

Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan Report of Public Consultation

Introduction

This report addresses the issues raised during a period of public consultation on the Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan (Masterplan). It summarises the issues raised, sets out officers' observations in respect of the issues and makes recommendations in respect of whether changes to the Masterplan should be made.

Public consultation exercise

A six-week period of public consultation took place between Wednesday 3 January and Wednesday 14 February 2024.

Consultation emails were sent to a wide range of consultees that included public-sector organisations, equality-related groups, MSs, MPs, town and community councils, all CCBC elected members and neighbouring authorities, among others.

Posters were displayed in public libraries (Blackwood and Oakdale) and in units in Blackwood town centre. The consultation was advertised on the Council's website and through the Council's social-media channels.

Eighty-three representations were received (7 by email, 76 through the consultation webpage) were received, with most of the respondents living in the Masterplan area.

Respondents were asked to comment on the Masterplan's Vision, Strategic Objectives and Development Strategy as well as site-specific proposals. They could also suggest additional proposals.

Equalities Impact Assessment

In line with the Council's Equalities Monitoring procedures, respondents were asked whether their answers were affected by any of the following: age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, religious belief or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality or responsibility for any dependants.

Fifteen respondents said that they had equality issues.

One respondent wrote:

My son has epilepsy so he can't drive at the moment so better public transport is an essential.

Another respondent wrote:

A member of the household suffers from a learning disability and autism and his number one thing is to go shopping and going on walks. If you can facilitate things like this that would be great.

Sections of questionnaire

Q4 Is the 'vision' sensible and realistic?

Responses: 77 (2 not through webpage and 75 through webpage)

Yes: 50 (65%)

No: 27 (35%)

The following observations were made about the 'vision' statement:

(Note: Most observations are presented as they were submitted. The author has corrected only those mistakes that made observations unclear.)

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
1	Questionnaire	The Vision is supported, particularly in respect of its identification that "New housing will meet local needs in sustainable locations". It will be important that the remainder of the Masterplan translates this into action.	The support is noted.	No change.
2	Questionnaire	It feels like you are making a lot of assumptions. It's very 'wishy washy' and comes across as a corporate idea of what the publics vision would be. It's out of touch.	The 'vision' is meant to be broad in nature to provide a view of how the county borough will be in the future. The respondent did not identify any specific changes or how the Vision could be amended to address the issues.	No change.
3	Questionnaire	The town centre doesn't have enough parking to cope with the amount of people	The Council will continue to consider the issue of parking	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>visiting now. Let alone when you make these updates.</p> <p>The town centre is old and dated but has absolutely nothing to offer compared with Cwmbran and Newport, we have a town centre full of cafe's, hairdressers and vape shops. Very little diversity when it comes to shops.</p> <p>As for the transport links, your plan to 'change' business hours/shifts are completely unrealistic, all you will do is change the traffic issues to the new times. In order to solve peak time traffic issues is to improve the roads but you refuse to do so. You'd rather build more houses and create even more traffic issues with the surge of new residents. Look at Maesycwmmmer, you allowed 150 people (who signed a petition) prevent you from creating a dual carriageway to improve the traffic flow for thousands of people who use that route on a daily basis.</p> <p>You continually give up road space for cyclists when, because we are in the middle of a valley, we have pavements that are not used by pedestrians because almost everyone drives a car because of the local topography is exhausting to navigate on foot.</p>	<p>in Blackwood. However, it is important to note that Welsh Government has target to increase modal shift away from the car to 40% of all trips by 2040 and, if achieved, will reduce the need for parking in own centres.</p> <p>The Masterplan sets out a framework for proposals to come forward to improve Blackwood town centre and widen its activities and active periods.</p> <p>The Council will continue to monitor traffic levels in the Masterplan area. However Welsh Government's modal shift target will reduce traffic levels if achieved.</p> <p>National planning policy favours walking, wheeling and cycling over private motoring.</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
4	Questionnaire	The vision contradicts the actual plan. There is talk of making Blackwood more accessible, then indicates to transport being placed too far for easy access (station in Crumlin). Talks of attracting people to promote economic growth, then talks about building on some of the main attractions of Blackwood which will deter people from going and ultimately spending in the economy (building skateparks on the Showfield.)	<p>The masterplan sets out the issues currently facing the masterplan area and the provides a development strategy that would seek to address them. Blackwood lacks direct access to the rail network but that does not mean that accessibility to the town centre cannot be improved through bus service, cycling and pedestrian improvements.</p> <p>The skatepark will enhance and diversify the offer of the showground potentially increasing footfall rather than reducing it.</p>	No change.
5	Questionnaire	We don't need any more cafes; charity shops; barbers or hairdressers. What we need is men's clothing shops; hardware shops and women's bigger size clothes shops.	<p>The vision seeks to increase the offer in the town centre by diversifying uses and extending operating times.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the Council has no control over the business types in the centre and most units are in third party ownership, so the</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Council has no powers to influence this.	
6	Questionnaire	<p>Blackwood and surrounding areas have seen far too many new build developments since the 1990's it has changed the character of the area and brought with it additional issues in relation to the environment and access to services - none of which the council has sought to address. It lacks adequate leisure facilities, for example a well thought out public park and its greatest strengths being the location and outstanding countryside is very underdeveloped in terms of tourist attractions for example the area has excellent mountain bike trails that have been developed by the community - these are the resources that need to be taken advantage of. As a resident it feels like the area has been forgotten by the council and many residents are sick of the constant housing developments - these have brought limited benefits, if any benefit at all to long standing residents.</p>	<p>The masterplan area has been the subject of significant development and growth over the past 15 years. However, this has not just been housing development as the area has seen significant employment development, the development of the Blackwood Gate and Asda retail developments, significant infrastructure improvements including the Chartist Way and Blackwood interchange improvements. The area has seen housing developments, but this has provided homes for people who need them and delivered affordable housing to help meet the local need.</p> <p>The masterplan seeks to improve the tourist offer in the masterplan area as well provide the environment to encourage recreation and</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			leisure proposals to come forward.	
7	Questionnaire	<p>We don't have money to put these things in place. Over the past 40 years councils and government have taken away the very things you are now looking to put into place either intentionally or unintentionally.</p> <p>There is no talk of increased health and social care services or policing, all of which aren't fit for service currently and you are proposing a higher number of residents and more activity that would depend on these currently inadequate services.</p>	The aim of the Masterplan is to provide a vehicle for applying for grant funding and levering in private sector investment to address the issues facing the masterplan area.	No change.
8	Questionnaire	Sounds like the council will be trying to create 15-minute neighbourhoods and to restrict private transport. This is the Labour Party policy in their manifesto.	Welsh Government's transport strategy seeks to increase active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) and reduce the use of the car. The Masterplan reflects this position and seeks to promote modal shift and increased accessibility so that the Welsh Government's targets can be met.	No change.
9	Questionnaire	The services we receive north of Blackwood stop at the Rock Villas. Caerphilly offers nothing in Argoed or Hollybush. No schools, no shops, no facilities. The forgotten ward.	Argoed and Hollybush lie outside of this masterplan area (being within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Area masterplan area.). Consequently, these issues are not addressed in this masterplan.	
10	Questionnaire	I'm not sure how you can create 48 pages of what is already there or what would be nice scenarios. Not exactly a plan.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.
11	Questionnaire	Your business rates are NOT feasible for businesses.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.
12	Questionnaire	Funding has not been confirmed for all aspects.	The aim of the Masterplan is to provide a framework to assist in bidding for grant funding and leveraging in	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			private investment for regeneration proposals. It is not a funding plan.	
13	Questionnaire	It is sensible but it is not realistic. I welcome the proposals but until ground has been broken then I reserve judgement. As always, the council and Welsh Gov priorities lie elsewhere.	The comments are noted.	No change.
14	Questionnaire	Although it sounds brilliant, and I do think Blackwood has the potential to become prosperous, I think any funds should be directed to public services first and foremost - additional doctors surgeries, NHS dentists, more taxi companies (realistically Relay is trying to monopolise the market, and they cause a nuisance to the high street by parking their cars on the double yellows outside their office). I'm all for making Blackwood a great place to be (having spent 31 years of my life here).	The comments are noted. It should be noted that doctors and dentists are private businesses that the Council has no control over or financial responsibility for. These businesses are free to make their own decisions that affect the residents of the masterplan area. Taxis are also private companies over which the Council has no control.	No change.
15	Questionnaire	I read a lot about a lot of master plans but no actions, The things written about Blackwood are also unrealistic and have no bearing of the town at all I have lived in Blackwood for over 40 years and seen the decline, please action is needed now not In 2035, I have just walked through town and the number of	Many factors affect the number of vacant buildings in a town centre. The Masterplan is one part of the Council's approach to reducing vacancy rates in Greater Blackwood. Some	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		empty shops derelict buildings is an absolute disgrace.	Masterplan projects will take longer than others to start.	
16	Questionnaire	Not a sustainable vision. This is not a joined-up plan.	The masterplan is a targeted document seeking to provide a framework for the regeneration of the masterplan area. The masterplan is Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Local Development Plan which is the appropriate vehicle for delivering the joined-up approach.	No change.
17	Questionnaire	While some of the plan is a good idea (improving transport links, increasing employment opportunities, improving community facilities & schools, utilising empty buildings) providing more houses in this area is NOT a good plan. There have already been too many large new housing sites in a small area with no infrastructure to support all the extra people and the loss of all green spaces.	<p>There is a significant need for both market and affordable housing in the masterplan area and the county borough as a whole. New housing is required to address this fundamental need.</p> <p>Past housing developments have delivered infrastructure to address their impacts, including new play spaces, open space, playing pitches as well as education improvements, highway improvements and</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			environmental improvements.	
18	Questionnaire	Until CCBC understands that building housing, driving businesses out of town, not supporting accessible parking (free charging would be better) and listening to residents and business owners, then this 'masterplan' is nothing more than a paper exercise.	The Masterplan has been the subject of consultation to seek input from residents, businesses, public sector organisations and infrastructure providers.	No change.
19	Questionnaire	The elephant in the room, overshadowing the regeneration plans is the proposed 2 apartment blocks adjacent to the Market Place would be disastrous for the town because it would have 79 people, mostly with anti-social behaviour and also criminal records all living together in the heart of the town. Blackwood would become known as a 'rough town' with a lot of anti-social behaviour. This would completely overshadow all the good intentions to regenerate the town. This is how Blackwood would be perceived.	The purpose of the masterplan is to provide a framework for the future regeneration of the masterplan area. It is not a vehicle for identifying development proposals. Consequently, the comments in respect of the proposed development are not a matter for the Masterplan.	No change.
20	Questionnaire	Needs to include. The shops. Whereby rent are too high by CCBC. And not attracting. Small businesses. With this in mind a lot of money was spent on Blackwood for regeneration. And still wasted money by rents. Not supporting small businesses. And attracting other businesses. In the area. A lot of vacant. Shops. Now in place. This does not mean. Hairdressers. Estate agents. Or	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		take aways. But more. Successful. Small businesses. Which will attract. More people back into local shopping. Please think about that before Blackwood becomes a ghost. Town.	that specifically identifies what will happen. In addition, the vast majority of town centre units are in private ownership and so the Council has no control over the level of rent charged for the units or the type of businesses that operate from them.	
21	Questionnaire	No free parking due to council greed, local chavs take over bus station and retail park in the nights with zero police presence to be seen.	Parking provision, and the tariffs for parking, will be kept under review by the Council. The Council is not responsible for policing.	No change.
22	Questionnaire	No real strategy re transport links for Blackwood. Need a railway station. Extra events and evening entertainment? We need major retailers to come back in! This plan does nothing with that. Massively missed opportunity to have built Islwyn Highschool on Pontllanfraith site. Now we have a school with no transport links for all catchment pupils. Old council offices should have had an amazing leisure complex. Now we are stuck to a much harder to get Newbridge site which is so hard to park at. Is the leisure facility at old Pont site just going to be for	The masterplan is not intended to be a transport strategy document or a strategy document for the redevelopment of sites. The masterplan document sets out a framework to facilitate the bidding for funding and delivery of regeneration projects for the masterplan area.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>vulnerable pupils? It seems like nothing to attract middle class citizens as everything seems to be geared around the vulnerable and less wealthy in terms of more and more social housing. As usual we have people making these plans are not including residents from the word go. What do I get out of this? A 6.9% rate increase to help pay for a shortfall. There is not one thing in this plan that will actually help me.</p>		
23	Questionnaire	<p>Firstly, the plan is very anti car owner. It constantly emphasises bus and rail networks but there is absolutely no mention of free parking, to encourage visitors. etc. public transport in Wales is shambolic and these plans will do nothing other than constrict/enforce residents to remain within the town boundaries.</p> <p>Secondly and probably more important than anything else the Masterplan talks about increased housing development, which is great BUT where are all the services needed to provide adequate healthcare to the new and existing residents? There are insufficient GP surgeries and dental surgeries at present. What are you going to do the ensure that, the increased and, in your words, aging population will have access to excellent medical/healthcare facilities?</p>	<p>The Masterplan follows the 'sustainable transport hierarchy for planning' set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024). Private motoring (non-ULEVs) is at the bottom of that hierarchy.</p> <p>The Council may look at tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.</p> <p>The Council considers local infrastructure and facilities when it assesses a planning application. However, GP surgeries and dentists are private businesses that are not under the control of the</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>Council or the health board and as such are free to make their own decisions that impact the residents of the masterplan area. The Council do not control these and are not in a position to provide them.</p>	
24	Questionnaire	<p>Plans to revitalise Blackwood Town Centre has been probably have been left many years late.</p> <p>There were plans for the redevelopment of Blackwood Market Square a couple of years ago, what has happened with that proposal?</p> <p>Banks are closing without any alternative facility, again, another reason not to travel into the town centre.</p> <p>Housing development needs very careful consideration and should not be at the cost of green spaces e.g. farmland. ideally only 'brown sites' should be deemed as suitable.</p> <p>Village upon village have become connected in the borough's valleys following housing developments, leaving little or no green space between them. What has happened to these communities who have lost their</p>	<p>The Council does not agree that it is too late to act.</p> <p>Some of the housing projects in the Masterplan involve 'greenfield' sites but have already received planning permission.</p> <p>The Council considers local infrastructure and facilities when it assesses a planning application, and the masterplan will encourage infrastructure projects to come forward.</p> <p>The other points are not relevant to the 'vision'.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>individuality and identity and become swallowed up into the scheme of those proposals It has become obvious in recent years that we lack the infrastructure to accommodate further medium to large housing developments without having a negligible effect on the present population or the services who strive to meet their needs.</p>		
25	Questionnaire	<p>Number of items contradict the masterplan, particularly the housing development proposed in the Snap Fitness car park. Inviting the volume of housing association residents to take over the town is diabolical. It will completely go against the items planned in section 4 and 5 - it will drive the town into the ground.</p>	<p>The masterplan provides a framework for the regeneration of the masterplan area and is not the appropriate vehicle for considering the impact of identified developments.</p>	No change.
26	Questionnaire	<p>Blackwood buses are not efficient. Housing has not been built in suitable areas environmentally speaking and people go to Cardiff to spend their time and money.</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to improve public transport and attract people to Blackwood Town Centre. The Masterplan does not allocate housing sites. These have been identified in the adopted local development plan that has been the subject of examination.</p>	No change.

