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Assessment Support Unit

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**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

# **Report on the Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)**

## Further Information

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## Key Mitigation Measures for the Local Development Plan

<b>Theme</b>	
<b>Economic Activity</b>	
1.	Support existing employment strategy with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate skills, knowledge and training;</li> <li>• Increased opportunities in self employment;</li> <li>• Local labour market agreements; and</li> <li>• Affordable community childcare.</li> </ul>
2.	Refer to the ‘Learning City’ concept as part of joined-up initiatives in Education (training), especially regarding greater retention of younger people.
<b>Leisure and Natural Environment</b>	
1.	More explicit links between the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and mental well-being, e.g. CCW and BGCBC work around access to natural green spaces.
2.	Improve open space provision through co-operation between Planning and Leisure.
3.	Ensure joined-up tourism based policy initiatives and consider developing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage trails;</li> <li>• Major tourist attractions; and</li> <li>• Land for accessible accommodation for future tourists.</li> </ul>
4.	Link public transport with natural environment.
<b>Retailing and Town Centres</b>	
1.	Ensure that no communities are isolated from accessing the town centres by public transport
2.	Facilitate town centre regeneration by-occupation of vacant properties.
3.	Ensure that the profits of retailing are retained in the area.

<p>4.</p> <p>5.</p>	<p>Takeaway Food shops need greater restriction near to schools and colleges by planners taking health into greater consideration.</p> <p>Through the LDP consider including a policy to protect local shops in isolated communities.</p>
<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p>	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>Consideration should be given to housing for disabled people.</p> <p>Ensure close proximity to services for new build.</p> <p>Consideration could be given to encouraging low-impact and low-density development for example part-buried eco-housing.</p> <p>Increase the use and enforcement of design codes for housing layouts.</p> <p>Those not reliant on housing still need consideration; thought should be given to the needs of the gypsy and traveller communities.</p>
<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>6.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b></p> <p>Consider increasing train links and integrating them with bus services.</p> <p>Increase the provision of cycle lanes through partners like Sustrans.</p> <p>Removal of all street signage (public realm).</p> <p>Ensure that there are transport links to public facilities.</p> <p>Link transport connections to businesses and their provision for their workers' ability to travel to work, e.g. encouraging private provision of showers and bike racks</p> <p>Encourage operators to link the three valleys.</p>
<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><b>Public Services</b></p> <p>Location of primary health care facilities should be accessible and sustainable.</p> <p>Combined services should be encouraged in primary health care facilities.</p>

	<b>Waste</b>
1.	Provide more links to recycling facilities.
2.	Encourage the use of recycled materials

## **Executive Summary**

This consultation report outlines the views expressed at the rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) workshop which was held to discuss the proposed strategy of the draft Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) in terms of its negative and positive impacts on the health and well being of the Blaenau Gwent population.

The workshop was held on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009, at the Llanhilleth Institute, Llanhilleth. The event brought together eighteen key internal and external stakeholders from the local authority area (see Appendix A for a full list).

The purpose of the workshop was to identify:

- How the LDP might impact, both positively and negatively, on the health and well-being of the population, in particular, vulnerable groups; and
- What further work is required to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts.

### **Workshop Session 1: Impact on Vulnerable Groups**

The first workshop session involved participants identifying who are the vulnerable groups within Blaenau Gwent's overall population. The participants identified a range of population groups under the following categories:

- Disabilities and Carers;
- Mental Health Concerns;
- Minority Sexual Orientation;
- Age dependent risk;
- Ethnic Minorities;
- Income Related;
- Groups who suffer social disadvantage;
- Geographical Issues; and
- Groups where food and exercise are health concerns.

The participants were asked to keep these groups in mind, as the results would be used in workshop 2.

## **Workshop Session 2: Strategic Screening of the LDP**

This workshop session was an opportunity for the participants to discuss the proposed strategy of the draft Local Development Plan in terms of its negative and positive impacts on the health and well being of the Blaenau Gwent population. The discussions in the workshop identified positive and negative impacts under the following themes:

- Economic activity;
- Leisure and natural environment;
- Retailing and town centres;
- Housing;
- Public services;
- Transport; and
- Waste.

## **Workshop 3: Possible Mitigation of Impacts**

The aim of the final session was to identify what further work was required on the draft LDP to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts identified in the previous workshop session. Key mitigation measures for the Local Development Plan are provided at the front of this report.

## **Way Forward**

The Council will seek to ensure that the views expressed at the workshop will be taken into account as the draft LDP is finalised. The views expressed represent an important extra layer of evidence about potential health impacts. This is due to the close contacts that the stakeholder group has with the local community.

Participants gave feedback on the workshop and felt that the session has been useful in identifying the positive and negative impacts of the LDP on the health and well being of the Blaenau Gwent population. A copy of the evaluation form is contained in appendix E.



## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 In November 2006, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) made the decision to cease work on its Unitary Development Plan and begin developing a Local Development Plan (LDP). This key strategic document will set out the framework for land use planning and allocation in the County Borough between 2006 and 2021. 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 Guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in the form of a *Draft Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement: Planning, Health and Well-Being, DMIPPS, 02/2006*, (WAG, 2006c) highlights the importance of Local Planning Authorities considering:

“any views expressed in preparing the policies which will provide the basis for planning decisions ... in relation to health and well-being ... HIA should be used to provide information to enable actual and perceived effects on health to be considered in an open and reasoned way.” (WAG, 2006c, 4-5)

1.3 HIA is a mixture of procedures, methods and tools concerned with measuring health and well-being. They are used to judge a policy, programme or project in terms of the potential health effects on a population. A HIA can also reveal the likely distribution of those effects within a population. This means it can establish who may benefit from, or suffer from, the policy, programme or project in question.

1.4 The definition of health used will determine the depth of any HIA. The definition used by the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) (See Appendix B for a description of WHIASU’s work) is broad and comes from the World Health Organisation (WHO):

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1946)

- 1.5 In the first instance, this definition says that the health of an individual is determined by their age, sex and constitutional factors. Although, individual lifestyle factors, social and community networks and general socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions are also important. These include a range of ‘determinants’: living and working conditions, agriculture and food production, education, the work environment, unemployment, water and sanitation, health care services and housing (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991, 1993).
- 1.6 The resources available determine the majority of HIAs. HIAs can be classified in two ways; ‘in-depth’ or ‘rapid’. In-depth HIAs are comprehensive assessments that can take many months to complete as they involve systematic literature reviews, new data collection and expert analysis. Rapid HIAs, by contrast, can be completed in hours or days. Both approaches involve stakeholder meetings and a report. The only previous rapid HIA undertaken on a LDP in Wales was undertaken for Wrexham County Borough Council.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.7 In the autumn of 2009, a rapid HIA was considered suitable for the LDP by the BGCBC planning policy section and the Blaenau Gwent Public Health team. During the summer and autumn of 2007, the Council undertook a number of community engagement events at which a range of local stakeholders had an opportunity to consider where we are (identification of key issues facing the Borough), where we want to go (development of a vision), and how do we want to get there (consideration of three strategy options). These events generated valuable feedback which assisted the Council in preparing the Preferred Strategy for the LDP.
- 1.8 It was agreed that the rapid HIA would be in the form of a participatory half-day workshop. It would follow the systematic methodology for a rapid HIA outlined above which is also given in greater detail in *Improving Health and Reducing Inequalities: A Practical Guide to Health Impact Assessment* (WAG, 2004).

## 2.0 The Workshop

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<sup>2</sup> See CISHE (2008)

- 2.1 The purpose of the workshop was to identify:
- How the LDP might impact, both positively and negatively, on the health and well-being of the population, in particular, vulnerable groups; and
  - What further work is required to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts.
- 2.2 Invitations were sent to a range of internal and external stakeholders from the local authority area, encompassing representatives from the Local Authority departments (Planning, Leisure, Education, Regeneration) and from health organisations such as the Community Health Council, National Public Health Service in Wales (NPHS), Local Health Board (LHB) and voluntary sector organisations, of which 18 attended. A list of all attendees who attended the event is provided in Appendix A.
- 2.3 Before the workshop, the invitees were sent a one-page summary leaflet on the LDP Strategy (see Appendix C) and an information leaflet on health impact assessments. Invitees were asked to familiarise themselves with the literature and to consider any evidence that they may have, either quantitative or qualitative, that could be used to inform discussion on the day and bring this with them if they wished to do so.
- 2.4 As an introduction to the day, Lynda Healy (Development Plans Manager) welcomed the stakeholders and outlined the purpose of the workshop. This was followed by a presentation from Hayley Spender, Planning Policy Officer who gave a detailed background to the development of the Blaenau Gwent LDP. This was followed by a presentation from Nick Hacking from the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) who explained the processes involved in HIA in the context of LDPs. There was then an opportunity for attendees to clarify aspects of the LDP process, the technique of HIA and the workshop itself. The full agenda of the workshop is provided in Appendix D.
- 2.5 The morning was arranged around three workshop sessions. Attendees were arranged to form two groups each with a facilitator, (either Nick Hacking or William Beer, the Principal Health Promotion Specialist for the National Public Health Service in Blaenau Gwent). The groups were also assisted by Lynda Healy and Hayley

Spender who helped to keep the wide-ranging discussions as focussed as possible. The first of which was to identify who are the vulnerable groups within Blaenau Gwent's overall population.



- 2.6 The second workshop session was arranged around the same groups as the first and discussions focussed on the proposed strategy of the LDP in terms of negative and positive impacts on the health and well being of the Blaenau Gwent population.
- 2.7 In the third workshop session, attendees were asked to identify what further work was required on the draft LDP to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts.
- 2.8 As each workshop session progressed, participants recorded their suggestions on 'Post-It' notes. These were grouped thematically on poster-sized pages at the front of the workshop. Spoken comments and views were accurately recorded by a scribe from the Blaenau Gwent Public Health team, Jennifer Evans.
- 2.9 A summary of the discussions for workshops one and two are provided in sections 3 and 4, and the suggested mitigation of impacts are provided in section 5. This feedback will be used to improve and finalise the draft Local Development Plan.

