

Appendix 1

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan
(First Revision)**

Up to 2031

**Sustainable Urban Network
Growth Strategy**

October 2014

**DRAFT PREFERRED STRATEGY
FOR
CONSULTATION PURPOSES**

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FOREWORD

In November 2010, Caerphilly County Borough Council became the first Unitary Authority in Wales to adopt its Local Development Plan. The Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP) allocates land for essential new development that meets the social and economic needs of residents and business within the area and balances this with the need to conserve and protect those features of the natural and built environment that are important to us. Moreover, it helps to inform key investment decisions of business, industry and of utility providers and the infrastructure priorities of both local and national government.

As Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development I am responsible for ensuring that the Council maintains an up to date adopted local development plan to provide the statutory framework for these important decisions to be made.

This Draft Preferred Strategy represents a key stage in the revision of the existing adopted LDP. It outlines the main issues to be addressed through the revision of the LDP, which will cover a revised plan period up to 2031. It identifies the alternative spatial strategies that have been considered and provides an early indication of those areas that are likely to be identified for growth in the future.

Importantly the publication of the draft strategy represents the first statutory stage of the revision process where residents, business, landowners, developers and other key stakeholders with an interest can get involved and contribute to the debate on the location for new development.

This is your chance to have a say on the future of the county borough and I would urge you to get involved and have your say on where our residents and children will live and work in the future.

Councillor K James

Cabinet Member, Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2031 (First Revision) October 2014

SUSTAINABLE URBAN NETWORK GROWTH STRATEGY

BACKGROUND TO REVIEW PROCESS

The town and country planning system is designed to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. It seeks to reconcile the development needs of the population with the wider environmental concerns for the conservation of the man-made and natural environment. It also seeks to ensure that the most sustainable use is made of limited resources, whilst at the same time stimulating the local economy, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Within the planning system the Local Development Plan (LDP) sets the framework for the control of development proposals. The Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2021 (LDP) is the statutory framework for the development and use of land within Caerphilly County Borough. It was prepared using prescribed statutory procedures and was formally adopted by Caerphilly County Borough Council on 23rd November 2010.

Following the adoption of the LDP, the Council has a statutory obligation, under section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect the development of its area. In order to do this, the Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report to assess if the LDP is being implemented effectively. To date the Council has prepared three Annual Monitoring Reports, the most recent of which was the 3rd AMR for 2014.

As a consequence of the Council's consideration of the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report in October 2013 it resolved to roll forward the LDP to cover the plan period up to 2031. When adopted, the ***Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2031 (First Revision)*** will supersede the existing Adopted ***Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2021*** for the Caerphilly County Borough area.

Review stages

There are 3 important stages in the plan making process – plan preparation, plan production and plan scrutiny. Plan preparation has already resulted in an approved Delivery Agreement.

Delivery Agreement (2013)

The Delivery Agreement (DA), which has been formally agreed with Welsh Government (February 2013), includes the Community Involvement Scheme and Project Management Timetable for the review of the LDP. The DA provides an indicative date for adoption for the revised plan as 2017.

The Review Report (2014)

R1: Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (First Revision) Up to 2031 - Review Report (August 2014) forms an integral part of plan scrutiny and draws upon the three Annual Monitoring Reports prepared to date. It sets out clearly those parts of the plan that require only minor modification due to

their effectiveness and those parts of the plan that require significant revision. On balance, the Review Report indicates that there is a need to review the Development Strategy that underpins the Adopted LDP as an integral part of the full revision of the plan. Therefore alternative strategy options need to be explored in consultation with stakeholders through the review process.

It is important to note that the Review Report indicates that a full review of the plan in line with Local Development Plan Regulation 41 is being undertaken which will lead to the preparation of a Replacement LDP.

Alternative Strategy Options

As monitoring has indicated the need to review the existing development strategy, there will therefore be a need to test realistic alternative strategy options (including the existing Adopted Development Strategy) for inclusion in the plan going forward.

Background Paper 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy (August 2014), sets out the alternative scenarios that have been considered through the review process in consultation with stakeholders in respect of: A) Population & Household Growth, B) Employment Growth and Alternative Spatial Options for the distribution of development sites that arise from the consideration of A and B.

Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal

An important feature of the review process is also the testing of each of the alternative strategy options through the process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). These assessments are contained in the **SEA/SA Part 1 - Document 3: The Assessment of the Preferred and Alternative LDP Strategies (2014)**

Baseline information outlining the current state of the environment together with a review of relevant policies, plans and programmes is included in the **LDP Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal: Scoping Report (2014)**. The Scoping Report (available separately) will be used to assess the effects of the detailed development management policies and land allocations of the Deposit LDP.

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031 - Draft Preferred Strategy (2014)

The Draft Preferred Strategy represents a key stage in the revision of the plan and in plan production. It outlines the main issues to be addressed in the Replacement LDP, identifies the alternative spatial strategies that have been considered and provides an early indication of those areas that are likely to be identified for growth through the review. As such it represents the first statutory stage of the plan review process, building on earlier informal stages including the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (SA/SEA) Scoping Report published for consultation in May / June 2014.

The Draft Preferred Strategy is underpinned by the following scenarios contained in Background Paper 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy:

- Population & Household Growth Scenario M – Moderate Average Household Size Change and SE Wales Migration (10 years);
- Employment Growth Scenario 1 - Historic Land Take-Up; and
- Spatial Option 5: Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connection Corridors.

It sets out the guiding principles for the future development and conservation needs of the county borough up to 2031, in line with national, regional and local strategies.

Notably this consultation document promotes a change to the existing development strategy that underpins the Adopted LDP.

What Happens Next?

A series of consultation questions are contained within **Background Paper 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy** that seek to gauge stakeholders views on the alternative strategy options that have been considered.

The stakeholder feedback obtained through the Draft Preferred Strategy Consultation exercise will serve to inform the Council of the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the Council's Preferred Strategy. It will help to determine the scale of future population and household growth that would result in the most sustainable future for Caerphilly County Borough up to 2031.

All responses returned within the six-week consultation period, will be considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the revised vision, objectives, strategic policies and strategy to be included in the revised Deposit Local Development Plan up to 2031. The Deposit LDP will include more detailed policies and land allocations and will be subject to a further public consultation exercise in the Autumn of 2015 before being subject to independent examination.

The Broad Structure of the Draft Preferred Strategy is as follows:

Introduction

National and Regional Context

Local Policy Context

Key Land Use Issues

The Vision for Caerphilly County Borough

Key Aims and Objectives

The Draft Preferred Strategy

Strategy Policies

Key Diagram

Strategy Implications

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal of Alternative Strategy Options

Appendices

Monitoring Strategic Policies: Monitoring Indicators

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031: Draft Preferred Strategy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Spatial Context

1.1 Caerphilly county borough covers an area stretching from Powys and the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south. It is bordered to the west, by Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf and to the east by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and thus it lies in the heart of the South Wales Valleys and the Cardiff Capital Region.

1.2 Caerphilly county borough is made up of 3 valleys, the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw, covering an area of approximately 28,000 ha with a mixture of urban, semi-urban and rural communities. The county borough has one of the highest populations in Wales of approximately 178,800 (2011 Census), notwithstanding this 75% of the county borough is used for agriculture and forestry (countryside/rural). It has both an expanding economy and an attractive environment and benefits from excellent transport links with good access to the public transport network, whilst the south of the county borough has good links to the M4 motorway.

2.0 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT: DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

National Context

2.1 Since the ground-breaking duty in the Government of Wales Act put Sustainable Development at the heart of devolution, Wales has taken a distinctive path to development. In the time since devolution in 1999, sustainable development has grown in strength, with increasingly widespread recognition and growing numbers of successful examples of its application in all sectors.

2.2 The Welsh Government's *Programme for Government* reinforces the importance of sustainable development's place as the core principle in defining the best development path for Wales. In addition, it commits to ensuring that all the Government's policies and programmes reflect this central commitment to sustainable development.