Q6 Do you agree with the strategic objectives?

Responses: 77 (3 not through webpage and 74 through webpage)

Yes: 52 (68%)

No: 25 (32%)

The following representations were made about the strategic objectives:

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
27	Email	Housing: Council seems preoccupied with housing. The area isn't affluent. Larger population would need more jobs. No mention of improving existing houses and areas.	The strategic objectives aim at directing housing to suitable locations and increasing the number of jobs in Greater Blackwood. Paragraph 5.18 talks about bringing empty houses back into use.	No change.
28	Email	Transport: Public transport is limited on Sundays.	The comment is noted. The Masterplan seeks to improve public transport in Greater Blackwood, although due to the fact that bus services are operated by private companies there are significant issues in delivering improvements to these services.	No change.
29	Email	Transport: A housing development on the old Oakdale colliery railway in Pontllanfraith would prevent the creation of a	This is not a proposal in the Masterplan, but the loss of a potential active-travel route would be considered as part of a formal planning application.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		cycleway to leisure and employment sites.		
30	Email	It is 'almost impossible' to walk to the new crematorium.	The comment is noted.	No change.
31	Email	Maximising Blackwood bus station in terms of usage and access, and potential park and ride opportunity is accompanied with another housing application using the adjacent car park.	Noted. The Council will consider various transport options in and near Blackwood.	No change.
32	Email	Visitor economy: Car parking always political but easy income, but if parking difficult why visit Blackwood? During shut down, main car parks used regularly. Local residents able to park in their street. Charges re-introduced saw parking difficulties quickly return.	The Council will continue to monitor parking in the masterplan area. However, it should be noted that Welsh Government policy seeks a reduction in car borne traffic and an increase in active travel (walking and cycling) and sustainable transport options (bus and train).	No change.
33	Email	Visitor economy: Plan identifies need for tourist information, yet the Council is closing the office in adjacent Caerphilly and is already a bigger tourist area.	Information for tourists can be provided in more than one way. This does not affect the strategic objectives.	No change.
34	Email	Community facilities: The Council is planning to close Pontllanfraith LC despite yet another local housing development area.	Strategic Objective E seeks to 'promote well-being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities'.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			The masterplan is not the appropriate vehicle for the consideration of the future use of the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.	
35	Email	<p>Blackwood town centre:</p> <p>The Council supports the expansion of bars, yet health promotion is to reduce alcohol consumption.</p>	The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to promote nighttime activities that includes a wide range of activities that includes evening/nighttime entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.	No change.
36	Questionnaire	'Strategic Objective F is supported in its recognition that priority will be given to brownfield land. The text should be amended to additionally make reference to underused land as being given priority for redevelopment.'	Planning Policy Wales advises that priority should be given to appropriate brownfield sites and underutilised land. As such it is appropriate to amend Strategic Objective F to reflect this.	<p>The supporting text to Strategic Objective F be amended as follows:</p> <p>Greater Blackwood needs both 'market' and 'affordable' housing. The Masterplan will give priority to the redevelopment of vacant, underused and/or 'brownfield' land</p>

