

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent



Community Facilities
Background Paper
Papur Cefndirol Cyfleusterau
Cymunedol

Deposit Local Development Plan
Cynllun Adeneuo Datblygu Lleol

CONTENTS	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT	2
People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan	2
Planning Policy Wales Edition 4	3
Shaping the Way We Work, Live and Play: Practical guidance on delivering sustainable development through the planning system	3
3.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT	4
“Turning Heads...” – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020	4
4.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT	5
Making a Difference – The Big 20 Year Plan for Blaenau Gwent 2010 to 2030	5
Draft ‘Healthier Future 3’ Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy	6
Draft Children and Young People’s Plan 2011/14 – Working to Address Issues of Child Poverty	6
Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan	6
5.0 CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES	8
Health	7
Education	11
Community/Youth Centre	15
Libraries	17
Emergency Services	18
Cemeteries	20
Social Services Facilities	21
Other Civic Facilities	24
6.0 KEY ISSUES IN BLAENAU GWENT	25
The Issues Paper	25
Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal	26
7.0 THE PREFERRED STRATEGY	26
8.0 DRAFT LDP POLICY	28
Objective 7	28
Objective 10	28
Strategic Policy (SP) 8 Economic Growth	28
Development Management Policy (DM) 12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities	30
Allocation – MU2 ‘The Works	31
Allocation – ED1 Education Provision	32
Allocation - CF1 Community Centres	33
Allocation - ENV5 Cemeteries	33



COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

Tables

Table 1 – Primary Health Care Services in Blaenau Gwent	9
Table 2 – Current Ambulance Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent	18
Table 3 – Current Fire Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent	18
Table 4 – Current Police Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent	19
Table 5 – Burial Capacities of the Cemeteries in Blaenau Gwent	20
Table 6 – Current Provision of Homes for the Elderly in Blaenau Gwent	21
Table 7 – Current Provision of Day Centres in Blaenau Gwent	22
Table 8 – Current Provision of Support Centres in Blaenau Gwent	22

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Primary Health Care Services in Blaenau Gwent
Appendix 2 – Community/Youth Centres



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aim

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

Overview of how this paper fits into Plan preparation

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

Context

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

- 1.4 For the purposes of the Local Development Plan, community facilities are defined as:

- Hospitals;
- Surgeries
- Schools;
- Nurseries;
- Colleges;
- Community Centres;
- Youth Centres;
- Libraries;
- Emergency Service Stations – Ambulance, Fire and Police;
- Cemeteries; and
- Other Civic Facilities e.g. Courts, Registry Offices.

- 1.5 This Background Paper sets out:

- **The National Policy Context** for community facilities;
- **The Regional Policy Context** for community facilities;
- **The Local Policy Context** for community facilities;
- **Current and Future Provision** of community facilities;
- **Key Issues in Blaenau Gwent** in relation to community facilities
- **Preferred Strategy**, policy in respect of community facilities, representations to the strategy and proposed policy response; and
- **Draft LDP Policy**, which provides the proposed policy context for community facilities in Blaenau Gwent.

2.0 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

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

- 2.1 The Wales Spatial Plan forms one of the high-level strategic ‘building blocks’ of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Wales Spatial Plan is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities, who are statutorily obliged to have regard for the objectives, aims and requirements of the Wales Spatial Plan in developing their Local Development Plans.
- 2.2 The Wales Spatial Plan sets a vision for how each part of Wales should develop economically, socially and environmentally over the next 20 years. It guides the way the Assembly Government will spend its money over the coming years. The Wales Spatial Plan reinforces the Welsh Assembly Government’s commitment to developing a sustainable future for Wales, including the statutory duty to promote sustainable development in all its work to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the people now and in the future.
- 2.3 The Wales Spatial Plan identifies that successful, thriving communities are formed where many social interactions take place in a high quality environment, with a good mix and balance of population with high aspirations to achieve. Health, well-being and quality of life are also identified as a key spatial dimension to assist in delivering prosperity and dynamism.
- 2.4 The objectives and actions of the Wales Spatial Plan in respect of community facilities include:
- An integrated approach to tackling child poverty, identifying and finding solutions to the determinants of poor health;
 - Directing strategic interventions to key settlements in order to improve services, including healthcare, and access to job opportunities for all;
 - Tackling health threats and problems;
 - Agreeing regional actions to create communities where people want to live; and
 - Promote efficient and best use of public resources.
- 2.5 The Wales Spatial Plan identifies that each area of Wales will need its own distinctive response to delivering the objectives and actions identified. Blaenau Gwent County Borough falls within the South East Wales region which has been identified as the ‘Capital Region’. The Wales Spatial Plan identified the following as strategy requirements for the South East region;
- In addition to the hubs, a wide range of mid and upper Valleys settlements need modern shopping, leisure, community and cultural facilities.
 - The success of hubs should improve life in smaller rural and valley communities, with good access to services being a key determinant of the quality of life.
 - Healthcare – At the local level renewed emphasis on illness prevention and strengthening primary and community based services.

