

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

# **Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

Adroddiad Cwmpasu  
Aseiad Cynaliadwyedd

**Revised Local  
Development Plan**  
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol  
Diwygiedig

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# Blaenau Gwent Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

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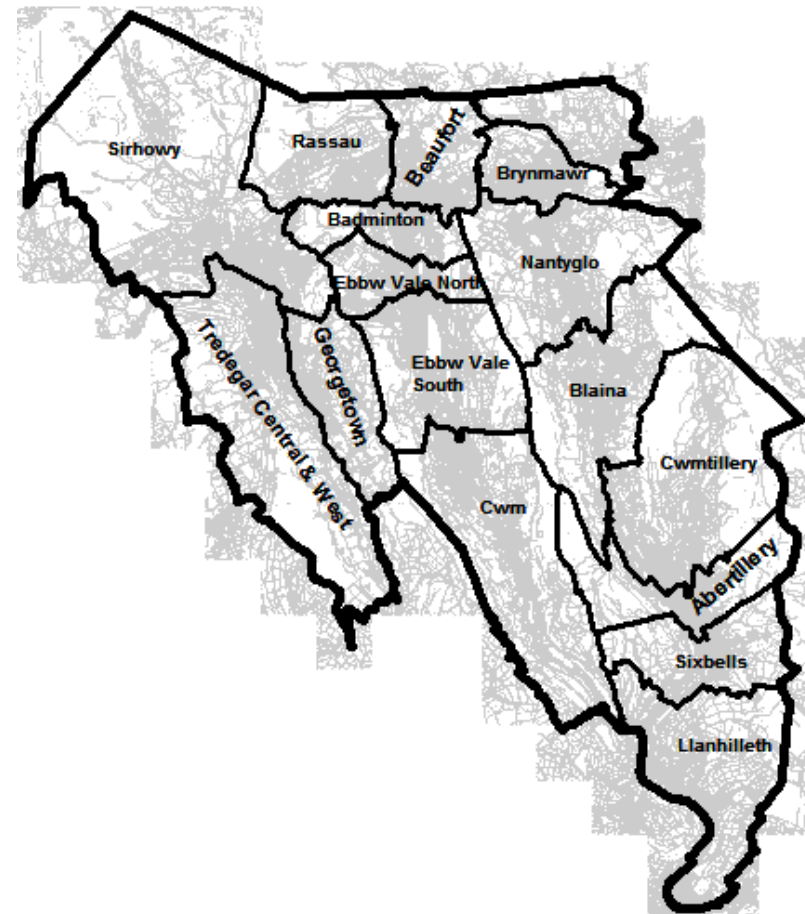
## 1.0 Background to the LDP and Purpose of the Integrated SA Scoping Report

### Introduction

**1.1** In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council adopted its first Local Development Plan (LDP) for its administrative area (as shown on Figure 1) in November 2012. Since 2013, the Council has undertaken, in accordance with statutory requirements, annual monitoring of the plan, with five Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) published to date. The AMR provides the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the LDP objectives and strategic policies, the Plan's sustainability credentials and identifies any significant contextual changes that might influence its implementation.

**1.2** In November 2016, a full review of the Plan was triggered, being 4 years after the Plan's adoption. The Council have completed the review of the Local Development Plan with the final review report being published in September 2017. Based on the evidence contained in the review report, it was concluded that the LDP should be revised and that this should take the form of a full revision procedure.

Plan 1: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Area



## What is the revised LDP?

**1.3** As a full revision of the plan is to be undertaken this will result in the preparation and adoption of a revised LDP. The full revision process is generally the same as for the preparation of the first LDP and should build on the experience gained with the original LDP. The proposed approach, timescales and consultation arrangements are set out in the revised LDP Delivery Agreement which was agreed by the Welsh Government on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018. As the statutory requirements are the same for the revision of the Plan as for the original LDP any revised LDP is required to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal.

## What is an integrated SA?

**1.4** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out the requirement for each Local Planning Authority to produce a Local Development Plan (LDP). In accordance with the 2004 Planning Act, all LDPs are also required to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The role of the Sustainability Appraisal is to assess the extent to which the emerging planning policies will help to achieve the wider environmental, economic and social objectives of the LDP. The Local Development Plan Manual (WG, 2015), suggests that the SA should be an ‘integral element of every stage of the plan preparation’ (para 3.13).

**1.5** The European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations (2004) as amended (the SEA

regulations) require the ‘environmental assessment’ of certain plans and programmes prepared by local authorities, including LDPs. The aim of SEA is to provide high level of protection to the environment and to promote sustainable development by the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans or programmes.

**1.6** The Local Development Plan Manual (2015) states that for development plans the requirements of the SEA regulations are best incorporated into the SA (para 3.2.1). Such an integrated approach will help to avoid unnecessary confusion and duplication. The SA therefore incorporates the requirements of the SEA. Throughout this document and in the accompanying Appendices where reference is made to the term ‘SA’ it should therefore be taken to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive. In line with the Directive, the SA will give consideration to the likely environmental effects of the plan, including those of strategic alternatives. The SA also has a role to help identify ways of reducing potential adverse impacts through suitable mitigation measures.

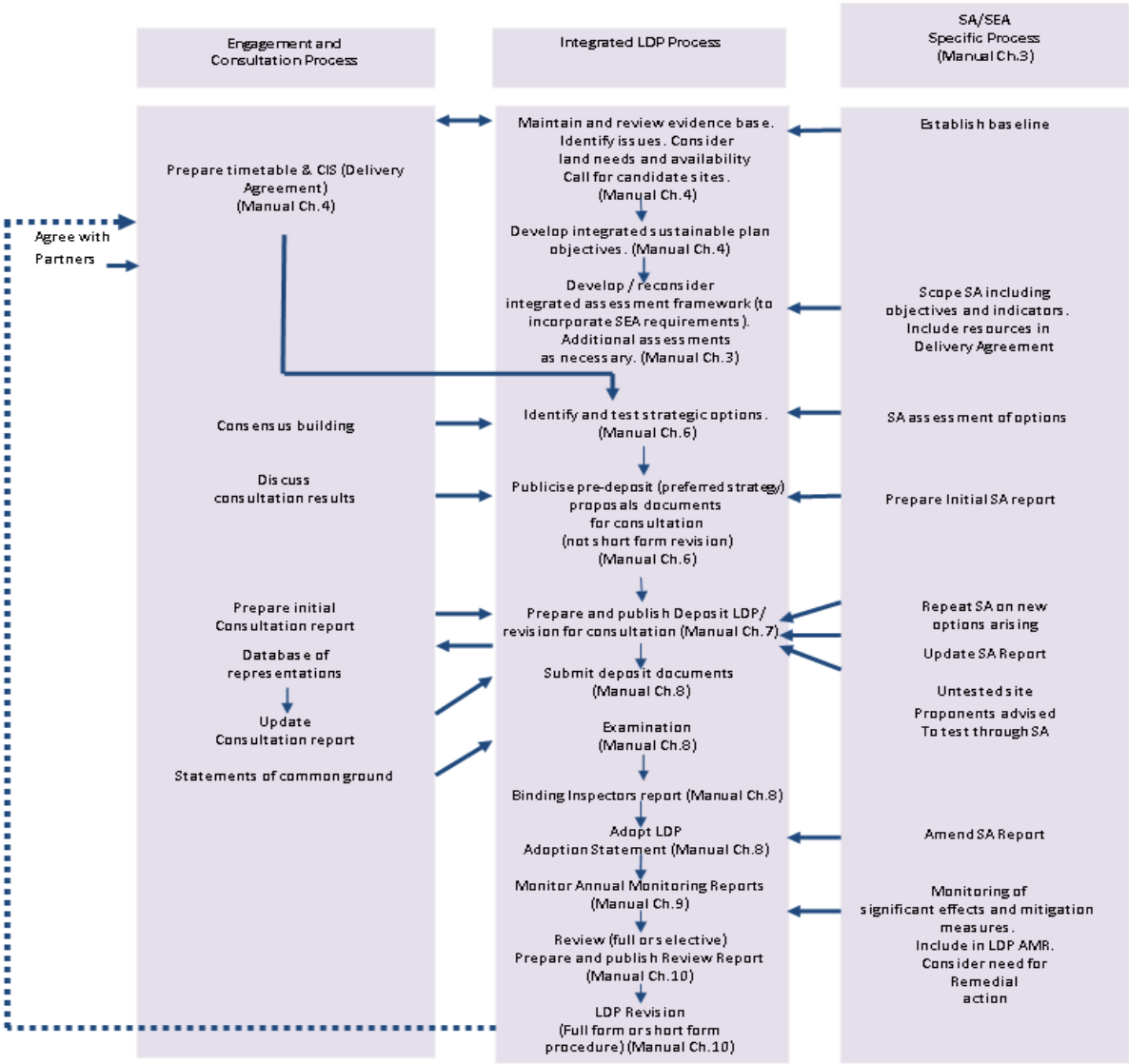
**1.7** The SA provides an enabling role in the promotion of sustainable development as an integrated part of the LDP preparation process. This includes an imperative role to consider the sustainability impacts of the LDP, including any proposed alternative approaches, at an early stage and throughout the LDP preparation. The SA can also provide the basis for monitoring the sustainability of the LDP during implementation as part of the wider LDP monitoring process. Figure 2.1 from the LDP Manual (2015) shows how LDP preparation, SA/SEA and consultation fit alongside

one another. It is important to note that SA is an iterative and on-going process and that stages and tasks in the SA process may be revisited and updated or revised as the plan develops, to take account of updated or new evidence as well as consultation responses. This is the approach to be followed in the SA for the revised Blaenau Gwent LDP.