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				for housing in easy-to-reach places.
37	Questionnaire	I don't agree with new commercial developments on untouched land. I believe they should be restricted to redeveloping vacant/derelict sites first.	In line with national planning policy, the Masterplan favours previously developed land over undeveloped land. However, some development needs to be undertaken on greenfield land as there is insufficient brownfield land to accommodate the appropriate level of growth.	No change.
38	Questionnaire	More rent-free premises for small business and no parking charges.	The Council will consider such approaches for its own buildings, but many business premises are under third party ownership and the Council has no control over these properties.	No change.
39	Questionnaire	<p>D: You need to restore bus services that have been taken away before you try to improve transport links. As for train services, you need to expand the carparks for the stations before you expand the services at the stations, Pengam, Newbridge and Ystrad station car parks are always full.</p> <p>E: Improve the current leisure services in the area, upgrade Newbridge, Cefn</p>	<p>The Council will continue to liaise with Transport for Wales in respect of improvements to park & ride provision at the stations in the county borough.</p> <p>Bus services are not within the control of the Council as they are operated by third party companies. The Council will continue to use available funding</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>Fforest, Pontllanfraith and Bargoed leisure centres before you add new centres.</p> <p>F: How about providing more affordable housing that won't be sold to people who intent to rent them out at extortionate prices.</p>	<p>mechanisms to influence the provision of services, but it cannot enforce the reinstatement of former services.</p> <p>The Council published its Sport and Active Recreation Strategy in 2019 and this document sets out the Council's programme for delivering leisure service up to 2029. The strategy provides an ambitious and holistic vision and future purpose for the delivery of sport and active recreation across the county borough, with future facility investment focused on four strategic leisure centres in Risca, Caerphilly, Newbridge and Bargoed/Aberbargoed. The Masterplan has been prepared in accordance with this strategy.</p> <p>Strategic Objective F meets this issue by seeking to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'.</p>	
40	Questionnaire	F: There have been far too many housing developments in the area.	There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			county borough. There is currently a local and national housing shortfall that needs to be addressed.	
41	Questionnaire	You need to take care of the disabled residents better; I am struggling while others are getting things they aren't even using.	Strategic Objective E seeks to 'promote well-being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities'. The details of services will be considered under separate procedures.	No change.
42	Questionnaire	Unsure.	Noted.	No change.
43	Questionnaire	Why constantly develop town centres, the outlying villages don't even get proper transport links. Shameful.	The Masterplan aims to improve transport and accessibility throughout Greater Blackwood.	No change.
44	Questionnaire	Most of these are pretty much tasks that should have been happening over the past few decades anyway. We had a 901 bus link that connected us straight to Cardiff but now your saying Crumlin will be our saving grace. Yes, just what we need is a train that goes to Newport and even longer to get to Cardiff whilst we had a bus that took us directly to Ystrad. I'm unsure how you decided that bus wasn't used enough. Every time I used this there were a fair number of passengers using the service.	Bus services are not within the control of the Council as they are operated by third party companies. The Council will continue to use available funding mechanisms to influence the provision of services, but it cannot enforce the reinstatement of former services or improvements to services that currently operate.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
45	Questionnaire	Your business rates are NOT FEASIBLE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.
46	Questionnaire	<p>E. Promote well-being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities. No mention here of increasing the size of the health facilities in the area. There are plans for many more houses in the area (F) and as nearly 10% of the population is in bad or very bad health (2011 census) means an even more congested local health service in the area. This would also apply to the schools with no mention of any expansion to cover the extra children from the new homes.</p> <p>With the closure of Pontllanfraith leisure centre there are no longer any sports halls available in the area. This is especially unfair after Caerphilly council used a £20 million 'Levelling up' fund to replace an already existing leisure centre.</p>	<p>The housing sites that are identified in the Masterplan are identified in the Local Development Plan that also identified infrastructure to meet the needs of the new development.</p> <p>The Council is not responsible for health provision, as this is the role of the Health Board. GP practices, pharmacies and dentists are private businesses and are free to make their own decisions in respect of the services they provide and who they provide them to.</p> <p>The Council published its Sport and Active Recreation Strategy in 2019 and this document sets</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>out the Council's programme for delivering leisure service up to 2029. The strategy provides an ambitious and holistic vision and future purpose for the delivery of sport and active recreation across the county borough, with future facility investment focused on four strategic leisure centres in Risca, Caerphilly, Newbridge and Bargoed/Aberbargoed. The Masterplan has been prepared in accordance with this strategy.</p>	
47	Questionnaire	<p>I disagree with more housing in the area we are already overrun with new builds that are of poor quality and we don't have the medical infrastructure locally or wider to accommodate safely more people in the area.</p>	<p>There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough. There is currently a local and national housing shortfall that needs to be addressed.</p>	No change.
48	Questionnaire	<p>Everything needs rethinking.</p>	<p>The comment is noted. No suggestions for changes to the Masterplan have been provided.</p>	No change.
49	Questionnaire	<p>You need to think outside the box and repurpose buildings to bring people into town.</p>	<p>The Masterplan recommends that Blackwood town centre be made more attractive and more accessible through diversifying uses in the centre and by</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			promoting the nighttime economy. This allows the flexibility to introduce new uses into the centres to help in their revitalisation.	
50	Questionnaire	The Sirhowy Valley is the only major valley without a rail connection. We had a rail connection up until 1992. A feasibility study should be conducted to assess the viability of renewing the railway connection into the Sirhowy Valley.	The Masterplan supports increased accessibility and transport improvements into and within the Masterplan area. Whilst it would be unlikely that rail services would be reintroduced into the Sirhowy valley, improvements to the connectivity and service provision for the Sirhowy valley could be delivered through other forms of sustainable transport including active travel and bus and tram provision. These improvements are within the scope of the Masterplan framework.	No change.
51	Questionnaire	Certainly, do not agree with F.	The comment is noted.	No change.
52	Questionnaire	None of your plans. Waste of money whereby you need to concentrate on what is already in place. And work on that.	The comment is noted.	No change.
53	Questionnaire	You appear to want Blackwood nightlife in the forefront of your objectives, but	The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>the daytime is dead. Shops leaving the high street and now the second Bank is closing. You cannot shop in Blackwood anymore as it is full of Charity shops, barbers, hairdressers and nail bars. There are enough drinking venues for the evening and the high street is rowdy so a visit to the Maxine picture house has to be planned to feel safe. How about a bowling alley in Wilcos? That would bring people to Blackwood and entertain the youngsters instead of them being anti-social and causing problems in the Blackwood area.</p>	<p>during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p>	
54	Questionnaire	<p>Farming is an important industry in Wales, you've mentioned food, but who produces it has not been mentioned in a prosperous Wales why not? The difficulty in rural areas is that contracting machinery has got larger and new landowners do not care for the hedgerows and allow them to overhang, the roads/lanes are too rough to drive tractors, this is making farming harder to access SMARTer ways of working. Our farm allows the locals access to the countryside, there's no tributes to the local farmers that have helped to keep food on the tables, 21 dairy farms</p>	<p>Many types of farming don't need planning permission. The Masterplan covers the types of development that do need planning permission. Any proposals for improvements to the nature of farming would be welcomed under the Masterplan Framework.</p> <p>The Council is not responsible for health provision, as this is the role of the Health Board. GP practices, pharmacies and dentists are private businesses and are free to make their own</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>existed in the Blackwood area and only 1 remaining.</p> <p>Oakdale surgery is stretched, waiting times are beyond the average, something is needed to help, as mentioned 10% are in bad health in the Blackwood area. With extra housing needs better GP resource and facilities.</p>	decisions in respect of the services they provide and who they provide them to.	
55	Questionnaire	Something for the middle classes! Railway and major retailers and better leisure facility within walking of Blackwood.	These issues are covered by the Masterplan Strategic Objectives, namely B, E and D.	No change.
56	Questionnaire	As per my response to the previous question you have totally failed to identify how or where the increased population can gain access to good quality healthcare and educational services. This is a lovely "woolly" strategy put together based on an ideal world, but we don't live in an ideal world.	The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide a framework within which proposals, like education improvements and leisure and health improvements, can come forward with the Framework provide a basis for bids for grant funding. It is not the role of the Masterplan to propose solutions for the issues in the county borough.	No change.
57	Questionnaire	A very thoughtful and careful long-term approach, incorporating this area's industrial, agricultural and cultural history.	The comment is noted. This is what the Masterplan sets out to do.	No change.
58	Questionnaire	D. Improve transport links both within and beyond Greater Blackwood.	The Council and Transport for Wales will consider future rail	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>I am in more favour of frequent rail services, although would like to see some replacement or improvement of services of rail services connecting to Blackwood, particularly since the cancellation of the Rail Linc bus from Ystrad Mynach train station to Blackwood town centre. It would be good if this is being addressed by the mid-valleys rapid route along the A472. The rail Linc bus provided potential accessible travel for the residents, carers, and family, of residents of Cefn Glas Extra Care Sheltered Scheme via back access of the complex to Apollo Way. It also provided transport links to Pontllanfraith health centre (this now requires going to Blackwood station from Apollo Way Garages to return on yourself to get there). Alternative connecting buses from Pengam do not make up for the loss of the Rail Linc bus service and is less accessible due to dangerous high-traffic roads to cross. Improving the accessibility at rail stations is great, but nearby connecting bus services are less accessible to get afterwards, and their service have</p>	<p>options in the area. The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for improved bus and rail services.</p> <p>It is unlikely that rail services would be reintroduced to Blackwood. However, improvements to the network can be implemented using different forms of transport including active travel, buses and/or trams.</p> <p>Transport for Wales are currently investigating the feasibility of a mid-valleys strategic route that would be based along the A472 south of Blackwood. If implemented this could provide an important interchange point for east-west and north-south services that would increase accessibility to the Blackwood and the Sirhowy Valley.</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		restricted availability, particularly in the evening.		
59	Questionnaire	F. No mention of support for first time buyers to get on the housing market. Those who want and have to work to afford a home. 'Affordable housing ' usually means socially funded housing. Seeing more and more of this type of housing within the Blackwood district which is not good for Blackwood's future and certainly not sustainable for our economy. Encourage those to Blackwood who have more disposable income and see Blackwood as an attractive and vibrant place to live. Housing more in keeping with its surroundings. No flats.	Strategic Objective F seeks to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'. This will include 'market' housing. This includes affordable housing that can come in many forms from low-cost home ownership through to formal rented properties.	No change.
60	Questionnaire	B. Establish Blackwood town centre as a sub-regional hub that is attractive, accessible and busy both during the day and at night. Maxime is a great asset to the town - it is hard to go on a night out without being in a rowdy pub full of drunks. Rhymney Brewery is great, would be great to attract more places where you can go for a civilised drink.	The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.	No change.
61	Questionnaire	F Housing	There is still a significant need for new housing, both market	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>Housing has become a huge issue for the wider Blackwood area. There are too many builds with little to no infrastructure to support the community. No additional capacity has been given to schools, health, local businesses, green spaces - more people mean more investment into key services. And Oakdale must not become a giant housing estate. Following feedback from the community, people are not happy with CCBCs plans - which go against the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act</p>	<p>and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough. There is currently a local and national housing shortfall that needs to be addressed. The provision of this basic amenity for people is entirely in accord with the Well-being Act.</p> <p>The housing sites that are identified in the Masterplan are identified in the Local Development Plan that also identified infrastructure to meet the needs of the new development. Improvements to schools, recreation and leisure facilities, highways and the environment have all been delivered through housing developments. Health care provision is outside the remit of the Council and has no control over it, although the Council works with the Health Board to deliver health care improvements.</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
62	Questionnaire	<p data-bbox="663 277 846 304">E. Wellbeing</p> <p data-bbox="663 347 1227 711">CCBC's plan and continuous messaging of health and wellbeing of residents, do not link with the actions in the strategy and budget. People want and need accessible leisure facilities, yet CCBC plan to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and Cefn Forrest. The disappearing green spaces are also affecting peoples physical and mental health.</p> <p data-bbox="663 754 1227 1118">The issue here is CCBC looking for short term gains (usually financial) for little long-term benefit. More and more housing, but less and less access to recreation, green spaces, parks, community activities, etc will ultimately create more demands on the NHS, and Council services. Healthier, happier communities are more important than a quick fix to budgets.</p>	<p data-bbox="1263 277 1733 935">The Council published its Sport and Active Recreation Strategy in 2019 and this document sets out the Council's programme for delivering leisure service up to 2029. The strategy provides an ambitious and holistic vision and future purpose for the delivery of sport and active recreation across the county borough, with future facility investment focused on four strategic leisure centres in Risca, Caerphilly, Newbridge and Bargoed/Aberbargoed. Strategic Objective E seeks to 'promote well-being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities'.</p>	
63	Questionnaire	<p data-bbox="663 1131 1189 1193">F - Many more affordable houses are required urgently</p>	<p data-bbox="1263 1131 1715 1305">Strategic Objective F seeks to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'. This includes both market and 'affordable' housing.</p>	No change.
64	Questionnaire	<p data-bbox="663 1318 1227 1380">I agree with most of the objectives, but F (housing) appears incomplete and so</p>	<p data-bbox="1263 1318 1693 1380">There is still a significant need for new housing, both market</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>it is not possible to say if I agree with this without seeing the full objective. In the past 10 years there has been significant housing development but not sufficient investment in ensuring outdoor spaces and infrastructure (health services etc.) are maintained or improved. The new track at Rhiw Syr Dafydd appears to be received positively, yet before it was turned into a track it was not available for public use and now to use the space you must be into athletics and pay for it, there is very little general, open, community space for families to use.</p>	<p>and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough.</p> <p>It should be noted that recent housing development have provided improvements to schools, recreation and leisure facilities, open space, highways and the environment.</p>	

Q8 Do you agree with the development strategy?

Responses: 76 (2 not through webpage + 74 through webpage)

Yes: 46 (60%)

No: 30 (40%)

The following representations were made about the development strategy:

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
65	Questionnaire	Para 5.13 describes the role and function of Blackwood Town Centre. It should be amended to make reference to the town centre as being a great place to live – our suggested amendment is as follows: “It should be known as a place where people can <u>live</u> , work, learn and enjoy spending time together” (new text bolded and underlined).	It is agreed that paragraph 5.13 would benefit from the inclusion of the word “live” to reflect the function of the centre more accurately.	Paragraph 5.13 be amended as follows: Blackwood town centre should be safe, attractive and busy both during the day and at night. In addition to having a mix of compatible uses, it should be easy to reach from other parts of Greater Blackwood. It should be known as a place where people can <u>live</u> , work, learn and enjoy spending time together.
66	Questionnaire	Para 5.18 outlines the strategy in respect of housing. It refers to vacant commercial buildings potentially being suitable for housing. This	It is agreed that the proposed amendment	Paragraph 5.18 be amended as follows:

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>should be amended to refer to underused sites generally, such as town centre car parks. As it stands, the Masterplan does not go far enough in supporting the residential redevelopment of parts of the Town Centre. Including this support (and particular reference to redevelopment of underused parking areas) within the Masterplan would ensure that it aligns with Future Wales, PPW (2024) and Welsh Government's Town Centre Position Statement (2023).</p>	<p>would improve the Masterplan.</p>	<p>For social and environmental reasons, empty houses should be brought back into use as quickly as possible. <u>Underused land in sustainable locations may be suitable for housing, and</u> and some vacant commercial buildings might <u>may</u> be suitable for conversion into flats or houses.</p>
67	Email	Blackwood town centre needs to be maintained.	The comment is noted. The Town Centre Manager will continue to look at the options.	No change.
68	Email	The Council should ask those living in High Street whether they want a busier night-time economy.	A town centre is a hub of activities and services that cater for a wider area. As such town centres are meant to be active and increasing activity within them is appropriate. Any	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			proposals that come forward are likely to require planning permission which will consider the impact of the proposals on residents.	
69	Email	Replace the old public toilets at the north of the High Street with anything that is not an eyesore.	The comment is noted. The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.
70	Email	Encourage the few shops still in side streets to relocate to the High Street.	The Town Centre Manager will continue to look at options.	No change.
71	Email	Provide more off-street parking, for residents as well as visitors, such as using the waste ground in Hall Street at the north end of William Street. Consider blocking off the west end of Thorncombe Road (subject to emergency access and safety provisions) and using the area thus reclaimed to extend the car parks either side of the current short section of road.	The comment is noted. The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			which is currently being prepared.	
72	Email	Make the High Street safer for pedestrians by removing vehicular access from the High Street to the rear of certain shop premises on the east side of the street and providing new access from the main High Street linear car park. This could also provide more public parking spaces using the waste ground between the car park and the aforementioned shops.	<p>The comment is noted. The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.</p> <p>Project B3 covers 'environmental and accessibility enhancements' in Blackwood town centre. Also, a detailed placemaking plan for the town centre is currently being developed.</p>	No change.
73	Questionnaire	Masterplan needs a lot more as developments for housing and Housing costs needs to be resolve and people that cannot use phone or tablet needs access to local shops and shopping needs i think doing more for the OAPS will help Blackwoods population and the way people look	The comments are noted.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		at blackwood. Blackwood Bridge needs more improvement to stop people hurting themselves that is the biggest part of blackwood right now		
74	Questionnaire	5.4: Is your continued attack on drivers, and part of the 2027 strategy to get people to give up private vehicle ownership which will never happen.	Welsh Government's transport policy is to reduce the reliance on the car and increase modal shift to active travel and sustainable transport. The Council supports this position, and the Masterplan has been drafted to reflect this.	No change.
75	Questionnaire	As per question 1, it goes against the original strategy. The town should be drawing in people to visit and spend, which in turn brings jobs and promoted economic growth. They should be looking at successful projects that have done this such as friars walk, John Lewis centre (albeit on a larger scale, but an image for a business case). There is a need to attract known business' and franchises if you want to increase jobs and economic growth. Another barber, charity shop or cafe will not do this.	The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars. Any proposals that are brought forward will be	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			considered under the Masterplan Framework.	
76	Questionnaire	<p>So-called decarbonisation is an inaccurate statement so please stop making it, the reduction of c02 (an essential gas for life) is folly based on unproven computer modelling which will not enhance the local economy but reduce the standard of living of all residents and will hinder economic output. One example you use is offsetting by planting more trees yet in the blackwood area policies have been enacted which have destroyed the local environment. The council is for example purchasing electric vehicles which is exasperating environmental problems elsewhere for example lithium mining and the environmental damage that is has and will continue to cause. You also giving tacit approval to child labour which is used in the extraction of cobalt (an essential material in EV battery production) which I'm sure is at odds with your modern-day slavery policy. So-called green power generation is not green at all, wind turbines consume far more energy in their construction than they give out and are also very difficult to recycle. Solar energy is also highly inefficient at this latitude, it consumes many hectares of productive land, and the panels are highly toxic which again cannot be easily, or cost</p>	The Masterplan follows national planning policy on 'decarbonisation'.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		effectively recycled. In terms of sustainability, it would be far better to set aside land for new allotment development which would bring about many benefits or look to invest in small nuclear power generation as developed by Rolls Royce.		
77	Questionnaire	Unsure.	The comment is noted.	No change.
78	Questionnaire	No funds available unless you want to heavily tax the population.	The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide a basis for the Council to bid for funding for regeneration projects in the Masterplan area.	No change.
79	Questionnaire	Again, this section doesn't really explain to an average resident what exactly your development strategy is. The only thing clear is that this will cost us an absolute fortune due to the green agenda being forced down our throats without any consultation.	The Masterplan provides a framework for regeneration proposals to come forward and will allow the Council to bid for funding for regeneration projects in the Masterplan area. The Masterplan is not the appropriate vehicle for identifying the strategy for addressing the issues.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
80	Questionnaire	I'm suspicious of claims of climate emergency / reducing carbon as it would infringe on public's right to travel and result in more taxes.	The Masterplan has been drafted to reflect Welsh Government's position of reducing reliance on the car and increasing modal shift to active travel and sustainable transport. The Masterplan is also conforming with Welsh Government's policy on decarbonisation.	No change.
81	Questionnaire	Your business rates are not feasible for small businesses.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.
82	Questionnaire	I agree with most of it, but I believe the main focus will be 5.2-5.5 (inclusive) and the rest of the plan will suffer to accommodate the climate change pipedream.	The comment is noted.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
83	Questionnaire	Again, action now.	The comment is noted.	No change.
84	Questionnaire	<p>All pie in the sky. The only sure thing is redevelopment of housing and bringing poorer people and family into town who will unfortunately do nothing for the area to regenerate it. You need listen more to local residents and protect them from building social housing on their doorstep. Bring in businesses by reducing business rates in the town centre. Free parking. Barclays bank building to be repurposed as a new library to link in with blackwood stute, do more for children and youths. Demolish old library and make a memorable garden for Mr Mogridge who founded the town, therefore bringing back colour and green space making the entrance to blackwood more appealing to visitors. Re purpose the old Wilkinson building and turn it into a multi food/street food outlet like the one in Newport Town. Make it a magical experience to the right type of people such as families attending the cinema and for young couples, and office workers, selling a mixture of foods from different nationalities e.g. pizza, Mexican, healthier eating. Lots of tingly lights and tropical plants, the right ambience to discourage gangs of youths. Only to open 5.00 to 10.00 so it has no impact on the already successful cafes in the town and so you don't have the pub goers at the</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p> <p>Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		end of the night. Attract more up market business to market like your artisan market in Caerphilly.		
85	Questionnaire	Too much emphasis is being placed on private investment. If private investment is not forthcoming, then the Blackwood catchment area will stagnate and then ultimately decline.	The purpose of the masterplan is to provide a framework for bringing forward regeneration proposals and as a basis for bidding for funding to deliver them, whether that be through private or public funding.	No change.
86	Questionnaire	Greater Blackwood does not need any more housing particularly without the infrastructure to support it. It does not need any more empty buildings or business sites created unless there is a business to take up the site. Blackwood does not have a great deal of leisure facilities with the loss of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the threat of Cefn Fforest. Public transport is poor and not very suitable for the train stations. As a major town in the borough, it should have its own railway station.	There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough. Improvements to schools, recreation and leisure facilities, highways and the environment have all been delivered through recent housing developments.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Strategic Objective D seeks to increase accessibility and improve transport within and into the masterplan area.	
87	Questionnaire	The apartment block would create an area of trouble where you put all the bad tenants together.	The masterplan is not the appropriate vehicle for the consideration of individual development proposals.	No change.
88	Questionnaire	4 plateaus for employment in Oakdale which is no longer a village but arguably a small town. No consideration for any Doctors/ health clinic expansion and it's a 3 week wait for a doctor's appointment at the moment. The school is full already although it was thought to have been ample but now demountable classrooms are to be added. How many more houses are going to be built without adding any services?	<p>There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough. Improvements to schools, recreation and leisure facilities, highways and the environment have all been delivered through recent housing developments.</p> <p>As for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen, Oakdale, (project E9),</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>the Council will remove the aging demountable classrooms and build a four-classroom extension. This will increase the capacity of the school by 60.</p> <p>Health care provision is outside the remit of the Council and has no control over it, although the Council works with the Health Board to deliver health care improvements.</p>	
89	Questionnaire	Too difficult to answer this without seeing plan at same time. This survey should have summarised this here.	A response form that included material from the draft masterplan would have been too long and too complex.	No change.
90	Questionnaire	Public transport in Wales is shambolic. You can gloss it up as much as you like but this strategy is a "wolf in lambs clothing". It is a disguised attempt to restrict people's rights to movement. (much like the Senedd did during Covid) maybe not as extreme but there is a distinct lack of mention of use of cars and let's face it if you want two encourage people to come into the are there will have to be an acceptance of cars. e.g.	Welsh Government's transport policy is to reduce the reliance on the car and increase modal shift to active travel and sustainable transport. The Council supports this position, and the Masterplan	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		if you want to encourage people to use the caravan site at Pen y Van Caravan park, how do you think they will transport their caravans there without a car?	has been drafted to reflect national policy.	
91	Questionnaire	New housing should be focused on brownfield sites not greenfield. Building on non-brownfield sites clashes with the outlined environmental goals such as tree planting, re-wilding and sustainable drainage. In terms of recreation there is a lack of access in terms of leisure centres. Blackwood could do with a sports centre similar to that in Ebbw vale, which has a big swimming pool and several 4g outdoor football pitches. Especially with uncertainty surrounding what's happening with Pontllanfraith leisure centre.	<p>Planning Policy Wales advises that brownfield land should be used before greenfield land and all Council planning documents accord with this approach.</p> <p>However, the argument that building on greenfield land is wrong because of its environmental impact is wrong. Brownfield sites contain some of the county borough's most diverse and important habitats and a blanket approach to develop on brownfield land would lose much of this important environmental asset. By contrast much of the land within the</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>county borough is comprised of improved grassland (improved through agriculture) that has little, if any ecological value. To protect such land at the expense of potentially higher value brownfield land would be wholly inappropriate. The issue here is not whether the land is greenfield, but its ecological and environmental value, and that is different for different areas of land.</p>	
92	Questionnaire	<p>Blackwood is fundamentally seen as a minor town, and there's certainly not enough pull factor to attract people to the town. I often find myself urged to go to Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, or Cardiff for shopping and recreation. We need to focus on attracting retail chains such as M&S, Next, Curry's, and the like to Blackwood. This is how you develop. If you want people to visit or stay in Blackwood, you need to give them reasons to do so.</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment,</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.	
93	Questionnaire	<p>Do not agree that greenfield sites should be used for housing, as there has been too much of this already over the past 10-15 years and available space for residents is being removed too much, we are becoming a concrete jungle. Active travel sounds appealing, but currently the main cycle path in the area (Yard Coal Rise) is not as safe as it should be - the traffic travels too fast on the road (commonly faster than the speed limit) and the path itself is regularly covered in small stones and broken glass. Other roads are not safe for cycling due to number of parked cars and behaviour of motorists, and the plan at 6.15 refers to "development and delivery of proposals will depend on the availability of funding".</p>	<p>The issue of greenfield development is addressed in the response to issue 91.</p> <p>There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough.</p> <p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for improved active-travel routes.</p> <p>The Council has recently updated its Integrated Network Map (INM) to create an Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) that shows existing walking and cycling routes and where improvements</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			or new routes are proposed. This has been approved by Welsh Government. The map is available on the Council's website.	

Q10 Do you have any comments to make on specific proposals?

68 responses (1 not through webpage and 67 through webpage).

The following representations were made about specific proposals:

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
94	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	<p>The car park is not profitable, is underutilised and will likely close in the coming months. The proposed redevelopment of the car park has been the subject of pre-application dialogue with CCBC (SPA/23/0038) and statutory Pre-application Consultation with the local community. The proposals are being advanced in conjunction with United Welsh Housing Association (as the RSL proposed to occupy the development). The submission of a planning application is due imminently and the proposals will comprise circa 59 residential apartments spanning across two three and five storey buildings.</p> <p>Whilst the Development Principles as drafted do not conflict with the proposals being progressed for the site, a further bullet point should be</p>	<p>Paragraph 6.7 (under project B1) already refers to a 'mix of compatible uses'.</p> <p>The Masterplan is not the appropriate vehicle for the consideration of detailed development proposals.</p> <p>Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			added to make reference to the residential development proposed.		
95	n/a	Questionnaire	Get free parking for the town centre.	The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	No change.
96	n/a	Questionnaire	Do more for policing.	The Council is not responsible for policing.	No change.
97	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	6.7 - the proposal for an easily walked through square makes sense, but it's not enough. Blackwood is too busy with traffic to easily navigate. Blackwood high street should be shut to allow street vendors to pop up, and for people to easily walk through the town. Street food is a huge business currently. Allowing them on a closed high street would bring people and make the town safer. Your 'busy day and night' plan will not work with such traffic pass through.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals for the improvement to the town centre. The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.
98	n/a	Questionnaire	Put a bowling alley on the bottom floor of the vacant Wilkinson's building. Put a bar and food stalls	The comment is noted. Any proposals for such improvements would	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			on the first floor and possibly a rooftop terrace.	be considered under the masterplan framework.	
99	n/a	Questionnaire	Better services for disabled.	<p>The comment is noted. Project B3 covers 'environmental and accessibility enhancements' in Blackwood town centre. Also, a detailed placemaking plan for the town centre is being developed.</p> <p>Strategic Objective E seeks to 'promote well-being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities'.</p>	No change.
100	n/a	Questionnaire	Transport- is there any possibility for a rail link directly in Blackwood.	<p>It is unlikely that Blackwood would see a rail link reinstated.</p> <p>However, Transport for Wales are currently investigating the feasibility of a</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				<p>mid-valleys strategic route that would be based along the A472 south of Blackwood. If implemented this could provide an important interchange point for east-west and north-south services that would increase accessibility to the Blackwood and the Sirhowy Valley.</p>	
101	n/a	Questionnaire	<p>Diversify the local shops in Blackwood town centre, it is full of barbers/hairdressers, charity shops and cafes... We need more appealing stores to bring customers to the town.</p> <p>Also remove parking fees, people are more likely to shop in a town that they can park in for free, no one wants to pay £1 to park to quickly go in to the poundshop for a £1 item for example.</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	
102	D5 – Electric vehicles	Questionnaire	D5 - Electric vehicles Are any investigations going to take place regarding the possible fire hazard of electric vehicles?	This is an issue that is outside of the remit of the masterplan. The Council are considering options for electric vehicle charging points and the consideration of safety issues are part of this process.	No change.
103	n/a	Questionnaire	Your business rates are not feasible for small businesses.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
104	n/a	Questionnaire	Do away with parking charges.	The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	No change.
105	n/a	Questionnaire	Plan is achievable but not ambitious enough. Why not get a monorail from Blackwood to Crumlin train station and back. Run it late and not stop it before 23.00. We need transport that's not just buses and I guess a Blackwood train station is impossible although this would be the ideal.	<p>Transport for Wales are currently investigating the feasibility of a mid-valleys strategic route that would be based along the A472 south of Blackwood. If implemented this could provide an important interchange point for east-west and north-south services that would increase accessibility to the Blackwood and the Sirhowy Valley.</p> <p>It is unlikely that this would be in the form of a monorail due to the high cost of that mode of transport. The proposal will most likely consider</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				tram or bus provision and active travel.	
106	B2 - Diverse uses, renovated buildings, vacant units	Questionnaire	<p>B2 - Attract established brands to the town centre. The former Post Office has been vacant for about 10 years. A unit of this size could accommodate someone like Next or Primark etc. Personally, I would like to see a 10-pin bowling/amusement complex there as this type of facility is sorely lacking for younger people and families and they are going to Cardiff/Newport/Cwmbran/Merthyr instead, that revenue needs to be spent here, not 10-15 miles away! It would be a perfect companion to the cinema.</p> <p>There are too many barber shops here. There are 3 within a 50m radius at the top end of High Street, only 1 of which is ever busy, I'll leave you to work what is actually going on there.</p>	Transport for Wales are currently investigating the feasibility of a mid-valleys strategic route that would be based along the A472 south of Blackwood. If implemented this could provide an important interchange point for east-west and north-south services that would increase accessibility to the Blackwood and the Sirhowy Valley.	No change.
107	D1 – South Wales Metro and Metro Plus	Questionnaire	6.13 - Crumlin is too far for a railway station to server any purpose to Blackwood (Pengam is closer). Unless the proposal to do shuttle services from Blackwood, this will bring little to the area.	A station at Crumlin would be the closest station to the county borough's principal employment centre at Oakdale/Penyfan	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				<p>which is otherwise poorly served by public transport. In addition, the link from the station at Crumlin to the proposed A472 rapid transit route would provide a key north-south transport link that could better link Blackwood and its primary employment centre.</p>	
	<p>F7 – Land at Gellideg Heights, Maesycwmmmer (HG 1.40 in Adopted LDP)</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>F7 – Land at Gellideg Heights, Maesycwmmmer (HG 1.40 in Adopted LDP).</p> <p>Too much congestion for further development in Maesycwmmmer - have you seen the traffic?</p>	<p>This site has been allocated in the Adopted LDP and has been granted planning permission on appeal.</p>	
<p>108</p>	<p>B4 – Evening and night-time economy</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>B4. See above. You need to encourage more people into Blackwood with disposable income. Blackwood isn't a mining town but a market town and has a wealth of history which has been sadly demolished over the years. More emphasis on the Chartist movement needed. Even a mini museum in the stute? Make people</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that</p>	<p>No change.</p>