- Effective action to raise levels of skill and education has to start at pre-school. The Department for Children, Education and Life-Long Learning and Skills will ensure that the area has a sufficiently strong and co-ordinated network of education and skills providers at every level, including further and higher education.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 4 (February 2011)

- 2.6** Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government. PPW is national planning policy and local government is obliged to take the requirements of PPW into account when preparing development plans.
- 2.7** The key policy objectives, as listed under paragraph 4.4.2, relating to community facilities are: -
- Promote access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open and green space, maximising opportunities for community development and social welfare; and
 - Contribute to the protection and, where possible, the improvement of people's health and well-being as a core component of sustainable development. Consideration of the possible impacts of developments – positive and/or negative – on people's health at an early stage will help to clarify the relevance of health and the extent to which it needs to be taken into account.
- 2.8** When preparing Local Development Plans, PPW requires Local Planning Authorities to: -
- Recognise the strength of urban communities, which are home to the majority of the population of Wales and the role development can play to help “arrest the decline in community facilities” (para. 4.5.1);
 - Consider previously developed sites in built-up areas for development where they facilitate the regeneration of existing communities (para. 4.8.2);
 - Make provision for land for schools, further and higher education, places of worship, recreation and other community facilities (para. 2.4.4); and
 - Provide adequate and efficient infrastructure including services such as education and health facilities (para. 12.1.1).
- 2.9** Planning Policy Wales gives Local Planning Authorities the opportunity to seek planning obligations through a developer; to restrict development or use of the land, require operations or activities to be carried out, in, on, under or over the land, require the land to be used in a specific way, or require payments to be made to the authority either in a single sum or periodically. Planning obligations are often sought to offset negative consequences from developments, to help meet local needs or to secure benefits, which will make development more sustainable (para. 3.7.1). The provision of community facilities is considered an appropriate form of development that could be sought through a planning obligation, and as such is identified within the Local Development Plan.

Shaping the Way We Work, Live and Play: Practical guidance on delivering sustainable development through the planning system (May 2007)

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

3.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

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

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

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

4.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT


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

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


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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 4.8 The draft Children and Young People's Plan 2011/14 – Working to Address Issues of Child Poverty is the second Children and Young People's Plan and the first Child Poverty Plan for Blaenau Gwent. The overarching aim of the plan is to work towards reducing child poverty and mitigating its effects on outcomes. The local pledge for the partnership is: *“Working together we are committed to delivering high quality integrated services to support and empower children, young people and families to meet their potential, and to address the effects of child poverty.”*
- 4.9 The priorities of the Plan are aligned to the Welsh Assembly Government's 7 core aims for children and young people. The core aim relating to community facilities is that all children have a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities (core aim 2). Under this core aim, a priority is to improve levels of attainment for all pupils by working to implement proposals for school reorganisation.

Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan- Draft First Revision (December 2010)

- 4.10 The Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan identifies an overarching aim and six principles along with the proposals to translate them into action. The overarching aim is to 'Share Benefits of Regeneration Widely'. This will be achieved by ensuring that all those in Blaenau Gwent share the benefits of regeneration. The six principles are:

Principle 1: Diversify the economy and develop manufacturing

Principle 2: Boost business support and enterprise

Principle 3: Promote Learning and modern skills

Principle 4: Focus investment in key communities

Principle 5: Deliver 'The Works' as a National flagship

Principle 6: Develop the transport infrastructure

4.11 Under principle 3, there are 4 projects identified, relevant to community facilities:

- **The Blaenau Gwent Lifelong Learning Campus**
The creation of a Learning Campus will be one of the flagship developments on The Works site. The current plans envisage bringing together the sixth-forms from throughout the Borough, higher education institutions and Coleg Gwent in a state-of-the-art £30m Learning Zone that will attract 3,500 full-time students.
- **Vocational training for 14-19 year olds**
The Vocational Training Centre at Tafarnaubach will be incorporated into the Learning Campus as part of a hub and spoke model. Focusing on skills to meet business needs, reduce disengagement and assist progression post-16.
- **Adult Learning and the Rise Network**
This involves building on achievements of Learning Action Centres, BIG Learning Community and partnership work across 5 counties by developing a programme of provision, focussed on learning for employment, progression to further learning and engagement in economic and community life.
- **Developing a strong higher education presence**
This is closely linked to the Blaenau Gwent Lifelong Learning Campus, delivering transformational higher education provision to Blaenau Gwent as part of a Heads of Valleys university, with a relevant and innovative curriculum supporting individual and business needs.

4.12 Under principle 4, there are 2 projects identified, relevant to community facilities:

- **The Community Hub and Spoke Network**
This involves creating a transformational network of four integrated Community Hubs in Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Upper Ebbw Fach and Lower Ebbw Fach; each anchored by a new secondary school and linked learning, community and enterprise facilities.
- **Area Regeneration Frameworks**
This involves a series of area based studies to establish appropriate and sustainable physical regeneration priorities and delivery plans for the four key areas and communities, linked closely to priorities for skills, learning, enterprise and community development.

5.0 CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

5.1 The following section seeks to identify the current provision of community facilities within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, the future requirements of facilities and the proposed locations and allocations that will be included within the Local Development Plan.

HEALTH – Current Provision

5.2 Health services are delivered by the following agencies:

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

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

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

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

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

5.7 The total estate available for delivering primary health care services in Blaenau Gwent comprises 33 premises. These are split between the main hub areas as indicated in Table 1. Appendix 1 lists the primary health care services in Blaenau Gwent.

