



Eich Cyf/ Your ref: MH/ST
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/0404/26

Councillor Stephen Thomas
Leader
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Stephen.Thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

17 March 2026

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 5th March 2026 notifying me of your intention to withdraw your emerging Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-2033 and to commence preparation of a new Joint LDP with Torfaen County Borough Council, and for setting out your reasons for this decision. This position was formally agreed by the Council meeting 5th March 2026. I also note that your officers have provided my officials with a copy of the report and recommendations.

I note that your principal reason for the delay and proposed decision to withdraw your replacement LDP was to undertake a new Joint LDP with Torfaen Council, following the 'federation' approach being instigated by both Local Authorities. In addition, I note there have been significant contextual changes that must also be considered, namely:

- The 'Federation' approach with Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen CBCs entering into a collaborative mechanism to deliver key services, including LDPs
- Publication of Future Wales (FW) in February 2021
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 12)
- Publication of updated household and population projections
- Creation of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs)

My officials have discussed these matters with your officers over recent months and have had positive and productive discussions to consider the potential options and way forward for the LDP.

While the delay in preparing a RLDP is unfortunate, I note your commitment to commence work on a new Joint LDP and consult on and then submit a new Delivery Agreement (DA) to Welsh Government for approval October 2026. I have considered your reasons, and I do not intend to intervene in the proposed withdrawal of your RLDP.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Following withdrawal of the RLDP it is imperative that you comply with the necessary statutory procedures in the notification and publication of the withdrawal to ensure your communities and stakeholders are fully informed and kept up to date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a distinct 'E'.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio