

SD20



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Regeneration Division

Local Development Plan

Vision & Strategy Options Workshop

22nd November 2007

Draft Report of Consultation

March 2008

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Executive Summary

This consultation report outlines the views expressed at a stakeholder workshop, which was held to discuss the Vision and the Strategic Options for the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan. The Workshop was held on Thursday 22nd November 2007, at the Learning Action Centre, Ebbw Vale and involved 20 attendees, representing a variety of interests and organisations from Blaenau Gwent and neighbouring authorities (**Appendix B**).

The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Share information on the Local Development Plan Vision and Strategy Options;
- Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to share views on the Vision;
- Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the Council's preferred strategy and;
- Address any queries and questions

Vision Workshops

The first workshop task involved building consensus on where Blaenau Gwent wanted to be in 2021. This involved attendees discussing the following draft Local Development Plan Vision for Blaenau Gwent.

Draft Vision

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

As each groups agreed the draft Vision required further work, each group attempted to re-write the Vision for the area.

Strategy Options Workshops

The second task involved engaging relevant stakeholders in initial discussions on the following LDP strategy Options:

Option 1: Regeneration

This option maintains the current strategy contained within the Blaenau Gwent Adopted Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011)

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 1:UDP	Population loss House build rate of 117	Borough wide (though more in Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr Valleys)	Borough wide	5 centres No hierarchy Broad role

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 2: Growth and Regeneration	Population increase House build rate of 200	Heads of Valleys emphasis	Heads of Valleys emphasis - broadening offer	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles

Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 3: Balanced and inter-connected communities	Population stability House build rate of 157	Borough wide (equalising growth – new allocations in Ebbw Fach Valley)	Borough wide (equalising growth de-allocating sites in north)	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles

The workshop discussions highlighted advantages and disadvantages of these options. Through these discussions, option 2 was deemed to be the most favourable strategy by the stakeholders. Option 3 was considered viable, although stakeholders considered this option was “not ambitious enough” in comparison to option 2 and had unrealistic employment goals. Although, currently in place, it was considered that option 1 would not effectively address future issues and problems facing Blaenau Gwent.

The stakeholders were also asked to suggest alternative strategy options, and the following were identified:

- Option 2, but with a house build rate of 175-225 per annum
- Option 2 but with a house build rate of 250 per annum
- Option 2 but with a higher growth level to increase population to 73,000. Ebbw Vale and Tredegar should be the key settlements.

Way Forward

The Council will seek to ensure that the preferred strategy meets the expectations of relevant stakeholders and the sustainability objectives set out in the draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report.

Participants gave feedback on the stakeholder workshop and 90% felt that the session had been very useful in developing the Vision and Strategy Options.

The findings from the workshop will be used by the Council to develop the draft Vision and draft Preferred Strategy for the LDP, which will be formally consulted on in the autumn 2008.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2006, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council made the decision to cease work on the Unitary Development Plan and start work on the Local Development Plan. The timetable for the various statutory stages of production of the Local Development Plan is set out in the Delivery Agreement (May 2007).
- 1.2 The first step in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan was to draft and formally consult on the Issues Paper. The Issues Paper was prepared as a discussion document intended to promote debate on the issues of strategic significance for the authority. Alongside this, an Issues and Vision Workshop was held on the 27th July 2007, at the ViTCC, Tredegar. A full record of the workshop is set out in the Issues and Vision Workshop Report of Consultation (August 2007) which is available from the Planning Policy Team or from the planning policy pages of the council's website www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.
- 1.3 Building on the opinions and views expressed at the Issues and Vision Workshop, a second set of workshops was held to discuss the Vision and the Strategic Options for the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan. This workshop was repeated on three dates, 19th October 2007 at the ViTCC, Tredegar and the 22nd and 30th November at the Learning Action Centre, Ebbw Vale.

Purpose of the report

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to record and analyse the information gathered at the 22nd November 2007 Vision and Strategy Options Workshop and to provide the Council with a clear indication of the views and wishes of those attending the workshop.

2.0 The Workshop

- 2.1 The purpose of the workshop was to:
 - Share information on the Local Development Plan Vision and Strategy Options;
 - Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to share views on the Vision;
 - Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the Council's preferred strategy and;
 - Address any queries and questions.
- 2.2 Invitations were sent to a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including various local interest groups and organisations from Blaenau Gwent and neighbouring authorities, of which 20 attended. **Appendix A** provides a list of stakeholders who invitations were sent to. In addition to Appendix A, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) sent 30 invitations to other voluntary organisations from Blaenau Gwent. A list of all attendees who attended the event is provided in **Appendix B**.

- 2.3 As an introduction to the workshop, Lynda Healy (Development Plans Manager) provided an update on progress of the Local Development Plan (LDP). This was followed by a presentation by Hayley Spender, Planning Policy Officer, who explained the process of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Local Development Plan. Lynda Healy gave a further presentation outlining the purpose of the workshop. **Appendix C** displays the slides used in the presentations. It should be noted that there was also opportunities for workshop attendees to clarify aspects of the LDP process and the workshop itself. The full agenda of the workshop is provided in **Appendix D**.
- 2.4 The morning was arranged around three workshop sessions. Attendees were arranged to form three groups (the yellow group, red group and green group) (see **Appendix E** for a list of the workshop groups). Each group had a facilitator and a planner to ensure that discussions were focussed and comments accurately recorded. The first of which was to build consensus on the draft Local Development Plan Vision for Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.5 The second workshop was arranged around the same groups as the first workshop and discussions focussed on the advantages and disadvantages of each of the strategy options. Prior to the commencement of the discussion of each strategy option, Lynda Healy provided a summary of the strategy option. This exercise was repeated for each strategy option.
- 2.6 In the third workshop, attendees were also asked to provide an alternative option to those already proposed.
- 2.7 A summary of the discussions for workshops one and two are provided in sections 3 and 4, and the suggested alternative options are provided in section 5. This feedback will now be used to improve the Draft Vision and determine the preferred strategy for the Local Development Plan.

3.0 Draft Vision

- 3.1 The aim of workshop 1 was to build consensus on the draft Local Development Vision for Blaenau Gwent. The draft Vision that had been prepared by planning policy officers, following views received on the Issues Paper and the Issues and Vision Workshop held in July 2007, was used to inform the discussion in this workshop session.

Draft Vision

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

- 3.2 Attendees were asked to judge if the draft Vision meets the requirements for a Vision. Guidance was provided on what a vision should be. The first requirement was that the Vision should be clear, realistic, and based on the objectives, and priorities of the Community Strategy.
- 3.3 The second set of requirements was based on advice received from the Welsh Assembly Government training workshop. It was advised that a Vision should be:
- a) A succinct statement of intent;
 - b) A point of reference for all parts of the plan and all participants;
 - c) Distinct to the area.

Red Group

- 3.4 The red group agreed that the draft Vision was clear, realistic and based on the objectives and priorities of the community strategy (requirements set out in LDP Wales for a Vision). It was also agreed that the draft Vision was a succinct statement of intent, a point of reference for all parts of the plan and participants and distinctive to the area.
- 3.5 The facilitator then outlined the second task, which was to allow the attendees to suggest improvements to the draft Vision.
- 3.6 The red group firstly noted that there were a number of strengths to the draft Vision in that it was a positive statement with a good range of detail and not too general. It was also distinct to Blaenau Gwent in that it had a local focus and covered many of the significant issues facing Blaenau Gwent. It was also considered that incorporating the community plan vision at the end of the draft vision was a good idea.
- 3.7 However, the group identified that there were several weaknesses to the draft Vision. Firstly, it was felt that the draft vision wasn't easy to read as one long paragraph and so it was suggested that bullet points be inserted.
- 3.8 The red group also identified that there were three themes that were missing from the draft Vision, the first relating to accessibility and sustainable transport, it was felt that this could be dealt with by adding the word 'accessible' to the first line of the draft Vision.
- 3.9 Secondly, it was also noted that the draft Vision lacked links to education and skills. However, the group suggested no way of incorporating this theme into the draft vision
- 3.10 The third theme that was considered missing from the draft Vision was health and well-being. It was felt that the group could address this by adding the word 'healthy' in the first line of the vision.
- 3.11 They devised the following vision to incorporate some of the proposed changes:

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of healthy, accessible, sustainable, safe vibrant valley communities; through:

- providing a range of good quality, affordable homes;
- diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy;
- establishing safe and thriving town centres;
- generating a vibrant visitor destination.

Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected and enhanced, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Yellow Group

3.12 The yellow group suggested the following improvements:

- It should read 'safe communities' not just 'safe towns'.
- Learning, inclusion, health and play are all-relevant and should be incorporated in the vision.
- Travel or transport connections are missing from the vision and should be included.
- Environment, cultural and historic identity should be 'enhanced' not just 'protected'.
- 'Interesting' should be added to vibrant visitor destination.

3.13 The yellow group devised the following vision to incorporate some of the proposed changes:

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe communities and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Green Group

3.14 The green group did not agree that the Vision was a succinct statement of intent as participants commented that the middle section contained the objectives of the vision so did not fit into what was required of a succinct statement.



- 3.15 As the green group did not consider the original vision statement to be succinct, the draft vision was modified to produce the following:

By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable vibrant valley communities; ~~through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its in a~~ unique environment, ~~cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place~~ where people want to live, work and visit.

4.0 The Strategy Options

- 4.1 The aim of workshop 2 was to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the Council's Preferred Strategy for the Local Development Plan. The stakeholders were asked by the facilitators to identify advantages and disadvantages of each of the three strategy options (Regeneration, Growth and Regeneration and Balanced and Interconnected Communities).

4.2 Option 1: Regeneration (continuation of UDP strategy)

This option maintains the current strategy contained within the Blaenau Gwent adopted Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011), with the following features:

- Population decline from 2006 level
- No new housing allocations – urban containment
- Continue with existing employment allocations and strategy
- Main towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery focus of shopping, commercial, cultural, social and leisure activity
- Main expansion of services will be in Ebbw Vale

Red Group

Advantages

The red group considered that the option may encourage the development of previously developed land, protecting the rest of Blaenau Gwent, including important areas of Greenfield land, against major development, resulting in less environmental impacts. It was also considered that this approach would sustain existing communities.

It was also considered that this approach would possibly limit travel as it would be more sustainable as the main expansion of services would be in Ebbw Vale, in close proximity to the railway line.

Disadvantages

Respondents considered that this option would produce an ageing housing stock and it was felt that this would discourage people from moving into the area, especially with no new housing allocations.

Participants pointed out that population loss would continue and correspondingly less money would be received from the Welsh Assembly Government.



It was also considered that there would be a population imbalance as this approach would result in an ageing population, which would put more pressure on services and there would be a decline in the working population, which would mean that there would be less people working.

One of the features of this option was the 5 town centres as prescribed in the UDP would continue to have a broad role. The group considered that the town centres would continue to decline, as they would be competing against each other within Blaenau Gwent and neighbouring larger centres such as Cardiff, Newport and Cwmbran.

Yellow Group

Advantages

The only advantages identified by the consultees were that this option would result in more places to play (due to less development pressure) and less urban sprawl, which could lead to coalescence of places.



Disadvantages

A key issue raised was that there would be further decline in the area if this option were followed. For instance, there would be a lack of inward investment and town centres would continue to decline. Also, communities would suffer, as local people would have low aspirations.

Some stakeholders highlighted that the population loss would result in school closures, and consequently less choice of schools and increased journeys to school. As there would be a reduction in services there would be increased distances to travel for services.

Participants pointed out that the population loss would continue and correspondingly less money would be received from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Others indicated that this option would not have a positive effect on the G.D.P.

Green Group

Advantages

The only advantages identified by the consultees were that this option would result in less pressure on services and open spaces.

Disadvantages

In general the stakeholders highlighted that the current UDP strategy would maintain the 'status quo' and not effectively address the issues that the Borough faces. One example cited by participants was that there would be further decline in Blaina, as this option did not address the issues faced by the town.

Another disadvantage identified related to the amount of land allocated for manufacturing, although it was in decline. It was felt that this option did cater for other types of employment on allocated land and did not therefore allow for a diversification of the economy.

Conclusion

There was very little support for this option, with a limited number of advantages being highlighted by the three groups. Overall it was felt that it would not be appropriate to plan for the next 15 years on the basis of the UDP, as it would not effectively address the future issues likely to be faced by communities in the area

4.3 Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

This is a growth strategy, which has the following aspects:

- Stems out-migration leading to an increase in population to 71,000
- A house build rate of 200 per annum
- Emphasis of growth would be in the Heads of Valleys and a regeneration focus in the south of the borough

- A new hierarchy of towns with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre, with Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery becoming district shopping centres. Blaina would become a local shopping centre.
- Specific roles would be provided for town centres, which are currently in decline, in an attempt to encourage their growth.

This option would address concerns with the economy by broadening the economic base by being more flexible in allowing different uses on industrial estates to those traditionally permitted. This would take into account the decline of manufacturing industry in the area and provide new employment opportunities to those currently available on industrial estates.

Discussions regarding this option identified a number of advantages and disadvantages, which are outlined below.

Red Group

Advantages

Stakeholders recognised that option 2 was a market led approach and accepted the benefit of encouraging growth in the Heads of the Valleys region as there is funding available (Heads of the Valleys) to be spent in this area. Some also insisted that other parts of the Borough should continue to benefit from regeneration projects – this is in line with this option which targets regeneration in the South. In addition, through focussing the growth in the Heads of the Valleys region, it would ease pressure off land “that isn’t there in the South”.

Stakeholders also suggested that this option would increase the provision of affordable homes and would encourage a range of house types to create more choice – they emphasised that both were needed in the area.

The anticipated population increase as a result of this option was welcomed in that it would improve the population dynamic through the anticipated growth of younger people moving into the area. It was also considered that the anticipated population growth would result in an improved financial settlement for the Authority.

Stakeholders agreed that introducing a retail hierarchy and identifying a role and function for the four town centres would have positive implications, in that it would stop their decline. It was agreed that this approach would create sustainable town centres.

Disadvantages

Stakeholders considered whether this option was ambitious enough in terms of the number of homes to be built per annum. It was suggested that to aim for a higher level of growth such as 250 houses per annum.

Although it was identified in the advantages of this option that the provision of affordable homes would increase, the stakeholders expressed concerns that

in some developments the wrong mix of houses could be encouraged, resulting in fewer affordable homes.

In addition, it was also identified that this option could result in possible alienation for the South of the borough, with the growth being focussed on the Heads of the Valleys region. It was recognised that an action plan for the regeneration of the South be devised.

One stakeholder also raised the question if four town centres were viable in a small area like Blaenau Gwent.

Yellow Group

Advantages

It was considered that this option promoted sustainable transport, as development would take place close to existing and planned transport infrastructure i.e. the Heads of the Valley Road and Ebbw Valley Railway.

Attendees welcomed the positive effect of this option which would result in increased vibrancy throughout the area with more money spent and it would benefit local firms as well as provide higher skilled jobs.

As town centres would be given specific roles there would be an opportunity to incorporate tourism etc. into broadening the role of town centres and this option would arrest their decline.

Consultees were of the opinion that this option would provide more opportunity for planning gain and ensure the provision of more affordable homes.

Stakeholders recognised the benefit of encouraging population growth, as it would lead to additional income from the Welsh Assembly Government, increased G.D.P. and higher school rolls.

It was highlighted that there would be less poverty in the area although some indicated that this depended on local people benefiting from increased employment opportunities in the area.

Disadvantages

There were concerns that by accommodating the level of growth contained in this option there would be pressure on developing Greenfield sites, as well as pressure on providing health (and other services) and infrastructure.

Green Group

Advantages

Stakeholders recognised the benefit of encouraging population growth, as it would lead to additional income from the Welsh Assembly Government and also there would be a more balanced population.

As town centres would offer different types of services they could reinvent themselves and this broadening of their role would arrest their decline. It was felt that the town of Ebbw Vale would become the catalyst for town centre activity and that there would be a trickle down effect of prosperity, which would benefit other town centres.

It was considered that this option would address concerns with the economy, as it would broaden the economic base with a more flexible approach being adopted in allowing different uses on industrial estates to those traditionally permitted.

Consultees were of the opinion that this option would provide more opportunity for planning gain and ensure the provision of more affordable homes.

Disadvantages

There were concerns that by accommodating the level of growth contained in this option there would be pressure on the existing infrastructure and developing Greenfield sites. Also, some indicated that the decline of Blaina as a town centre would continue.

Conclusion

All three discussion groups considered this option to be proactive and recognised that it had a considerable number of benefits, which outweighed any disadvantages associated with it.

4.4 Option 3: Balanced and Interconnected Communities

This option is trend based characterised by the following:

- Stems out-migration and stabilises population at 2006 levels.
- The emphasis is to spread growth according to the share of population, which would mean de-allocating some employment sites in the north and relocating them borough wide.
- The house build rate would be 157 per annum.
- No retail hierarchy but the number of town centres in the borough would be reduced from five to four (Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar) by excluding Blaina.
- New roles for the town centres, for example, one town may specialise in tourism.

Red Group

Advantages

Participants considered an advantage of this option was that there would be an Ebbw Fach Valley focus.

It was also considered that new allocations could possibly lead to better use of land, in that employment land could be deallocated from manufacturing and reallocated for service sector uses.

Stakeholders recognised that if new employment sites were located in close proximity to the town centres, it would be more sustainable.

Disadvantages

Stakeholders referred to this option as “not ambitious enough” in terms of the growth level, especially in comparison to option 2.

Some felt that there would be unrealistic employment goals in that businesses would continue to be attracted to locations with existing transport infrastructures such as in the north, around the heads of the valleys, instead of locating elsewhere in the borough – this approach was considered to be not market led.

It was also considered that deallocating employment sites in the North of the Borough would offer limited options to the location of new businesses, and thus new businesses could be lost to other authorities with greater options.

Participants also highlighted that there may be a danger of overdevelopment in the South as there is currently a lack of available land for development.

As this option proposes equalising growth, with primarily new allocations in the Ebbw Fach Valley, it was considered that this may increase the pressure on existing transport systems.

Yellow Group

Advantages

Stakeholders did not identify any advantages associated with this option.

Disadvantages

Attendees pointed out that growth should be targeted for needs not wants i.e. it should be aimed at those areas where communities are most need of growth rather than being arbitrarily spread on the basis of percentage of population.

Participants also highlighted that by equalising growth throughout the borough this would be less sustainable in terms of transport as growth should take place close to existing and planned transport infrastructure i.e. the Heads of the Valley Road and Ebbw Valley Railway, rather than in the south, where there are less advanced transport links.

Green Group

Advantages

Stakeholders felt that this option would stop the decline in population and produce a more balanced population.

It was felt that the option would be beneficial for town centres and also that there would not be so much pressure on services as option 2.

Some commented that the option was sustainable as it had an Ebbw Vale focus, and that as growth was equalised throughout the borough there was a better ‘balance’ in which all communities benefited.

Disadvantages

Attendees felt that in this option growth will be arbitrarily spread on the basis of percentage of population rather than being market-led.

Participants also highlighted that by equalising growth throughout the borough this would be less sustainable for some communities and the availability/suitability of sites close to some of the most southern town centres was questioned.

Consultees were concerned that there would be less opportunity for planning gain/affordable housing/addressing local needs.

Conclusion

Although the participants considered this a better alternative to the existing UDP strategy, they still favoured option 2.

5.0 The Alternative Option

5.1 The aim of workshop 3 was to give stakeholders the opportunity to propose an alternative option to the 3 options already identified.

Red Group

5.2 The table below summarises the alternative option that was devised by the red group:

Option Name	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Issues
Ambitious Growth/ A Flexible Approach	Population Increase House build rate 175-225 per annum	Growth in Heads of Valleys Regeneration in South – devise a strategy	Employment – Heads of the Valleys emphasis Broaden offer Retail – 4 centres Ebbw Vale – Regional Centre Brynmawr, Tredegar and Abertillery – District Centres

5.3 One of the disadvantages identified when assessing the options in workshop 2 was that the level of growth was “not ambitious enough” so the group aspired for a high level of growth, with a house build rate of 175-225 per annum. The reason that the group imposed a range to the house build rate was to be ambitious with a target of 225 yet realistic at the same time with a lower target of 175, as the group was aware that the house build rate at present is 117 per annum. This is the main reason why the option name is ‘Ambitious Growth / A Flexible Approach’.

- 5.4 The group agreed that the spatial spread should remain as option 2 with growth along the Heads of the Valley, in line with market forces and regeneration in the South. It was reiterated that a regeneration strategy should be devised for the South.
- 5.5 In terms of employment, it was agreed that there should be a heads of the valley emphasis, in line with market forces. In the south of the borough, it was noted that there is a lack of land and any land that is available should be allocated for housing. The group also focussed on employment sites broadening their offer to include provision for service sector employment, not just manufacturing. The group also suggested the need to reallocate disused manufacturing sites for service sector uses.
- 5.6 In terms of retail, it was agreed that the number of retail centres should be reduced from 5 to 4, excluding Blaina. It was also accepted, as option 2 that a retail hierarchy was needed, with Ebbw Vale as the regional centre and the three remaining towns as district centres.
- 5.7 Although the red group emphasised the need for a high level of growth, the group also pointed out that there is a need to keep “one eye on our environment” and protect important greenfield sites from development.
- 5.8 In conclusion, stakeholders created the ‘ambitious growth / flexible approach’ as the alternative option. This option picked up on most elements of option 2, however the group identified a higher level of growth.

Yellow Group

- 5.9 Participants considered Option 2 as being acceptable and did not suggest an alternative option to those presented for assessment. However, it was suggested that the level of house building should be increased to 250 houses per annum in line with the housing needs assessment.

Green Group

- 5.10 Participants considered Option 2 as being acceptable and did not suggest an alternative option to those presented for assessment. However, it was suggested that if there were to be an alternative option then the growth levels should be increased aiming at a population figure of 73,000. Ebbw Vale and Tredegar were regarded as the key settlements within this option.

6.0 What Next?

- 6.1 The Workshop was useful to improve the draft Vision and for discussing the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the strategy options proposed by the Council. These will be taken into account as the Council determines the preferred strategy for the LDP, which will be formally consulted on in the autumn 2008.

Appendix A – Invitations sent to stakeholders

Name	Organisation/Section
Elaine Townsend	
G Bartlett	Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
Ernie Pitt	Base Handling Products
Dennis Owens	BGCBC
Alan Reed	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alison Hoskins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alun Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alwyn Hughes	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Andrew Long	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Andrew Parker	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Alyson Tippings	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Bethan Cartwright	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Catherine Ashby	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Chris Engel	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Clive Rogers	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Deborah Beeson	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Dave R Cook	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Dave Watkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Eirlys Hallett	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Emma Cashmore	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Frank Olding	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Ged McHugh	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Edward Robinson	Blaina Senior Citizens
A Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Cllr John Davies	Brynmawr Town Council
Carl Woods	Capita Symonds
Gill Clark	Chair Cwmtillery Partnership
Frank Callus	Coleg Gwent
David Llewellyn	Co-ordinator for Cwmtillery Partnership
Darren Lewis	Co-ordinator for Rassau & Garnlydan Partnership
Anna Chard	Co-ordinator for St Illtyds Partnership
Claire Stonelake	Department of Enterprise and Innovation Network
Chris Cox	DTZ
Dr Jane Layzell	Local Health Board
Gemma White	Local Health Board
Cllr David Britton	Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council
Brian Walters	National Assembly for Wales
D Gronow	New Tredegar Community Council
Anita Thomas	Princes Trust
Glyn Davies	Ramblers Association - North Gwent
Colin Stevens	Rassau Tenants & Residents Association & Blaenau Gwent Federation of T & R Associations
Andrew Jenkins	Rhyd Development Ltd
A Edwards	Town Centre Partnership Brynmawr Traders
Brian Kember	Tredegar Development Trust
G Powell	Tredegar Development Trust
Alyson Hoskins	Vice Chair, Abertillery Communities First
Garth Collier	Vice Chair, Blaina Communities First
Graham Bartlett	Vice Chair, Cwmtillery Communities First
Gareth Matthews	Working Links

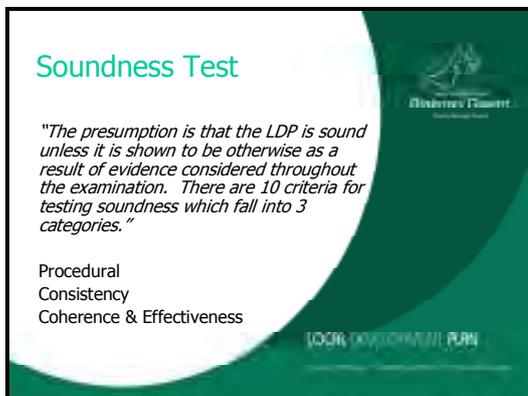
Name	Organisation/Section
	United Welsh
Greg Paulsen	Co-ordinator for Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Gwyn Smith	Sustrans
Hayley Selway	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Heidi Carter	Secretary of the Youth Forum
Helen Madden	Co-ordinator for Blaina Partnership
Helena Hunt	Community Safety
Huw Lewis	GAVO
Huw Lewis	Vice Chair, Rassau & Garnlydan Communities First
J Morgan	Tredegar Town Council
J P Williams	Rhymney Community Council
James Eades	Linc Cymru
Jane McNeil	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Janice Tse	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Jayne Nicholas	Chair Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy Partnership
Jeff Harris	ARPP
Jeremy Gass	University of the Valleys
Jessica Daley	Chair of the Youth Forum
Jessica Osbourne	Co-ordinator for Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy Partnership
Jim Allen	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
John Davies	Ebbw Vale & District Development Trust
John Howells	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
John Millard	Melin Housing Association
John Morgan	Vice Chair, Communities First Tredegar Central & West & Sirhowy
John Wedlock	Vice Chair, Ebbw Vale North & South Communities First
Julian Bosley	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Karin Lamb	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Kate Terrell	Chair St Illtyds Partnership
Kayna Tregay	Environment Agency
Keith Dykes	Chair Abertillery Partnership
Keith Rogers	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Kelsey Watkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Keren Bender	Chair Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Kerry Diamond	Continental Teves
Leanne Connor	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Louise Horner	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Lyn Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Lyn Harber	Vice Chair, Six Bells Communities First
Lyn Maloney	Vice Chair, St Illtyds Communities First
Lynn Phillips	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
M Phillips	Ebbw Vale Trades Council
Mair Sheen	Co-ordinator for Six Bells Partnership
Margaret Retallick	Tredegar Town Council
Mark Hopkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Mark Price	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Michelle Evans	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Name	Organisation/Section
Mike Garland	M & J Europe
Mike Johnson	The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Newport & Valleys)
Mike O'Brien	Chair Rassau & Garnlydan Partnership
Mike O'Dowd	Vice Chair, Nantyglo Communities First
Neil Maylan	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
Nick Landers	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Nigel Collins	Co-ordinator for Abertillery Partnership
Pat Tagg	Job Centre Plus
Patrick Lewis	Heads of the Valleys Programme
PC Andy Harris	Police Architectural Liaison Officer
Peter Woodhead	Vice Chair, Communities First Cwm, Waunllwyd & Victoria
Phillip Hackling	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Reg Arnold	
Rhian Deakin	Blaenavon Town Council
Richard Bevan	Local Health Board
Richard Crook	Corus Project Team
Richard Jones	Countryside Council for Wales
Richard Price	The Home Builders Federation
Rob James	Co-ordinator for Ebbw Vale N & S Partnership
Rob Murray	Torfaen County Borough Council
Rob Thompson	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Roderic Jenkins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Roger Hewett	Chair Blaina Partnership
Roger Leadbeter	
Ruth Sinfield	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Sarah Fotheringham	Glamorgan & Gwent Housing Association
Sharn Anett	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Sharon Hill	Co-ordinator for Nantyglo Partnership
Simon Dobbs	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Steve Harford	Careers Wales
Steve Herridge	Chair Six Bells Partnership
Steve Smith	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Tony Chivers	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Tracy Nettleton	Brecon Beacons National Park
Trevor Neatherway	Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board
Trish Law	AM
Vic Parkin	Chair Nantyglo Partnership
Victoria King	Coleg Gwent
Wayne Thomas	RISE