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>feel proud of where they live. Free parking, lower shop rates and more attractive green spaces are needed enveloping the town centre. Currently blackwood pubs in the town are seen as littered with drugs and not the place to spend your evening.</p>	<p>includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars. The Council will consider heritage-related events and attractions in Blackwood town centre.</p>	
109	B4 – Evening and night-time economy	Questionnaire	<p>B4 - There is a lack of quality restaurants/eateries in the town. Amici and Bistro 8 are great but other than that it's Wetherspoons or a curry. More variety needed. Likewise pubs, the recent opening of The Westgate has provided a welcome option for people especially considering the raging drug problems at the Moggridge across the road. I think the live music on offer is ok for the area as the pubs regularly have acts on. However, the Miners Institute is not ideal and can be pricey if events are in the main hall plus you have the seating issue, a lot of people like to stand (and dance) to certain types of music, this is not possible</p>	<p>The comment is noted.</p> <p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			in there. The downstairs room is ok, but the bar is not stocked with the same drinks as upstairs.		
110	B5 – Town-centre events	Questionnaire	6.1. food and drink festive is a good idea like a mini Abergavenny food festival with local Welsh produce. I go to the Abergavenny food festival every year and it's one of the highlights of my calendar. It needs to attract people with disposable income so more quality produce please. Would be good if it was towards the end of the summer when people think about Christmas presents. Be good to have a live band playing as well.	The comment is noted. Any proposals for the suggested improvements that come forward will be considered under the Masterplan Framework.	No change.
111	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	B1 6.7 Blackwood High Street and Square can simply be supported by utilising a local economy approach. Provide low rents for new business, support them to provide to local authority (local supplier initiatives) and create a business-led Network for the area.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				It is agreed that supporting the local economy would assist the town centre and any proposals that address these issues would be supported under the masterplan framework.	
112	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	<p>B1. Rates</p> <p>A Town has to be attractive for people to visit. It has to offer what people need and that's not the case at the moment. Lower business rates would attract new businesses and encourage the ones already here to stay.</p>	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.
113	E3 – Navigation Colliery, Crumlin	Questionnaire	6.1.6.28 - Navigation Colliery. A time limit should be put on the proposals and funding requirement for the 'friends of Navigation colliery' to finalise their plans. Although this is grade II listed	Suggestion noted. Navigation Colliery is a listed building and as such its demolition is a last resort and only when an	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>building, it is an eyesore. It is serving no purpose, other than to reduce the overall aesthetics of the area. It harks back to our past, whereas the overall proposal is forward- looking. The navigation colliery is better bulldozed, I'm sure local residents would be grateful. It is only people who don't live in the area think it should be preserved. How many more years should the local people put up with the Dickensian outlook in this area and how long should they wait before it is got rid of.?</p>	<p>appropriate replacement scheme is proposed. The issues at Navigation colliery are primarily linked to flood risk issues rather than the listed buildings.</p>	
114	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	B 1 - Totally agree with the proposals, the town is crying out for a new square, more frequent market days which, in turn, will help fill the vacant retail units.	The support is noted.	No change.
115	E5 – Skatepark, Blackwood Showfield Playground	Questionnaire	6.27 Skatepark Blackwood Showfield: This would detract from current use of this green area and possibly encourage antisocial behaviour in an area used by the company.	As outlined in the Masterplan the skatepark is proposed to increase social and physical activity across a range of age groups in an area that is currently used for play activities.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
116	B1 - Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	Blackwood Town Square cries out for development. A large covering of a larger part of the existing marketplace would allow 1. Enhance the current 2-day market. 2. Allow pop up markets during the week e.g. flea market 3. Allow live performances for choirs, entertainment etc. 4. Ensure the site could operate all weathers. A town square manager could protect the site, arrange the letting and, along with at the adjacent bus interchange, provide a secure environment for customers, spectators etc. This would be a real attraction and enhance Blackwood Town.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for ideas of this nature.	No change.
117	B2 – Diverse uses, renovated buildings, vacant units	Questionnaire	B2. Parking Take the parking charges off. I am sure local businesses saw far more footfall when residents and visitors did not have to pay parking fees. I, and I know lots of others, visited the town far more often when we didn't have to pay for parking.	The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	No change.
118	D5 – Electric vehicles	Questionnaire	D 5 - There must be a large number of vehicle-charging points throughout the town centre before	The comment is noted.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			the number of vehicles outstrip availability.		
119	F1 – Cwm Gelli Farm, Blackwood	Questionnaire	6.36: One of your development objectives is to use brown field site for housing development. This development will remove an important green area which has a diverse set of environmental sites. Once lost never to be replaced. This proposal conflicts with your objectives.	Outline planning permission was granted on appeal (that is, by an independent inspector) in 2016. It is currently awaiting a decision from the Welsh Minister following a successful high court case. The site is an allocation in the Adopted LDP.	No change.
120	B3 – Environmental and accessibility enhancements (Blackwood town centre)	Questionnaire	Consider paving over the High Street in Blackwood to stop through traffic (apart from buses). All deliveries to shops to be before 10 o'clock, speed limit c.5 mph, more outdoor seating, no need for crossing by lights, all barriers removed, tree planting where practicable to enhance the street appearance. This could be between Bridge Street and Pentwyn Road. All this with existing good parking facilities will bring in new businesses and customers.	Individual proposals for improvements within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
121	E5 – Skatepark, Blackwood Showfield Playground	Questionnaire	E5 - Skatepark on Showfield. This is possibly the worst idea to have come out of the council. The Showfield attracts numerous people of all ages currently, it's the best attraction in Blackwood due to its vast playing field. This proposes to add even more concrete to the field and will only attract the teen age group. This will definitely deter families with younger children and the elderly, who often like to sit and look out at the field in those spots. It will bring vandalism to the children's parks, also. There are numerous areas that already have these and have seen the above occur. The Showfield, by name, should indicate this is better kept as a green field for children to play, and elderly to walk. There are much better spots for a skatepark, such as the back playing fields that already only attract the teen groups. Leave the showfield for the kids.	As outlined in the Masterplan the skatepark is proposed to increase social and physical activity across a range of age groups in an area that is currently used for play activities.	No change.
122	E6 – Maesycwmmmer Park, Maesycwmmmer	Questionnaire	E6 – Maesycwmmmer Park, Maesycwmmmer	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for a	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			More options than just a park needed in Maesycwmmmer, what about community classes?	proposal of this nature.	
123	D3 – Active travel	Questionnaire	D3. Cycle / walking routes need an overhaul. One in particular is looking very neglected. Sirhowy cycle path next to units in penman lnd park and up to old Islwyn council site. There are some beautiful river walks along the Sirhowy which no one seems to know about as not promoted by the council. Encourage school children to get walking and tell their parents about them.	<p>The Masterplan offers ‘in principle’ support for improved active-travel routes.</p> <p>The Council has recently updated its Integrated Network Map (INM) to create an Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) that shows existing walking and cycling routes and where improvements or new routes are proposed. This has been approved by Welsh Government. The map is available on the Council’s website.</p>	No change.
124	D4 – Bus services	Questionnaire	D4 - There should be a bus running from the interchange over to Pengam station. A lot of people use Pengam as their main station,	Strategic Objective D seeks to improve accessibility and transport links within	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>which can be seen by the car park regularly full or overfull. Adding a bus service would reduce the number of cars going there and the associated problems with the narrow roads and poor traffic light systems which cause huge congestion at peak times. The bus to Ystrad Mynach was ok but it seemed an odd choice when Pengam is 10 mins away, and it was regularly caught up in the congestion around Maesycwmmmer. I think a shuttle to Pengam would be ideal, especially with the recent focus on using public transport. The trains are not great and are subject to various delays and cancellations but that is a wider issue across the network.</p>	<p>the and beyond the masterplan area.</p> <p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for a proposal of this nature. The Council will consider various transport options under separate procedures.</p>	
125	D3 – Active travel	Questionnaire	<p>D3 - Cycle routes in the area need improving and expanding to connect with the national network. Negotiating main roads is not ideal for a leisurely ride.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for improved active-travel routes.</p> <p>The Council has recently updated its Integrated Network Map (INM) to create an Active Travel</p>	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
				<p>Network Map (ATNM) that shows existing walking and cycling routes and where improvements or new routes are proposed. This has been approved by Welsh Government. The map is available on the Council's website.</p>	
126	B1 – Blackwood Square, Blackwood	Questionnaire	<p>Welcome the idea to turn blackwood square into a busier area with more diverse options. Street food etc.</p>	The support is noted.	No change.
127	A1 – Oakdale Plateaux	Questionnaire	<p>Whilst fully supportive of improving employment opportunities in the area, there has been examples where development has taken place and then laid empty which we need to avoid as it is a waste of money and damages the environment. Near these identified locations are existing open spaces for dog walking, family walks, cycle rides and fishing and development risks wildlife as well as removing</p>	The comment is noted.	No change.

Observation number	Proposal	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			these opportunities for outdoor activity.		
128	D3 – Active Travel	Questionnaire	As already mentioned, this does not sound like it will happen given the comment re: availability of funding. Without committing to investment, the plans risk making Greater Blackwood more and more built up with little to no free outdoor space or opportunities for active travel.	The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide a basis for the Council to bid for funding for regeneration projects in the Masterplan area.	No change.

Q14 Are there any additional proposals that should be included in the Masterplan?

47 responses (1 not through webpage and 46 through webpage).