### **3.0 Workshop Session 1 – Impact on Vulnerable Groups**

3.1 The aim of workshop 1 was to identify the vulnerable population groups in Blaenau Gwent using Appendix 2 from the Welsh HIA guidance (WAG, 2004). The health of vulnerable groups tends to be impacted much more than the rest of the population by negative health pathways (Popay *et al*, 1998), something that is missed by other impact techniques such as Environmental Impact Assessment which do not use the WHO's broad definition of health.

3.2 As the workshop participants began to identify a range of population groups, these were collated at the front of the room under the following categories:

#### **Disabilities and Carers**

- Disabilities;
- People living with physical disabilities;
- Sensory impairment;
- Deaf community;
- Those with long-term limiting illness;
- People with learning disabilities;
- Children with disabilities;
- Carers of disabled children;
- Carers; and
- Young carers.

#### **Mental Health Concerns**

- People with mental health issues;
- Phobias; and
- Work-life balance.

#### **Minority Sexual Orientation**

- Lesbian and gay people; and
- Bisexual.

#### **Age Dependent Risk**

- Young people i.e. risk-taking behaviour;
- Ex-offenders;
- Older people; and
- Children.

### **Ethnic Minorities**

- Ethnic minority groups moving into the area – language barriers;
- Travellers/migrants/ asylum seekers; and
- Cultural expectations.

### **Income Related**

- Poverty;
- Low income;
- Unemployed;
- Lack of education / knowledge;
- Poor literacy;
- Those with poor basic skills;
- School leavers with low academic achievements; and
- Economically inactive.

### **Groups who Suffer Social Disadvantage**

- Single parents and those who work full-time;
- Single parent families;
- Homeless people; and
- Children with parents who abuse alcohol.

### **Geographical Issues**

- People living in isolated areas;
- People unable to access services and facilities;
- People who don't/ can't drive;
- Access to the natural environment and the ability to use it; and
- People living in areas known to exhibit poor economic and/or health indicators.

### **Groups where Food and Exercise are Health Concerns**

- Those with obesity; and
- Those with low physical literacy.

3.3 At the end of this first session, having identified a range of potentially vulnerable groups it was pointed out that participants should have these groups in mind as they begin workshop 2.

## **4.0 Workshop Session 2 – Strategic Screening of the LDP**

- 4.1 The aim of the second workshop was to discuss the proposed strategy of the draft LDP and consider its impact upon the health and well-being of the Blaenau Gwent population, both positively and negatively.
- 4.2 Results were collated thematically. This section describes the discussion in detail and is followed by a summary of the positive and negative impacts identified.

### **Economic Activity**

- 4.3 The first theme to emerge was economic activity. There was a general recognition that, over the last century, the loss of heavy manufacturing in the area has been hugely painful in terms of social impacts. These have been chiefly through the loss of employment, subsequent out-migration of younger people of working age and lower birth rates (a problem seen in communities right across Wales over the last twenty years) (ONS, 2001; *BBC News Online*, 2010).
- 4.4 These negative impacts, over a long period, have produced noticeable ‘dents’ in the age pyramid for Blaenau Gwent. The age bands covering 20- to 30-year-olds were noticeably depleted and remain so today. While young people entering the jobs market for the first time may want to stay in the area, the tendency is to leave because better job opportunities exist elsewhere.
- 4.5 It was considered by the group that the health benefits of being fully employed, as compared to unemployed, are well known and reflected in the LDP. In terms of health impacts, it was suggested by the group that at least the businesses that do remain are involved in far healthier activities for individuals than was the case for coal, minerals and iron and steel manufacture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 4.6 Several stakeholders talked about how growth today tends to be in the form of light industry and service sector activity. There were several calls in the group for increased help for individuals wanting to work flexibly in social enterprises and in self-employment which were both viewed as growth areas. More affordable community child care was requested by some participants given that one of the



vulnerable population groups identified in workshop session 1 was lone-parent families.

- 4.7 In order to gain such positive health outcomes, participants considered that the appropriate skills, knowledge and training must be made available to make this shift in employment. Stakeholders identified that more emphasis should be given to the 'Learning City' concept in the LDP which was discussed as a way of transforming the educational system in Blaenau Gwent. The idea is about becoming a centre of educational excellence, not just about the provision of schools. Vocational training and post-16 educational opportunities should be catered for in particular.
- 4.8 The 'Learning City' concept had been highlighted within the Education Department as a major potential opportunity. It would raise aspirations to keep young people in the area and attract people to undertake training. A 'Learning City' is also thought to impact upon individuals' senses of identity, place and pride which all have mental health and well-being benefits. On this issue and others, hopes were expressed for joined-up policy initiatives between departments.
- 4.9 Lastly, it was questioned if the proposed retail jobs suggested by the LDP can actually be filled given the difficulties outlined above with keeping young people in the area.