**1.8** The outputs of the combined SA and SEA are sustainability reports that detail the appraisal process followed and include the results of impact assessments, together with recommendations on how the sustainability performance of the LDP could be improved.

**1.9** At the initial stage the sustainability report produced is the draft Scoping Report that sets out the background for the SA process that will be followed and considers the sustainability characteristics of the area.

### Main Stages of the LDP Process (Source: LDP Manual)



## Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

**1.10** The adopted Blaenau Gwent LDP is subject to a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required by the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations (2004) as amended (the SEA Regulations), as part of the SA of the Plan. Under the SEA Regulations, however, all proposed ‘minor modifications’ to existing plans require the Responsible Authority to determine, in consultation with the SEA Consultation Authorities, whether a SEA is required as a result of the modification being likely to have significant effects on the environment. The LDP Manual 2nd Edition (Welsh Government (WG), 2015) advises that as the term ‘minor modification’ is not statutorily defined, any review of an existing LDP (and thus any revisions to or replacement of it) should be subject to SEA screening to determine the need for a full SEA. If it were to be determined that a full SEA is not required, however, this would make little difference, as all likely effects in relation to the environmental topics prescribed within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations will still need to be assessed to present a robust assessment of the sustainability of the emerging revised LDP, as required separately under the 2004 Act.

**1.11** As the Council has made the decision to undertake a full revision of the LDP it is likely that the replacement LDP will not simply be subject to ‘minor modification’ but comprise policies and site allocations that are substantially different from those in the existing LDP and which have the potential to result in significant

effects on the environment. It is therefore the Council’s view that a formal SEA be undertaken as part of the SA for the revised LDP.

## The relationship between the LDP, integrated SA, the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment

**1.12** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act gained Royal Assent in April 2015. The Act strengthens existing governance arrangements for improving the well-being of Wales by ensuring that sustainable development is at the heart of government and public bodies. It aims to make a difference to the lives of people in Wales in relation to a number of well-being goals including improving health, culture, heritage and sustainable resource use. The Act provides the legislative framework for the preparation of Local Well-being Plans which will replace Single Integrated Plans. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies, including local authorities, to carry out sustainable development by contributing to the achievement of the seven well-being goals (as detailed in the table below).

**Table 1: Definition of Well-being of Future Generations Act Goals**

Goal	Description of the Goal
A Prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which



Goal	Description of the Goal
	generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A Resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A Healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit health are understood.
A More Equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.
A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A Globally Responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

**1.13** The Act also sets out five ways of working needed for public bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals: (1) Long-term; (2) Integration; (3) Involvement; (4) Collaboration; (5) Prevention. Given that sustainable development is the core underlying principle of the LDP and SA there are clear associations between the aspirations of both the LDP and the Act.

**1.14** The revised LDP will play a part in contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals for Wales, and as such it is important that the SA Framework ensures that LDP policies are tested and developed in a manner which looks to maximise the contribution they can make to the achievement of these goals. The first stage of developing the SA Framework is to develop objectives against which the revised LDP can be assessed. As such, the initial set of well-being objectives published by the Welsh Government in 2016 have been used as a starting point to structure the Scoping Report. However as these cover the period 2016 – 2021 and the Welsh Government is committed to reviewing them, these will need to be considered as the SA and revised LDP progress.

**1.15** Under the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, every Public Service Board in Wales must publish a Local Well-being Plan. The Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan was published in April 2018 and has clear links with the LDP and integrated SA where it relates to land use planning.

**1.16** The objectives for the Local Well-being Plan are indicated in the table below:



**Table 2: The Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Plan Objectives**

1	Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life...	Ensuring early years of future generations are healthy, happy, free from harm and ready to succeed.
2	Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities...	Creating safer communities, where people feel safe and have good social connections, are socially responsible and have a good cultural life.
3	Blaenau Gwent wants to look after and protect its environment...	Creating a vibrant area that lives in harmony with its natural environments, using resources in a fair and sustainable way.
4	Blaenau Gwent wants to forge new pathways to prosperity...	A place where people thrive and achieve their full learning and lifelong potential.
5	Blaenau Gwent wants to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play	A place where people live longer with better health, a place where healthy behaviours is the norm.

### Other appraisals incorporated into the SA

**1.17** As part of an integrated approach to the SA process, assessments will be made of the impacts of the Plan’s policies and proposals on human health, equalities and on the Welsh language. Each of these will be assessed alongside all the other sustainability and environmental issues, enabling the effects of the Plan to be fully assessed in detail and the findings taken into account in the

development of the Plan. As these key aspects will be considered as part of the evidence base and included in the SA Framework for the revised LDP, the following additional impact assessments will be addressed through the SA process:

- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA);
- Welsh Language; and
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

**1.18** By incorporating these into the SA process it provides a robust and thorough mechanism for identifying issues and opportunities, assessing impacts including cumulative and indirect effects, and undertaking monitoring in a holistic way.

### Will a Habitat Regulations Assessment be undertaken?

**1.19** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) (2010) (the Habitats Regulations) require that HRA is applied to all statutory land use plans in England and Wales. The purpose of the HRA is to assess whether the plans proposals would have any significant adverse effect on designated sites defined under Regulation 10 of the Habitat Directive; which includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

**1.20** The HRA should not be incorporated into the SA or SEA, it should run parallel to the processes.

**1.21** Though there are no European sites within the Local Planning Authority of Blaenau Gwent there is a requirement to ascertain whether there are European sites within neighbouring

authorities whose integrity may be adversely affected by a LDP. A HRA was prepared for the first LDP, the Council will be undertaking a further assessment of the revised LDP – details of the proposed approach LDP are provided separately within an initial HRA Screening Report.

### The SA Process

**1.22** The purpose of the integrated SA and SEA is to test the emerging revised LDP for its contribution towards sustainable development, and to identify where there may be impacts on achieving greater sustainability to help inform the decisions made on the emerging LDP.

**1.23** There are five main stages in conducting an SA that need to be integrated into the revised LDP preparation:

<b>Stage 1</b>	Scoping – setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline evidence and deciding on the scope.
<b>Stage 2</b>	Appraisal – developing and refining options and assessing effects.
<b>Stage 3</b>	Reporting – preparing the SA report.
<b>Stage 4</b>	Consulting – consulting on the preferred option of the development plan and the findings of the SA Report.
<b>Stage 5</b>	Monitoring – monitoring significant effects of implementing the development plan.

**1.24** The scoping stage is the first stage of the SA process, identifying the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA report. This stage provides a valuable opportunity to gain an understanding of the plan area in order that the process of SA can be well informed by a full appreciation and understanding of local circumstances. Central to this scoping process is giving opportunities to those with specialist knowledge of sustainability issues and the area to have an input in to the SA.

**1.25** This document, the draft Scoping Report, is produced as a consultation document to allow all those with an interest in the SA process to feedback on the issues covered.

### Structure of the SA Scoping Report

**1.26** This document reports the scoping stage of the SA process for the revised Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan. Following this introductory section 1 the report is structured into four further sections with two appendices:

- **Section 2** – this provides the policy context, setting out the key plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the revised Blaenau Gwent LDP.
- **Section 3** - this summarises some of the key sustainability issues that are considered to arise from an analysis of the collated baseline data together with the opportunities that the revised LDP will need to address.
- **Section 4** – this section focuses on the development of the SA framework and includes a review of the existing LDP SA

objectives, together with any amendments to the proposed SA objectives.

- **Section 5** - this sets out the proposed the SA Framework for the revised LDP
- **Section 6** – this sets out the next steps in the process, with a summary of the key SA tasks that will be undertaken together with the consultation details for this draft Scoping Report.
- **Appendix 1** – this provides a review of other plans, policies, programmes and strategies relevant to the LDP and sustainability objectives and suggests the ways that these can be taken into account during plan preparation.
- **Appendix 2** – this contains the baseline data for Blaenau Gwent. It is essential to provide an evidence base for considering environmental issues when establishing the impacts that a revised Local Development Plan (LDP) is likely to have on the existing situation in the County Borough.

## 2.0 Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

### Introduction

**2.1** In order to establish a clear scope for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), it is necessary (and a requirement of the SEA) to review and develop an understanding of the wider range of plans, policies and programmes that are relevant to the LDP. This includes International, European, National, Regional and Local level plans, policies and programmes. Summarising the aspirations of other relevant policies, plans and programmes promotes a systematic identification of the ways in which the LDP could help to fulfil them. The full list of plans, policies, and programmes reviewed is found in Appendix 1. The list is not exhaustive and does not provide a definitive account of their contents; however, it is considered that it provides a sufficient review of those relevant to the preparation of the revised LDP and identifies any social, economic, cultural and environmental objectives that should be considered within the SA.

