical Services, Transport
Alwyn Hughes	BGCBC - Regeneration, Business Services
Andrew Long	BGCBC - Public Protection
Andrew Parker	BGCBC - People and Performance Division
Alyson Tippings	BGCBC - Leisure, Tourism
Bethan Cartwright	BGCBC -Regeneration, Town Centres
Catherine Ashby	BGCBC - Public Protection, Development Control
Chris Engel	BGCBC - Regeneration, Projects
Clive Rogers	BGCBC - Technical Services
Deborah Beeson	BGCBC - Regeneration - Biodiversity
Dave R Cook	BGCBC - Public Protection
Dave Watkins	BGCBC - Leisure Services
Eirlys Hallett	BGCBC - Public Protection – Development Control
Emma Cashmore	BGCBC - Education
Frank Olding	BGCBC - Leisure - Heritage
Ged McHugh	BGCBC - Regeneration – Economic Policy
Edward Robinson	Blaina Senior Citizens
A Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Cllr John Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Carl Woods	Capita Symonds
Gill Clark	Chair Cwmtillery Partnership
Frank Callus	Coleg Gwent
David Llewellyn	Co-ordinator for Cwmtillery Partnership
Darren Lewis	Co-ordinator for Rassau & Garnlydan Partnership
Anna Chard	Co-ordinator for St Illtyds Partnership

Name	Organisation
Alyson Hoskins	Vice Chair, Abertillery Communities First
Garth Collier	Vice Chair, Blaina Communities First
Graham Bartlett	Vice Chair, Cwmtillery Communities First
Gareth Matthews	Working Links
	United Welsh
Greg Paulsen	Co-ordinator for Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Gwyn Smith	Sustrans
Hayley Selway	BGCBC - Housing
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	BGCBC - Communities First
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	BGCBC - Technical Services – Architecture and Business Dev
John Davies	Ebbw Vale & District Development Trust
John Howells	BGCBC - Education – School Services
John Millard	Melin Housing Association
John Morgan	Vice Chair, Communities First Tredegar Central & West &



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Name	Organisation
M Phillips	Ebbw Vale Trades Council
Mair Sheen	Co-ordinator for Six Bells Partnership



For further Information please contact:

Planning Policy Team  
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council  
Business Resource Centre  
Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate  
Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent  
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or visit [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