**Health Impact Summary: Economic Activity**

**Potential Positive Impacts Identified**

- Increased employment opportunities through the diversification of the economic base; and
- Less heavy manufacturing industries such as coal and iron resulting in less ill health.

**Potential Negative Impacts Identified**

- If economic activity does not increase as the LDP predicts the health impact of continued high unemployment is unlikely to be good;
- Frustration if training and flexibility are unavailable to local individuals preventing successful uptake of new employment;
- Lack of emphasis on the ‘Learning City’ concept in the Plan; and
- Questioned if the proposed retail jobs in the LDP can actually be filled given the difficulties in keeping young people in the area.

#### Leisure and Natural Environment

- 4.10 A number of participants felt that the stated aim in the LDP of diversifying the economic base through tourism was appropriate in the context of the decline of heavy industry. They felt that increased tourism opportunities would have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals in the area in terms of mental health, physical benefits, employment, and local people making greater use of new facilities in the natural environment like cycle trails and walking routes, for example.
- 4.11 Changing the perception of the area through promotion of Blaenau Gwent’s culture and history and its natural environment was felt to be important. This could be done through greater marketing and awareness both locally and nationally. Cardiff was considered a useful target market. Without a change in perception, there could be a negative mental health and well-being impact related to individuals’ identity and sense of place. It was questioned whether this could be tackled through more explicit links between mental well-being and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
- 4.12 4.12 Specific tourism suggestions were identified including developing heritage trails, encouraging increased local engagement for the upcoming Eisteddfod and even thinking about attracting major tourist attractions on the scale of Centre Parcs. A concern expressed about the tourism-based strategy seen in the LDP is the current lack of accessible accommodation for future tourists.

**Health Impact Summary: Leisure and Natural Environment**

**Potential Positive Impacts Identified**

- Diversifying the economic base through the tourism sector;
- Increased tourism opportunities would lead to positive impacts on the health and well-being of individuals in the area in terms of mental health, physical benefits and employment; and
- Local people making greater use of new facilities in the natural environment like cycle trails and walking routes.

**Potential Negative Impacts Identified**

- Lack of accessible accommodation for tourists.

**Retailing and Town Centres**

4.13 Participants agreed that the LDP should focus on regenerating town centres and boosting retail activity. However, it was considered that local shops need protecting as these are vitally important assets for local communities particularly those living in isolated communities. It was also considered important public transport is available for those living in isolated communities to access town centres.

4.13 Participants hoped the Council might occupy vacant properties within the town centre through Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to help facilitate regeneration.

It was also considered how likely it is, in the current economic climate, for town centres to attract ‘big-name’ retailers into vacant shops. There was debate around what impact this would have, at least in terms of the ability of small local entrepreneurs to employ people in smaller chains. It would be beneficial to the local economy and hence to the health of local people if retail profits could be better

retained in the area. Leakage of profits is a significant structural factor that can reinforce low incomes and poor investment (Warnaby, 1998).

4.15 The group also suggested that healthy convenience retailing in town centres should be encouraged, perhaps in the form of a market. The Principal and District Town Centre Policy, which restricts the number of hot food takeaways and public houses operating to 10.0% and 5.0% respectively, was welcomed. It was felt that too many of such outlets with their negative impacts on health, operate in town centres.<sup>4</sup>

4.16 It was also questioned what role can planners play in preventing town centres being areas of anti-social behaviour with drug and alcohol misuse. Boy racers were also considered a problem in town centres.

**Health Impact Summary: Retailing and Town Centres**

**Potential Positive Impacts Identified**

- The aim of the plan to regenerate town centres and boost retail activity was welcomed;
- The local economy, and hence the health of local people, ought to benefit more if there is a greater retention of retail profits in the area; and
- The restriction on the number of hot food takeaways and public houses operating in the town centre was welcomed.

**Potential Negative Impacts Identified**

- No protection for local shops particularly those located in isolated communities;
- In the current economic climate, town centres may not attract 'big-name' retailers into vacant shops.

**Housing**

<sup>4</sup> Blaenau Gwent CBC has continued to tackle such concerns after the publication of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) made for its Unitary Development Plan (UDP). See, for example, BGCBC (2008)

- 4.17 The intention of the LDP is to help create safe, healthy and vibrant communities. The stakeholders agreed that the LDP should be used to provide healthier housing.
- 4.18 Stakeholders considered that the reference made in the plan to sustainable, high quality development and the welsh housing quality standard was a positive impact and would improve a large proportion of sub standard housing in Blaenau Gwent and increase the quality of new build private sector development. Although it was pointed out that more should be done to increase the standard of housing in the private rented sector.
- 4.19 The workshop participants also made the point that new housing sites should be located in sustainable locations, i.e. close to services, other facilities and employment. The supply of housing for disabled people was felt to be a concern by one stakeholder. Others indicated that consideration should be given to low-impact and low-density projects. For example eco-housing that can be partly set into hillsides in mountainous areas for energy efficiency was suggested.
- 4.20 By contrast, one stakeholder said that for those who choose not to be housed at all privately or by the Council, i.e. gypsy and traveller communities, there needs to be a better understanding of their specific health needs.

**Health Impact Summary: Housing**

**Potential Positives Impacts Identified**

- Agreed with the LDP Vision to create safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard and the reference made in the plan to sustainable, high quality development would improve a large proportion of sub standard housing in Blaenau Gwent and increase the quality of new build private sector development.

**Potential Negative Impacts Identified**

- More should be done to increase the standard of housing in the private rented sector.
- Shortage of supply of housing for disabled people.

### **Public Services**

- 4.21 Several stakeholders considered that there should be more investment in public services, i.e. Blaenau Gwent’s health care facilities. One participant considered that the LDP fails to take account of the primary care health facilities planned in the near future. However, it was pointed out that these issues had previously been covered in the preparation of a Community Facilities Background Paper for the Local Development Plan.
- 4.22 Consideration by the group was also given to travelling to and from primary and secondary health care settings. It was pointed out that the travel time should be no more than thirty minutes and appropriate transport should be provided. To ensure sustainable use of the primary care facility, combined services should be encouraged, for example, combining health and leisure facilities would allow increased access for the vulnerable population groups.

<b><u>Health Impact Summary: Public Services</u></b>
<b>Potential Positive Impact Identified</b>
Future plans for primary health care facilities are covered in the Community Facilities Background Paper

### **Transport**

Stakeholders agreed with the transport Strategic Policy contained in the Plan - ‘Ensuring Accessibility’. This encourages an integrated and safe system of cycle and pedestrian routes but does not completely prioritise pedestrian movements over vehicle use.

Some participants also considered that increased road use by HGVs may further discourage people to walk and cycle. Greater investment in the maintenance of roads was also considered an important issue by several participants.

- 4.24 The extension of the rail line to Blaenau Gwent was felt to have been an excellent strategic move in recent years and several participants questioned if more could be done. Stakeholders suggested increased train links that are better integrated with bus services would help to decrease the number of vehicles on Blaenau Gwent’s roads and improve accident rates. It would also cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to help create a more sustainable and healthier outcome.
- 4.25 Another suggestion went beyond the LDP’s increased provision of cycle lanes through partners like Sustrans to providing hybrid bikes for rental which are more appropriate to the local terrain. It was questioned if they could be offered to the public using a hire service currently seen in places like Cardiff, London and Paris.
- 4.26 Another suggestion was to consider removing all street signage except for directions. This can improve the public realm, naturally slow vehicles and so cut road accidents. Such changes were pioneered in the 1990s by a Dutch traffic engineer, Hans Monderman (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008).
- 4.27 Private bus companies were a concern to several stakeholders. Commercial decisions have led to the withdrawal of certain services in the area (there lacks a commercial incentive to link the three valleys). This increased isolation for some individuals impacts upon mental health and well-being and can reduce access to better quality healthy food, for example.

<b><u>Health Impact Summary: Transport</u></b>
<b>Potential Positive Impacts Identified</b>
Increased opportunities to walk or cycle through the proposed cycle network.

Extension of rail line to Blaenau Gwent important strategic move, which could reduce vehicle usage.

**Potential Negative Impacts Identified**

Increased road use by HGVs may further discourage people to walk and cycle  
 Isolation due to lack of bus services could impact upon mental health and well-being and opportunity to access healthy food.  
 Isolation of the three valleys by having no link bus services.

**Waste**

4.28 In terms of waste management, there was relatively little discussion by the stakeholders despite there being a number of uncertainties linked to future waste-related plans in the LDP. One group member suggested more recycling facilities and also the use of recycled materials would be beneficial in health terms given the impact on the broader environment. Another was interested in learning more about BGCBC’s approaches to environmental issues in general.

**Health Impact Summary: Waste**

**Potential Positives Identified**

- More recycling will lead to less landfill usage, energy waste and air pollution.

**Potential Negatives Identified**

- Less recycling, however, will lead to greater landfill usage, energy waste and air pollution.



## 5.0 Workshop Session 3 – Mitigation of Impacts

5.1 The final workshop session focussed on identifying what further work was required on the draft LDP to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts identified in the previous session. The facilitators explained to the stakeholders that in this session the mitigation needed to be realistic and land use related.

5.2 Everyone present was familiar with the constraints of budgets and bureaucracy which would almost certainly prevent them from implementing several of the more 'blue-sky' schemes raised in session 2. Thus, the aim here in session 3 was to make the most constructive and yet realistic suggestions to BGCBC's planners in terms of mitigating potentially negative and maximising positive health impacts.

5.2 Initially, the stakeholders made some general suggestions for improving potentially negative outcomes. It was felt that the Planning Policy section should continue with their engagement with others to create and sustain ownership of change through the LDP. One suggestion was for participatory budgeting which lets citizens identify, discuss, and prioritize public spending on certain projects. It was felt that this might help the Council consult more widely with the community on major developments.