Table 1 – Primary Health Care Services in Blaenau Gwent

Hub Area	Number of Premises				Grand Total
	GP Practice Only Main Surgery	GP only Branch Surgeries	Clinic/ Health Centre/	Hospital	
Ebbw Vale	4	3	2	3	12
Tredegar	2	0	1	1	4
Upper Ebbw Fach	4	1	2	1	8
Lower Ebbw Fach	6	1	2	0	9
Grand Total	16	5	7	5	33

Source: Aneurin Bevan Health Board (2010)

HEALTH - Future Provision

Local General Hospital

- 5.8 Among the most significant of factors influencing health service provision in the area is the difficulty in sustaining current patterns of delivery to a dispersed local population. Also spatial inequalities exist in terms of deprivation and infrastructure. In Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, the Local Health Board has embarked upon pathfinder projects with new Local General Hospitals to be located at Ebbw Vale and Ystrad Mynach. In the new system, existing hospitals at **Ebbw Vale**, **Abertillery**, Caerphilly District Miners, Oakdale, Aberbargoed and Ystrad Mynach, will close.
- 5.9 Planning permission for a new Local General Hospital was granted in 2008 at 'The Works', Ebbw Vale. Construction of the new hospital is complete; an eight-week programme of transferring services and bringing in equipment and furniture will see the £53 million hospital fully operational by November 2010. Thousands of appointments will transfer from Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny to Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. The new hospital also boasts more than 100 inpatient beds, a minor injuries unit, an adult mental health unit and inpatient rehabilitation, palliative care and elderly support services.
- 5.10 Services and staff are also being transferred from Blaina and Tredegar hospitals. These facilities will not close completely, though final decisions over what, if any, role they will play in the future have yet to be made. One possibility for Tredegar is that part of the site might host a primary care resource centre, or super surgery, providing a range of GP and other services.
- 5.11 Adult mental health services currently provided at the Dan y Bryn, Lyndhurst and Cru Glas units across Blaenau Gwent will also transfer to Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan.

Primary Care Resource Centres

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

Surgeries / Health Centres

- 5.19 Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board highlights that there is a need to replace Cwm Health Centre, plus additional capacity for Glyn Ebwy / Pen-y-Cae Surgeries is required. This is a medium priority scheme that needs to be timetabled in conjunction with the Ebbw Vale Primary Resource Centre scheme, in that both schemes can't be ongoing at the same time. The potential site that was identified by the Local Authority is no longer available and therefore no allocation is included in the Local Development Plan.

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

EDUCATION – Current Provision

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

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

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

Other	2
Total (all)	34

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (January 2011)

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

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

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

PROPOSAL 1

Stage 1

It is proposed that the Waunlwyd Primary and Pontygof Primary Schools and the Ebbw Vale and Glyncoed Schools would close.

Stage 2

Changing the age range for Brynmawr and Tredegar Secondary Schools to 11-16. In the event that Ebbw Vale and Glyncoed Secondary Schools do not close the Local Authority proposes to change the age range of these schools to 11-16 also.

PROPOSAL 2

The relocation of the Pen Y Cwm School to 'The Works' site by 31st August 2012. This option provides an opportunity to have high quality purpose designed specialist facilities for children with learning difficulties or special educational needs for some 120 pupils.

PROPOSAL 3

Stage 1

A new 3-16 school would be established on 1 September 2012. The primary phase will be established in a new building on the steelworks site from this time. The secondary phase will move to a new building on the new site on 1 September 2013. This proposed new school may incorporate a 420 place primary phase, occupying separate premises to the secondary phase. This would cater for the current and future demand for Waunlwyd Primary School, Pontygof Primary School and housing developments in the area.

Stage 2

The establishment of an Integrated Children's Centre attached as part of the new primary education provision.

PROPOSAL 4

The establishment of post 16 provision (previously provided in the sixth forms of secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent) delivering all post 16 programmes of learning and learning opportunities under the governance of Coleg Gwent.

- 5.35 The formal consultation ended in August 2010. The period of Statutory Notice for proposals relating to educational provision on The Works site, Ebbw Vale, ended on 14th December and 28th December 2010. All correspondence and objections received have been submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government, for the Minister to determine a decision. No objections were received in relation to Pen y Cwm and this proposal was determined by the Council on 9th February 2011.

EDUCATION – Future Provision

- 5.36 The proposals identified through the formal consultation process presents exciting and significant changes and opportunities to Blaenau Gwent's education system. However, as no decisions have been taken, no allocations have been made in the Deposit Plan. Future proposals will be determined by relevant development management policies.

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

Primary Education

- 5.39 The Local Authority has completed the statutory notice period to discontinue Garnlydan Primary School. Education for pupils from the Garnlydan catchment area will be provided for at Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary School, Ebbw Vale.
- 5.40 Planning permission for a new Welsh Medium Primary school was secured in September 2008 on land north of Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Nantyglo. Construction of the new school is now complete. The school provides educational opportunities for 330 primary school children.
- 5.41 The school replaces the Brynmawr Junior and Infants premises which was built over 100 years ago. The school could not provide the standard of facilities that was needed to support the education of children in the 21st century. In addition as many pupils travelled to the school from across Blaenau Gwent (and parts of Monmouthshire) by bus, there were concerns regarding traffic safety.
- 5.42 The lower plateau of the Six Bells Colliery site has been identified for a new primary school to accommodate 330 children. As part of the redevelopment of the whole of the Six Bells Colliery site the new school is likely to be developed in 2014.