2.3 The Welsh Government is committed to further strengthening sustainable development's place in the Welsh constitution by bringing forward legislation to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle of the wider public service in Wales. The Welsh Government considers that enshrining sustainable development as the central organising principle, not just of the Welsh Government, but of the wider public service in Wales through the Sustainable Development Bill, will further reinforce this commitment. The aim is to ensure that in pursuit of a better long term future, the best possible decisions are made that achieve the maximum possible long term benefits to the economic, social *and* environmental wellbeing of Wales, within environmental limits.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2.4 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Local Planning Authority, in this case, Caerphilly County Borough Council, to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the whole of the County Borough. The development plan should provide a positive framework for sustainable and quality development, which enables the provision of homes and economic investment, whilst protecting all that is best in the local environment. The Council must therefore exercise its strategic planning function with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

2.5 In line with statutory requirements, the Council formally adopted the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2021 (LDP) on the 23 November 2010. This document forms part of the review of the Adopted LDP to prepare a Replacement LDP that will cover the period up to 2031.

Planning (Wales) Bill

2.6 On the 6 October 2014 the Minister for Natural Resources Wales introduced the Planning (Wales) Bill to the National Assembly. The Bill outlines the Welsh Government's proposals to streamline the planning system in Wales drawing upon the key conclusions from Welsh Government research into the planning system.

2.7 With regard to planning policy, the Bill recognises that some planning issues extend beyond the boundaries of a single local planning authority and need to be tackled at a sub-regional level, through a strategic development plan, prepared by a strategic planning panel.

2.8 Although Welsh Government propose to set the geographical focus for SDPs, they do not specify the precise physical extent of the area to be covered by the SDP. It is suggested that a nominated lead local authority will be required to work collaboratively with other local authorities within the area of focus to identify the boundary of the plan area based on robust evidence which must be submitted for approval by Welsh Ministers.

2.9 Within a Caerphilly context it is assumed that the SDP area would cover the Cardiff Capital Region. This would reflect the collaborative work that has already been undertaken to date, by the 10 LPAs in the region through the SE Wales Regional Board, South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration Group (SEWDERG) and South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG). A formal discussion and thereafter decision will need to be taken by the Council and its neighbouring Local Planning Authorities in order to enable the SDP for the area to be prepared at a future date.

2.10 In future the LDP will be required to be in conformity with the relevant SDP. Where an SDP covers an LDP area, the LDP will need to be rationalised so that it only focuses on local matters, particularly site specific allocations, in accordance with the scale and location of growth set out in the SDP. Issues such as the overall level of housing, employment, retail provision and strategic sites will have already been addressed in the SDP and will not need to be repeated. In future that will result in a much slimmer LDP in both scope and content and it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the time associated with plan preparation and review.

2.11 Welsh Government has indicated that a pre-requisite for the preparation of SDPs will be comprehensive coverage in the region of adopted LDPs. This is likely to take time given that a number of authorities in the region, most notably Cardiff, have yet to adopt their development plan. In the interim, it is important that Caerphilly County Borough continues to ensure that there is an up to date planning policy

framework against which to take informed decisions on planning matters in order to stimulate economic growth and afford certainty to stakeholders and the development industry.

National Planning Policy & Guidance

2.12 In producing the LDP (1st Revision) the Council must have regard to national planning policies. The Welsh Government's national land use planning policies are set out in Planning Policy Wales and Minerals Planning Policy Wales supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTANs) and Circulars. Taken together these national planning policies set out the planning framework to help achieve sustainable development.

People and Places: The Wales Spatial Plan

2.13 The Wales Spatial Plan, approved by the Welsh Assembly in 2004 (Updated in 2008), provides a broad strategic framework for development and other plans.

2.14 The Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) divides South East Wales functionally into three zones. The City and Coast zone includes the M4 corridor and the cities of Cardiff and Newport, just south of Caerphilly County Borough. The central zone, termed the Connections Corridor, links the prosperous City and Coast zone to deprived communities in the Heads of the Valleys Plus zone.

2.15 The bulk of the County Borough, containing over 80% of the population, lies in the Connections Corridor, with the remainder in the Heads of the Valleys zone. The Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan carries this sub-division further by defining a 'Southern Connections Corridor' (SCC) comprising Caerphilly Basin and Lower Islwyn in which development pressures from Cardiff and Newport are strongest where the environment is under particular pressure, and a 'Mid Valleys Corridor' (MVC) where the County Borough's major conurbation is situated and where the capacity for economic growth is greatest.

2.16 The WSP identifies 'Key Settlements' in each of the six areas of Wales. These key settlements are seen as locations for growth and for the provision of services and employment for the wider catchment areas they serve. Unlike the other five areas of Wales, the South East Area section of the WSP does not identify all the key settlements in the region but only the 14 'primary' key settlements. These include Caerphilly and Blackwood, which are referred to in the LDP as Sub Regional Principal Towns.

2.17 The Caerphilly LDP develops the WSP strategy in more detail by identifying a further three important Key Settlements (Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach and Risca) in addition to Caerphilly and Blackwood. For the purposes of the LDP, these settlements have been termed 'Sub Regional Principal Towns' and 'Principal Towns'. The Plan also identifies four other centres, equivalent to WSP 'Local Centres,' namely Newbridge, Nelson, Bedwas and Rhymney.

2.18 The other five area sections of the WSP also grouped related and complementary Key Settlements into 'hubs' offering a wider range of facilities and greater economic potential than the individual settlements on their own. The Caerphilly LDP identifies such a 'hub' in the Mid Valleys Corridor that encompasses Blackwood, Ystrad Mynach, Bargoed and Newbridge, together containing a population of approximately 75,000.

Turning Heads - A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys (2006)

2.19 The Heads of the Valleys Strategy sits firmly within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan and has provided the broad framework for change within the Heads of the Valleys Area. The Strategy was developed around five priority themes:

- An attractive and well-used natural historic and built environment
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities
- A well-educated, skilled and healthier population
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience
- Public confidence in a shared brighter future

2.20 The Heads of the Valleys Strategy Area includes the Upper Rhymney Valley and the Upper Sirhowy Valley areas encompassing the settlements of Princetown, Rhymney, Abertysswg, Pontlottyn, Fochriw, Deri, New Tredegar, Bargoed, Aberbargoed, Gilfach, Argoed, Markham and Hollybush. The development strategy for the Plan harnesses and exploits the opportunities afforded to the north of the County Borough brought about by the Heads of the Valleys Strategy.

Vibrant and Viable Places (2013)

2.21 Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) sets out the Welsh Government National Regeneration Framework that seeks to establish a more integrated way of reversing economic, social and physical decline throughout Wales. Its vision for the future is that:

“Everybody in Wales should live in well-connected vibrant, viable and sustainable communities with a strong local economy and good quality of life.”

2.22 It promotes amongst other things a place-based approach to regeneration to create successful physical and environmental improvements to an area. It recognises that settlements are key to regeneration and that there is a growing need for town centre regeneration to create developmental hubs that can have a wider economic impact, providing a place of employment, leisure activity and the location of public services, the promotion of cultural activities, the nurturing of civic identity, to provide the community and visitors with an enriched town environment. The vision is for diversified town centres in which retailing constitutes a key element of the offer but is supported by learning, health and leisure facilities providing multiple reasons for town centre footfall.

2.23 The Caerphilly LDP develops this strategy by identifying five Principal Towns (Blackwood, Caerphilly, Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach and Risca) and four Local Centres (Newbridge, Nelson, Bedwas and Rhymney) based on their functions as major employers, retail centres, providers of services and centres of population.

2.24 The VVP recognises that transport plays a central role in terms of influencing where people live and work, their leisure options, and their opportunities to interact with friends, family and the wider community. An effective, accessible and affordable transport system therefore is identified as a key building block of the Welsh Government regeneration framework.

2.25 The Caerphilly LDP develops and builds on the excellent work undertaken over the last decade to enhance the connectivity and efficiency of the transportation network. It will identify and safeguard land to enhance and facilitate the provision of

a networked transportation system through the Metro Concept that will increase the connectivity of the area to the Cardiff Capital Region and beyond.

Regional Policy Context

Delivering a Future with Prosperity: SE Wales Regional Strategic Framework (October 2013)

2.26 The publication of the SE Wales Regional Strategic Framework entitled *Delivering a Future with Prosperity*, represents a critical stage in regional working, and as well as taking forward the collaborative agenda of the local authorities, it sets out priorities to complement and support key Welsh Government policies and initiatives, for example in relation to tackling poverty, implementing regeneration initiatives, securing economic development, effective planning, affordable housing, efficient and accessible transport (The Metro) and excellent connectivity in its widest sense. The LDP provides the development strategy and policy framework for the necessary developments associated with the delivery of the agreed strategic priorities for the region in terms of Place, Business Support and & Development and People and Skills.