5.3 Another suggestion was identifying and engaging the partners who can help with mitigation strategies. It was felt that real rather than notional commitment was needed from such partners. Several individuals noticed that the agendas of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP), Health Social Care & Well-being (HSCWB) and the Council's Strategy for Older People overlap. It was stated that individuals who recognise such shared agendas are more likely to work together collaboratively.

5.2.1.1 The following table identifies specific ideas for possible mitigation of negative impacts and maximisation of positive impacts:

## Specific Ideas for Possible Mitigation of Positive and Negative Impacts

Theme	Lead
<b>Economic Activity</b>	
1. Support existing employment strategy with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate skills, knowledge and training;</li> <li>• Increased opportunities in self employment;</li> <li>• Local labour market agreements</li> <li>• Affordable child care</li> </ul>	Regeneration including Planning Policy and Economic Development
2. Refer to the ‘Learning City’ concept as part of joined up initiatives in Education (training), especially regarding greater retention of younger people.	Planning Policy
3. Support enterprises through schemes like the Community University of the Valleys Partnership which provides free training to working people	Local Service Board, GAVO
4. Develop skills in the community to cater for tourism	
5. Ask local communities for their opinion of the most problematic issues	Local Service Board
<b>Leisure and Natural Environment</b>	
1. More explicit links between the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and mental well-being e.g. CCW and BGCBC work around access to natural green spaces	Regeneration including Planning Policy and Countryside
2. Improve open space provision through co-operation between Planning and Leisure	Planning and Leisure
3. Ensure joined up tourism based policy initiatives and consider	Planning Policy

	<p>developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage trails;</li> <li>• Major tourist attractions; and</li> <li>• Land for accessible accommodation for future tourists</li> </ul>	and Leisure
4.	Link public transport with the natural environment	Regeneration including Planning Policy and Countryside and Technical Services
5.	Encourage the Youth Hostel Association to the area	Leisure
6.	Create a 'tourist centre' or centres	Leisure
7.	Support Council departments dealing with the active and the natural environment with local campaigns that highlight the safety and mental health benefits of outdoor activity.	Local Health Board Communication Team Regeneration Leisure
<b>Retailing and Town Centres</b>		
1.	Ensure that no communities are isolated from accessing the town centres by public transport.	Engineering Services, Planning
2.	Facilitate town centre regeneration by occupation of vacant properties	Regeneration
3.	Ensure that the profits of retailing are retained in the area	Planning Policy

4.	Takeaway food shops need greater restriction near to schools and colleges by planners taking health into greater consideration.	Planning
5.	Encourage the provision of healthy food in town centres through markets	Regeneration
6.	Through the LDP consider including a policy to protect local shops in isolated communities.	Planning Policy
<b>Housing</b>		
1.	Consideration should be given to housing for disabled people	Housing Strategy
2.	Ensure close proximity to services for new build	Planning Policy
3.	Consideration could be given to encouraging low-impact and low-density development for example part buried eco housing	Planning Policy
4.	Increase the use and enforcement of design codes for housing	Planning Policy and Planning Control
5.	Those not reliant on housing still need consideration, though should be given to the needs of the gypsy traveller communities	Housing Strategy
6.	Link housing developments and upgrades to local schemes, e.g. provision of care and repair / handy person	Housing Strategy
<b>Transport</b>		
1.	Consider increasing train links and integrating them with bus services	Engineering Services
2.	Increase the provision of cycle lanes through partners like	Sustrans

	Sustrans	Engineering Services
3.	Removal of all street signage	Regeneration, Engineering Services
4.	Ensure that there are transport links to public facilities	Engineering Services
5.	Link transport connections to businesses and their provision for their workers ability to travel to work e.g. encouraging private provision of showers and bike racks	Planning Policy
6.	Encourage operators to link three valleys	Private bus companies, Engineering Services
7.	Develop transport providers as social enterprises	Engineering Services
8.	Set up council run transport	Engineering Services
<b>Public Services</b>		
1.	Location of primary health care facilities should be accessible and sustainable.	Local Health Board Planning
2.	Combined services should be encouraged in primary health care facilities.	Local Health Board
<b>Waste</b>		
1.	Provide more links to recycling facilities.	Technical

		Services Planning Policy
2.	Encourage the use of recycled materials.	Planning Policy
3.	Consider free disposal of commercial waste to encourage recycling.	Environmental Services

## **6.0 Workshop Conclusion**

- 6.1 Ultimately, the workshop was felt to be a successful forum by members of the group. It involved lively discussions around land-use planning and health. Most importantly, it highlighted recommendations for the Planning Policy section to consider when finalising the draft deposit LDP.
- 6.2 In their evaluation of the workshop (a copy of the evaluation form is contained in appendix E), the stakeholders commented on the cross-cutting nature of the day. One stakeholder considered that it was an “opportunity to meet with a useful number of managers representing differing perspectives”, while another reported how it had been transparent and inclusive in the way participants were brought together. In addition, while several stakeholders commented that they were pleased with the way the day had been structured some were keen to know what plans there were to follow it up.
- 6.3 In terms of adding greater consideration of health into the LDP, all who responded were hopeful to see many of the positive changes suggested in the Plan. However, one group member questioned “How will ‘Mrs Jones’ see the difference?” This reflected both the need to successfully communicate such changes to the public and the real pressure on resources (which had been part of the thinking behind session 3). This same individual was also hopeful that the HIA process would help to ensure that planners didn’t miss the “people-centric” nature of the services that they and their colleagues were involved in delivering.