Secondary Education

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

COMMUNITY/YOUTH CENTRES – Current Provision

- 5.45 Obtaining information on community and youth centres has proved extremely difficult as there is no central database which holds such information. However, information from the Communities First Partnership has approximately identified the number and names of the community centres and halls within the County Borough. The Holistic Area Regeneration Plans (HARPs) identifies the future provision required.
- 5.46 Community halls and centres are important facilities in towns and villages. There are approximately 25 in Blaenau Gwent County Borough. There are 3 youth centres in Blaenau Gwent which are run by the adult education department of the Council. Appendix 2 lists the community and youth centres identified in the County Borough.

COMMUNITY/YOUTH CENTRES – Future Provision

Tredegar area

Sirhowy Community Facility

- 5.47 This is a partnership project with Sirhowy Tenants and Residents Association, United Welsh Housing and Tredegar Development Trust to create a community facility on the former Sirhowy Infants School site in the centre of social housing on Sirhowy Hill. Outline planning permission was granted in 2009 for a new community centre on the south eastern section of the site and 23 affordable homes on the northern section of the site.
- 5.48 The community centre, or as it will be known “The Star Centre” will host a range of services comprising of early years provision, youth services, youth clubs and after school provision, learning, recreation, community safety, advice and information, community events and carnivals and venue hire.

Waundeg Community Facility

- 5.49 Waundeg is an isolated community separated from Tredegar by the A465. There is already a community house but this has proved too small especially for youth facilities. As part of a multi phased affordable housing development by Melin Homes there is scope for a community facility to be provided. There are no firm proposals at this stage so no allocation can be made in the Plan. Future development proposals will be dealt with through relevant development management policies.

Kidz R Us

- 5.50 Kidz R Us Limited has been running for over five years in the former Park Place Chapel, Tredegar, in that time the number of children using the facility for example has increased to 234, attending dance, drama, singing lessons and choir.
- 5.51 The current building cannot accommodate the demand, therefore there is scope to extend the rear of the existing building to accommodate more classes, meeting space and changing facilities. As this is a small scale project no allocation is included in the Plan. Future development proposals will be dealt with through relevant development management policies.

Lower Ebbw Fach

Six Bells Community Hall

- 5.52 The Six Bells Community Hall project aims to develop and improve the existing facilities at the community centre through the creation of a wildlife garden and seating area at the rear of the centre. The community centre is being utilised by a wide variety of agencies and provides a centre for local community groups. As this is a small scale project, no allocation is included in the Plan. Future development proposals will be dealt with through relevant development management policies.

Abertillery Youth Centre

- 5.53 The Abertillery Youth centre has previously benefited from Heads of Valleys funding to refurbish one end of the building. However, the main hall and the annex are still in need of improvement. This centre will feature as one of the fixed sites which will provide a base of the new youth provision being planned for Blaenau Gwent and provide a dance/fitness studio and storage area. As this is a small scale project no allocation is included in the Plan. Future development proposals will be dealt with through relevant development management policies.

The Jim Owen Pavilion

- 5.54 The Jim Owen Pavilion was originally constructed in 1994 to provide a recreational facility to complement the adjacent sports pitch. It is currently used as a changing facility for people using the sports field and contains one small room for communal use. Its relative size and internal facilities limits a number of community groups from using the facility.

- 5.55 Recently concerns have been raised about its condition particularly in light of vandalism to the fabric of the building. It is indicative of a lack of sense of ownership of the building with the local community and an absence of adequate community activities.
- 5.56 As part of the CALON (Cwmtillery Active Lifestyles Outdoors Nexus) project, the potential to expand the use of the Jim Owen Pavilion as an Outdoor Gateway and Education Centre is being explored, whilst retaining the existing function and purpose of the existing and identified community users. Land has been allocated in the Plan as a leisure allocation for this project. Further details on the CALON project are contained in the Leisure Background Paper.
- 5.57 In order to address demand in the County Borough and in response to national planning policy, the Local Development Plan should make provision for the following community / youth centre provision:
- Former Sirhowy Infants School, Tredegar

LIBRARIES – Current Provision

- 5.58 There are currently a total of 6 libraries within Blaenau Gwent County Borough; Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Tredegar, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery and one small outreach provision in Llanhilleth.
- 5.59 There are also 2 mobile library services, namely a home delivery and a mobile delivery.