**2.2** Each of the plans, policies, programmes and strategies were researched to develop an understanding of:

- The relevant objectives, targets and indicators; and
- The implications for the revised LDP and SA.

**2.3** Local planning authorities (LPA's) must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of LDP preparation in the context of strategic cross

boundary matters, and as such the surrounding development plans have also been included in the review. The implications of these development plans for the revised Blaenau Gwent LDP and SA will be considered at each SA stage to ensure that any identified issues remain relevant.

**2.4** The iterative nature of this work will ensure new plans, policies and programmes which are published as the revised LDP progresses can and will be taken into account.

### Key themes arising from the review

**2.5** There were many common themes identified in the review of plans, policies and programmes. Whilst specific results are contained in Appendix 1, Table 3 below summaries the key themes identified. These themes are also considered against the seven well-being goals and where they could make a contribution to the achievement of these goals.

**Table 3: Key Themes Resulting from the Review of Plans, Programmes, Policies and Strategies and Baseline Data**

Key Themes from the Review	Relevant Well-being Goals
<b>1. Population (socio economic issues)</b>	
Raise educational attainment and improve skills to help improve opportunities for life	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
Promote quality employment opportunities and economic activity	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
Promote economic growth, diversity and business competitiveness to raise prosperity for all	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A Globally Responsible Wales
Improve access to good quality housing to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent affordable home	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A Globally Responsible Wales
Create safe, sustainable, balanced and cohesive communities	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales

	A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
<b>2. Air</b>	
Reduce air pollution and maintain or seek improvements in air quality	A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>3. Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	
Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity interests, flora and fauna	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>4. Soil and Land</b>	
Safeguarding of soil resources, maximising the efficient use of land and the remediation of contaminated land	A Resilient Wales A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>5. Water</b>	
Protect and improve the quality and quantity of water resources.	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>6. Material Assets (Minerals and Waste)</b>	
Safeguarding of minerals and manage mineral extraction	A Resilient Wales A Globally Responsible Wales
Increase levels of reuse and recycling to achieve more sustainable waste management and reduce landfill	
<b>7. Human Health</b>	
Improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce health inequalities	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales

Increase the amount of recreational open space and protect and enhance the access to high quality open space	A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>8. Cultural Heritage</b>	
Protection, enhancement, conservation and preservation of heritage assets	A Prosperous Wales
Contribute towards the future well-being of the Welsh language	A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>9. Landscape</b>	
The protection and enhancement of designated landscapes, landscape character, landscape features and visual amenity	A Prosperous Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>10. Climatic Factors</b>	
Increasing the use of low carbon and renewable energy sources and resource efficiency	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales
The location of new development should avoid areas where risks of flooding are unacceptable and cannot be mitigated	A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales
Sustainable development that reduces the need to travel and promote active travel	A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales
New development is designed to adapt to the future effect of climate change	



## 3.0 Baseline Information and Identification of Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

### Introduction

**3.1** The collection of baseline data is a requirement of the SEA regulations. The collection of the data is essential in providing an evidence base for considering environmental issues when establishing the impacts that a revised Local Development Plan (LDP) is likely to have on the existing situation in the County Borough. It provides a baseline for predicting the effects of alternative LDP strategies at the strategic options stage and it provides a benchmark against which future monitoring can take place. The SEA Regulations (Schedule 2) require that information is gathered on *'...the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme'* and, *'...the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected'*.

### Baseline Information

**3.2** Understanding the characteristics of Blaenau Gwent's economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being is essential to understand the effects of a revised LDP. Characterising the environmental and sustainability baseline, issues and context is important in defining the framework for the SA. It involves the following elements:

- Characterising the current state of the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of Blaenau Gwent;

- Understanding future trends based on current trends and future projections that may impact on Blaenau Gwent's economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being; and
- Using this information to identify existing issues and opportunities which could be influenced by the revised LDP, recognising that whilst many of the issues will have land use implications the revised LDP will, in some instances, not be the best mechanism to address these issues.

**3.3** The SEA Regulations require that defined environmental issues are covered in the assessment process, these are:

- population
- air
- biodiversity
- flora
- fauna
- soil
- water
- material assets
- human health
- cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage
- landscape
- climatic factors
- the inter-relationship between the issues

**3.4** However, as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is encompassed within this process the issues to be covered need to be widened to include social and economic matters.

**3.5** Appendix 2 of this draft Scoping Report sets out the key information relating to Blaenau Gwent's environmental characteristics, population, economic characteristics and infrastructure. In accordance with SEA regulations, the Appendix reports on the unique aspects of Blaenau Gwent.

**3.6** The baseline data for Blaenau Gwent contained in Appendix 2 of this report is structured according to the seven well-being goals<sup>1</sup>

- A Prosperous Wales
- A Resilient Wales
- A Healthier Wales
- A More Equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language
- A Globally Responsible Wales

**3.7** Whilst there are many overlaps between the baseline sets and topics, each of the baseline topics identified in the SEA Regulations are represented.

**3.8** The following section summarises some of the key sustainability issues that are considered to arise from an analysis of this data together with the opportunities that the revised LDP will need to address. These are identified across the seven Wellbeing goals and ISA topic subheadings which stem from the baseline data (Appendix 2). These will be refined and updated alongside the emerging revised LDP as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

### A Prosperous Wales

#### Population - Employment and Economy

- Blaenau Gwent has the lowest GVA per head in Wales.
- Blaenau Gwent has the lowest percentage of working age population economically active and the largest percentage of the working age population who are economically inactive and not wanting a job compared to neighbouring authorities and the average for Wales.
- The level of unemployment for 20-24 and 16-19 year olds is higher than the Welsh average.
- Blaenau Gwent has the largest percentage of its working age population claiming key benefits. The rate of long term sickness is significantly higher than the all Wales level.
- Limited employment opportunities with a reliance on employment in manufacturing sector followed by wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and human health and social work activities. The rate of self-employed is notably lower than the all Wales level.
- Blaenau Gwent has a lower percentage of its working age population in the managers and professional occupations (standard occupation classification groups 1-3) than Wales has. In contrast Blaenau Gwent has the highest percentage of its working age population in the standard occupation classification groups 8-9 compared to Wales as a whole.
- The average gross weekly pay for full-time workers in Blaenau has increased by £130.30 since 2009, although the average

remains less in Blaenau Gwent when compared to Wales but it is higher than Newport or Caerphilly.

- Compared to neighbouring authorities and Wales Blaenau Gwent has relatively high levels of out commuting from the County Borough and low levels of people commuting into the authority .
- Blaenau Gwent performs well in terms of superfast broadband speeds but very poorly in terms of ultrafast and mean download speeds.
- Since the last Destination Management Plan the area has seen a growth of 7.2% visitors. These visitors have contributed an extra 10.7% into the local economy with 8.8% increase in those directly employed in tourism.
- Some of the County Borough's town centres are generally performing well in terms of vacancy rates whilst others less so.
- The percentage of working age population with no qualification is more than double that of Monmouthshire, and more than the Welsh average.
- The percentage of people qualified to NQF level 3 or above has increased over the period 2012 to 2017 although it remains less than the Welsh average.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *The revised LDP can encourage a diverse economy within the County Borough, specifically by ensuring that sufficient employment sites are located in attractive, accessible and sustainable locations and are of an appropriate size and type to meet the needs of the market/key economic sectors.*

- *The revised LDP can have some influence over commuting patterns through ensuring that more jobs are provided and wherever possible jobs and homes are located in close proximity to each other to provide greater opportunity for people to work locally.*
- *The revised LDP can contain policies to protect town centres from out of town developments and consider their evolving role/function.*
- *The revised LDP can contain policies that encourage tourism development while at the same time ensuring that the natural and built heritage that attracts visitors to the area is preserved and enhanced.*
- *The revised LDP can affect unemployment levels and the reluctance of certain sectors of the population to actively seek employment by encouraging growth in appropriate locations and of an appropriate type, and through a combination of regeneration activities including environmental and accessibility improvements and increased availability of training and education.*
- *Provision should be made for encouraging an increase in the percentage of the working age population attaining higher skill levels and enabling young people to reach their full potential.*
- *The revised LDP should encourage the working age population to settle in the area, thus it will be important to ensure that job opportunities are matched by access to housing that is suitable and affordable.*

- *Access to high speed internet can be a particular issue for those with low incomes. The revised LDP can help to address digital exclusion by seeking to support the delivery of high speed connections.*
- *The revised LDP has an opportunity to maximise the socio-economic benefits to the County that may accrue from the implementation of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and South East Wales Metro.*

## A Resilient Wales

### Air

- The air quality in Blaenau Gwent is good

#### **Opportunities for the revised LDP to address**

*The revised LDP can also take measures to ensure that the location of new development does not exacerbate air quality conditions in existing areas that are monitored or create issues in other areas.*

### Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

- There is a wide range of habitats in Blaenau Gwent. The most significant habitats include: 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest; 11 Local Nature Reserves; and 148 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, as well as numerous European protected species. These natural assets need to be conserved, enhanced and protected from the potential effects of new development.