Strategic Development Plan – Cardiff Capital Region

2.27 In future the LDP will be required to be in conformity with the relevant SDP. Where an SDP covers an LDP area, the LDP will need to be rationalised so that it only focuses on local matters, particularly site specific allocations, in accordance with the scale and location of growth set out in the SDP. Issues such as the overall level of housing, employment, retail provision and strategic sites will have already been addressed in the SDP and will not need to be repeated. In future that will result in a much slimmer LDP in both scope and content and it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the time associated with plan preparation and review.

2.28 Welsh Government has indicated that a pre-requisite for the preparation of SDPs will be comprehensive coverage in the region of adopted LDPs. This is likely to take time given that a number of authorities in the region, most notably Cardiff, have yet to adopt their development plan. In the interim, it is important that Caerphilly County Borough continues to ensure that there is an up to date planning policy framework against which to take informed decisions on planning matters in order to stimulate economic growth and afford certainty to stakeholders and the development industry.

Regional Transport Plan

2.29 The South East Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP) was published in March 2010 and included a 5-year programme of projects and a 15-year strategy to deliver an integrated transport system for the region. The RTP's long term vision, objectives and priorities for transport in SE Wales remain current and forms the basis of the Local Transport Plan. The RTP's 5-year programme of schemes is to be reviewed and updated to reflect progress and priorities

2.30 In line with the Welsh Government guidance, the LTP does not include rail or trunk road schemes i.e. schemes that are not within the Local Authority's remit. In future such schemes will be prioritised, progressed and delivered directly by Welsh Government in consultation with the Cardiff Capital Region Board. It is expected that these strategic schemes will be included in the National Transport Plan (NTP) and will form part of the Metro programme.

South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party – Regional Technical Statement

2.31 Minerals Planning Policy Wales (2000) has set out the overarching policy guidance for all types of mineral extraction in Wales. The guidance provides positively for the working of minerals resources to meet society's needs and advocates identifying areas for future working where practicable and by safeguarding mineral resources from permanent development that would prevent their future working.

2.32 The South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) is charged with producing the Regional Technical Statement (RTS). A first review of the Regional Technical Statement (RTS) originally published in October 2008 was issued in 2014. The RTS sets out a strategy for the provision of aggregates within Wales until 2036, developing national mineral planning policy and providing apportionments and allocations for each local planning authority (LPA) which will be carried through the policies contained within the LDP.

Local Policy Context

Caerphilly Delivers (Single Integrated Plan) 2013

2.33 The Caerphilly Local Service Board (LSB) is a partnership of equals comprising the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Gwent Police, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Welsh Government. The Single Integrated Plan **Caerphilly Delivers** has been prepared by the LSB and replaces a number of existing plans that were previously required, such as the Community Strategy, the Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan, and the Community Safety Plan, it represents a determined commitment by all partners to accelerate change, strengthen partnership working, multi-agency collaboration, and accountability for delivery.

2.34 **Caerphilly Delivers** has been developed based on the following principles of:

- **Sustainable development** where we promote social justice and equality of opportunity and enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits.
- **Equalities and Welsh language** where we all promote and mainstream equalities and the Welsh language in accordance with our legislative requirements and strategic equality objectives.
- **Early intervention and prevention goals** with the aim of either preventing matters from getting worse or occurring in the first place, by identifying those in greatest need from their vulnerability, their risk of becoming vulnerable or from otherwise becoming disadvantaged.
- **Community cohesion** where people from different backgrounds enjoy similar life opportunities, understand their rights and responsibilities and trust one another and are trusting of local institutions to act fairly.

2.35 In order to realise the long term Strategic Vision for the county borough, Caerphilly Delivers identifies 5 key outcomes as follows:

Prosperous Caerphilly - The LDP (1st Revision) will therefore seek to increase the economic prosperity of the people and communities of the county borough through the provision of land for employment opportunities, supported by appropriate housing (including affordable housing and homes for the elderly) and ancillary facilities and services (including community and health facilities, recreation, leisure etc). Further it will seek to facilitate the provision of a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and

protects the environment; where public transport, walking and cycling provide real travel alternatives.

Safer Caerphilly - The LDP (1st Revision) will seek to make Caerphilly County Borough a clean, green, safe and pleasant place to live and work with decent public services. It should enhance the vibrancy and diversity of local communities, in order to ensure good health and social cohesion. It will facilitate the creation of new developments, which help to enhance social cohesion so that people feel safe and secure and it will deliver high quality design that deters opportunities for crime and anti social behaviour.

Learning Caerphilly - The LDP (1st Revision) will recognise the importance of modern education facilities and the role that they play in up skilling the population. It will therefore protect existing facilities and make adequate provision for sufficient land to be released to enable the improvement of education facilities throughout the county borough.

Healthier Caerphilly - The LDP (1st Revision) will contribute to improving public health, by promoting land use developments that contribute to healthy lifestyles and well-being. The plan will make provision for a transportation network that increases the opportunities for walking and cycling and provide a policy framework for the protection and enhancement of recreation and leisure facilities to ensure that they are accessible for all.

Greener Caerphilly - The LDP (1st Revision) will protect the environment as a whole whilst balancing the need for new development with the need to conserve valuable resources. Further it will underpin all development with the principle of good design, that meets a diversity of needs; which uses resources efficiently; and which makes adequate provision for recycling and waste management and ensure that new development minimises emissions of greenhouse gases as far as is practically possible in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. Finally it will seek to ensure that resources are used efficiently making the best use of our valuable assets.

3.0 KEY LAND USE ISSUES

Introduction

3.1 In order to ensure a robust basis for the development strategy, a review has been undertaken of the social, economic and environmental data available for issues affecting the County Borough. A detailed discussion of the broad issues that are relevant to the LDP up to 2031 are outlined in the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report- 2031'.

Spatial Context

3.2 Caerphilly County Borough is located in the heart of the South East Wales Capital City Region. The county borough occupies some 28,000 ha of the Valleys area of South East Wales. It stretches over 40 kms between the coastal belt of the Cities of Cardiff and Newport in the south and the Brecon Beacons in the north, taking in the valleys of three rivers: the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw.

3.3 The county borough is well positioned within South East Wales with easy access to the M4 Corridor and so the rest of the UK. The A465 Heads of the Valleys Road runs through the extreme north of the County Borough and offers good road links to the west to Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, West Wales and Ireland, and to Ebbw Vale and the Midlands to the east.

3.4 Caerphilly's position between the Capital City of Cardiff and the Heads of the Valleys area gives it a strategic importance as a gateway to the valleys and a link between the relative wealth of the Capital, and the deprived valley communities.

3.5 The county borough and the surrounding valleys sub-region do not presently function as a connected city region, but as a loose network of settlements. There is a strategic desire to address this however through the creation of the Cardiff Capital Region supported by a Metro Transport System to improve the connectivity within the region and to other parts of the country.

Settlement Strategy

3.6 Caerphilly County Borough comprises three valleys, namely Rhymney, Sirhowy and the Lower Ebbw. The topographical constraints associated with valleys communities presents significant challenges in terms of the inter-relationship between towns and villages and the way in which they function. As a consequence there tends to be a strong north south influence.

3.7 Very few areas within the county borough are capable of being self sufficient. As a consequence, settlements within the area enjoy a close relationship with a cluster of other villages and towns.

3.8 The functional analysis of the county borough identified five Principal Towns within the county borough, namely Blackwood, Risca, Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach and Caerphilly, supported by four Local Centres at Newbridge, Rhymney, Nelson and Bedwas. These main centres perform as the principal areas for employment and retail provision and are generally where services can be accessed. Blackwood and Caerphilly are also important as sub regional centres.

3.9 The remaining settlements in the county borough are mainly residential urban areas. There are also a number of more remote valleys settlements that are rural in nature.

Healthier Caerphilly – Social Characteristics

Population

3.10 Towards the end of the 20th Century the population of the County Borough remained relatively stable. The Census indicated that there had been remarkably little variation in population between the 1981 Census at 171,700 and the 2001 Census at 169,500. However the 2011 Census indicated that the population of Caerphilly was considerably higher than had previously been estimated, at 178,806 people. This was over 5,400 higher than the LDP projections had assumed for 2011 and nearly 5,000 higher than the Welsh Government 2008 based projections indicated for 2011. Notably Caerphilly had one of the highest differences in Wales in the anticipated population (as per the MYE) and the actual Census figures.