LIBRARIES - Future Provision

- 5.60 As part of the regeneration of the 'The Works', Ebbw Vale, it was originally considered that the Ebbw Vale library would be relocated to this site. However, it is now proposed to refurbish the existing Ebbw Vale library which is located in the Principal Town Centre of Ebbw Vale.
- 5.61 Abertillery library is considered to be located on an unsuitable site outside the town centre. There are proposals to relocate Abertillery library from its current location at Oak Street, Abertillery. There are a number of options being explored as part of the town centre's redevelopment. One possible site is the vacant site on the corner of Tillery Street, where the library service will share accommodation with other public, local services.
- 5.62 Another option is also being explored, as part of the Abertillery Regeneration Strategy (Powell Dobson, 2006). A 'Community Campus' is proposed to the south of the town centre, from High Street to Somerset Street. It is proposed that this will add a range of services, utilise otherwise vacant floorspace and stimulate footfall and activity. This part of the town will include cultural facilities like the Metropole, as well as local services like a library.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

- 5.63 As these options continue to be explored, no allocation can be made in the Plan. Future development proposals will be dealt with by development management polices.
- 5.64 Elsewhere in the County Borough, the current static provision is considered acceptable following the recent refurbishment of Tredegar and Brynmawr libraries.
- 5.65 Borough-wide there is a need to expand the provision of home and mobile delivery library services, as these are the more popular services.

EMERGENCY SERVICES – Current Provision

- 5.66 The following tables illustrate the current emergency services provision in the County Borough.

Table 2 - Current Ambulance Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent

Ambulance Stations	
Facility	Hub Area
Tredegar Ambulance Station	Tredegar
Aberbeeg Ambulance Station	Lower Ebbw Fach

Table 3 - Current Fire Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent

Fire Stations – Retained Duty System (RDS) (These Firefighters live and work within five minutes of their local Fire Station and are called in to respond to incidents, when required, ensuring an appliance is always available)	
Facility	Hub Area
Tredegar	Tredegar
Blaina	Upper Ebbw Fach
Brynmawr	Upper Ebbw Fach
Fire Stations – Day Crewed (These Stations have Wholetime Firefighters based on them who provide cover from the Station during working hours and from their homes during evenings and weekends. Similar to the RDS these Firefighters must also live within five minutes of their Stations.)	
Facility	Hub Area
Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale
Abertillery	Lower Ebbw Fach

Table 4 - Current Police Station Provision in Blaenau Gwent

Police Stations – continuously manned	
Facility	Hub Area
Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale
Tredegar	Tredegar
Brynmaur	Upper Ebbw Fach
Abertillery	Lower Ebbw Fach
Police Stations – part time manned (24/7 police officers but not 24/7 public counter)	
Facility	Ward
Cwm	Ebbw Vale
Rassau	Ebbw Vale
Blaina	Upper Ebbw Fach
Llanhilleth	Lower Ebbw Fach

EMERGENCY SERVICES – Future Provision

Ambulance Stations

- 5.67 The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) is seeking to implement system status management in operations for the future. This will mean that operations will be more vehicle based and less building based. The Trust will designate response points throughout the communities where ambulances and paramedic cars will be parked closer to the predicted need.
- 5.68 As part of the system status management system, ambulance stations throughout Wales are being scrutinised by WAST. Therefore, the future of the Tredegar Ambulance Station is currently under review. To date, WAST has confirmed that a building base is required in Tredegar. However, there is uncertainty if the base would be the existing ambulance station. The decision will be subject to a site option appraisal. Due to this uncertainty, no allocation for a new ambulance station in Tredegar has been included in the Plan.
- 5.69 Tredegar Ambulance Station was also put forward as a candidate site, to be considered for residential development. Again, due to the uncertainty over the future of the station no allocation has been included in the Plan to redevelop the site for housing.
- 5.70 Following the recent relocation of Aberbeeg Ambulance Station to the Abertillery Fire Station site, there are no further ambulance station developments proposed in the south of the Borough in the foreseeable future.

Fire Stations

- 5.71 The South Wales Fire Service anticipates that there will be no change in station locations or numbers during the plan period.

Police Stations

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

- 5.72 During 2009, Gwent Police Force has undergone a major reorganisation, which has resulted in changes in premises requirements in the Blaenau Gwent area.
- 5.73 One change identified is the desire to improve the profile of the smaller police station to make them more visible and accessible to the respective communities. It is envisaged that the smaller police stations will be relocated to existing public buildings to improve contact and reassurance. The current premises have very few visitors and the officers who are based at the stations spend most of their day patrolling the community. Consequently the premises are severely under-used.
- 5.74 It is therefore proposed that site sharing will be investigated in Llanhilleth, Blaina, Cwm and Rassau.
- 5.75 Within the County Borough, there are four large police stations; Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. Some of these sites are under utilised and a few require major investment. Therefore, an assessment is underway to investigate if one, two or three sites are needed to provide a service in the area.
- 5.76 In addition, as part of the Ebbw Vale Sustainable Regeneration Framework Draft Report (July 2010), the existing Ebbw Vale Police Station has been identified as a potential refurbishment/ redevelopment opportunity. Therefore, this site has been identified in the plan as an action area.

CEMETERIES – Current Provision

- 5.77 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council currently manages seven cemeteries, these are listed in table 5 below. No crematoria facilities are currently located in the County Borough and are dependent on those at Greater Gwent (Cwmbran) and Llwydcoed (Aberdare).

CEMETERIES – Future Provision

- 5.78 The Council has undertaken a review of the current Cemeteries capacity within Blaenau Gwent as shown in the table below. The review identifies that extensions are required at five of the seven sites.