- There is a need to safeguard and enhance the green infrastructure in the LDP area and the connectivity of the local environment.

***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *Internationally and nationally designated sites and protected species already have a high level of protection under national law and, therefore, should not be subject to significant harm. The revised LDP should ensure that new development does not cause harm to these interests and that where appropriate and necessary mitigation measures are taken to avoid any such adverse effects.*
- *The revised LDP can contain policies that protect and enhance the green infrastructure network in the County Borough. Green infrastructure can help to deliver multiple benefits across Blaenau Gwent, including air quality, water quality, flood risk and soil quality as well as positively impacting on health and well-being of the population.*
- *It will be necessary to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment to ensure any cumulative effects arising from the revised LDP through development in Blaenau Gwent and adjoining areas does not result in harm to internationally designated conservation areas.*

**Soil**

- Deep peat soils are one of Blaenau Gwent’s critical natural assets. Peat supports the largest amount of soil carbon per unit area of any soils and when in good condition in wetlands play a

very important role in climate change by locking up carbon from the atmosphere.

- There is no best and most versatile agricultural land in the County Borough.
- The Blaenau Gwent area is predominantly natural land (67%), with only 20% of total land area built on, 5% green urban and 9% farmland. This is likely to present constraints to development on the basis of landscape and biodiversity value, which will either increase demand for brownfield land in the County Borough; or alternatively act as a deterrent to developers who may seek to develop less constrained sites in neighbouring areas.
- Notwithstanding the above, the average percentage of housing completions on brownfield land over the past 12 years is 81%.
- Blaenau Gwent has a long history of heavy industry including coal and mineral extraction and iron and steel manufacture. These industries were spread throughout the area and as a result there is likely to be a widespread dispersion of the contaminants associated with this sector of manufacturing.

***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *The identification of development sites in the LDP can enable the commercial reuse of brownfield land, including contaminated sites; and limit the loss of valuable greenfield land to development. Such land allocations will need to be informed by the robust understanding of the financial pressures of commercial development in order to ensure that all allocations have a real prospect of development in the revised LDP period.*

### Water Quality

- In Blaenau Gwent there are waterbodies classed as good. However most are 'moderate' or 'poor'. None are 'bad'.
- The six reservoirs in Blaenau Gwent are classed as moderate, and are primarily failing because they are artificial/heavily modified waterbodies.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *The revised LDP needs to guide location and character of development in order to avoid harm to either surface or ground water quality.*

### Material Assets – Minerals and Waste

- Although Blaenau Gwent is making progress in the amount of municipal waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting the amount is the lowest when compared to surrounding neighbouring authorities and the Welsh average. There are therefore still improvements that need to be made if statutory requirements are to be met.
- Blaenau Gwent lies on the north eastern edge of the South Wales coalfield. The Coal Measures underlie the majority of the County Borough. The coal bearing rocks are overlain in the south of the County Borough by Pennant Sandstone, predominantly the Hughes and Grovesend Beds. There is an outcrop of carboniferous limestone on the edge of the coalfield in the north of the County Borough. There is a need to safeguard these resources in order to make an appropriate contribution to the sustainable supply of aggregates to the South Wales economy as a whole.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *The LDP will need to promote a holistic approach to waste management. This includes the development of a new waste management facility, which should include waste treatment and recycling. In addition there will be a need to address waste production at source through improved sustainable design of buildings and the provision of domestic sorting and composting facilities.*
- *The revised LDP can ensure that mineral resources are safeguarded and exploited in a sustainable fashion that enables Blaenau Gwent to meet its obligation to make a contribution to the requirements of the South Wales region.*

### A Healthier Wales

#### Human Health

- Figures relating to the teenage conception rate in Blaenau Gwent was much higher than the Welsh average in 2001-3 The figures have now decreased and are generally in line with the Welsh average.
- The average life expectancy for both males and females in Blaenau Gwent is generally increasing. However life expectancy in Blaenau Gwent remains well below the Wales average.
- Blaenau Gwent has the lowest percentages of residents assessing their general health as very good health and good health when compared to all other local authorities. This is reflective of residents' lifestyles as Blaenau Gwent has the higher proportion of smokers and e cigarette users than Wales.

In terms of obesity levels, Blaenau Gwent has a higher percentage when compared to the Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Wales as a whole.

- Blaenau Gwent had the highest proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived 50% in Wales for the health domain.
- Most of Blaenau Gwent's residents have good access to natural green space, which can have positive effects on health and well-being. There is a need to protect and enhance this access to high quality open space.
- The amount of recreational open space has decreased in the County Borough since 2009 from 1.11 ha to 0.99 ha. There is a data gap in terms of assessing the efficiency of these recreation and open space areas.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP***

- *The design of the built environment can play an important role in creating a healthier Blaenau Gwent, many aspects of which are considered under other headings in this report, such as housing, active travel, development patterns, green infrastructure, flood risk, climate change, biodiversity and air quality.*
- *Good housing and access to well paid jobs and the potential consequential impact on living standards and health are important factors that can be addressed through the revised LDP.*
- *The revised LDP can affect the provision of public open space and recreation by protecting, where necessary, existing provision and requiring new development to make a contribution to the provision of new facilities.*

## **A More Equal Wales**

### **Population**

- Historically, the overall population in Blaenau Gwent has fallen since it peaked in 1921. More recently the rate of decline has been more stable, falling by just 3.4% in the 20 year period between the 1991 Census and 2011 Census.
- From 2001 to 2007 natural change played a significant part in population loss. However, the biggest contributor to change is net internal migration with losses of 100-300 on a number of occasions. The overall trend has changed from large net losses (over 600 a year) to increases of 100 a year. The population of Blaenau Gwent appears to be stabilising.
- The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales. Blaenau Gwent's population density is similar to neighbouring areas, all of which are significantly above the Welsh average.
- The latest Welsh Government population projections show a demographic profile in Blaenau Gwent that, if current trends continue the percentage of the population aged 0-15 will decrease by 2% by 2039. This is in contrast to the expected increase across Wales overall. The population aged 16-64 years is expected to decrease by 16% by 2039 which is of significant concern; and the over 65 population is expected to increase by 2039 in line with expectations across Wales.



### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP***

- Amongst other things, trends in age structure suggest that the LDP should take a role in strengthening the local economy, ensuring an appropriate economic base to enable people to live and work in the County and ensuring that demand for homes is satisfied, providing good quality affordable homes for those who need them.
- The revised LDP can contain policies that ensure that the housing provision is suitable for people of all ages, to create an equitable society, but also make an efficient use of housing.
- The revised LDP must decide on the level of growth appropriate for Blaenau Gwent and the spatial distribution of this growth.

## **A Wales of Cohesive Communities**

### **Multiple Deprivation**

- Blaenau Gwent had the highest percentage of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales, for income, education and community safety.

### **Housing**

- House prices in Blaenau Gwent are low compared to the Welsh average and neighbouring authorities. This can be interpreted that Blaenau Gwent is a less desirable location in which to live than other neighbouring areas, which could be a consequence of a number of factors including perceived employment opportunities, quality of housing stock, environmental quality and lack of suitable accommodation.

- Although Blaenau Gwent is one of the most affordable areas in Wales, there remains an affordability issue given the employment characteristics of the borough such as lower paid jobs and high dependence of people on benefits for example.
- 52% of the current housing stock in Blaenau Gwent comprises of terraced properties constructed pre1919, although there is considerable variation between areas.
- House building completions in Blaenau Gwent have been erratic since 2006 and fall well below the expected LDP figures so far having only built 39% of what is expected.
- Since adoption of the Plan Blaenau Gwent has failed to achieve a 5 year land supply.
- The latest Welsh Government housing projections indicate that the number of households in south east Wales will increase by 8.4% (46,500) between 2018 and 2033. Blaenau Gwent will have to accommodate a share of this growth both to fulfil its regional obligations as part of the Cardiff Capital Region and to ensure the viability of its own communities by addressing affordability and demographic issues.
- In 2015/16, the rate of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented (for at least 6 months per 10,000 households) was 51%. This is high compared to other local authorities in the region, where the lowest was 26%. The Wales average for the same period is 35%. This needs to be closely monitored to avoid a reduction in the positive performance of Blaenau Gwent in preventing homelessness.
- The revised LDP should seek to ensure that the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community are met.

### Crime

- Total crime in Blaenau Gwent has increased by 6% over the calendar year 2016. . The 4,895 offences account for 12.5% of all crime in Gwent and translate to a crime rate of 70.96 crimes per 1000 population which remains above Gwent's average (68.33).
- Blaenau-Gwent saw a significant reduction in antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents during 2016 i.e. - 15% or 546 fewer incidents.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- The revised LDP should provide for a range of homes that meets the needs of the population and are high quality, warm, secure and energy efficient.
- The revised LDP should seek to ensure that the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community are met.
- The revised LDP will affect the amount of affordable housing to be provided by both deciding on overall levels of growth and by setting thresholds and proportions to determine the amount of this residential development that is affordable. It can influence the type, tenure and nature of housing built within the County Borough.
- The revised LDP should seek to capitalise on infrastructure developments so that Blaenau Gwent is an area of choice with full access to good quality leisure and lifestyle amenities.