Appendix B – Workshop Attendees

Name	Organisation
Roger Leadbeter	
Alun Evans	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Catherine Ashby	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Louise Horner	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Mark Hopkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Simon Dobbs	Blaenau Gwent CBC
James Watkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Marie Chislett	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Administration Officer)
Lynda Healy	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Development Plans Manager)
Andrew Parker	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Facilitator)
Dave Rees	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Facilitator)
Ged McHugh	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Head of Economic Development)
Hayley Spender	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer)
Brian Swain	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer)
Keith Dykes	Chair Abertillery Partnership
Greg Paulsen	Co-ordinator for Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Chris Cox	DTZ
Kayna Tregay	Environment Agency
Huw Lewis	GAVO (Facilitator)
Frank Callus	Heads of Valley Strategic Programme Co-ordinator (Education)
John Howells	Local Education Authority
Janice Tse	Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Gemma White	NPHS
Anita Thomas	Princes Trust
Colin Stevens	Rassau Tenants & Residents Association & Blaenau Gwent Federation of T&R Associations
Andrew Jenkins	Rhyd Developments Ltd
Mike O'Dowd	Vice Chair, Nantyglo Communities First

Appendix C – Presentation



To date....

- Develop the Evidence Base
- Invitation for Expressions of Interest (Candidate Sites)
- Consultation on Issues Paper
- **Spatial Strategy and Preferred Options**



Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Hayley Spender – Planning Policy Officer



What is Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Development Plan?

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – Section 39 (2)

A Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process that is designed to evaluate the predicted social, economic and environmental effects of development planning.



What is the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Development Plan?

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC
 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004

The systematic and rigorous assessment of the 'significant environmental impacts' of Development Plans



Link between SA and SEA

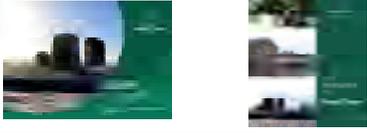
The major differences between the SA and SEA processes is in their scope and depth of environmental issues



However, guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government recommends that Authorities take an integrated approach to SA/SEA.

SA/ SEA and the LDP Process

- Informs the production of the LDP
- Mitigates against the worst environmental effects
- Key indicator in the 'soundness' of the LDP



SA/SEA – The Main Stages

Stage A: Setting Context and Scope
 Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
 Stage C: Preparing the SA report
 Stage D: Consulting on the Preferred Strategy option of the Development Plan and the SA report; and
 Stage E: Monitoring and implementation of the plan

WAG guidance also requires the preparation of a Scoping Report and Sustainability Appraisal Report

Environment

Where we are at in the SA/SEA process?

Atkins Consultants have been commissioned to carry out the SA/SEA work

Stage A: Setting Context and Scope

Output of Stage A = Scoping Report



SA/SEA

Environment

Draft Scoping Report

Establishes scope and method for undertaking Sustainability Appraisal of LDP

- > Reviews relevant plans, policies and programmes
- > Identifies baseline information
- > Identifies key sustainability issues for Blaenau Gwent
- > Establish the Sustainability Framework of the LDP

The draft Scoping Report is currently out for a 5 week public consultation exercise.



SA/SEA

Environment

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

The Sustainability Framework identifies:

- > 18 Key Issues
- > 25 SA Objectives
- > Identifies Indicators and Target



SA/SEA

Environment

18 Key Sustainability Issues

1. High levels of economic inactivity and high benefit dependence
2. Limited employment opportunities and low household income
3. Tourism potential
4. High vacancy rates in Town Centres
5. Changing demographics and housing needs
6. Poor housing quality, mismatch of housing size/tenure with needs and demand
7. Housing Affordability problems
8. Low education attainment
9. Transport Access constraints to the area
10. Health
11. Welsh language and culture
12. Crime and Social Deprivation
13. High Car usage and CO2 emissions
14. Protection of ecological resources and biodiversity
15. Under appreciation and protection of heritage resource
16. Limited supply of brownfield land
17. Contaminated Sites
18. Waste management

SA/SEA

Environment

Objectives and Potential Indicators

Table 1: Draft SA Framework

Key to Data Availability for Indicators

Red = Known data for Blaenau Gwent
 Blue = Known data for South East Wales Region
 Yellow = Data for Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales Region currently unknown

SA Objective	Potential Indicators	Target	SA Impact
1. To promote economic growth and strengthen and diversify the local economy	Establishment of sector The percentage of companies Proportion of population in business or construction Proportion of population in business or construction	Enhance and diversify local economy Increase Increase Increase Increase Increase Increase Increase	Population Human Health
2. To increase levels of local employment and secure provision of appropriate support for most deprived areas	% of working age population that are economically inactive Proportion of population of working age claiming benefits % of the population of working age that are long term unemployed % increase in average earnings Average household income	Decrease Decrease Decrease Increase Increase	Population Human Health
3. To support the development of a vibrant tourist economy in Blaenau Gwent, complementary to the regional offer	Proportion of population involved in retail recreation Proportion of population involved in retail recreation	Increase Increase	Population Human Health

SA/SEA

Environment

Next Steps

5 week public consultation exercise on the draft Scoping Report.