## **7.0 The Way Forward**

- 7.1 The workshop was useful in identifying how the Local Development Plan (LDP) could impact on the health and well-being of people in Blaenau Gwent, both positively and negatively. It also identified what further work was required to maximise the positive and mitigate the negative impacts. The views expressed at the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Workshop will be taken into account by the Council as it finalises the draft deposit, which will be formally consulted on in late summer 2010. During this time anyone can make representations to the Council on the contents of the Plan.



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## Appendix A – List of Attendees

Name	Organisation
Lynda Healy	Development Plans Manager, BGCBC
Hayley Spender	Planning Policy Officer, BGCBC
Nick Hacking	Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit
William Beer	National Public Health Service
Jennifer Evans	National Public Health Service
Sharn Annett	BGCBC - Assistant Director Children and Young People
Clive Phillips	BGCBC - Strategy, Development and Implementation Co-ordinator
Gemma Wasley	BGCBC - Healthier Future Partnership Officer
Linda Davenport	Aneurin Bevan Health Board – Primary Care
Sonia Stainer	Gwent Community Health Council
Kate Thomas	GAVO
Judith Pearce	GAVO
Debra Smith	GAVO
Anthony Hughes	BGCBC – Leisure Services
Claire Thomas	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Chris Engel	BGCBC - Regeneration

## **Appendix B - Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)**

Health Impact Assessment is a process which supports organisations to assess the potential consequences of their decisions on people's health and well-being. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to developing its use as a key part of its strategy to improve health and reduce inequalities.

Health impact assessment provides a systematic yet flexible and practical framework that can be used to consider the wider effects of local and national policies or initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health.

Health impact assessment works best when it involves people and organisations who can contribute different kinds of relevant knowledge and insight. The information is then used to build in measures to maximise opportunities for health and to minimise any risks. It also provides a way of addressing the inequalities in health that continue to persist in Wales.

### **Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)**

WHIASU is based in the Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics which is part of Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences. It is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, through the Wales Centre for Health and is resourced to cover both North and South Wales.

The key roles of WHIASU are:

- To support the development and effective use of the health impact assessment approach in Wales through building partnerships and collaborations with key statutory, voluntary, community and private organisations in Wales.
- To provide direct information and advice to those who are in the process of conducting health impact assessments.

- To contribute to the provision of new research, and provide access to existing evidence, that will inform and improve judgements about the potential impacts of policies, programmes and projects.

For more information with regard to HIA or the Welsh Health Impact Assessment Unit please contact:

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# Appendix C – Summary Leaflet on the LDP Strategy

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY

The Local Development Plan sets out a vision of where we want to be by the end of the plan period and sets sixteen objectives, which must be addressed, to overcome the issues the area faces. The Local Development Plan Strategy addresses the question of 'how we get there', that is, what we need to put in place to achieve the vision.

The Strategy is a hybrid, based on building a network of district hubs around the principal hub of Ebbw Vale whilst recognising that there is a north south divide in terms of opportunities for growth.

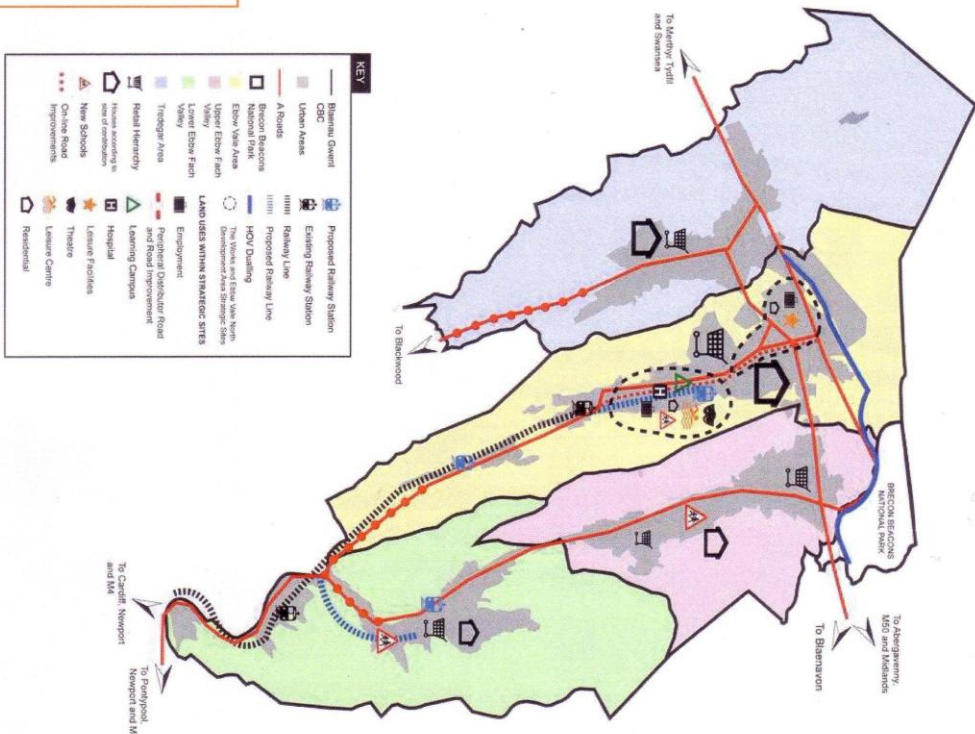
The Northern Strategy area includes Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Upper Ebbw Fach. The emphasis is on sustainable growth and regeneration, the benefits of which are to be shared across the whole of Blaenau Gwent through a network of hubs.