3.11 The 2011 Census also indicated that there has been significant change in the distribution of the population within the County Borough, and significantly, the population decline in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area has generally been halted, with a slight increase in the population from 30,626 in 2001 to 31,087 in 2011.

3.12 Despite the generally held view that Britain is culturally diverse, 80.5% of the resident population indicate that they are of Welsh National Identity compared to 65.9% of residents in Wales.

3.13 In terms of the Welsh Language, 84% of the population of the county borough however indicate that they have no knowledge of the Welsh language compared to 73% overall in Wales. 8.5% of residents in the county borough indicate that they can speak, read and write Welsh compared to 14.6% in Wales (Census 2011).

Households and Housing

3.14 The number of houses required for residents has increased because of the long-term trend towards slightly smaller households, which is caused by several factors. There has been a long-term trend for families to have fewer children compared to past rates. The break up of households due to divorce, and the increasing numbers of single-parent families, has led to smaller households. There has been a significant increase in elderly households, reflecting both increased longevity and relative decline in the provision of institutional care (Office for National Statistics). It should be noted however that the household size between 2001 and 2011 did not reduce by the levels envisaged over that period.

3.15 A comparison between the 2001 and 2011 Census indicates that there has been a decline in the number of older person households compared to other household compositions, but the number of one person households not containing an older person has increased.

3.16 There has been small changes in the proportion of households where all the children are non-dependent, indicating that more children are living with their parents for longer. This is likely to indicate that there are issues with young people entering the housing market due to affordability issues.

3.17 Average house prices in the County Borough have fallen steadily since the economic downturn, with the average house price falling from £133,000 in 2008 to £97,811 in 2013. There are substantial differences in prices across the County Borough, with prices in the south of the County Borough significantly higher than in the north (Land Registry).

3.18 The Local Housing Market indicates the need for 526 affordable houses to be built per annum to meet housing need.

3.19 Welfare reform requires an increase in the provision of 1 and 2 bedroom

houses to meet the need of smaller households. At present there is a mismatch between housing supply and demand.

3.20 69.6% of households in the county borough own their own home slightly higher than the national average of 67.8%. However this is a drop from the 2001 Census when 72.6% of households in the county borough indicated that they owned their own home.

3.21 There has been a marked increase in the number of households relying on private landlord accommodation in the county borough, rising from 4.3% of households in 2001 to 9.6% in 2011 (Census).

3.22 Viability continues to be a major issue in the county borough, particularly in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area where land values are low.

Health & Well Being

3.23 Nearly a third (31%) of adults in the county borough report having a life-limiting long-term illness (compared with 27% for Wales), whilst 60% of adults aged 65 and over report that they have a life-limiting long-term illness (compared with 56% for Wales)

3.24 Life expectancy in the county borough is increasing. The average number of years a man in the county borough can expect to live healthily is 60 years, whilst a woman can expect to live healthily for 61.1 years. However, there are inequalities within the county borough. Men living in the most deprived areas can expect to live over 19 years less healthy than those in the least deprived areas; for women the difference is 17 years. (Public Health Wales Observatory, using ADDE/MYE (ONS), WIMD/WHS (WG))

3.25 The causes of health inequities are multifaceted and include lifestyle factors, e.g. smoking, alcohol intake, diet and physical activity. Wider determinants such as poverty, housing and education also play an integral part, along with access to appropriate healthcare.

Prosperous Caerphilly – Economic Characteristics

Deprivation

3.26 14 of the 110 statistical areas in Caerphilly County Borough are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011).

3.27 The highest overall concentration of deprivation in the County Borough is located in the Upper Rhymney Valley and the Upper Sirhowy Valley areas (Heads of the Valleys Regeneration area), although there are pockets of deprivation in the MID Valleys Corridor and Southern Connection Corridor (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2011).

Economic Activity

3.28 The manufacturing sector remains the largest employment sector in the County Borough with 16.2% of the workforce being employed in manufacturing compared to 10% in Wales (Census 2011). The sector remains over-represented in the County Borough when compared to Wales thereby increasing the significance of these declines to the Caerphilly economy. The sector however is in long-term decline in the UK and its significance to the Caerphilly economy in terms of employment is likely to gradually decrease over the coming years. However the structure of the manufacturing sector in Caerphilly has been changing. Those in

decline have been the traditional/basic manufacturing activities, whilst more high-value activities have been growing, particularly small and medium size operations.

3.29 The retail sector is second to manufacturing in the county borough, with 15.1% of the workforce being employed in retailing compared to 12.8% in Wales (Census 2011). The Principal Towns and Local Centres continue to perform well with relatively low vacancy rates. Footfall has remained fairly consistent within each town centre, but slight reductions have been seen throughout the recession, which is consistent with the rest of the UK. However the decline in the retail sector is clearly a cause for concern.

3.30 The outstanding natural beauty of the county borough, coupled with the intensely rural nature of many communities, makes Caerphilly an ideal place to benefit from the growth in the low-carbon economy and the increasing links between economic development, regeneration and the environment.

3.31 Only 70% of working age men (16 to 64) and 59.9% of working age women (16 to 59) are economically active in the county borough (Census 2011). 38.3 % of the economically active population are in full-time work whilst, 13.2% are in part-time work. Notably 5% of the workforce are unemployed (Census 2011).

3.32 Over 9% of the population of Caerphilly were unemployed in 2012 (higher than the 8.3% figure for Wales). Male unemployment was 9.5% and female unemployment was 8.5%. Unemployment figures for both Caerphilly and Wales were higher than the UK average (7.9%) (NOMIS 2013).

3.33 Local Planning Authorities are required by national guidance to support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development.

Transport and economic activity

3.34 In June 2012 central government announced an extension of the electrification of the railways programme to include the main line to Swansea and the valleys railways as well. Electrification of the rail lines will enable and facilitate future expansion and improvement in rail services throughout the county borough and the SE Region affording improved access to job opportunities within the region.

3.35 32,200 Caerphilly residents commute outside of the County Borough to work. Overall, there is a net out-commuting of 18,100 workers to jobs outside of Caerphilly.

3.36 The largest commuting destination is Cardiff, which accounts for over 10,900 of out-commuters, closely followed by Newport at 7,700. Cardiff is also the largest source of in-commuting, with a total of 3,300 people working in Caerphilly, closely followed by Blaenau Gwent at 2,300 and Rhondda Cynon Taf at 2,200. This shows that whilst the most obvious commuting flows between Caerphilly and Cardiff are strong, there is also a high level of lateral commuting across the Valleys. Significantly 80% of people that commute can get to work within 30 minutes. (Statistics on Commuting in Wales, 2010)

3.37 Congestion problems combined with Government policies to limit car usage and car parking as well as the growing emphasis on the environment means that access to public transport will become an increasingly important element in the viability of employment sites. Different modes of transport (private and public) as well as reliable transport links will therefore be key to the success of future employment sites.

3.38 73% of households in the County Borough have access to a motor vehicle compared to 76% of the Welsh Average (Welsh Transport Statistics 2006).

3.39 When travelling to work, 80% of residents travel by car, compared to 10% by public transport with the remainder travelling by foot or by bicycle. (Statistics on Commuting in Wales, 2010)

3.40 Travel distance to job opportunities is an important factor in determining access to employment. Two factors play a significant role, namely travel costs and public transport availability.

3.41 Rail improvements will need to continue, particularly if the Metro concept is to be implemented, as new rail routes will need to open. Continued frequency and capacity improvements will need to continue to further enhance improvements already made.

3.42 Rhymney Valley Line has been subject of major improvements to allow 4 trains per hour frequency and accommodate 4 carriage trains. Further improvements are required to increase the capacity to six carriage trains in the future

3.43 Whilst the transportation strategy for the County Borough is very much focused on measures to encourage the greater use of the public transport system, there remains parts of the county borough that also require investment in the highway infrastructure, and this is particularly the case in the Rhymney Valley which is overly reliant on the A469 for access.

Learning Caerphilly

3.44 The proportion of the Caerphilly population with no qualifications is 31.4% (Census 2011). This is a significant improvement when compared to 39.8 % in 2001 and is to be welcomed. However when compared to the Wales figure of 26% the lack of qualifications is a matter of concern.