Amend draft Scoping Report following consultation

Once the final version of the Scoping Report is prepared, the SA Framework will be used to assess the Plan at each stage of preparation.




SA/SEA

What is the Process for making a Plan?



Blaenau Gwent
Local Development Plan

The Essentials of making a Plan

What have we got? (Issues)
Where do we want to get to? (Vision)
How do we get there? (Strategy)

Using the matters over which the plan has influence

With a Process that :

- Is understandable
- Engages stakeholders and the community

Why are we here this morning?

Build Consensus on:
Where we want to go?
- Vision Workshop

Establish best way to get there?
- Options workshops

Questions

Workshop 1: Vision

Vision

It should be based on a vision of the future which should be clear, realistic and based on the objectives and priorities of the relevant community strategy. (LDP Wales)

A succinct statement of intent
A point of reference for all parts of the plan and all participants.
Distinct to the area
(LDP Training workshop)

Community Strategy

'A better place to live work and visit'

Draft LDP Vision

"By 2021, Blaenau Gwent will become a network of sustainable, vibrant valley communities; through: providing a range of good quality, affordable homes; diversifying and creating a dynamic and competitive economy; establishing safe and thriving town centres; generating a vibrant visitor destination. Its unique environment, cultural and historic identity will be protected, thereby creating a place where people want to live, work and visit."

Created from work undertaken at workshop in Summer (Officers and LDP Forum)

Workshop 1: Vision

Task 1
Judge if draft vision provided meets the requirements for a vision

Task 2
Suggest minor improvements to draft vision

Workshop 2: Strategic Options

How do we get there?

Due to requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment must look at a number of options

Variables

- Demand and Supply
- Specific Location

Not forgetting that we are attempting to resolve the issues identified

Growth Options

Estimating population is important as it will have a major influence on future land requirements

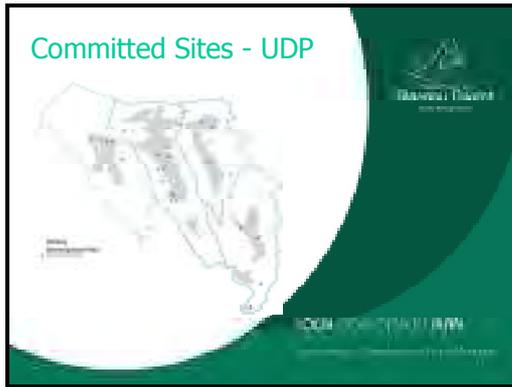
Housing development is principal consumer of land

Identified 3 strategic growth options

Growth Options

Share of Growth

Settlement	Share of population	Share of housing	Approx No of committed houses
Upper Sirhowy Valley (Tredzgar)	22%	27%	500
Ebbw Fair (Ebbw Vale)	33%	54%	1000
Upper Ebbw Fach (Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina)	21%	12%	220
Lower Ebbw Fach (Aberillery)	24%	7%	120



Growth Scenarios

Strategy	Assumed annual build rate	Additional Dwelling Requirement	2021 Population
UDP	117(1755)	0	68,000
Growth	200 (3000)	800	71,000
Trend	156 (2340)	200	69,500

Spatial Options

UDP = Urban Containment
 Growth = Heads of Valleys
 Trend = Equalise Growth (Ebbw Fach)



Strategy Options

Option 1:UDP Regeneration (UDP)
 Decline - Urban Containment

Option 2:Growth and Regeneration
 Growth - Heads of Valleys focus

Option 3: Balanced and Inter-Connected Communities
 Trend - Equalise Growth

Employment Land

Landbank of 64 ha - annual take-up 2 ha
 Sufficient land - but is it suitable for new business opportunities and is it developable
 Do we need a new Strategy?
Option 1: Retain existing borough wide
Option 2: Broaden offer through new mixed-use sites in Heads of Valleys area
Option 3: Borough wide de-allocate some in Heads of Valleys



Retail

Do we need a retail hierarchy?
 Option 1 (UDP) – no (all 5 equal)
 Option 2 (Growth) – yes
 Option 3 (Balanced) – no

Should we have 5 town centres?
 Option 1 (UDP) – yes (includes Blaina)
 Option 2 (Growth) – no
 Option 3 (Balanced) – no

Should we look for new roles?
 Option 1 UDP – no (broaden)
 Option 2 Growth – yes
 Option 3 Balanced – yes



Strategic Options

Option	Growth Level	Spatial Spread	Employment	Retail
Option 1: UDP	Population loss House build rate of 117	Borough wide (though more in Sirhowy and Ebbw Fach Valleys)	Borough wide	5 centres No hierarchy Broad role
Option 2: Growth and Regeneration	Population increase House build rate of 200	Heads of Valleys emphasis	Heads of Valleys emphasis - broadening offer	4 centres Hierarchy Specific roles
Option 3: Balanced and inter-connected communities	Population stability House build rate of 157	Borough wide (equalising growth - new allocations in Ebbw Fach Valley)	Borough wide (equalising growth - new allocations in north)	4 centres No Hierarchy Specific roles



