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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cŵngor Bwrdeistref Siol Blaenau Gwent

Community Facilities

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aim

- 1.1 The aim of this Background Paper is to set out how objectives, policies and allocations relating to Community Facilities have been identified and developed.

Overview of how this paper fits into Plan preparation

- 1.2 This Paper will provide information for Officers and Members of the Authority, stakeholders, members of the public and the Inspector to help explain the approach taken on Community Facilities.

Context

- 1.3 Providing a range of community facilities accessible to as many people as possible is intrinsically important to the successful maintenance and enhancement of settlements. Such facilities are often major employers and can be centres for skills in particular fields – hospitals and surgeries for instance, attract a pool of specialist personnel to provide medical care for the benefit of the wider community. Also educational facilities can

2.0 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Wales Spatial Plan – People, Places, Futures (July 2008)

- 2.1 The Wales Spatial Plan forms one of the high-level strategic ‘building blocks’ of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Wales Spatial Plan is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities, who are statutorily obliged to have regard for the objectives, aims and requirements of the Wales Spatial Plan in developing their Local Development Plans.
- 2.2 The Wales Spatial Plan sets a vision for how each part of Wales should develop economically, socially and environmentally over the next 20 years. It guides the way the Assembly Government will spend its money over the coming years. The Wales Spatial Plan reinforces the Welsh Assembly Government’s commitment to developing a sustainable future for Wales, including the statutory duty to promote sustainable development in all its work to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the people now and in the future.
- 2.3 The Wales Spatial Plan identifies that successful, thriving communities are formed where many social interactions take place in a high quality environment, with a good mix and balance of population with high aspirations to achieve. Health, well-being and quality of life are also identified as a key spatial dimension to assist in delivering prosperity and dynamism.
- 2.4 The objectives and actions of the Wales Spatial Plan in respect of community facilities include:

- 2.10 Shaping the Way We Work, Live and Play is practical guidance to assist Local Planning Authorities in Wales in successfully promoting and implementing sustainable development through the statutory planning system. The guidance was primarily produced by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).
- 2.11 The document is subdivided into chapters covering all aspects of sustainable development. The most relevant chapter in relation to community facilities is “Supporting Communities”. The key objective in this chapter is to *“ensure that appropriate community facilities are available within a suitable distance”*.
- 2.12 Sustainable communities are considered as those that *“meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice”*. Local facilities are considered key in providing the means for people to interact socially. Such facilities can improve social cohesion, reduce isolation and build a sense of place and community.

3.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

“Turning Heads...” – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 (June 2006)

- 3.1 In June 2006, the Heads of the Valley Strategy was launched to help tackle the issues faced by the Heads of the Valleys communities. £140 million was committed over a period of 15 years to regenerate the whole area. The Heads of the Valleys Programme area covers the whole of Blaenau Gwent.
- 3.2 The Strategy provides a framework for regenerating the area, with a focus on 5 priority themes. The theme relevant to community facilities is *“A well educated, skilled and healthier population.”*
- 3.3 The document recognises the Heads of the Valleys communities as having powerful social networks with a strong sense of culture and identity. As a result of the Communities First Initiative, there is now considerable enthusiasm from the communities themselves and key stakeholders to work to integrate further community benefits in a more holistic manner.
- 3.4 By 2020, the Heads of the Valleys Strategy seeks to ensure all *“children and young people within the Heads of the Valleys will have a flying start in life whatever their background. People will generally have the knowledge, skills and opportunities to maintain their best possible levels of physical and mental health. There will be easier access to a comprehensive range of academic and vocational education and learning opportunities, including personal and social skills and the opportunity to go to university in the area. Community-focussed schools will actively promote health, nutrition and fitness; they will offer out of hours learning, and will collaborate across the area”*.

3.5 The Local Planning Authority should take into account the aims and objectives of the Heads of the Valleys Strategy and seek to integrate these into the Local Development Plan.


4.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT


4.1 As a corporate document, the Local Development Plan must have regard to other documents produced by the Council. The relevant documentation relating to community facilities is set out below.

Making a Difference –The Big 20 Year Plan for Blaenau Gwent 2010 to 2030


4.2 The Community Strategy builds on the work undertaken by the Community Plan and takes forward the vision of making: Blaenau Gwent a better place to live, work and visit. The Community Strategy has 7 key themes and each theme has its own vision.

 **Lively and Accessible Communities**
Creating communities that people enjoy and want to live in

 **Thriving Communities**
Offering the opportunities, support and resources in our communities for people to thrive

 **Fair and Safe Communities**
Making people feel safer and included in our communities

 **Learning Communities**
Giving people the skills to succeed

 **Healthy Communities**
Helping people to be healthy and get the right care and support when they need it

 **Green & Sustainable Communities**
Improving our environment today for tomorrow

 **Leading Communities**
Working with, and for our communities

4.3 Community facilities are covered under the themes of Lively and Accessible Communities, Healthy Communities and Learning Communities. Under the theme of Lively & Accessible Communities, the aim is to ensure that our neighbourhoods are places people want to live. This will be achieved by focussing improvement in all of our neighbourhoods; making our neighbourhoods look more attractive; protecting and improving places and buildings that are important to Blaenau Gwent; and offering a range of activities that fulfil people's lives.

4.4 Under the theme of Learning Communities, the aim is to ensure people are aiming high and achieving. This will be achieved by raising people's aspirations; and offering people a choice from a wide range of education, training and learning opportunities, and supporting to help them succeed.

4.5 Under the theme of Healthy Communities, the aim is to improve the provision, quality, integration and sustainability of care provided. This will be achieved by

ensuring people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time; and enabling people to live happy, fulfilled and independent lives.

Draft Healthier Future 3 - Blaenau Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy (2011-2014)

- 4.6 Healthier Future 3 is the third Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy for Blaenau Gwent, developed in partnership between Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and its partners. The strategy sets out a continued commitment to working together to improve the health, social care and well-being of all people living and working in Blaenau Gwent.
- 4.7 The strategy has identified the following six outcomes as a focus for future sustainability and developments:
- Babies are born healthy;
 - Pre-school aged children are healthy, safe and develop their potential;
 - School aged children and young people are healthy and equipped for adulthood;
 - Working age adults live healthy and independent lives for longer;
 - People age well into their retirement; and
 - Frail people are safe and happily independent.

Draft Children and Young People's Plan 2011/14 – Working to Address Issues of Child Poverty

- 4.8 The draft Children and Young People's Plan 2011/14 – Working to Address Issues of Child Poverty is the second Children and Young People's Plan and the first Child Poverty Plan for Blaenau Gwent. The overarching aim of the plan is to work towards reducing child poverty and mitigating its effects on outcomes. The local pledge for the partnership is: *“Working together we are committed to delivering high quality integrated services to s*

HEALTH – Current Provision

5.2 Health services are delivered by the following agencies:

- **National Health Service (NHS)** is directly funded by Central Government. It is responsible for the overall management and strategy of health services in local areas including ownership and maintenance of facilities. The division covering Blaenau Gwent is the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust.
- The responsibility for health services in the Blaenau Gwent area is now the responsibility of **Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board**. Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board is responsible for the delivery of health care services to more than 600,000 people living in the Gwent area. The Local Health Board are also responsible in partnership for improving the health and well being of local people. The **Local Health Board** delivers services to the populations of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The Health Board came into being on the 1st October 2009 and replaces the former Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Local Health Boards.
- **General Practitioners (GP), Dentists, Pharmacists, Opticians and Voluntary and Independent Providers** offer services directly to the public at the point of contact.

5.3 As the nation's largest single employer, the NHS accounts for a significant proportion of public sector expenditure and is currently undertaking a major restructuring exercise. There are a number of implications for healthcare facilities in Blaenau Gwent County Borough.

5.4 The County Borough is mainly served by a network of 2 District General Hospitals within the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust and 1 within the North Glamorgan NHS Trust

5.5 The District General Hospitals all lie outside the County Borough boundaries but provide a range of similar services. These are the Royal Gwent, Newport and Nevill Hall, Abergavenny in the Gwent NHS sub region and Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil in the North Glamorgan NHS trust.