3.45 Similarly the proportion of the Caerphilly work force qualified to degree level or equivalent (18.7%) is considerably lower than that of Wales (24.5%).

3.46 The number of schools over subscribed in terms of the school rolls has increased.

3.47 There is a need to identify land for schools for the Council's ambitious 21st Century Schools Programme.

Greener Caerphilly – Environmental Characteristic

Natural Heritage

3.48 Maintaining and enhancing the natural heritage of Caerphilly is important as it contributes to our quality of life, a healthier environment, attracts tourism and benefits the local economy. There are a variety of statutory (local, national and international) designations and non-statutory designations in the county borough. The weight to be attached to nature conservation interests is dependent on the relative significance of the designation.

3.49 Caerphilly has one European designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the County Borough, namely Aberbargoed Grasslands. This grassland area is of importance for the Molinea Meadows and Marsh Fritillary Butterfly. This area is also designated as a National Nature Reserve, the only one in the county borough.

3.50 The County Borough has 11 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific

Interest (SSSI), 6 have been designated for their biological interest and 5 for their geological interest. There are also 4 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 190 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

3.51 Furthermore, 6 Special Landscape Areas (SLA) have been designated in order to protect those areas considered to be important to the overall landscape, history, culture, biodiversity and geology of the County Borough, along with 4 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs), designated to protect the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough.

3.52 The potential loss of significant areas of woodland, forestry and individual trees in both the rural and urban environment as a result of disease poses a serious threat to the landscape and biodiversity of the county borough. A more subtle consequence would be the impact upon the soil quality and carbon sink stores, both of which have now been identified in PPW as key drivers within a development plan.

3.53 The County Borough has 16 Conservation Areas and 411 Listed buildings. There are 47 scheduled ancient monuments and 4 historic parks and gardens, whilst Gelligaer Common is a Historic Landscape.

3.54 There are 68 buildings at risk within CCBC and an additional 52 buildings that are considered vulnerable. However, buildings at risk can be restored, adapted and reused and the active promotion of these buildings as an asset should be seen as a priority and encouraged accordingly.

Air Quality

3.55 The main sources of air pollution today arise from heavy traffic flow in and around the town centres, particularly in the Caerphilly area, where there is frequent queuing and congestion. As such, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in Caerphilly Town through the Local Air Quality Management Process. The measures required to deliver tangible air quality improvements in Caerphilly are likely to involve road infrastructure changes. A second AQMA has also recently been designated at Hafodyrynys.

Waste

3.56 CCBC are currently exceeding the national targets set for recycling, which are 52% of all waste to be recycled/ composted by 2012/13. CCBC recycling rate for household waste in 2011-12 was 63.9%, for municipal recycling was 59.1% and for local authority municipal waste was 55.9%).

Minerals

3.57 Within the County Borough there are resources of coal, sand and gravel and other minerals that need to be identified and safeguarded in the LDP.

3.58 The Upper Rhymney Valley offers the most significant potential in terms of energy production within the county borough due to the presence of coal resources at Nant Llesg.

3.59 A planning application has been lodged with the Council to seek consent to mine approximately 6 million tonnes of coal from Nant Llesg Surface Mine using surface mining methods. If successful the proposed Restoration Strategy for the site will be of fundamental importance in mitigating the impact of the development in the medium to long term.

3.60 The County Borough has potential in terms of coal bed methane extraction and a considerable proportion of the county borough has been licensed. The license

has no basis in planning however and planning consent needs to be given to enable any exploration of the resource.

Land contamination

3.61 Given the industrial legacy associated with the past development and use of land there is the potential for some brownfield sites to be contaminated. Land contamination has the potential to cause significant harm to ecosystems, humans, property and pollution of controlled waters (including groundwater, lakes, ponds, coastal waters and surface watercourses) because of the presence of particular substances in, on, or under the ground. In proposing the development of brownfield land for future development, it is important to ensure that all risks associated with potential land contamination have been addressed so that the land is suitable for use.

3.62 Planning legislation and guidance places the responsibility on owners and developers to determine the extent of any contamination on their site. The Local Planning Authority's duty is to ensure that owners and developers carry out the necessary investigations and proposals for dealing with any land contamination in a responsible and effective manner.

Safer Caerphilly

Crime and Fear of Crime

3.63 The crime rate in the county borough has generally been falling year-on-year over the last 10 years and the current crime rate is at an historic low level. The crime rate fluctuates at slightly above or slightly below the crime rate in Wales, but has followed a similar trend over time. The scale of the reduction over this time is significant with 3494 (-25%) fewer victims of crime and 9970 (-49%) fewer victims of anti-social behaviour in 2012, compared to 2008.

4.0 THE STRATEGIC VISION FOR CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH

4.1 It is important that a Strategic Vision of what the County Borough should look like in fifteen/twenty years time is formulated. This has already been achieved with partners through the development of the Community Strategy and the Adopted Local Development Plan. More recently this Strategic Vision has been refined through the work undertaken by the Local Service Board in respect of the Single Integrated Plan entitled ***Caerphilly Delivers***. The overall Strategic Vision therefore reflects and draws upon this earlier work and looks ahead to 2031.

Strategic Vision for 2031

The Development Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough will capitalise on our strategic location at the heart of the Cardiff Capital Region. It will ensure that by 2031 the social and economic needs of all residents and business are met through the:

- ***Provision of a wide range and diversity of sites that will deliver high quality and appropriately located homes, jobs and services supported by modern integrated transport provision; and***
- ***Sustainable regeneration of the historic environment and our unique towns and villages.***

Access to the surrounding countryside and our natural environment will be exploited where appropriate, and will complement the provision of a strategic network of recreation, leisure and community facilities that: are easy to access; encourage healthy active lifestyles; and promote the well being of residents and visitors alike.

4.2 In order to achieve the 5 key outcomes identified in Caerphilly Delivers, the LDP translates the Strategic Vision into a series of social, economic and environmental objectives. These objectives are at the centre of the LDP and will form the basis for future policy development.

Key Aims and Objectives

4.3 The Key Aims of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031 are therefore to:

- A. Protect the environment as a whole whilst balancing the need for development with the need to conserve valuable resources.
- B. Ensure that new development minimises emissions of greenhouse gases as far as is practically possible in order to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- C. Underpin all development with the principle of good design that meets a diversity of needs; which uses resources efficiently; and which makes adequate provision for recycling and waste management.
- D. Make Caerphilly County Borough a clean, green, safe and pleasant place to live and work with decent public services.

- E. Enhance the vibrancy and diversity of local communities, in order to ensure good health and social cohesion.
- F. Ensure equal opportunities for all to proposed and existing facilities and services within and outside the County Borough.
- G. Provide a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and protects the environment; where public transport, walking and cycling provide real travel alternatives.
- H. Increase the economic prosperity of the people and communities of the County Borough through the provision of land for employment opportunities, supported by appropriate housing, ancillary facilities and services (including community and health facilities, recreation, leisure etc).
- I. Contribute to improving public health, by promoting land use developments that contribute to healthy lifestyles and well-being.
- J. Use resources efficiently making the best use of our assets.
- K. Improve education facilities to 'up skill' the population.
- L. Promote Caerphilly County Borough as an area with a distinctive identity and as an area in its own right.
- M. Facilitate the creation of new developments that help to enhance social cohesion so that people feel safe and secure.
- N. Deliver high quality design that deters opportunities for crime and anti social behaviour
- O. Promote the Principal Towns and Local Centres as hubs of enterprise through the provision of land for new commercial and mixed-use development to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of these important centres.
- P. Encourage the sensitive restoration and redevelopment of important historic assets that contribute to the rich urban fabric of the county borough and which serve to define the unique sense of place of individual towns and villages.
- Q. Facilitate the development of modern, well-designed, accessible and affordable housing that meets the needs of all sections of the community through the identification of appropriate land for housing in sustainable locations.

4.4 Each of the **Key Objectives** outlined below contribute to the achievement of one or more of the aims of the Plan and also serve to realise the Vision.