The following representations were made about additional proposals:

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
129	Questionnaire	'The Market Place car park should be included as a proposal under Proposal F [housing].'	<p>Paragraph 6.7 (under project B1) already refers to a 'mix of compatible uses'.</p> <p>Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.</p>	No change.
130	Questionnaire	Sports bar in the old Argos building.	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for a mix of uses in the town centre, but any proposal would have to comply with LDP policies.</p> <p>Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	
131	Questionnaire	<p>Why not aim for some new tourist attraction to bring people in. Something like the London Eye of cable car, bungee jump, air balloon ride, turn a park into a centre parcs type venue (staycations are more popular than ever). Turn Cwmcarn Scenic Drive into a ski lodge type venue or Markham Colliery site into a tourist attraction with monorail down the old railway line into Blackwood - keep the walkway underneath.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature.</p> <p>Cwmcarn Forest Drive is in the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan Area.</p>	No change.
132	Questionnaire	<p>I just wanted to alert you to the projects RecRock runs in the community. We work in partnership with Blackwood Miner's in school holidays to run a music project for young people to come and socialise and use music as a way to improve their wellbeing.</p> <p>We also run projects in Libanus Lifestyle for adults with learning difficulties and would love to run projects for adults to reduce social isolation.</p> <p>As a not-for-profit organisation that aims to run free sessions for people to come and improve their skills, it is really hard for us to fund the sessions. If there was some funding available,</p>	<p>The comment is noted.</p> <p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. Any proposals for improving or expanding the operation could be brought forward under the masterplan framework.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>or we were able to be built into the plans, by tying in with the public events such as the beach party, this would be of benefit to the people of Blackwood and surrounding areas.</p> <p>We also aim to improve skills and training (particularly future skills) by running courses in event management, digital skills and confidence and wellbeing.</p>		
133	Questionnaire	<p>Pencoed Fach is a visitor attraction that could be enhanced or used for educational purposes - rather than lose the land to housing. Connections for bikes from Cefn forest down onto the cycle route at chartist bridge, or in Maesycwmmmer.</p>	<p>The comment is noted. The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. As there are no firm proposals for the site it would not be appropriate to include it in the masterplan. However, any proposals for its use could be brought through under the masterplan framework.</p>	No change.
134	Questionnaire	<p>Public toilets in the town Free parking or first hour for free A jewellery shop like Warren James A Butchers A greengrocers More stalls at the market</p>	<p>The comment is noted. However, much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Any proposals for such improvements could be brought forward under the masterplan framework.	
135	Questionnaire	Safety measures on Blackwood bridge such as tall, curved railings to help prevent the suicide rates we see as a community, which has been petitioned with thousands of signatures.	The comment is noted.	No change.
136	Questionnaire	Improving the exiting road networks. Abolish the ridiculous 20mph limit, except for outside schools, when children are in attendance.	Strategic Objective D addresses improvements to the transport network. The 20mph speed limit is a national speed limit and is not within the remit of the Council to change.	No change.
137	Questionnaire	Link outer villages to train stations and get us part of the metropolitan development	Strategic Objective D addresses improvements to the transport network that includes increasing accessibility with the masterplan area.	No change.
138	Questionnaire	Retention and development of rail link bus service 901. Increased frequency and hours of operation of bus services. If the intention is to enhance the	Bus services are provided by private companies and the Council has no control over the services they	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		nighttime economy of Blackwood, public transport needs to meet that demand.	provide. The Council will continue to use their limited grant funding to influence service delivery across the masterplan area.	
139	Questionnaire	Community classes for adult learning.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. No specific proposals have been brought forward to date.	No change.
140	Questionnaire	Grants or schemes for those who want to buy their own homes. Sustainable more environmentally friendly shopping such as bring your own containers and fill up. Great carparks but they need to be free.	The comments and suggestions are noted. The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	No change.
141	Questionnaire	<p>As well as those mentioned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More wind turbines - where possible where there is already one make it two. 2. More tourism and new ventures - could be private/public partnership - invest in glamping pods, cable cars, toboggan ride, theme park, hot air balloon, water park, heated outdoor pool, new restaurants, darts venue, create a lake 	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. No specific proposals have been brought forward to date.</p> <p>The Council is currently preparing its Local Area Energy Plan that will address renewable energy generation.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>with a beach, pitch and put green, permanent fairground ride (big wheel)</p> <p>3. More affordable housing ideas - be ambitious - stop selling council land to allow private investors to profit unless it is fulfilling a need, i.e. selling the bowls club to a private investor means the money leaves the council.</p> <p>4. Be ambitious with grants and funds. How can we fund new developments or new houses in old redundant buildings and get them to pay grant back in 5 years when they have made the money or provided cheaper rents for key workers.</p> <p>5. Create a role for someone to establish new building plots on council owned land. I don't mean plot shop (although this would also work) I mean look how council houses can build other houses in the gardens or odd land strips could be developed such as the land at Pontllanfraith when you enter the town towards Blackwood.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective E addresses expanding and diversifying the visitor economy.</p> <p>Strategic Objective F seeks to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'. This will include 'affordable' housing. It should be noted that the Council are now building their own homes through Caerphilly Homes.</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>6. More wind turbines, new solar farms - why can't commons or redundant land be used as solar farms.</p> <p>7. Make all new house planning applications plant at least one new tree.</p> <p>8. Come up with ambitious rent ideas. Why not have a rental scheme that saves money off house prices when they are bought.</p> <p>9. Better bus investments or new monorails.</p> <p>10. Reduce number of council buildings turn them into rental spaces either shops or flats.</p>		
142	Questionnaire	Pie in the sky thinking. To help increase footfall in Blackwood town centre why not look at introducing a service in the town that people have to visit e.g. a health centre in the old Sommerfield building above the Iceland store. Easy to park, good public transport and people can then visit the town during the visit. Or free parking in town which worked well in the period it was free after CV19. A community centre in the high street that runs classes on the weekends that does not just cater for the	<p>The Masterplan and the Council will promote a mix of businesses in the town centre.</p> <p>The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		retired or children but for all those in-between and their families.	is currently being prepared.	
143	Questionnaire	Affordable housing so youngsters can get on the housing ladder.	Strategic Objective F seeks to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'. This will include 'affordable' housing.	No change.
144	Questionnaire	<p>Make Blackwood High Street a car free zone. A Pedestrianised high street would attract more businesses, businesses of a higher calibre than charity shops, vape shops and takeaways which there are far too many of.</p> <p>The precedent has been set here. The council shuts the high street for events like the beach party and Christmas Market. Also, years ago the council had gates erected either end of the high street to stop boy racers cruising the high street at night. It will also reduce pollution and make the area a healthier and greener place to shop. If the council is serious about making Blackwood this beacon to attract people you first need to attract shops and restaurants the people want to come and visit. Look at Abergavenny as a prime example of a vibrant town with a Pedestrianised high street. Blackwood could be the same!</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. No specific proposals to consider yet.</p> <p>The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>It would also help with filling the vacant Wilko store. Also, there is no mention of the plan for the indoor Market above the Wilko store. I'd also like to see plans or ideas about filling the old post office which sits next door to Wilkos. This post office has been closed and empty for 10, 15 years maybe more. I've not seen any evidence of plans or proposals on what to do with this space since the post office closed all that time ago. That end of Blackwood is going to become an issue as you have three spaces, probably the biggest three indoor spaces on the high street which are all vacant!</p>		
145	Questionnaire	<p>Consider more detailed plans regarding infrastructure for all the new proposed developments. Look at making a vibrant indoor market in the Wilkinsons store. Consider making the rentals on the hire street more affordable.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. No specific proposals to consider yet.</p>	No change.
146	Questionnaire	<p>There a few buildings empty (notably the post office, indoor market and Wilkinson's) that could be renovated to allow small business to start up and as well as pop restaurants that could hire space. This will help to add something unique to blackwood. especially if unusual cuisines are introduced.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature.</p> <p>The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	
147	Questionnaire	Improving the comfort of the bus station & appearance of the indoor market premises.	The comment is noted. Proposals of this nature would be compatible with the Masterplan. The Council will consider its options under separate procedures.	No change.
148	Questionnaire	Open Wilcos in the high street for a bowling alley aimed at getting the youngsters of the street and causing damage.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.
149	Questionnaire	Major retailers. Railway Blackwood. Big leisure complex Blackwood.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for proposals of this nature. No specific proposals to consider yet.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
150	Questionnaire	Better public transport to Oakdale and surrounding areas.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements throughout Greater Blackwood.	No change.
151	Questionnaire	In the longer term, a tram service to Tredegar / Newport / Cardiff using in the main existing old rail tracks would dramatically cut road travel.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements throughout Greater Blackwood.	No change.
152	Questionnaire	Support more 'after dark entertainment', more restaurants especially. In dire need of a butcher and greengrocer in Blackwood town to enable locals to support locally grown produce.	The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. The hospitality industry should be a part of this approach.	No change.
153	Questionnaire	Have a festival in the [Blackwood town centre] square annually.	The comment is noted. Paragraph 6.11 (under project B5) offers 'in principle' support for festivals and similar events. The Council will consider such options under separate procedures.	No change.
154	Questionnaire	I welcome the proposals of the plan. One final comment, for the benefit of the local communities, it would also be nice to see an increase in activities to reduce loneliness and	The comment is noted. This kind of activity would be compatible with the Masterplan.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		social isolation in Greater Blackwood. For example, Plas Mawr Community Centre is a nice community venue situated between Cefn Glas Extra Care Sheltered Housing, and Highfields Nursing Home but they would have no idea of any activities going on there that is suitable for them to attend. These venues should be promoted more widely for use and activities and events promoted online.		
155	Questionnaire	Protect/create more green space and wildlife-friendly areas for general use not specific to one type of activity e.g. skateboarding. The masterplan should be looking to improve quality of life so that existing problems get better, and issues do not arise in future, it is not good enough simply to "improve local quality of life so that existing problems do not get any worse and so that any future problems will be manageable".	<p>Only one skatepark is mentioned in the Masterplan. The Masterplan does not support the loss of valuable open space in Greater Blackwood.</p> <p>The Masterplan does seek to improve conditions for everybody, but the Council must be realistic about what it can achieve in the next five years.</p>	No change.

Q15 Do you have additional comments?

29 responses (3 not through webpage and 26 through webpage).