Main Issues

The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the services sector and technological industries

Find a role function for town centres

Create a balanced population stemming out-migration

Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations including the need for affordable housing



Other Issues

- Environment
- Leisure and Tourism
- Education and Skills
- Renewable Energy
- Waste
- Transport



Transport Links

Blauwaith Talwrn Council Development Plan




Workshop 2: Options

The aim of this workshop is to establish the preferred strategy

Task

Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each option



Option 1: UDP Regeneration

Population decline from 2006 level

No new housing allocations – urban containment (117)

Continue with existing employment allocations and strategy

Main towns of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery focus of shopping, commercial, cultural, social and leisure activity

Main expansion of services will be in Ebbw Vale



Option 1: UDP Regeneration

Settlement	Share of population	Share of housing	Approx No of committed houses
Upper Sirhowy Valley (Tredegar)	22%	27%	500
Ebbw Fawr (Ebbw Vale)	33%	54%	1000
Upper Ebbw Fach (Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina)	21%	12%	220
Lower Ebbw Fach (Abertillery)	24%	7%	120

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

Growth Strategy – stemming out-migration leading to increase in population to 71,000

House build rate of 200 per annum

Emphasis of growth in Heads of Valleys with a regeneration focus in the south of the borough

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

New employment opportunities to broaden offer

The identification of a few large sites will provide the opportunity for new/improved service provision

New hierarchy of towns with Ebbw Vale becoming the regional centre. Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery district shopping centres

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

Option 2: Growth and Regeneration

Settlement	Share of population	Share of housing	Approx No of houses
Upper Sirhowy Valley (Tredegar)	25%	27%	700 (200)
Ebbw Fawr (Ebbw Vale)	33%	45%	1200 (200)
Upper Ebbw Fach (Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina)	21%	29%	520 (300)
Lower Ebbw Fach (Abertillery)	24%	8%	220 (100)

Option 3: Balanced and Inter-connected Communities

Trend Based – stemming out-migration and stabilising population at 2006 level

House build rate of 157 per annum

Emphasis is to spread growth according to share of population

Equalise employment through de-allocating of manufacturing and concentrating on business close to towns

Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr and Abertillery will find complimentary roles

Workshop 3: Alternative Option

Alternative Option

Task
To identify an alternative Option

Variables
Growth
Location
Issues (Employment, Retail)

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What Happens Next?

- Prepare a Report of the Workshops
- Consider the findings of both workshops to help us identify the preferred strategy - SA will also assist in this process
- Prepare Preferred Strategy Document
- Report back to Steering Group and LDP Forum
- Seek Council Support
- Consult in Autumn 2008

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Close

Thanks
Evaluation Form

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Appendix D – Workshop Agenda

- 12.15 – 13.00** **Lunch and Registration**
- 13.00 – 13.05** **Welcome and Introduction**
Ged McHugh – Head of Economic Development
- 13.05 – 13.15** **Presentation – LDP Update**
Lynda Healy – Development Plans Manager
- 13.15 – 13.25** **Presentation - LDP Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**
Hayley Spender – Planning Policy Officer
- 13.25 – 13.35** **Presentation – LDP Process**
Lynda Healy – Development Plans Manager
- 13.35 – 13.45** **Questions and Answers**
- 13.45 – 13.50** **Presentation - Introduction to Workshop 1- Vision**
Lynda Healy– Development Plans Manager
- 13.50 – 14.05** **Workshop 1 – Vision**
- 14.05 – 14.20** **Break – Tea and Coffee**
- 14.20 – 14.35** **Presentation – Introduction to Workshop 2 – LDP Strategy Options**
Lynda Healy– Development Plans Manager
- 14.35 – 15.35** **Workshop 2 – LDP Strategy Options (including short presentations to introduce each option)**
- Stakeholders to discuss the following options (20 minutes per option)
- Option 1:** Regeneration (continuation of UDP Strategy)
- Option 2:** Growth and Regeneration
- Option 3:** Balanced and Interconnected Communities
- 15.35 – 15.55** **Workshop 3 - Alternative Option?**
- 15.55 – 16.00** **Close and Evaluation**

Appendix E – Workshop Groups

Yellow Group

Name	Organisation
Simon Dobbs	Blaenau Gwent CBC
James Watkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Dave Rees	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Facilitator)
Brian Swain	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer)
Greg Paulsen	Co-ordinator for Cwm, Waunlwyd & Victoria Partnership
Chris Cox	DTZ
Kayna Tregay	Environment Agency
Janice Tse	Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Gemma White	NPHS

Red Group

Name	Organisation
Roger Leadbeter	
Catherine Ashby	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Mark Hopkins	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Andrew Parker	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Facilitator)
Hayley Spender	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Planning Policy Officer)
Keith Dykes	Chair of Abertillery Partnership
John Howells	Local Education Authority
Mike O' Dowd	Vice Chair, Nantyglo Communities First

Green Group

Name	Organisation
Alun Evans	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Louise Horner	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Ged McHugh	Blaenau Gwent CBC (Head of Economic Development)
Huw Lewis	GAVO (Facilitator)
Frank Callus	Heads of Valley Strategic Programme Co-ordinator (Education)
Anita Thomas	Princes Trust
Colin Stevens	Rassau Tenants & Residents Association & Blaenau Gwent Federation T&R Associations
Andrew Jenkins	Rhyd Developments Ltd