1. Accommodate sustainable levels of population growth (Objectives A, B, C, H, M, and Q)
2. Ensure that the County Borough is well served by accessible public open space and accessible natural green space. (Objectives A, C, E I and H)

3. Ensure the effective and efficient use of natural and built resources while preventing the unnecessary sterilisation of finite resources through inappropriate development. (Objectives A, C, J, and P)
4. Ensure that the environmental impact of all new development is minimised. (Objectives A, B, C and J)
5. Improve energy, waste and water efficiency while promoting environmentally acceptable renewable energy to maintain a cleaner environment and help reduce our impact on climate change. (Objectives A, B, C, D and J)
6. Encourage waste management based on a hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recovery (including material recycling, energy recovery and composting) and safe disposal. (Objectives A, C, D and J)
7. Encourage the re-use and / or reclamation of appropriate brownfield and contaminated land and prevent the incidence of further contamination and dereliction. (Objectives A and D)
8. Concentrate new development in appropriate locations along existing and proposed infrastructure networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and to public transport in order to sustain and complement the role and function of individual settlements. (Objectives A and G)
9. Ensure an adequate and appropriate range of housing sites are available across the County Borough in the most suitable locations to meet the housing requirements of all sections of the population. (Objectives C, E, I, M, N and Q)
10. Ensure that all new development is well designed and has regard for its surroundings in order to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur. (Objectives C, D, M and N)
11. Identify, protect and, where appropriate enhance, valuable landscapes and landscape features and protect them from unacceptable development. (Objectives A, D and J)
12. Identify, protect and enhance sites of nature conservation and earth science interest and ensure the biodiversity of the County Borough is enhanced. (Objectives A, D and J)
13. Create appropriate new landscape and ecological features and habitats as an integral part of new development wherever appropriate. (Objectives A and J)
14. Manage, protect and enhance the quality and quantity of the water environment and reduce water consumption. (Objectives A, C and D)
15. Reduce the impact of flooding by ensuring that highly vulnerable development is directed away from areas of risk wherever possible. (Objectives A and C)
16. Reduce congestion by minimising the need to travel, promoting more sustainable modes of transport and making the most efficient use of existing transport infrastructure. (Objectives B, D, F, G and H)
17. Capitalise on Caerphilly's strategic position further developing its role as a commercial and employment centre in the heart of the Cardiff Capital Region with strong links to the Heads of the Valleys area and as the smart alternative for locating development to Cardiff and Newport. (Objectives C, D, G, H, K and O)

18. Provide and protect a diverse portfolio of employment land for a variety of employment uses, focusing in particular on higher value employment opportunities and sites to meet local need, including waste management facilities. (Objectives C, D and H)
19. Encourage the development of high quality, all season tourist attractions and tourist accommodation that complements the natural and built environment of the County Borough. (Objectives B, E, G, I, L, M, O and P)
20. Maximise the efficient use of the existing infrastructure and encourage the necessary improvements to the network to sustain necessary levels of development at appropriate locations across the County Borough. (Objectives A, B, D and G)
21. Protect and provide a wide range of community and health facilities which are appropriately located and easily accessible, and which meet the needs of all sections of the population. (Objectives D, E, F, G, H, I, L M and N)
22. Maintain the vitality, viability and character of the County Borough's town and village centres and re-establish them as a focus for economic activity and community pride. (Objectives D, E and O)
23. Maintain, enhance and develop a hierarchy of town and village centres which are easily accessible, and which meet the needs of all sections of the population. (Objectives D, E and O)
24. Protect and enhance the overall quality of the historic natural and built environment of the County Borough. (Objectives A, E, L, P and Q)

5.0 THE PREFERRED STRATEGY

Introduction

5.1 An important feature of the development plan process is the emphasis on identifying and testing realistic strategy options to deliver the Vision and Objectives of the plan over the plan period. As the Council already has an adopted LDP the existing Development Strategy for the county borough has been assessed alongside alternative strategies in order to determine whether or not it remains appropriate within the context of up to date National and Regional Policy and Guidance and having regard to the changing regional context for development.

5.2 The Adopted LDP Strategy (1) has therefore been tested against four alternative spatial options (2 to 5) as follows:

- **Spatial Option 1:** Continuation of the Adopted LDP Preferred Strategy
- **Spatial Option 2:** Targeting Growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area
- **Spatial Option 3:** Targeting Growth to the Northern Connections Corridor
- **Spatial Option 4:** Targeting Growth to the Southern Connections Corridor (Caerphilly Basin)
- **Spatial Option 5:** Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connection Corridors.

5.3 The five alternative spatial options provide clearly different spatial development scenarios in respect of future new housing and employment development; each of which will have different environmental, social and economic outcomes for Caerphilly County Borough up to 2031. Therefore each of the strategy options have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in order to determine which would deliver the most sustainable outcome. **The Assessment of the Alternative LDP Strategies** forms part of the SA/SEA and is available separately. However for ease of reference a summary of the findings is contained in Section 9.0.

5.4 Many of the component parts of the spatial options will be common to each of the strategies, specifically the future direction for the Principal Towns and Local Centers, the need for the school rationalisation process to be reflected and the need to ensure that the strategic infrastructure to support any new development is fit for purpose.

5.5 In particular all options considered the Council's need for improvements to the strategic transportation infrastructure, in particular the:

- Opportunities to maximise the use of public transport to improve connectivity throughout the county borough;
- Opportunities for the reopening of rail lines, specifically: the Caerphilly Machen / Newport rail line; and the proposed passenger service on the Cwmbargoed line to Dowlais;
- Provision of new stations, in particular at Crumlin/Nelson;
- Improvements to the rail network to improve frequency;

- An increased provision of Park & Ride where practicable in particular at Ystrad Mynach and Llanbradach.

5.6 In terms of the Strategic Highway infrastructure there is a need to consider the need, or otherwise for:

- A strategic highway corridor for the Upper Rhymney Valley to link New Tredegar and Pontlottyn;
- A Maesycwmmer Bypass; and
- A SE Bypass for Caerphilly.

5.7 What follows is the Preferred Strategy for the LDP up to 2031. This represents a combination of the best elements of the alternative strategies discussed in **Background Paper 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy** (August 2014). This paper sets out the alternative scenarios that have been considered in consultation with partner organisations and key stakeholders through the review process to date in respect of levels of: A) Population & Household Growth, B) Employment Growth and Alternative Spatial Options for the distribution of development sites that arise from the consideration of A and B.

5.8 The Preferred Strategy is therefore based on:

- The functional analysis that has been undertaken of the county borough as part of the review;
- Identification of key trends from the existing and emerging evidence base;
- Consideration of alternative population and household growth scenarios;
- Consideration of different employment growth scenarios;
- Feedback from the consultation with partner organisations and key stakeholders as an integral part of the review process;
- Consideration of the cumulative impact of development on infrastructure;
- Consideration of the issues raised through the annual monitoring of the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021;
- Availability of land proposed for development;
- SA/SEA Scoping exercise and consequent assessment of Alternative Strategic Options;
- Consideration of neighbouring local planning authorities development strategies; and
- Consideration of the up to date evidence base.

5.9 Having regard to the above the following are considered to be the most desirable, realistic and robust options to be used to underpin the Preferred Strategy for the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (First Revision) up to 2031:

- Population & Household Growth Scenario M – Moderate Average Household Size Change and SE Wales Migration (10 years) (**Agreed by a resolution of Council 07.10.2014**);
- Employment Growth Scenario 1 - Historic Land Take-Up (**Refer to BR 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy, August 2014**); and

- Spatial Option 5: Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connection Corridors (*Refer to BR 2: Development of Alternative Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy, August 2014*).

5.9 In combination, these options provide for a strategy that promotes a moderate level of population and household growth together with an appropriate level of economic development. It promotes a balance between: small scale organic expansion of existing urban settlements serving to sustain Local Centres and services, and contributes to regeneration initiatives throughout the county borough; with larger scale mixed-use developments targeted to key transportation and growth corridors, that expand the extent of the Principal Towns, and that are of a sufficient size to facilitate new and improved infrastructure provision to support the planned level of growth and effectively link the county borough to the Cardiff Capital Region. By targeting development to a limited number of growth corridors this will prevent the proliferation of larger developments in the open countryside and limit pressure on other environmentally sensitive areas.

5.10 The Preferred Strategy is henceforth referred to as: **The Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy** (strategy). The strategy will identify key areas of change and of protection, which will deliver the aims and objectives of the Strategic Vision up to 2031.

