

ES1.2

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

SESSION 1: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY/ VISION

THE COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES' RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTOR'S QUESTIONS (REF NO:10)

1.(i) Does the Plan provide an appropriate spatial strategy for Blaenau Gwent?

Please see the response to point 3 of CCW's review of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between CCW and Blaenau Gwent Council, which for ease of reference is copied here:

'Paragraph 4.5.1 of *Planning Policy Wales* outlines the WG's priorities for urban areas, through integrated approaches, one of which is to secure environmentally-sound and socially inclusive regeneration in those areas that require it, so that they become more desirable places in which to live and work.

In line with this WG priority the protection and enhancement of the environment should be an integral part of the delivery of regeneration areas, as well as the wider county area. Aims for the natural environment should therefore be clearly stated in the spatial strategy of the Plan. Although para 5.2 states that the LDP has taken account of the environment, this is not evident in the spatial strategy. Currently there is no reference to the environment in the Northern Strategy area, and for the southern strategy area, the only reference is to 'maximising the potential offered by the area's *unique setting and cultural qualities*.'

To deliver sustainable regeneration/development in line with national policy and the plan's vision, and meet Tests of Soundness C2 and CE1 we consider the strategy should also include reference to how the natural environment of the area will be protected and enhanced. Although the plan includes environmental policies later on in the plan, if they are to flow logically from the Vision and Spatial Strategy the spatial strategy should also outline what provision will be made for the protection and enhancement of the environment.'

(ii) To what extent can it be considered to be locally distinctive?

(iii) Might the strategy be considered to be an aspiration rather than one that is credible and capable of being delivered over the Plan period?

(iv) Can the spatial strategy therefore be considered to be sound?

No comment.

2. What research and evidence base underpins the regeneration and growth strategy the Council has chosen (refer SD19 to SD23)? What alternative strategies could the Council have considered?

No comment.

3(i). Does the Plan strike the right balance between encouraging new development, seeking development contributions from investors and securing other goals such as enhancing the environment?

Please see response to Q1(i) above.

(ii) In broad terms, would the scale, type and distribution of allocated lands in the Plan contribute to the sustainable future development of the borough?

In broad terms CCW considers the scale, type and distribution of the allocated lands in the Plan will contribute to the sustainable future development of the borough.

Although we initially had concerns about the following allocations and sites,

EMP1.5 Rassau Platform B,
EMP1.8 Crown Business Park Platform,
T6.1 Dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road (Tredegar to Brynmawr),
EMP2.13 Cwm Draw Industrial Estate,
EMP2.14 Marine Street Industrial Estate,
ED1.2 Lower Plateau Six Bells Colliery Site,
MU1 Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor,
R1.1 Rhyd y Blew Retail Park,
H1.6 Land adjacent to Chartist Way,
H1.14 Six Bells colliery Site, Six Bells,
H1.15 Warm Turn, Six Bells
H1.18 Hillcrest View, Cwmtillery,
H1.20 Land at Farm Road, Swffryd,
TM1.1 Eastern Valley Slopes,
TM1.2 Garden Festival,
TM1.3 Blue Lakes,
ENV1.2 Tredegar and Ebbw Vale,
M4.1 Land adjacent to Trefil Quarry, Tredegar,
M4.2 Tir Pentwys Tip, Llanhilleth,

our concerns have been broadly addressed by the Council through focussed and minor changes to the Plan, with the requirement that the integrity of biodiversity interests will be protected and connectivity routes provided and / or enhanced through relevant sites.

The allocation that we remain particularly concerned over, and which we consider to be contrary to the principle of sustainable development, is *M4.1 Land adjacent to Trefil quarry, Tredegar* and the likely impacts that quarrying at this site will have on significant natural heritage interests.

This will be debated more fully at Session 18, *Mineral Site Allocations*.

[Our concerns about allocation and policy MU1 are addressed though our comments for Session 7, Employment and Mixed Uses.](#)

4. How is the strategy consistent with the Wales Spatial Plan, other national guidance, regional plans and the strategies and plans of neighbouring authorities?

No comment.

5. Is the proposed geographic distribution of new development proposed appropriate? What are the consequences of the proposed focus of new development in and around Ebbw Vale on the south of the county borough?

No comment.

6. How have the county's settlement boundaries been designated? 7. Are the detailed policies that support the strategy locally distinctive? Do any of the policies repeat national guidance? If so, should these policies be amended or deleted? Do the policies contain an appropriate element of flexibility?

No comment.