### Accessibility

- During weekdays and on Saturdays, the current frequency of bus services between hubs varies between 2 and 4 per hour

which is considered a limited service. Sunday service also remains limited.

- A further issue identified in the Well-being plan engagement related to the lack of bus routes to the main employment areas in Blaenau Gwent.
- Improvements have been made to rail provision, plans are underway to increase the frequency of rail services in Ebbw Vale and Llanhilleth to two trains per hour.

#### ***Opportunities for the revised LDP to address***

- *Being able to access services, jobs and markets is a key requirement for an area to be successful. The revised LDP can help to develop a transport network which improves connectivity within and outside of Blaenau Gwent.*

### A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

#### **Cultural heritage**

- Statistics show that whilst the Welsh language does not currently play a significant role in the County, with less than 10% of residents able to speak Welsh, this figure has risen since the 2001 Census (1.7%).
- Blaenau Gwent has a rich cultural heritage, including a conservation area, a historic park and garden, 13 scheduled ancient monuments, 2 historic landscape designations and 53 listed buildings. There is a need to preserve, protect and enhance these cultural assets.

### **Opportunities for the Revised LDP to address**

- *The revised LDP needs to ensure that it takes into account equality issues in its policies and ensures that the Welsh language is safeguarded and supported.*
- *The revised LDP needs to take into account the need to preserve the historic and cultural heritage of Blaenau Gwent.*
- *There are opportunities for the revised LDP to provide a framework to recognise, protect, promote and enhance heritage assets which could help to deliver tourism and economic growth.*
- *The revised LDP can play a key role in 'place-making' by promoting good quality sustainable design that will enable new development to respect and enhance the existing distinctive character of Blaenau Gwent.*

### **Landscape**

- Blaenau Gwent has a rich and diverse landscape bordering the Brecon Beacons National Park, and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site.
- Special Landscape Areas within Blaenau Gwent cover a total area of approximately 7,614 hectares, accounting for approximately 70% of the total local planning area within Blaenau Gwent area.
- There is a need to protect and enhance the landscape assets of the County Borough, protecting the key views and visual amenity of both the settlements and the wider countryside. As these assets can extend beyond the boundary of the LDP area this protection incorporates cross-boundary landscapes.

### **Opportunities for the Revised LDP to address**

- *The revised LDP needs to protect high quality landscapes throughout the County Borough and the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site.*

## **A Globally Responsible Wales**

### **Climatic Factors**

- As in the rest of the country carbon emissions are continuing to rise, with emissions from housing, and road transport the main contributing factors. There is a need to minimise the emissions of air pollutants.
- Blaenau Gwent's water supply is primarily from the three small reservoirs – Shon Sheffery and Upper and Lower Carno. In dry weather the smaller upland reservoirs can experience storage declines therefore abstractions from the river Usk and Wye can be transferred to relieve the demand. This uses a lot of energy and is not wholly sustainable in the long term.
- There has been an increase in the generation of renewable and low carbon energy generation recently with 15.208 MW of renewable energy generation projects being installed and 2.79 MW of low carbon energy developments being installed between 2013 and 2017.
- Blaenau Gwent is starting from a good position as it has the lowest carbon and ecological footprint of the neighbouring areas and is also below the whole of Wales average.
- Parts of the County, those areas adjacent to major water courses are vulnerable to flooding, a risk that is increasing through

climate change and rising sea levels. 4,203 of people are affected by the risk of flooding.

***Opportunities for the Revised LDP to address***

- *The revised LDP can seek to minimise any polluting effects that might arise from new development in the County by encouraging appropriate patterns of development that seek to reduce the usage of private vehicles and to allow for increased walking, cycling and use of transport.*
- *The revised LDP can set targets to meet requirements and contain policies that encourage renewable and low carbon energy generation in appropriate locations and encourage the incorporation of appropriate renewable energy schemes within new developments.*
- *Concerns about climate change require that efforts are made to reduce the reliance on the private car and the consequent impact of carbon dioxide emissions. The revised LDP needs to consider appropriate patterns of development that promote a safe, efficient, accessible and sustainable transport system that provides opportunities for walking and cycling and encourages active travel.*
- *The revised LDP has a role to play in terms of reducing the risk from present day flood risk, as well as in relation to climate change adaptation and resilience.*
- *The revised LDP needs to guide the location of development away from flood risk areas or to fully mitigate any potential flood risks taking into full consideration the potential effects of climate change.*

## 4.0 Development of the SA Framework

### Introduction

**4.1** In order for a successful sustainability appraisal to be carried out it is essential to set out a standard definition of what is required from sustainable development in Blaenau Gwent. This can then be used as a constant against which LDP performance is assessed. The definition is set out in the form of a 'sustainability framework' for the SA of the LDP.

**4.2** This section identifies a proposed SA framework to assess the Likely Significant Effects from the emerging revised LDP. The framework is intended to show the diverse range of issues that are encompassed by the term 'sustainable development', with an objective set for each issue that shows what type of change would represent a movement towards sustainable development.

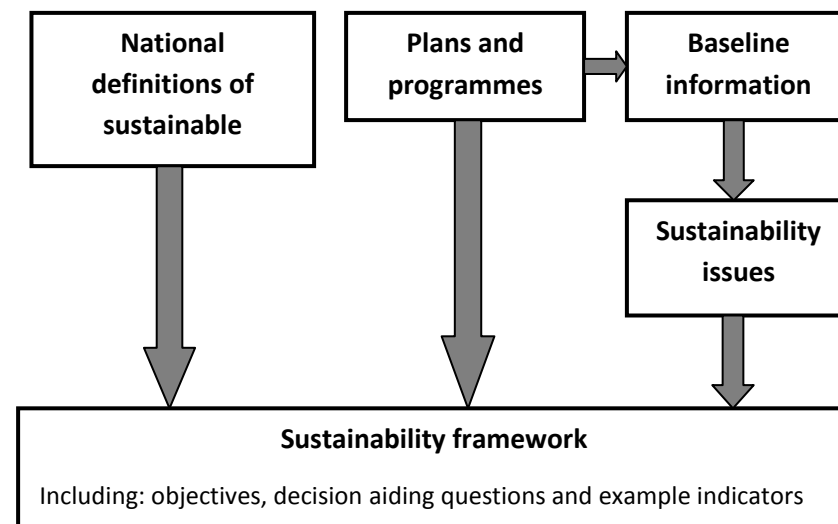
**4.3** The development of a sustainability framework is an essential output of the SA scoping exercise using information gathered on baseline characteristic issues and other plans and programmes to tailor a sustainable development definition to Blaenau Gwent's needs.

**4.4** The starting point for sustainability objectives is a basic understanding of sustainable development. The Well-being of Future Generations Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their

duty under the Act. In the Act, any reference to a public body doing something "in accordance with the sustainable development

principle" means that they'...*must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'. (Part 2 'improved well-being section 5 'the sustainable development principle, paragraph (1)').

### Approach undertaken to develop the sustainability framework



**4.5** There is the opportunity for this framework to be further refined through the process of targeted consultation on this draft

Scoping Report. Following this consultation period any responses received on the framework in Table 6 can be taken into account, and amendments and additions made where appropriate.

### Review of the Existing LDP SA Objectives

**4.6** While not specifically required by the Directive, SEA objectives are a recognised way of considering the environmental effects of a plan or programme and comparing the effects of alternatives. Another key element of the SA process is to consider whether the SA framework for the SA (incorporating SEA) of the first Blaenau Gwent LDP remains valid or if a revised framework is needed to allow the revised LDP SA to proportionately and effectively respond to the key sustainability issues identified in section 3. Table 4 lists the SA objectives of the existing Blaenau Gwent LDP framework and considers their continuing validity.

**Table 4: Review of the Existing Blaenau Gwent LDP SA Objectives**

Blaenau Gwent Existing LDP SA Objective		Assessment of Continuing Validity of the Existing LDP SA Objective
<b>Economic</b>		
1.	To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the economy	Given the evidence set out in the baseline data, the SA objective remains valid and rightly concentrates on promoting economic growth and strengthening and diversifying the economy. However the objective fails to acknowledge the fact that Blaenau Gwent has the lowest GVA per head in Wales and the average earnings are less than Wales as a whole therefore the objective should include wording reflecting increasing prosperity for Blaenau Gwent residents. Consideration also needs to be given to the regional aspirations and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, South Wales Metro and a future Strategic Development Plan for the South East Wales region. Consideration needs to be given in the SA framework to how a revised LDP will take account of these factors.
2.	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities	This SA objective remains valid and rightly concentrates on increasing levels of local employment and ensuring distribution of opportunities.
3.	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	The SA objective remains valid given the submission of the renewal of outline planning permission on the Motor Resort Wales site which would, if approved have significant economic benefits for the region.
4.	To enhance the vitality and viability of town centres	An identified key sustainability issue is that for some of the town centres the vacancy rates are higher than the national average and there is a need to increase retail spend in the County Borough. Therefore this remains a valid indicator.
<b>Social</b>		
5.	To meet identified housing needs	The SA objective usefully focuses on meeting housing needs however, no details are provided to define the needs (for example number, quality, types, tenure, size etc) meaning that individual decision making questions are needed to address each form of housing need individually. Given the importance placed within PPW on planning for housing delivery, it will be critical for the SA framework for the revised LDP to include a SA objective regarding meeting housing needs.
6.	To improve the quality of Blaenau Gwent's housing stock	The baseline data suggests that there has been significant improvement in the quality of housing stock in particular in Registered Social Landlord properties. Therefore it is not necessary to include an objective



<b>Blaenau Gwent Existing LDP SA Objective</b>		<b>Assessment of Continuing Validity of the Existing LDP SA Objective</b>
		on improving the quality of housing stock, however there is a need to ensure that sufficient good quality houses are provided. Given the emphasis of the draft PPW 10 on sustainable placemaking, there is also considered the need to include reference to the delivery of housing in sustainable locations.
7.	To secure the delivery and maintenance of quality affordable housing	The validity of the maintenance element of the SA objective is questioned due to the significant improvement in the quality of housing stock as mentioned above. However the delivery of affordable housing remains a relevant issue based on the low level of highly skilled employment, the average earnings and the dependence on key benefits.
8.	To improve educational attainment and increase skill levels	This SA objective remains valid, although there has been an improvement it remains an issue in Blaenau Gwent.
9.	To improve accessibility to education, leisure, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community	This SA objective remains relevant. However the SA objective could be refined to avoid listing all the different sectors, instead the wording of jobs, services and facilities would cover all that is currently listed. The SA objective in its current form fails to address the promotion of active travel and sustainability as this is covered in objective 12 below. Therefore it is more appropriate for objective 12 to be covered in this objective. In addition consideration could also be given to non-transport accessibility issues such as improving high quality digital connectivity and utilities.
10.	To promote community health, social care and well-being	The SA objective remains valid and rightly focuses on promoting community health, social care and well-being. To ensure that the SA takes account of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and incorporates the Well-being and Health Impact Assessments as part of the SA process the SA framework should include a broader interpretation of health and well-being, capturing issues such as mental health, multiple deprivation and community safety.
11.	To reduce crime, social disorder and fear of crime	The issue of crime remains a relevant issue, however it is questioned whether a separate objective is required on community safety or whether this could be subsumed under health and well-being
12.	To encourage modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport	See commentary under objective 9 above.
<b>Environmental</b>		
13.	To protect and enhance biodiversity across Blaenau Gwent	The SA objective remains valid. However it fails to acknowledge geodiversity which is an issue for Blaenau Gwent. To address more fully the identified key sustainability issues and to ensure that the SA takes account of the Environment (Wales) Act (2016) the SA Framework should include reference to how

Blaenau Gwent Existing LDP SA Objective		Assessment of Continuing Validity of the Existing LDP SA Objective
		the revised LDP will safeguard and enhance green infrastructure and ecological connectivity in the LDP area.
14.	To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Blaenau Gwent and their settings	The SA objective remains valid. However it should more broadly cover the historic environment and cultural assets. In addition recent guidance now requires that the SA process explicitly assesses the likely impacts of emerging LDPs on the welsh language. The SA Framework for the revised LDP should be broadened to capture the cultural and historic significance of the Welsh language.
15.	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss in biodiversity	The SA objective remains valid and relevant.
16.	To conserve soil resources and their quality	The safeguarding of soil resources remains a relevant and valid issue.
17.	To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide	It is considered that a more standalone clearer climate change objective should be included in the SA Framework for the LDP Review. This would allow a holistic assessment of all climate change impacts and implications of the emerging replacement LDP to be carried out.
18.	To reduce waste generation and maximise reuse and recycling	The SA objective remains valid and relevant given the lower levels of recycling rates. However, the need to develop a circular economy and to implement the waste hierarchy should be covered.
19.	To maintain current air quality	This SA objective remains relevant and valid given that the air quality is good in Blaenau Gwent and there is a need to maintain the level.
20.	To maintain current low levels of vulnerability of all development to flooding	An objective in relation to flood risk is relevant, however the wording of the current objective is not clear therefore some amendment to the wording is required.
21.	To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources	The monitoring framework for the existing SA has failed to meaningfully monitor this objective therefore consideration should be given to subsuming this objective within another.
22.	To increase energy efficiency and generation and use of renewable energy across the County Borough	This SA objective remains valid and relevant, however it fails to take account of low carbon energy sources and so should be updated to reflect this.

<b>Blaenau Gwent Existing LDP SA Objective</b>		<b>Assessment of Continuing Validity of the Existing LDP SA Objective</b>
23.	To conserve and enhance surface and ground water quality	This SA objective has a narrow focus and should more broadly reflect the need to protect and enhance the water environment and water resources.
24.	Protect the quality and character of the landscape and enhance where necessary	To protect the quality and character of the landscape remains a relevant and valid issue.

**4.7** From the review above it can be seen that the objectives in the first LDP mostly remain largely relevant and valid. However, it is considered that there is a need to refine the number and structure of the objectives and take account of contextual changes since the LDP adoption.

**4.8** In terms of number, currently there are 24 SA objectives, of which several relate to one topic area, for example for housing there are 3 objectives. It is considered that a better approach is for there to be one objective relating to the topic therefore where there are multiple objectives it is proposed to merge these to form one objective.

**4.9** In terms of structure, the SA framework for the first LDP divided the objectives under the headings of social, economic and environmental. However as there is significant interrelationship with the objectives under these three areas, it is proposed that the structure of the objectives is developed around topic headings relating to the SA/SEA regulations, where possible.

**4.10** In terms of contextual changes since the LDP adoption, the emerging regional situation with regards to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and South Wales Metro needs to be considered. Issues such as demographic challenges, affordability, the dual economy, green economy and digital accessibility have achieved greater prominence since Plan adoption in 2014.

## Proposed SA Objectives for the Revised LDP

**4.11** The proposed SA objectives for the revision of the LDP will help to show whether the objectives of the Plan are beneficial for the environment, to compare the environmental effects of alternatives, or, where required, to suggest improvements. The objectives have been developed through a review of the plans, programmes and policies in Appendix 1 which resulted in the identification of key themes as set out in Table 3, the analysis of the baseline data in Appendix 2 and the identification of the key issues and opportunities in section 3 and a review of the existing LDP objectives (Table 4).

**Table 5: Proposed SA Objectives for the Revised LDP**

<b>Blaenau Gwent Headline Topic</b>		<b>Proposed SA Objective</b>
1.	Economic Growth and Town Centres	To promote economic growth and maximise the economic contribution of the area to the Cardiff City Region, strengthening and diversifying the economy, enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and increasing prosperity for all.
2.	Employment, Skills and Education	To increase levels of local employment and ensure distribution of opportunities, whilst improving educational attainment and increasing skill levels.
3.	Tourism	To enable the development of a strong tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer.
4.	Housing	To provide a sufficient quantity of good quality market and affordable homes in sustainable locations to meet identified needs.
5.	Equality and Social Inclusion	To reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion; and promote community cohesion.
6.	Accessibility	To improve access for all to the jobs, services and facilities they need whilst supporting a reduction in the use of private transport by promoting active travel and encouraging modal shift to sustainable transport, and improving access to high quality digital communications and utilities.
7.	Air Quality	To maintain current air quality.
8.	Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soils	To conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests across Blaenau Gwent including improving green infrastructure provision and safeguarding soil resources.
9.	Land	To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss in biodiversity.
10.	Water	To conserve, protect and enhance the water environment, water quality and water resources.
11.	Materials, Minerals and Waste	To promote the circular economy by reducing waste generation and maximising reuse and recycling, ensuring the use of natural resources and the provision of an adequate supply of minerals.
12.	Health , well-being and security	To improve the health and well-being of the population including physical and mental health, social well-being and community safety .
13.	Cultural Heritage	To conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets, including the use of the

<b>Blaenau Gwent Headline Topic</b>		<b>Proposed SA Objective</b>
		Welsh language.
14.	Sustainable Placemaking	To enhance design quality to create great places for people.
15.	Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape.
16.	Flood Risk	To reduce and manage the risk of flooding.
17.	Climate Change	To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through increasing energy efficiency and generation and use of low carbon and renewable energy sources.

## 5.0 Integrated SA Framework

### Proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Revised LDP

**5.1** The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework tries to identify those matters of environmental, economic and social capital that are basic to achieving more sustainable development. The SA Framework in Table 6 below identifies a sustainability objective that clarifies what is being sought from development that would represent a movement towards greater sustainability. The diverse range of issues covered demonstrates the complexity and scope of issues that need to be addressed in seeking more sustainable development.

**5.2** The SA objectives are explained through an indicative set of decision aiding questions. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list but simply aim to add clarity to the objective by defining the measures a revised LDP could take to achieving more sustainable development.