Table 5 - Burial Capacities of the Cemeteries in Blaenau Gwent

Cemetery	Hub Area	Approximate Grave Spaces Available	Average Number of New Burials Per Year	Estimated life of Cemetery in Years and Months
Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale	1,830	73	25
Cwm	Ebbw Vale	270	27	10
Cefn Golau	Tredegar	15	40	0.3
Dukestown	Tredegar	260	26	10
Blaina	Upper Ebbw Fach	100	25	4
Brynmawr	Upper Ebbw	310	36	8.6

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

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

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

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

SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES – Current Provision

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

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

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

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

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

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

Table 7 – Current Provision of Day Centres in Blaenau Gwent

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

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

Table 8 – Current Provision of Support Centres in Blaenau Gwent

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

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

Facility	Hub Area	Description of Service
Gofal Cymru	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for people with mental health problems
Mencap Cymru	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for people with learning disabilities
The Bridge Project	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for vulnerable families
The Wallich	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for people who are homeless/potentially homeless
Trothwy Cyf	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for young people and care leavers
PPO Trothwy Cyf	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for priority and persistent offenders
United Welsh Housing Association	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support low level generic support
Cynnal Trothwy Cyf	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating Support for care leavers
Trothwy Arms Project	Across Gwent	Floating Support for ex-offenders
AFC Outreach service	Across Blaenau Gwent	Floating support scheme for care leavers
AFC Supported Lodgings	Across Blaenau Gwent	Supported lodgings for young people
Adult Placements	Across Blaenau Gwent	Adult placement schemes for people with learning disabilities
Bryn Glas House	Ebbw Vale	Supported housing scheme for people with mental health issues (not 24 hour)
Gorsedd Close	Ebbw Vale	Supported housing scheme for people with mental health issues (24 hour)
Laburnum Close	Ebbw Vale	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (24 hour)
Pen y Parc	Ebbw Vale	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (not 24 hour)
North Avenue	Tredegar	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (24 hour)
St Lukes Road	Tredegar	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (24 hour)
St James Way	Tredegar	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (not 24 hour)
TS House	Upper Ebbw Fach	Supported housing scheme for young people (not 24 hour)
North Blaina Cottages	Upper Ebbw Fach	Supported housing scheme for people with mental health issues (not 24 hour)
Quarry Row	Upper Ebbw Fach	Supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities (24 hour)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

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

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (2009)

SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES – Future Provision

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.0 KEY ISSUES IN BLAENAU GWENT

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

The Issues Paper (July 2007)

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

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

4 comments were made in relation to this question.

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

Response

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

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

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

Response

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

Issue - Community facilities should be provided in locations close to a critical mass of population

Response

Agreed. When preparing Local Development Plans, Planning Authorities are required to consider previously developed sites in built up areas for development where they facilitate the regeneration of existing communities. This has been a key element of the candidate site process as each site has been considered against its relationship to existing settlements and its proximity to services, facilities and public transport.

Issue - The Plan needs to take account of the Clinical Futures Programme, which aims to modernise and reshape the delivery of healthcare services across Gwent.

Response

Agreed. Chapter 5 of this Background Paper takes into account the Clinical Futures Programme.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise/ Sustainability Appraisal

- 6.4 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Exercise was undertaken between March – December 2007. The process identified key strategic problems, objectives and issues for sustainability. 18 key sustainability issues were identified, 2 of which are related to community facilities:
- Low educational attainment; and
 - Health

7.0 THE PREFERRED STRATEGY

- 7.1 The Preferred Strategy provided the following policy framework for community facilities in Blaenau Gwent:

Objectives

9. Improve education levels and skills through supporting infrastructure development of the Learning Campus, new schools and integrated education services, including lifelong learning.

- 7.2 No comments were made on objective 9.

- 7.3 Two comments were made on this policy.

SP14 Health and Education

To improve health provision and skills, sites will be safeguarded for a new hospital, Primary Care Resource Centres, the Learning Campus, relocation of the training centre and new schools.

Issue - Identification of the Community Facilities

It was reflected that the Policy fails to indicate where provision for the facilities will be made. Apart from the primary care resource centres and the relocation of the training centre, all the facilities listed in the Policy are to be accommodated on the former Steelworks site in Ebbw Vale and should therefore be identified in the Local Development Plan.

Response

The draft Deposit Plan, where possible, will identify proposed health and educational facilities. Chapter 5 of this Background Paper seeks to address the current and future provision of health and educational facilities in Blaenau Gwent.

The Plan includes a mixed use allocation at 'The Works' which includes the local general hospital and learning zone. Other than 'The Works' land is allocated for a new primary school in Brynmawr and Six Bells.

Issue - Disabled Living Facility

One comment reflected that there is no centre in Wales to act as a catalyst for Disabled Living. It is considered that a centre could be incorporated into the plans for the former Steelworks site, Ebbw Vale.

Response

It is recognised that there are gaps in service provision such as a dedicated respite care facility for people with a physical disability and an intermediate care facility to allow the transition to independent living. However, due to the resource position this will be explored in the future but not within the plan period.

8.0 DRAFT LDP POLICY

8.1 To address the issues raised the following is proposed:

Objective 7

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

Objective 10

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

Strategic Policy

SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth

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

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

The Strategy recognises that, in order to address some of the serious socio-economic problems in Blaenau Gwent, a progressive approach must be taken in the development of land for economic purposes. The LDP therefore allocates 50

ha of land based on a future land requirement study and a future need for employment space assessment. The approach is intended to meet economic development and employment needs and ensure that Blaenau Gwent achieves its economic potential. Statistical analysis and background to the employment land calculations is contained in the Employment Background Paper.

Pre-deposit consultation and results from the 'Living in Blaenau Gwent' Survey (July 2009) provides a clear indication that job prospects are considered of primary importance in making somewhere a good place to live, and are in most need of improvement in Blaenau Gwent. Through the LDP, the Council will seek the development of a business environment that delivers a strong and diverse economy, quality, well paid jobs, and addresses the problems of economic inactivity.

The Blaenau Gwent economy has experienced major structural change moving from the dependence on heavy industry that historically dominated the local economy, towards manufacturing and services. The scale of changes within the global economy have resulted in the transfer of operations to many of the lower cost centres around the world. A trend common to Blaenau Gwent, Wales and the UK is the failure to attract large levels of high-tech sectors. This trend is of considerable local concern in terms of the loss of economic activity, the scale of job losses and also in terms of employment land implications that might arise from this level of change.

The Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy (2009) recognises the need to diversify the economy and seeks to build on diversification of the local economy by promoting and supporting new areas of opportunity, and developing the strengths of the manufacturing industry. This is to be achieved through specialisation in high-tech industries based around key sectors such as electronics.

Outside manufacturing, there are a number of other key sectors where Blaenau Gwent should focus for maximum impact in the diversification of its economy such as in business services, tourism and leisure, cultural, health and social care and construction.

The social care sector has been growing throughout the UK and provides a substantial opportunity for employment at all levels. The development of the proposed 96-bed Local General Hospital in Ebbw Vale will provide employment across the entire range of clinical, caring and support services.

The Business Competitiveness Study (2009) identified a shortfall in local cultural facilities and that projects such as Parc Bryn Bach and Abertillery's Metropole Cultural and Conference Centre are making a difference, but further opportunities exist. The sector can contribute effectively to addressing the issues of employability by offering opportunities for less experienced people as well as providing high, quality cultural and leisure jobs.

In accordance with national planning policy rural enterprise in the countryside will be encouraged where proposals do not impact unacceptably on local amenity. Welsh Assembly Government's Climbing Higher Strategy aims to increase

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

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

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

Development Management Policy

DM12 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities

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

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

Local leisure and community facilities such as sports centres and community buildings are important to the health, social and economic well being of the settlements within the County Borough (a list of community facilities can be found in the Community Facilities Background Paper). In addition, these facilities often provide the key elements to achieving more sustainable settlements by providing facilities within easy reach of people by foot or bicycle. Consequently this Policy seeks to retain such facilities. This Policy applies to all proposals that may lead to the loss of a facility.

With regard to criterion b of this Policy, planning applications will need to be supported by appropriate evidence in order to demonstrate that the facility is surplus to requirements.

Allocations and Designations

MU2 'The Works'

In accordance with Policy SP1 land is allocated at the former steelworks site for mixed use including; the construction of a new hospital, learning zone, leisure centre, playing pitches, arts centre, approximately 520 houses, business hub, family history & genealogy visitor centre, environmental resource centre and wetland park.

Development of the site will be guided by the latest masterplan and supporting documentation.

The former Steelworks runs along the bottom of the Ebbw Valley to the South East of Ebbw Vale Town Centre. It is about 3 kilometres from north to south and half a kilometre from east to west. The site has the benefit of outline planning permission. The original Masterplan Design and Access Statement sets out a 10-year programme for development divided into 5 phases between 2008 and 2018. The revised masterplan incorporates an amended indicative framework with four phases allowed to run to a maximum of 4 years each to allow development flexibility although the 2018 date continues to be a broad indication of the time-scale envisaged for the delivery of the scheme.

The Vision is:

“The Works is the regeneration of the former steelworks site in Ebbw Vale which is transforming the site into a vibrant and distinctive area. It’s a £350 million project that will create new places for learning, working and recreational. It will be integrated into the existing town centre to make stronger connections and links to important local landmarks. The scheme includes delivering new houses, primary and special education needs school, hospital, commercial floor space, a learning zone, basement park, central valley wetland park, 2km railway extension and a mechanical link. Already some of the projects have been completed (e.g. Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan and the environmental resource centre) and others are ongoing (The learning zone and general offices). The Works is widely recognised as a sustainable exemplar project across Wales and the UK and is driven by four key objectives; economic, social, resources and environmental, all of which give the project its green credentials. These objectives include retaining the history and heritage of the area, involving the community in developing the site and creating wider employment and commercial benefits for Blaenau Gwent.”

Key elements are:

- **Aneurin Bevan Hospital** – a 96 bed Local General Hospital;
- **The Central Valley & Wetlands Park** – a green corridor running through the site;
- **Environmental Resource Centre** – Provides an education facility for local children and the community to explore the heritage and ecology of the site;

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

ED1 Education Provision

The following sites are allocated for education:

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

The Policy allocates land required by the Education Department for the provision of two new primary schools:

- Ysgol Gymraeg, Brynmawr; and
- The Lower Plateau of the Six Bells Colliery Site.