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
156	Email	Blackwood town centre should be closed to motor traffic.	The Council will consider traffic arrangements while it prepares a (separate) placemaking plan for Blackwood town centre.	No change.
157	Email	Shops in Blackwood town centre need to vary more and be more attractive.	The comment is noted. The Masterplan seeks a mix of compatible uses so that the centre will be busy during the day and at night.	No change.
158	Email	Smoking should be banned in Blackwood town centre.	The Council has no plans to do so.	No change.
159	Email	More benches in streets and more seating outside restaurants and cafes in Blackwood town centre.	The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
160	Email	The response form is difficult to complete on a mobile phone unless you have the draft masterplan open on a separate screen.	A response form that included material from the draft masterplan would have been too long and too complex.	No change.
161	Email	It may be difficult to find funding for the proposals.	The funding for some projects has already been The comments are noted. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.
162	Email	<p>Population:</p> <p>Plan only mentions older population without identifying any related provisions, yet a major contributor to the economy.</p> <p>Fails to address ambitions to regenerate the area and with increased population on the demands on much stretched services including transportation, education, training for employment, health/doctor's surgeries.</p>	The Council considers local infrastructure and facilities when it assesses a planning application.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
163	Email	<p>Transport:</p> <p>The Southeast Wales Metro is yet another Cardiff Bay fantasy, so please do not use it as a 'peg' for possible transport developments. The Sirhowy Valley must rate as the 'forgotten valley' of Gwent as far as rail/road connections are concerned.</p>	<p>The Council will monitor the progress of the South Wales Metro.</p> <p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements throughout Greater Blackwood.</p>	No change.
164	Email	<p>Transport:</p> <p>All former rail tracks have been pulled up and either built over, redeveloped or completely removed. You can only conveniently use the trains in the adjacent valleys if you have a car to get to the nearest station. From the Ebbw Valley a mere hourly service to Newport is hardly convenient.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements throughout Greater Blackwood.</p>	No change.
165	Email	<p>Transport:</p> <p>Road links are equally poor south of Pontllanfraith (via Ynysddu) and north of Hollybush, where there is no provision for pedestrians or cyclists, and the road in places is no better than its 19th century predecessor.</p>	<p>The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements (including active-travel routes) throughout Greater Blackwood.</p>	No change.
166	Email	<p>Recreation and leisure:</p> <p>Facilities should include a new Sports Centre with swimming pool to replace the loss of</p>	<p>Suggestions noted.</p> <p>Strategic Objective E seeks to 'promote well-</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the ageing swimming pool at Cefn Fforest. There is no other major indoor sports provision anywhere in the Sirhowy Valley.	being by enhancing or creating sustainable community facilities'. The Council will make decisions about facilities under separate procedures.	
167	Email	Build an outdoor gym at Oakdale Recreation Ground.	Suggestion noted. No firm proposal to consider yet.	No change.
168	Email	Promote all Community Centres and community buildings within the study area, not just Cefn Fforest Miners' Institute. They offer many and varied activities to their local communities and beyond and provide them far more economically than council-run premises. Encourage Centres to enhance their facilities with input from those within CCBC area that currently operate 'best practice'.	The Masterplan offers broad support for various community facilities. It doesn't need to name every facility in the area.	No change.
169	Email	Ton-y-felin Farm is in Croespenmaen, not Oakdale.	This will be corrected in the final version.	Bullet Point F3 be amended as follows: F3 – Land at Ton-y-Felin, Oakdale Croespenmaen
170	Email	Why is there no mention of other proposed housing sites, such as former Syr-Dafydd Allotments site (east of Nant-Gau); former Woody's site (east of Blacksmith Close); behind	The masterplan has been drafted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>the Old Forge (west of Pen-y-Groes) and the rest of the old golf course/range, all within Oakdale?</p>	<p>the Adopted Caerphilly Local Development Plan and the sites identified in the Masterplan are those identified in the LDP or sites that have subsequently been granted planning permission.</p> <p>There is no planning permission for housing on either land east of Nant-Gau or land East of Blacksmith Close.</p> <p>The land west of Pen-y-Groes is too small to include as a project in the Masterplan.</p> <p>The permitted housing at the former Oakdale Golf Course has been completed and there is no planning permission for any further housing development.</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Consequently, none of the sites raised by the respondent should be identified in the masterplan.	
171	Email	Blackwood town centre is a disgrace and an embarrassment. It needs a Maintenance Plan, not a Masterplan, as it has been shamefully neglected by the council for many years, even though it is probably the second largest town in Caerphilly in economic terms. Problems include missing, broken or blocked rainwater gutters, fly-posting and broken paving.	The comment is noted. The team responsible for managing the town centre are actively seeking to identify issues and arrange planned repairs and maintenance accordingly.	No change.
172	Email	The area does not have 'good north-south' transport links.	The comment is noted.	No change.
173	Email	Public parks are not 'attractive'. They have been neglected and down-graded since the withdrawal of flower-planting and the council's failure to maintain hedges.	The Council believes that the parks remain attractive.	No change.
174	Email	More about visitor accommodation, other than the two mentioned, should be included, as many visitors would welcome the more affordable accommodation that they offer.	The Masterplan offers broad support for existing and potential tourist accommodation.	No change.
175	Email	The area does not have a 'good range and choice of housing', because it has too little sheltered, retirement and single person housing available in all local communities.	The comment is noted. The Masterplan doesn't suggest that the range of housing can't be improved. Strategic Objective F seeks to	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'.	
176	Email	Under 'Opportunities', it is not clear where the 'public open space' referred to is located.	Greater Blackwood has many areas of public open space. The Masterplan does not need to identify all of them.	No change.
177	Email	The photograph used in this section is already out of date because the field to the north of Woodfield Park Funeral Home has already been redeveloped for housing (Millers Wood).	The comment is noted. The photograph will be changed for the final version.	The photograph will be replaced with an up-to-date photograph.
178	Email	Why haven't 2021 Census figures been used in preparing this plan?	The ward data, necessary for the updating of the masterplan, was not published until the end of January 2024. The masterplan has now been amended with the 2021 Census data.	The masterplan has been updated in a number of places to include the 2021 Census data.
179	Email	The area is unrealistic; it should not include Crumlin which is in the Ebbw Valley just to use it as a 'peg' for rail projects. I also think the inclusion of Maesycwmmmer is stretching things as that village looks to Ystrad Mynach and the Rhymney Valley for its focus rather than Blackwood.	Crumlin has been included in the Greater Blackwood Masterplan Area because of its importance for providing a rail station that will serve the principal employment	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>centre at Oakdale/Penyfan. In addition to this a link from Crumlin station to Oakdale could see it continue south to the A472 at Maesycwmmmer providing a north-south link with the primary east-west mid valley link. This will enhance accessibility to the employment centre. Consequently, it is important that these are included in the masterplan area as they are linked.</p>	
180	Email	<p>Oakdale is rarely, if ever, described as a 'Garden Village'; in 'The Buildings of Wales' by Newman (part of the Pevsner Architectural Guides), it is described as a 'model village', which most residents would accept. Neither is it a 'visitor attraction' - what is there to see? The community would be better served if the council put its energies into developing an Enhancement Plan for the Village Conservation Area, which it has singularly failed to do since its designation in 2011. The council is in breach of its statutory duty in that respect (Section 71(1) of</p>	<p>The Coflein website refers to Oakdale as both a 'garden village' and a 'model village.'</p> <p>Oakdale is more commonly known as a 'model' village rather than a 'garden' village, particularly locally. However, both epithets adequately and</p>	<p>For the sake of clarity 'Model' has been substituted for 'Garden' in paragraph 2.6 of the Masterplan.</p>