5.6 The District General Hospitals are supported by a network of 5 community and mental health hospitals and day care premises in Blaenau Gwent. In addition to the outpatient sessions held at the Health Board hospitals, there are 7 clinics and health centres that provide a wide range of services in the community and 21 GP surgeries.

5.7

- 5.12 During the planning stages for the new hospital, considerable work has been undertaken in terms of consultation and creating models for improving health services across the County Borough. Through these models, there are plans to deliver Primary Care Resource Centres in Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery.
- 5.13 In Ebbw Vale, a new build development is required to replace existing surgeries and the health centre. This is a high priority scheme.
- 5.14 In Tredegar, the planning of the Primary Care Resource Centre needs to link to the redevelopment of Tredegar hospital. It has been identified, however, that a new build on an alternative site may be required. The Primary Care Resource Centre will replace two existing surgeries, plus community clinics held in the Tredegar Hospital. The proposed centre would include pharmacy and voluntary sectors. This is a high priority scheme that is anticipated to start in 2011, when Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan is fully functional.
- 5.15 In Brynmawr, a new build is required to replace existing surgeries plus Brynmawr Health Centre. This has been identified as a high priority scheme that is anticipated to start in 2011.
- 5.16 The Local Health Board has agreed that Tredegar and Blaina Hospitals will become a Health and Social Care Unit, however what services are to be provided from these units are yet to be determined. With regard to Primary Resource Centres, the site of Blaina Hospital is considered not suitable for a Primary Resource Centre.
- 5.17 With regard to a primary resource centre in Abertillery, the Local Health Board has identified that the existing centre is adequate for current needs. However, it is anticipated that in 2017, a potential new build or alternatively redevelopment of the existing centre will be required.
- 5.18 The development of primary care resource centres throughout Blaenau Gwent are in the very early stages, therefore as no sites have been identified no allocations have been included in the Local Development Plan for primary care resource centres. Future development proposals for primary care resource centres will be dealt with by the relevant development management policies.

Surgeries / Health Centres

- 5.19 Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board highlights that there is a need to replace Cwm Health Centre, plus additional capacity fo

- 5.20 At Glan Rhyd Surgery in Brynmawr, additional capacity is required to allow the practice to develop as a mini hub and a training practice. This scheme is considered medium priority and needs to tie in with development of the Brynmawr Primary Care Resource Centre.
- 5.21 The Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board highlights that a new build is required to replace the existing Branch Surgery in Llanhilleth. However, this is dependent on future GP plans for the area.
- 5.22 In order to address demand in the County Borough and in response to national planning policy, the Local Development Plan should make provision for the new Local General Hospital through a mixed use allocation at The Works, Ebbw Vale.

EDUCATION – Current Provision

- 5.23 Nationally, there has been a downward trend in overall pupil numbers in both primary and secondary sectors of education because of the current demographic situation.
- 5.24 Education is provided in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council through a network of primary, secondary schools, post-16 further education colleges and university campuses lying just outside the area at Cardiff, Newport and Pontypridd.
- 5.25 At present there are 34 learning establishments for school age children in the County Borough catering for over 10,251 pupils.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Primary & Nursery schools/facilities (English Medium) | 26 |
| Primary & Nursery schools/facilities (Welsh Medium) | 1 |
| Total Primary | 27 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Secondary schools (English Medium) | 4 |
| Secondary schools (Foundation) | 1 |
| Secondary schools (Welsh Medium) | 0 |
| Total Secondary | 5 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Other | 2 |
| Total (all) | 34 |

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (January 2011)

- 5.26 Currently, advanced level post 16 education in Blaenau Gwent is provided at four 11-18 Secondary schools and vocational courses for this age-group are available at the Ebbw Vale Campus of Coleg Gwent. Some 480 students currently attend the schools' sixth forms and some 3,500 are registered at Coleg Gwent (Ebbw Vale).
- 5.27 In addition, some students who have attended an 11-16 denominational Roman Catholic or Welsh Medium School choose to continue their education post-16 at

Bishop Hedley RC School, Merthyr Tydfil and Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw at Pontypool. Some students choose to pursue post-16 education at Coleg Gwent (Cross Keys).