**5.3** The SA Framework also identifies possible indicators that could be developed into the LDP monitoring framework to monitor the sustainable implementation of the LDP. These indicators express a 'direction of change' that the Plan could bring about to make a positive step towards achieving more sustainable development. At this stage they are only examples of the type of indicator that may be suitable for monitoring. Many are based on the existing SA indicators for the first LDP, others are on the

information from the baseline data, whilst others are left more broadly to identify matters which could be gathered in the future. In some instances it is not possible to identify an indicator, reasons for this include where there is no reliable way of gathering data on an issue as it is more qualitative than quantitative, or where an indicator is of no use as the reasons for change are more likely to be attributable to the implementation of strategies other than the LDP. As the revised LDP emerges it will be necessary to prepare a set of indicators to monitor implementation, by including sustainability indicators in the monitoring system it will ensure that monitoring for sustainability is an integral part of monitoring and review procedures for the LDP.

**5.4** The SA framework has been developed using the scoping process that has been completed to date. This includes:

- The baseline data collection that has helped to identify the main sustainability issues facing the County Borough so that these can be incorporated into the SA framework as objectives. In addition the baseline information has been used to develop potential indicators for monitoring.
- The review of plans, policies and programmes has helped to find other sustainability objectives for the area that this sustainability appraisal will need to recognise and incorporate into the framework.

**5.5** There is an opportunity for this framework to be further refined through the process of public consultation on this draft

Scoping Report. Following the 5 week consultation period any responses received on the framework in Table 6 below can be taken into account, and amendments and additions made where appropriate.



**Table 6: Proposed SA Framework**

Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
1.	<p><b>Economic Growth and Town Centres</b> To promote economic growth and maximise the economic contribution of the area to the Cardiff City Region, strengthening and diversifying the economy, enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and increasing prosperity for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present opportunities to attract and provide a sufficient range of high quality and accessible employment land to facilitate the sustainable expansion of new jobs?</li> <li>• Help to diversify the local economy?</li> <li>• Encourage inward investment and sustainable expansion of resident businesses?</li> <li>• Support innovation and new enterprises?</li> <li>• Present opportunities to support and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres?</li> <li>• Present opportunities to increase retail spend in the borough?</li> <li>• Maximise the economic benefits from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and a future Strategic Development Plan for the South East Wales region</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of allocated employment land delivered: +</li> <li>• Employment by sector: +</li> <li>• Percentage of working age people who are self-employed: +</li> <li>• Amount of major retail, office and leisure development delivered: +</li> <li>• Average gross weekly pay for full time workers: +</li> <li>• Annual vacancy rate in town centres: -</li> <li>• Retail spend in the County Borough: +</li> <li>• Proportion of Comparison and Convenience retail uses in the town centres: +</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Employment, Skills and Education</b> To increase levels of local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to employment especially for local people?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of residents working in area of residence: +</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
	employment and ensure distribution of opportunities, whilst improving educational attainment and increasing skill levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase and diversify employment opportunities?</li> <li>• Enhance opportunities for education and lifelong learning?</li> <li>• Improve educational attainment and skills levels, especially within the working age population?</li> </ul>	A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of residents working in area of residence: +</li> <li>• Percentage of working age population who are economically active: +</li> <li>• Percentage of working age population who are economically inactive: -</li> <li>• Percentage of working age population not wanting a job: -</li> <li>• Proportion of working age population claiming benefits: -</li> <li>• Percentage of employment by standard occupation classification: + in higher classifications</li> <li>• Percentage of working age population with no qualifications: -</li> <li>• Percentage of working age population qualified to NQF level 3: +</li> <li>• Amount of learning infrastructure delivered: +</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Tourism</b> To enable the further development of a tourism economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present opportunities to develop Blaenau Gwent as a tourist destination?</li> </ul>	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of revenue generated by the tourist industry: +</li> <li>• Number of day visitors: +</li> <li>• Number of stay visitors: +</li> <li>• Number of tourism developments delivered: +</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives	Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
		thriving Welsh language A Globally Responsible Wales	
4.	<p><b>Housing</b> To provide a sufficient quantity of good quality market and affordable homes in sustainable locations to meet identified needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present opportunities to increase delivery of housing to meet the range of identified needs?</li> <li>Help to reduce homelessness?</li> <li>Increase mix, range and affordability of housing?</li> <li>Provide adequate pitches and plots required for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people?</li> <li>Provide opportunities to meet housing needs to enable people to remain in Blaenau Gwent?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population level of Blaenau Gwent: +</li> <li>Number of households: +</li> <li>Net number of additional affordable and general market dwellings built: +</li> <li>Percentage of vacant properties: -</li> <li>Average house price to income ratio: -</li> <li>Provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation to meet identified demand: +</li> <li>Number of homeless people: -</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Equality and Social Inclusion</b> To reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce poverty and social exclusion?</li> <li>Promote social cohesion and integration?</li> <li>Reduce fuel poverty?</li> <li>Offer the potential for investment, regeneration or renewal in areas experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Index of Multiple Deprivation: -</li> <li>Megawatt hours of domestic gas and electricity consumption</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
6.	<p><b>Accessibility</b> To improve access for all to the jobs, services and facilities they need whilst supporting a reduction in the use of private transport by promoting active travel and encouraging modal shift to sustainable transport, and improving access to high quality digital communications and utilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase accessibility to jobs, services and facilities?</li> <li>• Improve connectivity within Blaenau Gwent and to other areas?</li> <li>• Reduce car dependencies and encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of travel for people and freight?</li> <li>• Support the increased uptake of active travel?</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility and capacity and safety of the transport network?</li> <li>• Enhance the frequency, quality and integration of public transport?</li> <li>• Enhance the provision of high quality communications infrastructure?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and distribution of LSOAs in bottom 10% of most deprived in terms of access to services: <b>nc</b></li> <li>• Frequency of bus between hubs and to employment areas: <b>+</b></li> <li>• Frequency of rail services: <b>+</b></li> <li>• The percentage of the total length of rights of way in Blaenau Gwent that are easy to use by the general public: <b>+</b></li> <li>• No. and value of planning contributions secured for improvements in public transport, walking and cycling</li> <li>• Digital connectivity in the area: <b>+</b></li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>Air Quality</b> To maintain current air quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain or improve air quality?</li> <li>• Prevent and reduce emissions of harmful pollutants?</li> </ul>	<p>A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background air pollution: <b>-</b></li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
8.	<p><b>Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soils</b></p> <p>To conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests across Blaenau Gwent including improving green infrastructure provision and safeguarding soil resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an effect on nationally or locally designated sites?</li> <li>• Safeguard against habitat loss or fragmentation?</li> <li>• Improve access to nature and greenspace?</li> <li>• Present opportunities to enhance or manage important habitats or species and or provide a net gain?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance important soil resources?</li> <li>• Remediate known contamination of land and groundwater?</li> <li>• Protect or enhance protected trees or important woodland areas?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales</p> <p>A Resilient Wales</p> <p>A Healthier Wales</p> <p>A Wales of Cohesive Communities</p> <p>A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of developments which have an adverse effect on European sites: <b>nc</b></li> <li>• Area of SSSI lost to development per annum: <b>nc</b></li> <li>• Area of SINCC lost to development per annum: - <b>nc</b></li> <li>• Area of LNR lost to development per annum: <b>nc</b></li> <li>• Amount of protected woodland and trees lost to development per annum: <b>nc</b></li> <li>• No and area of contaminated land sites remediated through development: <b>+</b></li> <li>• Number of people with access to greenspace within 400m of their home as a percentage of all people: <b>+</b></li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Land</b></p> <p>To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development, where this will not result in damage or loss in biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the best use of land including through prioritising the development of brownfield sites?</li> <li>• Enable safe and appropriate restoration of contaminated land?</li> <li>• Have an effect on previously undeveloped greenfield or agricultural land?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales</p> <p>A Resilient Wales</p> <p>A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average density of housing development permitted on allocated sites</li> <li>• Amount of new development permitted on previously developed land (brownfield development and conversions) expressed as a percentage of all development permitted: <b>+</b></li> <li>• No and area of contaminated land sites remediated through development: <b>+</b></li> <li>• Amount of greenfield and open space lost</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives	Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).	
			to development which is not allocated in the plan	
10.	<p><b>Water</b> To conserve, protect and enhance the water environment, water quality and water resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the quality of waterbodies helping to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the ecological and chemical status of the water environment?</li> <li>• Effect the volume of surface water run off into or abstraction from water bodies?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water infrastructure?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River water body status of health: +</li> <li>• Lake water body status of health: +</li> <li>• Implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems on all qualifying developments: +</li> </ul>
11.	<p><b>Materials, Minerals and Waste</b> To promote the circular economy by reducing waste generation and maximising reuse and recycling, ensuring the use of natural resources and the provision of an adequate supply of minerals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the production of waste?</li> <li>• Promote the principles of the circular economy?</li> <li>• Increase recycling rates and reduce waste to landfill?</li> <li>• Provide appropriate sites for more sustainable waste management including re-processing, recycling and storage?</li> <li>• Safeguard mineral resources and enable sustainable levels of extraction?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of waste arising, and managed by management type: +</li> <li>• Delivery of appropriate sites for sustainable waste management</li> <li>• Number of years land bank of permitted aggregate reserves: +</li> <li>• The extent of primary land-won aggregates permitted expressed as a percentage of the total capacity required, as identified in the Regional Technical Statement</li> </ul>
12.	<b>Health , well-being and security:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect and improve access to</li> </ul>	A Prosperous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hectares of recreational open space per</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
	To improve the health and well-being of the population including physical and mental health, social well-being and community safety	<p>healthcare services and facilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce health inequalities and improve the physical and mental health and well-being of communities?</li> <li>• facilitate or encourage active travel or physical recreation?</li> <li>• increase the accessibility and quality of recreation, leisure and open space provision?</li> <li>• have an effect on communities in terms of increased noise generating activities?</li> <li>• Have an effect on communities and settlements in terms of community safety and cleanliness?</li> </ul>	<p>Wales A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<p>1,000 population (FIT Standard): +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people with access to greenspace within 400m of their home as a percentage of all people: +</li> <li>• Percentage of population within 1km of cycle network: +</li> <li>• Overall index of multiple deprivation: +</li> <li>• Life Expectancy: +</li> <li>• Provision of health infrastructure:</li> <li>• Provision of community and recreation facilities: nc</li> <li>• Number of developments exceeding TAN 11 or BS4142 Noise requirements</li> </ul>
13.	<p><b>Cultural Heritage</b></p> <p>To conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets, including the use of the Welsh language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment assets of national, regional and local importance and their settings?</li> <li>• Promote high quality and sensitive reuse and regeneration of historic buildings and historic townscapes?</li> <li>• Safeguard and increase the use of the welsh language?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Vibrant Culture &amp; Thriving Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of listed buildings and historic sites: nc</li> <li>• Number of listed buildings or archaeological sites enhanced: +</li> <li>• Number of listed or local buildings of historical value brought into use for tourism: +</li> <li>• Number and area of conservation areas: nc</li> <li>• Proportion of welsh speakers: +</li> <li>• Welsh medium schools as a proportion of all other schools: +</li> </ul>