5.11 An integral part of this Strategy is an emphasis on the development of sustainable and appropriate roles for each settlement that will provide the context for managing the scale and type of development that will be permitted in different locations.

5.12 Within the County Borough there are very few settlements that are capable of being self sufficient in terms of comprising an adequate range and mix of land uses. As a consequence most settlements enjoy a close relationship with a network of other villages and towns in order to provide the range of services that are needed to sustain them.

5.13 In order to understand this relationship a functional analysis¹ of the County Borough has been undertaken as an integral part of the review process based on five broad geographical areas:

1. Upper Rhymney Valley – incorporating Bargoed
2. Mid Valleys West
3. Mid Valleys East
4. Lower Sirhowy Valley and
5. Caerphilly Basin

5.14 Whilst this functional analysis has informed all Strategy Options it is particularly pertinent to the **Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy**, with the role and function of each settlement being a significant consideration in the identification of sites for new development.

5.15 It is important that the roles and functions of settlements throughout the county borough are considered not only in terms of their location within the County Borough but also in terms of their relationship to the wider area and in particular the Cardiff Capital Region.

¹ BR 1: Functional Analysis Caerphilly County Borough April 2014

5.16 The Wales Spatial Plan divided SE Wales (broadly the Cardiff Capital Region) into two spatial zones based on their functionality. Specifically the **Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area**, comprising the Upper Rhymney Valley and Upper Sirhowy Valley and the **Connections Corridor**, which extended to the remainder of the county borough.

5.17 The Adopted LDP further distinguished the Connections Corridor by dividing the area into the **Northern** Connections Corridor (Mid Valleys East and Mid Valleys West) and the **Southern** Connections Corridor (Caerphilly Basin and Lower Islwyn) where the influence of Cardiff and Newport is much more marked. The updated functional analysis of the area confirms that this division remains valid to inform the review of the plan.

5.18 The three broad strategy areas are thus defined as follows:

- **THE HEADS OF THE VALLEYS REGENERATION AREA (HOVRA)**
- **THE NORTHERN CONNECTIONS CORRIDOR (NCC)**
- **THE SOUTHERN CONNECTIONS CORRIDOR (SCC)**

5.19 As a consequence of comments made at the LDP Focus Group Meeting on the 4 November 2014, the strategy areas are to be renamed as follows:

- **THE HEADS OF THE VALLEYS REGENERATION AREA (HOVRA)**
- **THE MID VALLEYS CORRIDOR (MVC)**
- **THE SOUTHERN CONNECTIONS CORRIDOR (SCC) – Caerphilly Basin & Lower Islwyn**

NOTE: The geographical extent of each of the strategy areas is illustrated in the Key Diagram in Section 6.0.

Key Components: The Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy

5.20 Ten component parts form the Development Strategy and underpin the Strategy Policies. They are to:

- A. Target development to reflect the role and function of individual settlements;
- B. Target new development to the Northern Connections Corridor and the Southern Connections Corridor;
- C. Allow for the urban expansion of settlements within the Northern Connections Corridor and the Southern Connections Corridor on greenfield sites;
- D. Improve the strategic highway infrastructure within the Southern Connections Corridor through the development of the first phase of a south east bypass for Caerphilly Town;
- E. Explore opportunities to improve the strategic rail network to facilitate the reopening of the Caerphilly-Machen-Newport disused rail line;
- F. Reallocate suitable surplus employment sites for housing use across the Northern Connections Corridor;
- G. Reduce the scale and number of new housing allocations in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area to more closely align with market activities and market demand;

- H. Exploit opportunities afforded by the Valleys Regional Park and identify sites that are suitable for tourism;
- I. Minimise the impact of development on the countryside in the Southern Connections Corridor whilst allowing for appropriate planned levels of growth;
- J. Reduce the impact of development on the countryside in the HOVRA and the NCC.

Role and Function of Settlements

5.21 Within each strategy area there is an existing network of urban and rural settlements that are centered on a Principal town or conurbation, which acts as the hub for enterprise and activity. A number of Local Centres and a network of primarily residential urban areas support each of the Principal Towns.

5.22 For the purpose of the LDP the Principal Towns are: Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach, Blackwood, Caerphilly and Risca, with Blackwood and Caerphilly elevated to sub-regional status.

5.23 These Principal Towns are all strategically important. They are capable of supporting countywide services and facilities that are required to meet the wide and diverse social, economic and community needs of the resident and working population of the town, the surrounding Local Centres and residential areas. Importantly, they also serve to shape the unique identity of the area, its distinctive sense of place and act as a catalyst for investment into the area.

5.24 This strategy will establish a highly connected sustainable urban network of Principal Towns and Local Centres that are vibrant, accessible and safe and which contribute to the economic prosperity of the County Borough and the overall quality of life for residents. The emphasis in the Principal Towns will be on developing them as a focus for economic activity whilst ensuring that their vitality and viability is strengthened. The strategy will achieve this through the identification of land for a diverse variety of services, facilities and uses that complement the unique selling point of each of the Principal Towns.

5.25 There are also a number of important Local Centres within the county borough, namely: Rhymney, Nelson, Newbridge and Bedwas which are generally smaller and not as strategically significant but nevertheless perform a wider role than serving local needs. They have a valuable role, providing a range of local services and facilities that meet the day-to-day needs of residents. The emphasis in these areas will be on sustaining and diversifying the existing facilities to reinforce their importance as a Local Centre. The Strategy will also serve to improve the connectivity of these Local Centres to the Principal Towns and to a wider population with a view to sustaining and enhancing their role into the future.

5.26 All other towns and villages within settlement limits are referred to as primarily residential areas, although it is important to note that these areas will also contain other complementary local facilities such as schools and local shops within them and often some local employment as well, so that they should not be seen as 'just' housing areas. The emphasis within residential areas will be on: small scale expansion; retaining their distinct identity; providing a choice of house types; increasing connectivity to the Principal Towns, Local Centres and to the Cardiff Capital Region and maintaining and creating attractive well connected sustainable communities where people will want to live.

5.27 Rural Villages and Hamlets are located in the open countryside and are outside of defined settlement boundaries. As a general principle these areas will not be subject of further expansion. Furthermore, within these areas, there will be a general presumption against new residential development. Infilling or minor extensions may be acceptable if it can be shown that there is a local need for affordable housing or for housing associated with rural enterprise. New building in the open countryside away from existing villages and hamlets will continue to be strictly controlled.

5.28 In order for this network of urban settlements to function effectively, provision needs to be made to ensure that adequate social, physical and green infrastructure is available to support the education, leisure and health needs of the people that live in them, and to ensure that there is good connectivity between where people work, live and relax. In particular, the strategy will make provision for a strategic network of new and improved leisure and education facilities that have excellent connectivity to the communities that they serve, are fit for the 21st Century, and it will ensure that appropriate land is identified and/or safeguarded to enable adequate provision to be made.

Areas of Significant Change

5.29 This strategy promotes new development in particular housing and employment throughout the county borough but targets significant new development proposals to the Mid Valleys Corridor and the Southern Connections Corridor in particular. Housing sites are identified in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area but are scaled to reflect market demand.

5.30 The emphasis is on balancing the need for small scale organic expansion of existing urban settlements throughout the county borough to serve and sustain Local Centres and services, and the contribution such expansion would have in respect of regeneration initiatives; with the need for larger scale expansions of mixed-use developments that are targeted to key transportation and growth corridors within the Mid Valleys Corridor and the Southern Connections Corridor to meet the housing and employment needs of the population up to 2031.

5.31 The scale of the proposals to be targeted at each of the strategy areas will be based on an appraisal of the ability of the area to accommodate further growth having regard to the existing social and physical capacity of the area, the presence of environmental constraints, and the extent to which development can provide, or compensate for necessary social or physical infrastructure.

5.32 Having regard for the above, two strategic sites are proposed, one focused on the MVC along the A472 strategic highway corridor at Maesycwmmmer and one focused on the rail network resulting in a south east expansion of Caerphilly Town in the SCC. These sites will be of a sufficient size to facilitate new and improved infrastructure provision to support the proposed level of growth planned.

5.33 By targeting development to a limited number of growth corridors this will prevent the proliferation of larger developments in the open countryside throughout the county borough and limit pressure on other environmentally sensitive areas.