- 5.28 The role that long-term economic and environmental problems have had in influencing educational opportunities for the population as a whole must be acknowledged. The demise of heavy industry, such as coal and steel industries, has been accompanied by high unemployment, poor health and environmental problems.
- 5.29 One of the background influencing factors is that the Authority has a number of educational settings which are no longer fit for purpose and require investment. An analysis of the condition of schools is detailed in the Schools Asset Management Plan 07-12.
- 5.30 In February 2008 the Executive Committee established a Member Working Group which was tasked with identifying key issues to be addressed, together with associated requirements which could form the basis of the Authority's future School Development Strategy.
- 5.31 The key issues identified that are to be addressed include:
1. High levels of surplus school places in both the primary and secondary sectors, with significant implications for the educational and financial viability of some schools.
 2. The need to re-configure 6th form education.
 3. The need to introduce curriculum changes in relation to the foundation phase and 14-19 learning pathways.
- 5.32 Informal consultation was undertaken in the autumn of 2009 on a range of proposals focused on the former Steelworks site. These proposals included the provision of:
- Education and training for 16-19 year olds;
 - Primary Education;
 - An Integrated Children's Centre;
 - A Special School; and
 - Secondary Education.
- 5.33 Since the end of the informal consultation process on the 17th December 2009, the views expressed have been considered in order to inform the next part of the process. The formal statutory consultation process shall endeavour to obtain further views from stakeholders about the way in which the Council could and should organise educational provision in the Blaenau Gwent area. This stage is also known as formal consultation.
- 5.34 As part of the formal consultation process (June 2010), the Council have put forward four preferred proposals:

PROPOSAL 1
Stage 1

- 5.37 In 2007, the former steelworks site was granted outlined planning consent for a mix of land uses. The key elements of the permission relating to education provision is the Learning Zone, which includes the provision of education and training for 14 -19 year olds. 'The Works' site will also include a 21st Century 3-16 School over two sites that will provide: primary education; an integrated children's centre; secondary education and the relocation of Pen y Cwm Special School (subject to ministerial decision). A mixed use allocation for the development of this site and the provision of these education facilities are included in the Plan.
- 5.38 In March 2009 the Council and WAG commissioned ERM, Powell Dobson, DTZ and Capita Symonds to prepare an over-arching framework to guide the future sustainable development of Ebbw Vale. Delivery of 'The Works' Masterplan will create vacant development opportunities throughout much of the Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor, as existing land uses such as the college, leisure centre and possibly the school will be relocated. The framework has assessed the development potential of the area and has identified the following elements:
- Strategic mixed use employment site
 - Employment and road side services
 - Commercial leisure hub
 - Residential
- A mixed use allocation for the Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor has been included in the Plan.

Primary Education

- 5.39 The Local Authority has completed the statutory notice period to discontinue Garnlydan Primary School. Education for pupils from the Garnlydan catchment area will be provided for at Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary School, Ebbw Vale.
- 5.40 Planning permission for a new Welsh Medium Primary school was secured in September 2008 on land north of Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Nantyglo. Construction of the new school is now complete. The school provides educational opportunities for 330 primary school children.
- 5.41 The school replaces the Brynmawr Junior and Infants premises which was built over 100 years ago. The school could not provide the standard of facilities that was needed to support the education of children in the 21st century. In addition as many pupils travelled to the school from across Blaenau Gwent (and parts of Monmouthshire) by bus, there were concerns regarding traffic safety.