The Southern Strategy area covers the Lower Ebbw Fach Valley. The focus will be on regenerating the area and maximising the potential offered by the area's unique setting and cultural quantiles.

The strategy itself is based around the four themes identified from the vision.

### Theme 1: Create a network of Sustainable Vibrant Valley Communities

- The hub and spoke approach is reinforced by the creation of a new retail hierarchy which identifies Ebbw Vale as the principal town centre for the Borough.
- The Plan seeks to arrest population decline by retaining the existing population and attracting people to the area.
- Most of the new development is to be in the north of the Borough.
- The network of hubs will be key in delivering sustainable transport and improving connectivity.



### Theme 2: Create opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Promote Learning and Skills

- The economy plays a vital role in improving opportunities for residents of Blaenau Gwent.
- The key is to diversify the economy creating vibrant economic landscape.
- To achieve this, education and attainment and skills need to be improved and need to match the jobs on offer.

### Theme 3: Create Safe, Healthy and Vibrant Communities and Protect and Enhance the Unique Natural and Built Environment

- The natural and built environment play key roles in creating safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
- The Plan seeks to explore opportunities to improve the lives of its residents but without causing harm to the environment.

### Theme 4: Create opportunities to Secure an Adequate Supply of Minerals and Reduce the Waste

- The Plan must meet regional requirements both in terms of minerals and waste.
- The strategy aims to ensure that these requirements are met through a sustainable approach.

### Policies to support the Strategy

Thirteen policies have been developed that will assist with the implementation of the Strategy. The policies cover a range of issues such as strategy, retail hierarchy, quality housing, spatial distribution of housing sites, ensuring accessibility, creating sustainable high quality development, sustainable economic growth, green and healthy communities protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment, securing an adequate supply of minerals and delivering sustainable waste management.

## Appendix D – Agenda

### Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Stakeholder Workshop

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
9:00am to 12:40pm

Location: Llanhilleth Institute, Llanhilleth

8:45	<b>Registration with Tea and Coffee</b>
9:00 – 9:05	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b> <i>Lynda Healy - Development Plans Manager</i>
9:05 – 9:15	<b>Presentation – LDP Process</b> <i>Hayley Spender – Planning Policy Officer</i>
9:15 – 9:25	<b>Presentation – Outline of Health Impact Assessment (HIA)</b> <i>Nick Hacking - Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit</i>
9:25 – 9:40	<b>Questions and Answers</b>
09:40 – 9:50	<b>Presentation - Introduction to Workshop 1</b> <i>Nick Hacking</i>
9:50 – 10:20	<b>Workshop 1 – Impact on Vulnerable Groups</b> Facilitators: <i>Nick Hacking &amp; Will Beer, Principal Health Promotion Specialist, National Public Health Service</i>
10:20 – 10:40	<b>Break – Tea and Coffee</b>
10:40 – 10:50	<b>Presentation - Introduction to Workshop 2</b> <i>Nick Hacking</i>
10:50 – 11:50	<b>Workshop 2 – Strategic Screening of the LDP</b> Facilitators: <i>Nick Hacking, &amp; Will Beer</i>
11:50 - 12:00	<b>Presentation – Introduction to Workshop 3</b> <i>Nick Hacking</i>
12:00 – 12:30	<b>Workshop 3 - Identifying Possible Mitigation of Impacts</b> Facilitators: <i>Nick Hacking &amp; Will Beer</i>
12:30	<b>Close and Evaluation</b>
12:40	<b>Lunch</b>

## Appendix E – Blank Evaluation Form

### Health Impact Assessment Workshop

#### EVALUATION FORM

1. What did you learn during the workshop?
2. What do you feel were the positive outcomes resulting from this workshop?
3. What do you think worked and what didn't?
4. What were your expectations prior to the session? Did the session meet them?  
(Please rate from 1-10 where 1=not at all, 10=very much met them).
5. Any other comments you wish to make.