Planning permission for a replacement Welsh medium primary school for Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr was secured in September 2008 on land north of Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Nantyglo. The school will provide educational facilities for 330 primary school children.

The lower plateau of the Six Bells Colliery Site has been identified for a new primary school, as part of the redevelopment of the whole of the Six Bells Colliery Site. The new school is likely to be developed in 2014.

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

CF1 Community Centre

The following site is allocated for a community centre:

- 1. Former Sirhowy Infants School, Tredegar**

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

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

ENV5 Cemeteries

Extensions to the existing cemeteries are identified at the following locations:

- 1. Cefn Golau Cemetery, Tredegar**
- 2. Dukestown Cemetery, Tredegar**
- 3. Blaina Cemetery, Blaina**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council currently manages seven cemeteries. The Council has undertaken a review of the current Cemeteries capacity within Blaenau Gwent. The review identifies that extensions to the existing cemeteries are required at three of the seven sites. The Plan allocates land for these extensions.

APPENDICES



COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER



COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

APPENDIX 1 - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN BLAENAU GWENT

Facility	Hub Area	Comments
GP Practice Only Main Surgery		
Cwm Health Centre	Ebbw Vale	Main Surgery
Glanrhyd Surgery	Ebbw Vale	Main Surgery
Glyn Ebwy surgery	Ebbw Vale	Main Surgery
Pen-y-Cae Surgery	Ebbw Vale	Main Surgery
Glan yr Afon Surgery	Tredeggar	Main Surgery
Health Centre	Tredeggar	Main Surgery
Blaina Medical Practice	Upper Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Aparajita Surgery	Upper Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Blaen-y-cwm Group Practice	Upper Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Essendene Surgery	Upper Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Abernant Surgery	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Dr Dexter's Practice	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Dr Roy's Practice	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Six Bells Medical Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
The Surgery, Llanhilleth Institute	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
Aberbeeg Medical Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach	Main Surgery
GP only Branch Surgeries		
Bridge Street Health Centre	Ebbw Vale	Branch of Aparajita Surgery
New Braeside Surgery	Ebbw Vale	Branch of Blaen y Cwm Group Practice
The Surgery	Ebbw Vale	Branch surgery of Glyn Ebwy
Nantyglo Medical Centre	Upper Ebbw Fach	Branch of Blaen y Cwm Group Practice
Medical Centre, Institute House, Llanhilleth Institute	Lower Ebbw Fach	Branch of Six Bells Medical Centre
Clinic / Health Centres		
Cwm Health Centre	Ebbw Vale	
Ebbw Vale Health Centre	Ebbw Vale	
Tredeggar Health Clinic	Tredeggar	
Blaina Community Clinic	Upper Ebbw Fach	
Brynmaur Health Centre	Upper Ebbw Fach	
The Bridge Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach	
Swffryd Clinic	Lower Ebbw Fach	
Hospitals		
Dan y Bryn Unit	Ebbw Vale	
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan	Ebbw Vale	
Ysbyty'r Tri Chwm	Ebbw Vale	
Tredeggar General Hospital	Tredeggar	
Blaina Hospital	Upper Ebbw Fach	



COMMUNITY FACILITIES BACKGROUND PAPER

APPENDIX 2 – COMMUNITY/YOUTH CENTRES

Community Centre Name	Hub Area
Newtown Community Centre	Ebbw Vale
Hilltop Log Cabin	Ebbw Vale
Tyllwyn OAP Hall	Ebbw Vale
Mount Pleasant Church (Vestry)	Ebbw Vale
Hilltop OAP Hall	Ebbw Vale
All Saints Catholic Church Hall	Ebbw Vale
St John Ambulance Hall	Ebbw Vale
Ebbw Vale Institute (Church Street)	Ebbw Vale
Zion Church Vestry (Briery Hill)	Ebbw Vale
RTB's RFC Briery Hill	Ebbw Vale
Apostolic Church (Opposite Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre)	Ebbw Vale
Rassau Community Centre (Summerfield Road)	Ebbw Vale
Nantybawch Senior Citizens hall	Tredegar
Stocktonville Senior citizens hall	Tredegar
Ystrad Deri Community Centre	Tredegar
Sirhowy Senior Citizens Hall, Beaufort Road, Sirhowy	Tredegar
Georgetown Community Centre, James Street	Tredegar
Kidz R US (not really a community centre, but well used)	Tredegar
91-93 Attlee Way, Cefn Golau	Tredegar
Brynithel Community Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach
Llanhilleth Institute	Lower Ebbw Fach
Sofrydd Community Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach
Jim Owen Pavilion	Lower Ebbw Fach
Coed Cae Community Centre	Upper Ebbw Fach
Winchestown Pensioners Hall	Upper Ebbw Fach
Nantyglo Pensioners Hall	Upper Ebbw Fach
Youth Centre Name	Hub Area
Brynteg Community Education and Youth Centre	Ebbw Vale
Cwm Community Education Centre	Ebbw Vale
Abertillery Youth Centre	Lower Ebbw Fach



For further information please contact:

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