- 5.43 The Statutory Notice proposing the closure of Nantyglo Comprehensive School was published on 9th July 2009 and the matter was referred to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills at the Welsh Assembly Government. The Minister approved the decision to close the school on 22 March 2010. Former Nantyglo pupils will attend an enlarged Abertillery Comprehensive on 1st September 2010, with sixth form provision offered at either Ebbw Vale Comprehensive or Brynmawr Foundation School.
- 5.44 In order to address demand in the County Borough and in response to national planning policy, the Local Development Plan should make provision for the following educational facilities: -
- Through a mixed use allocation at The Works, Ebbw Vale
 - Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr, Nantyglo – New primary school
 - Lower Plateau, Six Bells Colliery site – New primary school

COMMUNITY/YOUTH CENTRES – Current Provision

- 5.45 Obtaining information on community and youth centres has proved extremely difficult as there is no central database which holds such information. However, information from the Communities First Partnership has approximately identified the number and names of the community centres and halls within the County Borough. The Holistic Area Regeneration Plans (HARPs) identifies the future provision required.
- 5.46 Community halls and centres are important facilities in towns and villages. There



5.55 Recently concerns have been raised about its condition particularly in light of vandalism to the fabric of the building. It is indicative of a lack of sense of ownership of the building with the local community and an absence of adequate community activities.

5.56 As part of the CALON (Cwmtillery Active Lifestyles Outdoors Nexus) project, the potential to expand the use of the Jim Owen Pavilion as an Outdoor Gateway and Education Centre is being explored, whilst retaining the existing function and purpose of the existing and identified community users. Land has been allocated in the Plan as a leisure allocation for this project. Further details on the CALON project are contained in the Leisure Background Paper.

5.57 In order to address demand in the County Borough and in response to national planning policy, the Local Development Plan should make provision for the following community / youth centre provision:

- Former Sirhowy Infants School, Tredegar

LIBRARIES – Current Provision

5.58 There are currently a total of 6 libraries within Blaenau Gwent County Borough; Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Tredegar, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery and one small outreach provision in Llanhilleth.

5.59 There are also 2 mobile library services, namely a home delivery and a mobile delivery.

LIBRARIES - Future Provision

5.60 As part of the regeneration of the 'The Works', Ebbw Vale, it was originally considered that the Ebbw Vale library would be relocated to this site. However, it is now proposed to refurbish the existing Ebbw Vale library which is located in the Principal Town Centre of Ebbw Vale.

5.61 Abertillery library is considered to be located on an unsuitable site outside the town centre. There are proposals to relocate Abertillery library from its current location at Oak Street, Abertillery. There are a number of options being explored as part of the town centre's redevelopment. One possible site is the vacant site on the corner of Tillery Street, where the library service will share accommodation with other public, local services.

5.62 Another option is also being explored, as part of the Abertillery Regeneration Strategy (Powell Dobson, 2006). A 'Community Campus' is proposed to the south of the town centre, from High Street to Somerset Street. It is proposed that this will add a range of services, utilise otherwise vacant floorspace and stimulate footfall and am0225 -0.0004 Tc 0 -1-0.000i s,3iell Dobson, 20060.0007Tc 0.2I2the ICts o()Tj /C 1.9

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- 5.72 During 2009, Gwent Police Force has undergone a major reorganisation, which has resulted in changes in premises requirements in the Blaenau Gwent area.
- 5.73 One change identified is the desire to improve the profile of the smaller police station to make them more visible and accessible to the respective communities. It is envisaged that the smaller police stations will be relocated to existing public buildings to improve contact and reassurance. The current premises have very few visitors and the officers who are based at the stations spend most of their day

| Cemetery | Hub Area | Approximate Grave Spaces Available | Average Number of New Burials Per Year | Estimated life of Cemetery in Years and Months |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| | Fach | | | |
| Brynithel | Lower Ebbw Fach | 364 | 38 | 9.5 |

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

- 5.79 Table 5, above identifies that priority work is required in Cefn Golau and Blaina cemeteries with only an estimated life of cemetery of 0.3 months and 4 years respectively. The extensions to both these cemeteries were complete in November 2010.
- 5.80 In 10 years, Dukestown Cemetery will require additional land outside of the existing cemetery boundary. 1.4 hectares of land has been identified to the north of the existing cemetery.
- 5.81 The review identifies that an extension to Cwm, Brynithel and Brynmawr cemeteries will be required in 10, 9.5 and 8.6 years respectively. It is proposed that these extensions will be accommodated within the existing cemetery boundaries, and therefore no land is proposed for allocation in the Deposit Plan.
- 5.82 In order to address demand in the County Borough and in response to national planning policy, the Local Development Plan should make provision for the following cemetery extensions: -
- Cefn Golau Cemetery, Tredegar
 - Dukestown Cemetery, Tredegar
 - Blaina Cemetery, Blaina

SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES – Current Provision

- 5.83 Social services provision in Blaenau Gwent County Borough caters for a range of people and ages with special needs. Facilities include residential homes for the elderly, day centres to cater for the specialised care of older people and children's residential homes for those who cannot be catered for by their parents.
- 5.84 The following tables illustrate the current social services provision in the County Borough: -

Table 6 – Current Provision of Homes for the Elderly in Blaenau Gwent

| Facility | Hub Area | Description of Service |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Plas Y Coed | Ebbw Vale | 37 residential beds for people over 65 who are frail but do not need permanent nursing care |
| Cartref Aneurin Bevan | Tredegar | 38 residential beds for people over 65 who are frail but do not need permanent nursing care |
| Crawshay House | Upper Ebbw Fach | 28 residential beds for people over 65 who are frail but do not need |

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| Facility | Hub Area | Description of Service |
|-------------|-----------------|---|
| | | permanent nursing care |
| Cwrt Mytton | Lower Ebbw Fach | 34 residential beds, for people over 65 who are frail but do not need permanent nursing care, of which 15 are EMI beds and on this 15, 1 bed is a short term care bed |

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

Table 7 – Current Provision of Day Centres in Blaenau Gwent

| Facility | Hub Area | Description of Service |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Vision House | Ebbw Vale | Day Centre for people experiencing Mental Health Problems and are aged under 65 |
| Time Out | Ebbw Vale | Weekend day service provided to individuals aged 65 and above with a mild to moderate dementia who live within the community and receive care and support for informal carers |
| Tredegar Resource Unit | Tredegar | Day centre for individuals with a Learning Disability |
| Tems | Tredegar | Work based / horticultural day services for individual's with a Learning Disability |
| The Bert Denning Centre | Upper Ebbw Fach | Day Centre for individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities |
| Blaina Resource Unit | Upper Ebbw Fach | Day centre for individuals with a Learning Disability |
| Abertillery Parc Café | Lower Ebbw Fach | Work based / catering day services for individual's with a Learning Disability |
| Joint Day Care Unit Abertillery | Lower Ebbw Fach | Day centre which caters for a range of service users including: Younger persons with physical impairments. Older persons Persons with a low level dementia |
| Cwrt Mytton Abertillery | Lower Ebbw Fach | Day centre for adults over 65 year of age with a mild to moderate dementia |
| Textile Recycling | | Work based services for individual's with a Learning Disability |
| New Vale Recycling | | Work based day services for individual's with a Learning Disability |

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

Table 8 – Current Provision of Support Centres in Blaenau Gwent

| Facility | Hub Area | Description of Service |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Cymdeithas Tai Hafan | Across Blaenau Gwent | Floating Support for people affected by domestic abuse |

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

| Facility | Hub Area | Description of Service |
|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| Somerset Street | Upper Ebbw Fach | Supported housing scheme for people with mental health issues (not 24 hour) |
| The Hollies | Upper Ebbw Fach | Supported housing scheme for people with mental health problems (not 24 hour) |
| Phoenix Project | Upper Ebbw Fach | Drop in centre for individuals experiencing Mental Health Problems |
| Hafal – Godwyn Hall | Lower Ebbw Fach | Horticultural based activity centres for individuals with mental health problems – based on Hafals recovery model. |