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 refers).	<p>appropriately describe the village. The village was clearly influenced by the Garden City Movement pioneered by Ebenezer Howard. Whilst Howard proposed entire new towns, the ideas and concepts were adapted to create villages (e.g. Oakdale) and suburbs (e.g. Pontywaun).</p> <p>Whilst the village is not a traditional visitor attraction it clearly has historic and architectural interest, as evidenced by its designation as a conservation area. It provides evidence of the evolution of social reform and town planning in a Welsh context.</p> <p>The preparation of a Conservation Area</p>	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			Enhancement Plan is outside the scope of this work but work on a programme of Appraisal and Management Plans for all Conservation Areas in the County Borough is planned.	
181	Questionnaire	Unfortunately, the introduction of so much social housing into a small area like Blackwood will help to further destroy the town centre. These people have very little disposable income to spend in the town. Concentrated clusters of social housing will also bring social problems into the area. More social housing should therefore be put into areas such as Caerphilly town which has a larger population and is having the majority of the council's money to improve leisure facilities amongst other things. Blackwood needs no more social housing being built as the council is creating an imbalance of people who are working and those who are not leading to the demise of the area. Houses in Chartist gardens already looking awful in such a small space of time. Bags and bedding hanging in windows. No creating a good look when you drive into Blackwood.	The comment is noted. Strategic Objective F seeks to 'provide housing that will meet local needs in sustainable locations'. 'Local needs' will of course vary and include both 'market' and 'affordable' housing.	No change.
182	Questionnaire	No business rates for small business for 3 years to encourage people back into the town.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	
183	Questionnaire	More for Homeless.	The comment is noted. No changes to the masterplan have been proposed.	No change.
184	Questionnaire	Your business rates are not feasible for small businesses	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
185	Questionnaire	Put more shops that people need.	Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.	No change.
186	Questionnaire	Since the no.26 Blackwood to Cardiff bus has been reduced to 1 an hour, we have used Blackwood far less. We no longer shop at Sainsburys & have moved dentist. To wait an hour if you just miss a bus is too long!	Strategic Objective D addresses improving transport links within and beyond the masterplan area, covering this issue.	No change.
187	Questionnaire	Better public transport need from Croespenmaen and Oakdale areas. These routes have been reduced and a service needed on a Sunday to be able to get to Blackwood to enjoy the new facilities. In my opinion Oakdale and surrounding areas been forgotten by public transport especially with all the new joys s being built.	Strategic Objective D addresses improving transport links within and beyond the masterplan area, covering this issue.	No change.
188	Questionnaire	Stop the snap fitness development plan or this master plan is pointless	The masterplan provides a framework for the regeneration of the masterplan area and is not the appropriate vehicle for considering the impact of specific developments.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
189	Questionnaire	No further building houses on Green- field sites. No more planning permission should be granted on green fields. There is adequate ground on navigation colliery if it is got rid of. The environment should be centre of these proposals, there is still planning permission being sort for Land at Grid Ref 318897 198815 Syr Dafydd Avenue Oakdale Blackwood NP12 OLA, one of the last green field sites in Blackwood. Why has it even gone this far? Surely, we should be preserving our landscape in the face of all the proposed developments for future generations	There is still a significant need for new housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of the residents of the county borough. The issue of greenfield development is addressed in the response to issue 91	No change.
190	Questionnaire	Try and re-establish the rail link to Cardiff.	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for transport improvements (including active-travel routes) throughout Greater Blackwood.	No change.
191	Questionnaire	More Jobs for people who cannot find one.	Strategic Objective addresses the issue of employment generation.	No change.
192	Questionnaire	Tidy up old toilets and try to develop.	The comment is noted.	No change.
193	Questionnaire	Why not buy churches or old pubs and turn these into centres for mothers and toddlers as training events for children in care or as affordable homes using grants as much as	It is not the role of the masterplan to identify building for reuse / redevelopment.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		possible. If not, then why not give full grants on owners of pubs and churches to convert these into affordable housing and then as those become profitable (when they sell the flats) pay the grants back for the next schemes. Or why not try a new affordable model whereby if councils provide grants, then tenants pay rent, and that rent is saved by the landlords for 3 years and paid as deposits for the tenants to buy the property in 3 years' time.	However, any proposals for such schemes could be brought forward under the masterplan framework.	
194	Questionnaire	Parking - bring back free parking in Blackwood. Work with big entertainment companies to entice them to come to Blackwood. We don't need any more shops, we need entertainment to keep us local. The cinema is by far one of the best assets to Blackwood, encourage more of that.	The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.	No change.
195	Questionnaire	Cheaper public transport options to increase visitors when the [unspecified] proposal is completed.	The fares for public transport are outside the remit of the Council and, unfortunately, are not a matter that the Masterplan can address.	No change.
196	Questionnaire	Make Blackwood Great again and More events though out the year to help council rise again.	The Masterplan discusses the possibility of holding additional events in Blackwood town centre.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
197	Questionnaire	Some good points, but overall, a rethink is needed. Especially around the points raised in the previous section.	The comment is noted.	No change.
198	Questionnaire	No more statues.	The comment is noted.	No change.
199	Questionnaire	This may be outside your control, but I would like taxis operating within Greater Blackwood to take card payment. Their limited use of this as a payment method hinders accessible travel across the area, unlike Cardiff where apps such as Uber operate and make it much easier and reassuring to get around the city and greater sub-urban areas. Lack of being able to get taxis from rail stations such as Ystrad, Pengam and so on also makes it difficult to travel.	This issue is outside the role of the Masterplan.	No change.
200	Questionnaire	Better access for winter vehicles around Cefn Fforest.	This issue is outside the role of the Masterplan.	No change.
201	Questionnaire	48 pages to basically say, improve the town somehow, build a load of houses but no mention of improving schools, building new gp surgery's etc. improving transport links, how happy we all should be to have a new train station which is no way as accessible as our old metro connecting bus. This is basically 48 pages of absolute nonsense. I guess this means 20 plus years of over budget nonsense that we have to deal with.	The role of the masterplan is to provide a framework for bringing forward regeneration proposals and provide a basis for bids for grant funding to deliver them.	No change.
202	Questionnaire	Diversify the local shops in Blackwood town centre, it is full of barbers/hairdressers, charity	The Masterplan and the Council will	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>shops and cafes... We don't need any more of those, we need more appealing stores to bring customers to the town.</p> <p>Also remove parking fees, people are more likely to shop in a town that they can park in for free, no one wants to pay £1 to park, just to quickly go in to the poundshop for a £1 item for example.</p>	<p>promote a mix of businesses in the town centre, although much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p> <p>The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy.</p>	
203	Questionnaire	Why have a master plan when businesses cannot come to the area when your rates are too high.	The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
204	Questionnaire	This survey isn't very public friendly and difficult to put your opinion across.	<p>83 responses have been received as a result of the consultation that contain a wide range of comments. Documents were made available online and in public libraries contact details were publicised so that anyone could contact officers to discuss their issues and get help submitting them.</p> <p>No formal suggestions for how the process could be improved were suggested</p>	No change.
205	Questionnaire	Fix roads	This issue is outside the role of the Masterplan.	No change.
206	Questionnaire	Make sure that green areas are protected.	<p>The issue of greenfield development is set out in the response to issue 91.</p> <p>The masterplan does not set out planning policy and is, therefore,</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>not the vehicle for addressing this issue.</p> <p>The Local development Plan is the Council's land use planning strategy document, and it is through this document that this issue should be addressed.</p>	
207	Questionnaire	Take over derelict buildings.	The Masterplan references bringing empty properties back into use. The Council has limited powers to do this as most derelict buildings are in private ownership.	No change.
208	Questionnaire	my proposals are at the beginning of my survey. Introduce more local history at school and commemorate local people such as zephania Williams and Mr Mogridge in the area. Make people feel proud of where they live. Sadly, the master plan is inadequate compared to your master plan for Caerphilly town centre. The workers of the Caerphilly County borough pay council tax, it seems very unjust it all goes to Caerphilly Town Centre which is sadly just a town most people bypass to get to Cardiff.	The first comment is covered by Strategic Objective B that seeks to expand and diversify the visitor economy, although nor proposals of this kind have been brought forward to date.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>The Council is preparing a detailed placemaking plan for Blackwood town centre (in addition to the Greater Blackwood Masterplan) that will contain detailed proposals for the town centre.</p>	
209	Questionnaire	<p>With the expected and/or anticipated increases in the housing stock there does not appear to be a viable approach to road management. The Metro scheme hopes to replace car journeys with bus journeys but, in reality, the bus service, at present, is dire. The 20MPH speed limit is not helping.</p>	<p>Welsh Government's transport policy is to reduce the reliance on the car and increase modal shift to active travel and sustainable transport. The Council supports this position, and the Masterplan has been drafted to reflect national policy.</p> <p>A reduction in car use in line with national policy will see a reduction in road use.</p> <p>The 20mph speed limit is outside the Council's remit to change.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
210	Questionnaire	None of the proposals. Have included. The regeneration. Of the past monies. Which cost the rate payers more. Think again with open minds.	The comment is noted. No changes to the masterplan have been suggested.	No change.
211	Questionnaire	Agriculture should be taken into account, the lane from Croespenmaen Industrial estate to Pentwynmawr is called Heol Cwm Dows, there is no street signs to tell visitors. There are no warning signs telling visitors of cows, tractors, horses yet it is the National speed limit. I would like to see a widening of the lane by 150mm and improved drainage to allow 8 wheeled HGV's to access the farm, this would make deliveries cheaper and allow the farm to continue for another 20 years and creating employment.	This issue is not within the remit of the masterplan.	No change.
212	Questionnaire	I have already stated that in general the Masterplan fails abysmally in acknowledging the fact that there are inadequate healthcare and educational service available at present without the additional housing proposals. Also, when you comment on the vibrancy of Blackwood Town Centre has anyone who drafted the plan reviewed services provided by the retail outlets in Blackwood? It is great if you want to use Charity shops, coffee shops, Nail bars and Barbers. But there are no specialist Butchers, Greengrocers, Hardware stores, quality clothing stores and the pubs are not particularly welcoming by day or night.	Health care provision is outside the remit of the Council, although the Council works with the Health Board to deliver health care improvements. Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
213	Questionnaire	<p>Increase Footfall in Blackwood by having a regenerated town centre. More places to eat, enhance and celebrate 2 key entertainments venues - blackwood miners and cinema. Need less vape shops and pound shops. Lower business rates to incentivise local business shops, have shops that will encourage wider footfall. Often pop to blackwood on a Sunday but 1 cafe open and a few shops open. Maybe close main road to cars and have a Sunday market like Chepstow?</p>	<p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p> <p>Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p> <p>The Masterplan sets out a framework to encourage proposals for the regeneration of the masterplan area and to assist in the process of bidding for grant funding to</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			implement such proposals. The Masterplan is not a plan that specifically identifies what will happen.	
214	Questionnaire	Environmental and sustainability efforts are largely missing from master plan.	The Masterplan sets out a broad approach to redevelopment in Greater Blackwood. Detailed development proposals will have to comply with national and local planning policies.	No change.
215	Questionnaire	Provide long term funding for wellbeing projects.	This goes beyond what the Masterplan can do. The role of the masterplan is to provide a framework to provide a basis for bids for grant funding to implement regeneration proposals, not secure long-term funding.	No change.
216	Questionnaire	Help young people with Key Skills Examples Workshops like cooking	The Masterplan offers 'in principle' support for suggestions of this nature. No specific	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		Running bills Make them smart and reliable	proposals have been brought forward to date.	
217	Questionnaire	Please do something - our communities in the northern part of the borough are slowly dying. Stop neglecting us in favour of Caerphilly town!	The Masterplan sets out to improve social, cultural, and economic conditions throughout Greater Blackwood.	No change.
218	Questionnaire	As someone who is relatively new to the area (from Cardiff), I can already see the decline of the town centre of Blackwood within the last year (closed down shops, bored youths misbehaving, crime), however it has so much potential to thrive. Therefore, I believe this would be so beneficial.	The comment is noted.	No change.
219	Questionnaire	Please include Argoed and Hollybush and stop making us feel we are an inconvenience.	These settlements are in the HOVRA (Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area) Masterplan Area. The HOVRA masterplan has been adopted as SPG by the Council.	No change.
220	Questionnaire	Free parking and shops that those that have money would like use. No more barbers, charity shop or cheaper pound land shops. No where to buy any decent clothes.	The Council will consider car park tariffs when it reviews its parking strategy. The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p> <p>Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p>	
221	Questionnaire	<p>Ensure there are plenty of green spaces for nature and for children to play safely, you don't have to build on every patch of land available. Bring appealing stores/businesses to the town e.g. major clothing brand stores etc. For example... Primark or Matalan.</p>	<p>The issue of greenfield development is set out in the response to issue 91.</p> <p>Strategic Objective E covers the issue of green spaces.</p> <p>The Masterplan seeks to make Blackwood</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
			<p>town centre busy during the day and at night. It seeks to diversify uses in the centre to increase footfall and promote nighttime activities that includes entertainment, commercial leisure uses and restaurants, as well as bars.</p> <p>Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties.</p>	
222	Questionnaire	<p>No time scale for your proposals. Your draft seems weak and not sustainable for Blackwood to prosper as an attractive place to work or live. It's not forward thinking enough and sadly Blackwood and rest of the surrounding districts have been neglected for far too long by the council while other areas IE Caerphilly has seen a lot of resources and money spent on it. Such as recent proposal of new Spa Leisure Well-being centre while you are proposing a vast block of flats right in the centre of Blackwood on</p>	<p>The Masterplan covers a five-year period. Some projects may start and finish in that period, but others may not. Details will become clear later.</p> <p>The masterplan provides a framework for the regeneration of</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		the old Sommerfeld site which will further the demise of the town and it's long-suffering loyal residents.	the masterplan area and is not the appropriate vehicle for considering the impact of specific identified developments.	
223	Questionnaire	Be much more ambitious - this is far too standard and aligned to Welsh government policies - it's a paper exercise rather than an ambitious ideas document that needs more external thoughts. Same people with the same ideas.	The Masterplan must be compatible with national planning policy.	No change.
224	Questionnaire	Pie in the sky thinking. To help increase footfall in Blackwood town centre why not look at introducing a service in the town that people have to visit e.g. a health centre in the old Sommerfield building above the Iceland store. Easy to park, good public transport and people can then visit the town during the visit. Or free parking in town which worked well in the period it was free after CV19. A community centre in the high street that runs classes on the weekends that does not just cater for the retired or children but for all those in-between and their families.	The Masterplan and the Council will promote a mix of businesses in the town centre. Individual proposals for sites within the town centre will be considered in detail via the Blackwood Placemaking Plan which is currently being prepared.	No change.
225	Questionnaire	The area needs an overall boost. The opening of the cinema saved the town if we are being honest. It is a busy little town but there is a continued lack of investment, with the focus of	The points made by the respondent are noted, although no specific proposals have been	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		<p>the council seemingly being Caerphilly town centre. The various playgrounds around the area need vastly improving, they are dilapidated, damaged and constantly full of litter. As previously mentioned, I think more is needed for younger people to use, a bowling alley would be great. The proposed skatepark likewise would give them somewhere to go.</p>	<p>brought forward to date.</p> <p>Support for the skatepark is noted.</p> <p>WG Transforming Towns Regeneration Programme requires a Placemaking Plan to be in place to enable this funding to be directed to a specific town. The Council is in the process of preparing such a plan to enable TT Funding to be sought for proposals in the town.</p>	
226	Questionnaire	<p>More community policing as residents feel unsafe. Also, you have to improve public transport so people can get jobs further afield</p>	<p>Policing is outside the remit of the Council.</p> <p>The Masterplan aims at improving public transport throughout Greater Blackwood.</p>	No change.
227	Questionnaire	<p>A better sustainable vision needed for the town. Make it a place to attract people with disposable income and where they want to spend their spare time socialising making it a vibrant place</p>	<p>This is what the Masterplan sets out to do.</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		to live. this would have a long-term positive impact on the town. For a long time, Blackwood looks run down attracting anti-social behaviour and drug use. This is further attracted rough sleepers. The whole image of the town needs a revamp. Blackwood needs an injection of cash.		
228	Questionnaire	There is a very positive need for a new (possibly electric) direct rail link in the Sirhowy Valley.	The Masterplan supports increased accessibility and transport improvements into and within the Masterplan area. Whilst it would be unlikely that rail services would be reintroduced into the Sirhowy valley, improvements to the connectivity and service provision for the Sirhowy valley could be delivered through other forms of sustainable transport including active travel and bus and tram provision. These improvements are within the scope of the Masterplan framework.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
229	Questionnaire	CCBC need to think long term, engage with relevant people and understand that people are not just angry for no reason, but because the plans don't make sense to a rational person.	The comment is noted. The Masterplan has been the subject of a six-week public consultation exercise and has been developed in conjunction with stakeholders and local ward and community members.	No change.
230	Questionnaire	Caerphilly CBC is fixated on Caerphilly town and the outskirts of our Borough are ignored.	This Masterplan covers Greater Blackwood, not the town of Caerphilly. WG Transforming Towns Regeneration Programme requires a Placemaking Plan to be in place to enable this funding to be directed to a specific town. The Council is in the process of preparing such a plan to enable TT Funding to be sought for proposals in the town.	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
231	Questionnaire	<p>Your support for Agriculture will be much appreciated.</p> <p>As mentioned, better healthcare facilities and GP resource for Oakdale, more housing has stretched this surgery, and the waiting times are not acceptable.</p>	<p>The Masterplan is a regeneration strategy that seeks to stimulate economic activity. Agriculture is an important economic activity, but much of it can take place without planning permission and without regeneration funding.</p> <p>Health care provision is outside the remit of the Council, although the Council works with the Health Board to deliver health care improvements.</p>	No change.
232	Questionnaire	<p>No skatepark! You have not got facts right. Skating is now not nearly as popular as 10 years ago. How about a secure dog walking area not one where we have to make sure that we do not encroach on marked out pitches.</p>	<p>The skatepark project is under way.</p> <p>The comments on a dog walking area are noted.</p>	No change.
233	Questionnaire	<p>I would suggest that the draft be revisited to review the inadequate healthcare services and to look at how this can be addressed before proceeding further. You cannot talk about improving people's health within the community</p>	<p>Health care provision is outside the remit of the Council, although the Council works with the Health Board to deliver</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		if you fail to educate them and if you fail to have inadequate facilities to support them.	health care improvements.	
234	Email	<p>Whilst there might be little to criticise in the Plan with regards its vision to improve the Town, it is difficult to get over excited, as we've had several false starts in the past with somewhat similar plans, that have never come to fruition.</p> <p>Town Council are obviously eager to see the Town return to its former vibrant self but would urge the Borough Council to treat the filling of the numerous vacant businesses in the High Street as the number one priority.</p> <p>Whilst it will be argued that a number of new businesses have opened over the past couple of years, the disappointment is that the majority of these are either nail bars, vape stores, gents hairdressers or charity shops.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we are no longer a High Street filled with small independent shops, and the rents/ business rates are a contributing factor to this. Until the Welsh Government get a grip on this, things are unlikely to improve.</p> <p>Town Council also consider the lack of public toilets in town has contributed to its decline, and whilst the Caerphilly Taxi Drivers Association tried hard to keep the Bus Station toilets open,</p>	<p>The comment is noted.</p> <p>The Council has published its public toilets strategy. Any changes to this will be considered as part of that process.</p> <p>Much of the town centre is in third party ownership so the Council has no control over the businesses that operate in the properties</p>	No change.

Observation number	Source of observation	Observation	Officer response	Recommendation
		continued mindless vandalism has led to its closure. We would urge any new plans give consideration to provision of public toilets.		