Proposed SA Objectives	Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
14. <b>Sustainable Placemaking</b> To enhance design quality to create great places for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote high quality design which strengthens local distinctiveness and fosters a sense of place?</li> <li>Facilitate the right development in the right place?</li> <li>Create buildings that last and are adaptive to change?</li> </ul>	A Prosperous Wales A Healthier Wales A More Equal Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of planning applications refused on design grounds</li> <li>Proportion of development on allocated land</li> </ul>
15. <b>Landscape</b> To protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance landscape character?</li> <li>Protect visual amenity and valued views?</li> </ul>	A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of valued landscape lost to development: -</li> <li>Number of developments which negatively affect the Brecon Beacons National Park or the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site: -</li> <li>Proportion of landscape characterised and managed: +</li> </ul>
16. <b>Flood Risk</b> To reduce and manage the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to minimise new development prone to flood risk or mitigate the potential for such risk?</li> <li>Manage residual flood risk appropriately and avoid new flood risks?</li> <li>Promote the development of sustainable urban drainage systems?</li> </ul>	A Resilient Wales A Healthier Wales A Globally Responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of development permitted in C1 and C2 floodplain areas: -</li> <li>Implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems on all qualifying developments</li> </ul>



Proposed SA Objectives		Proposed SA Decision Aiding Questions – Will the Revised LDP...	Well-being Goal (where the themes may make a contribution)	Possible SA Indicators showing the desired direction of change increase or more (+); decrease, less or none (-); and no change(nc).
17.	<p><b>Climate Change</b></p> <p>To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through increasing energy efficiency and generation and use of low carbon and renewable energy sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?</li> <li>• Support the minimisation of energy use?</li> <li>• Support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and reduce dependency on non renewable sources?</li> </ul>	<p>A Prosperous Wales</p> <p>A Resilient Wales</p> <p>A Healthier Wales</p> <p>A More Equal Wales</p> <p>A Wales of Cohesive Communities</p> <p>A Globally Responsible Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of renewable energy developments installed per annum: +</li> <li>• Capacity of low carbon energy developments installed per annum: +</li> <li>• Carbon footprint by area: -</li> <li>• Ecological footprint per person: -</li> <li>• Carbon dioxide emissions per capita, by sector: -</li> </ul>

**Table 7: Coverage of the SEA Directive Topics by Proposed SA Objective**

SEA Directive Topic	Proposed SA Objective
Population	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14
Air	7
Biodiversity	8, 10, 14, 15, 17
Flora	8, 14, 15, 17
Fauna	8, 14, 15, 17
Soil	8, 9
Water	10, 16, 17
Material assets	1, 2, 6, 11, 13, 14
Human health	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	13, 14
Landscape	8, 9, 11, 12, 15
Climatic factors	6, 7, 17

**Table 8: Coverage of other integrated assessments by Proposed SA Objective**

Impact Assessment	Proposed SA Objective
Health	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17
Inequalities	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14
Welsh Language	13, 14

## 6.0 NEXT STEPS

### Introduction

**6.1** This section outlines a summary of the key SA tasks and consultation for the SA of the revised Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan.

### Summary of SA Tasks

**6.2** The Blaenau Gwent revised LDP Delivery Agreement states that two iterations of the revised LDP will be consulted upon, the Preferred Strategy at Pre-Deposit stage and the LDP Deposit Plan. The LDP Deposit Plan will subsequently be subject to an independent examination and maybe changed at this stage, following which it will be considered for formal adoption as the replacement LDP for the Blaenau Gwent planning area. The SA/SEA process runs alongside the development of the emerging revised plan and, as an iterative and ongoing process, stages and tasks in the SA process may be revisited and updated or revised as the Plan progresses, to take account of updated or new evidence as well as consultation responses.

**6.3** The SA is an assessment tool that helps to inform decision making. The findings of the SA, alongside the wider evidence base, will assist the Council in relation to the selection or rejection of alternative and development of policy for the revised LDP.

**6.4** The following gives a summary of the SA tasks which will be undertaken during the process:

- **A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report** (this report) – This will identify the existing sustainability issues in the Blaenau Gwent area and provide baseline information along with a review of plans, policies programmes and strategies relevant to the LDP. The existing SA indicators and objectives will be reviewed and amended as necessary. A revised Sustainability Framework will be produced.
- **An Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISAR)** – This will predict and evaluate the effects of the LDP options, spatial strategy and strategic policies on the social, environmental, cultural and economic objectives as set out in the Scoping Report. The ISAR will be published at the same time as the Preferred Strategy.
- **A Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR)** – An updated SAR will be published at the same time as the Deposit Plan.
- **A Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR)** – This will bring together all the elements of the SA and take into account the binding recommendations of the Planning Inspector. The Final SAR will be published following receipt of the Inspectors Report.
- A Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement will be published to explain how the sustainability considerations and the Sustainability Assessment have been taken into consideration in the production of the revised LDP.

## SA of Candidate Sites

**6.5** The Stage 1 initial call for candidate sites (November 2018 – January 2019) will assist the Council with understanding what land is available to inform the LDP Preferred Strategy. Sites submitted at this stage will only be subject to a high level assessment to identify insurmountable constraints to development. It is considered that the individual sites submitted at this stage do not need to be assessed against the SA/SEA framework as these sites will only be used as market evidence used to shape the Preferred Strategy. Following the publication of the Preferred Strategy a call for further information and more candidate sites will be undertaken. Those sites still in the process will be subject to a more detailed assessment. It is during this stage that the candidate sites will be assessed against the Council's Sustainability Appraisal framework.

## Health and Equalities Impact Assessment

**6.6** Consideration of effects on equality and health will be made throughout the SA process. The SA topics, objectives and framework contain several direct and indirect links to health and equality.

## Collaboration with neighbouring Local Authorities

**6.7** This draft Scoping Report has been developed in collaboration with the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities of Torfaen County Borough Council and Monmouthshire County Council. It is intended that following this initial scoping stage the

three Local Planning Authorities will tender for consultants to undertake the remainder of the SA process on a joint basis, if appropriate.

## Consultation

**6.8** As with the emerging revised LDP, the SA will be consulted on at key stages in the process:

- Draft SA Scoping Report (October – November 2018)
- The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISAR) will be consulted on alongside the Preferred Strategy (November – December 2019)
- The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR) with any amendments resulting from the consultation on the ISAR will be consulted on alongside the Deposit Plan (October – November 2020)

**6.9** This Draft SA Scoping Report identifies the issues and defines a proposed SA Framework (Section 4) for undertaking the SA of the revised Blaenau Gwent LDP. This report will be subject to consultation with the SEA statutory bodies, CADW and Natural Resources Wales, for a 5 week period from the 31st October 2018 to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Any consultation responses received will be considered and inform the final SA Scoping Report which will then be developed into the initial SA Report of the Preferred Strategy.

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council