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES – Future Provision

- 5.85 Blaenau Gwent has developed a 'Living Independently in the 21st Century' Blaenau Gwent Older Peoples Strategy, to ensure a more co-ordinated and responsive approach to service provision for older people in the 21st century. The strategy proposes a move away from traditional forms of care such as residential/nursing care and home care.
- 5.86 Blaenau Gwent has one of the largest concentrations of care homes in Wales (in terms of its size) with a total of 741 beds. These are divided into
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| General Nursing | 198 |
| EMI | 124 |
| Residential | 306 (independent 142 L.A. 164) |
- 5.87 The strategy is proposing a move away from standard residential care and proposes the closure of 4 of the 5 local authority homes, with the re-investment in specialist long-term residential provision.
- 5.88 Three Extra Care Sheltered Housing Provision Schemes have been identified at:
- Ysbyti'r Tri Cwm, Ebbw Vale - 40 units
 - Hafod Dawel Site, Hospital Road, Nantyglo – 40-50 units
- 5.89 The location of the third scheme for 40-50 units is to be agreed.
- 5.90 The Plan will identify the first two schemes. The third scheme will be dealt with through relevant development management policies.

OTHER CIVIC FACILITIES (Courts/Registry Offices) – Current Provision

- 5.91 There are currently no magistrate court facilities in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. In 2010, a decision was made by the Ministry of Justice to close Abertillery Magistrates Court.

- 5.92 There is a central registry office in Tredegar and subsidiary registry offices in Abertillery, Blaina and Brynmawr where residents can record births, marriages and deaths.

OTHER CIVIC FACILITIES (Courts/Registry Offices) – Future Provision

- 5.93 There are no proposed registry office developments proposed in the foreseeable future. However, work undertaken by Gwent Police has identified that major investment is required in the former Tredegar Magistrates Court.

6.0 KEY ISSUES IN BLAENAU GWENT

- 6.1 Pre-deposit participation undertaken between July and August 2007 has provided a clear indication of those land use issues that key stakeholders consider to be of primary importance in Blaenau Gwent.

The Issues Paper (July 2007)

- 6.2 The Issues Paper (July 2007) identified a key issue that the Plan needed to address:
- The need to improve education and skills.
- 6.3 A consultation exercise on the Issues Paper asked a question in relation to the provision of new community facilities:

Question 2.11 – What should be the approach of the new LDP in relation to the provision of new facilities?

4 comments were made in relation to this question.

Issue - Opportunities should be maximised to associate new facilities with existing or planned facilities

Response

It is agreed that opportunities should be maximised to associate new facilities with existing or planned facilities. This is reflected through the Deposit Plan through the identification of mixed-use development sites. The Deposit Plan also proposes a new community centre which is to be integrated with new residential development.

Issue – Broad based approach to the provision of social services facilities

The LDP should adopt a broad based approach to the provision of social services facilities. Each section of the community should be catered for in line with its reasonable requirements, age group projections being used to inform decision-making.

Response

Chapter 5 of this Background Paper seeks to address the current and future provision of social services facilities for a range of people and ages with special needs.



8.0 DRAFT LDP POLICY

8.1 To address the issues raised the following is proposed:

Objective 7

By 2021, the regeneration plans for 'The Works', Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor and other key regeneration sites will have been delivered benefiting the residents of the County Borough through the delivery of jobs, houses and community infrastructure.

Objective 10

By 2021, the delivery of the Learning Zone, new schools and integrated education services, including life-long learning have facilitated improvements and broadened opportunities for education levels and skills.

Strategic Policy

SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth

In order to increase economic activity, diversify the economy and ensure that residents of Blaenau Gwent maximise their economic potential: -

- a. 50 ha of land for employment and business purposes will be allocated to meet economic development and employment needs;**
- b. The employment roles of major industrial areas will be identified to assist in the diversification of employment and to support the sustainable development of manufacturing;**
- c. Employment in Health and Social Care will be encouraged in town centres and in conjunction with the new hospital at 'The Works';**
- d. Tourism, leisure and cultural initiatives will be encouraged in town centres;**
- e. Rural enterprise and activity tourism will be promoted in the countryside;**
- f. A first class learning infrastructure will be put in place to ensure that residents gain the skills they require; and**
- g. Local labour agreements will be negotiated with developers to enable local people to secure employment and skills development.**

The 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 LDP therefore allocates 50

significantly the number of people using the Welsh natural environment for outdoor activities. The provision of facilities for sustainable outdoor and adventure activities in the countryside will encourage participation, improve health and attract visitors. In developing activity tourism it will be important to ensure that it is sustainable, that is, it must make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment and conservation.

The establishment of the Learning Zone at 'The Works' bringing together Coleg Gwent and all school sixth forms in a state of the art teaching and learning facility provides the opportunity to improve educational attainment and vocational skills at every level from basic skills right up to higher education (subject to ministerial decision and Judicial Review).

The regeneration of Blaenau Gwent is already providing job opportunities in construction and in hard and soft landscaping. There is an unprecedented programme of development incorporating 'The Works,' Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor, the town centre developments in Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, and Tredegar, schools refurbishment, Welsh Housing Quality Standard / Stock Transfer and public and private housing programmes. Planning Obligations will be used to secure local employment in the growing construction sector.

Development Management Policy

DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of a community and/or leisure facility will not be permitted unless:

- a. A comparable replacement facility is provided by the developer either on site or in an accessible location which is served by public transport or by foot or cycling; or**
- b. It can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements.**

Local leisure and community facilities such as sports centres and community

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

- **Employment** – 5 ha of commercial and business space primarily located adjacent to the hospital site;
- **Residential** – Approximately 520 houses at varying densities across the site built to higher than nationally required standards and including 20% affordable housing;
- **Learning Zone** – The Learning Zone includes the provision of education and training for 14-19 year olds. The Works site will also include a 21st Century 3-16 School over two sites that will provide; primary education; an integrated children's centre, secondary education and the relocated Pen y Cwm Special School (subject to ministerial decision and Judicial Review)
- **Leisure Centre and Sports Fields** – A new leisure centre and sports pitches will be developed to provide new leisure amenities for the community;
- **Arts Centre** – A new arts centre will be developed to provide a community and professional arts/cultural event programme;
- **Basement Strategy** – A range of uses are being considered for the basements including sports and leisure, exhibition space, summer markets for food & craft including a café, education and recreation facilities;
- **Retail** – The retail element will only consist of local convenience facilities, including local shops and smaller commercial units;
- **Energy Centre** – A centralised energy hub.
- **Family History & Genealogy Visitor Centre** – The Former General Offices (Grade II* Listed Building) is to become a visitor centre bringing industrial heritage to life and showcasing one of the largest archives in Wales.
- **Public Realm** – Focus on a sequence of public squares running through the site.

ED1 Education Provision

The following sites are allocated for education:

1. **Ysgol Gymraeg, Brynmawr – New primary school**
2. **Lower Plateau Six Bells Colliery Site – New primary school**

There will also be a need to address school provision in catchment areas where there is little or no existing capacity to accommodate the additional demand likely to arise from housing development. Where necessary, in such circumstance, financial contributions will be sought from developers towards the provision of new educational facilities, in accordance with DM4 Infrastructure Provision.

CF1 Community Centre

The following site is allocated for a community centre:

- 1. Former Sirhowy Infants School, Tredegar**

The former Sirhowy Infants School site, Tredegar has been identified for a new community centre on the southeast part of the site. The northern section of the site will be for 23 affordable homes.

It is proposed that the community centre, or as it will be known “The Star Centre” will host a range of services comprising of early years provision, youth services, youth clubs and after school provision, learning, recreation, community safety, advice and information, community events and carnivals and venue hire.

ENV5 Cemeteries

Extensions to the existing cemeteries are identified at the following

APPENDICES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER



APPENDIX 1 - PRIMARY HEALTH CAR

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

APPENDIX 2 – COMMUNITY/YOUTH CENTRES

| Community Centre Name | Hub Area |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Newtown Community Centre | Ebbw Vale |
| Hilltop Log Cabin | Ebbw Vale |
| Tyllwyn OAP Hall | Ebbw Vale |
| Mount Pleasant Church (Vestry) | Ebbw Vale |
| Hilltop OAP Hall | Ebbw Vale |
| All Saints Catholic Church Hall | Ebbw Vale |
| St John Ambulance Hall | Ebbw Vale |
| Ebbw Vale Institute (Church Street) | Ebbw Vale |
| Zion Church Vestry (Briery Hill) | Ebbw Vale |
| RTB's RFC Briery Hill | Ebbw Vale |



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