5.34 The Mid Valleys Corridor broadly corresponds with a corridor along the line of the A472. It has attracted substantial private and public sector investment and has transformed in recent years, giving confidence that a strategy based on growth in this area is viable and is likely to be effective to the benefit of the whole county borough.

5.35 Within the MVC the urban expansion of existing towns and centres will be targeted at mainly greenfield sites. Where greenfield sites are to be released this is considered necessary to diversify the existing housing stock, release land for economic development purposes in particular for SMEs and new office development and to make the area more attractive for future inward investment.

5.36 The Southern Connections Corridor comprises Caerphilly Basin in the west and Lower Islwyn in the east. Both areas experience significant development pressure given their proximity to Cardiff, Newport and the M4 corridor. Caerphilly Town is only 17 minutes by train from the centre of Cardiff. This is an extremely important economic advantage that the strategy will exploit. Within the SCC (Caerphilly Basin) the strategy will facilitate the release of appropriate brownfield sites close to the town centre and the rail network for redevelopment. Further it will improve the deliverability of those sites by releasing appropriate greenfield land to unlock their development potential. Where the deliverability of the site cannot be guaranteed within the plan period, the site will not be allocated.

Strategic Transportation Network

5.37 As a general principle development will be directed to locations that offer a choice of transportation. Particular importance will be placed on ensuring that development both supports and where necessary contributes towards the development of a modern integrated transport system in the county borough. The strategy therefore promotes development proposals that will improve the connectivity of the area within the Cardiff Capital Region, increases the ability of people to travel to work by public transport (in particular rail), and alleviates problems on the strategic road network.

5.38 Whilst the strategy is very much focused on measures to encourage the greater use of the public transport system, there remain parts of the county borough that also require investment in the highway infrastructure, and this is particularly the case in:

- the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area where there is a pressing need to increase the resilience of the area to the impact of disruption caused by the closure of sections of the A469;
- Maesycwmmmer which remains a traffic pinch point on the main A472 strategic highway route between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach; and
- the Caerphilly Basin where there is a pressing need to make specific improvements to the strategic network, to ease congestion and alleviate air pollution in the town.

Strategic Road Network

5.39 The strategy identifies the need to implement the final section of the strategic highway network in the HOVRA between New Tredegar and Pontlottyn, in order to realise a long-term ambition to provide a modern road network that meets the needs of business, residents and visitors and which would complete the high quality route between the Caerphilly Northern Bypass and the Heads of the Valleys Road.

5.40 The provision of a first class road and public transport network is key to the economic success of the MVC. The A472 forms the main east-west highway along the southern edge of the MVC. From Newbridge to Blackwood the road is dual carriageway, as is the A469 between Ystrad Mynach and Caerphilly. However the

single carriageway through Maseycwmmmer continues to act as a constraint to the overall flow of traffic using the network. There is a continuing need to ensure that the strategic road network is upgraded to ensure ease of movement between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach and the strategic rail network, and thus to the wider Cardiff Capital region. The strategy therefore identifies the need to address the traffic pinch point along the A472 at Maesycwmmmer through the provision of either on line improvements or through a new road provided as an integral part of the Strategic Development Site at Maesycwmmmer.

5.41 The strategy provides for a moderate level of housing growth over the plan period. This growth will lead to increases in traffic on the transport network, which will have implications, particularly in the southern connections corridor. There will be a need therefore for improvements to be undertaken to the strategic network in order to increase the capacity of the network and to alleviate the cumulative impact of new development in terms of both congestion and on air quality.

5.42 Road and rail links to Cardiff are particularly important as they serve not only local movements but also the massive commuter flows from further north in the Rhymney Valley. The need to facilitate travel patterns within Caerphilly Town Centre must be tempered by environmental considerations, particularly in respect of air quality standards. A sustainable transport system for Caerphilly which includes the provision of the first phase of a south east bypass as an integral part of the Strategic Development Site in Caerphilly, and capacity improvements along the existing network will ensure that travel patterns are accommodated whilst air quality within the built up area is improved.

Strategic Rail Network

5.43 Improvement to the existing transport infrastructure in the HOVRA continues apace including the provision of the new park & ride facilities and a new bus / rail interchange at Bargoed. The Rhymney Park and Ride is completed, whilst the final stages of the Rhymney Valley Line frequency enhancements are underway with the development of a passing loop at Tirphil. Together these improvements represent a significant step forward in encouraging residents of the HOVRA to shift their mode of transport from the private car to the train. Equally important, this investment in the transportation network provides improved access to job opportunities for residents living in the HOVRA.

5.44 Further improvements are now required in the MVC. There is a need for the strategy to build on the success of the Ebbw Valley Line and safeguard land for the provision of a new station at Crumlin. The establishment of this station would benefit the main employment site at Oakdale Business Park making it more accessible by rail. In addition as Ystrad Mynach is increasingly becoming a strategic hub for public services there is increasing pressure on the park and ride facilities. There is a need therefore to explore the opportunities to increase the park & ride provision at Ystrad Mynach Station.

5.45 Caerphilly has the second highest out-migration level in South Wales, with over 15,000 net car-borne out-movements each day. The majority of the out-migration is south to Cardiff and Newport. Measures therefore need to be identified to increase the number of commuting trips using sustainable modes, rather than the car. The strategic sites at Caerphilly and Maesycwmmmer both have potential to be served by train. Maesycwmmmer is in close proximity to three train stations, namely Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach and Llanbradach, whilst the strategic site in Caerphilly is directly adjacent to Caerphilly Station. There is a pressing need to ensure that the

opportunities to increase park & ride provision, particularly in Llanbradach are pursued to ensure that residents of these sites are able to commute by train.

5.46 Opportunities for the reopening of rail lines, specifically: the Caerphilly Machen / Newport rail line; and a passenger service on the Cwmbargoed line to Dowlais also need to be explored.

5.47 The Cwmbargoed line, whilst operating as a freight line for the Ffos-y-Fran mineral extraction works, remains as the last significant rail line within the county borough that does not have passenger services. The Cwmbargoed line links Nelson to the Principal Town of Ystrad Mynach and the services on the Rhymney Valley Line. The reinstatement of this line for passenger services and the provision of a rail halt at Nelson would facilitate movements to and from Nelson and would make the proposed mixed-use site at Ty Du more accessible to the region.

5.48 The Caerphilly Machen / Newport rail line will be safeguarded for the future provision of a passenger rail line.

5.49 The improved connectivity that will be delivered through these policy interventions and in particular: electrification of the Valleys Lines, capacity improvements throughout the network and the provision of new passenger lines will build on the successes achieved to date including the reopening of the Ebbw Valley Line, the provision of the new halt and park & ride facilities at Newbridge and Energlyn and the improved park & ride provision at Ystrad Mynach, Pengam, Rhymney and Caerphilly.

Walking/Cycling

5.50 A key factor in delivering more sustainable transport is realising a significant increase in the number of shorter trips by walking and cycling. The County Borough has a significant network of footpaths and has an excellent network of local and national cyclepaths. The provision of high quality strategic and local network of dedicated routes for these modes is an essential element in realising this growth. The Strategy will therefore protect and safeguard those routes that contribute to this strategic network and will identify new routes to expand existing provision.

Housing Development

5.51 One of the most basic and important requirements of residents is a home, and land for housing is one of the most significant, and often contentious land uses that have to be allocated in the LDP. The issues of population and housing are thus fundamental to the Plan.

5.52 The aim of the Strategy is to allow for a moderate level of population and housing growth up to 2031, to retain people within the area and attract new people of working age to live and work in the county borough. This approach is considered appropriate as it would not be acceptable to plan for a declining, ageing population, as this would adversely impact on the ability of the area to sustain services, facilities and economic growth. The aim therefore is to increase the 2011 level of population from 178,800 people to 192,250 by 2031. The strategy therefore makes provision for the development of 12,000 new homes in the plan period, 1,200 of which will need to be affordable.

5.53 In identifying sites to accommodate this level of growth regard has been had to the existing housing land supply, which takes into account information in respect of housing commitments, allowances for windfall sites, small sites, empty properties, demolitions and conversions. The Strategy therefore makes provision for the release of an additional 232 hectares of land for housing development up to 2031.

5.54 A large number of potential development sites have been identified through the Candidate Site process. (The Candidate Site Register lists the 177 sites that have been considered as part of the review process). Interested parties, landowners and developers, have proposed approximately 600 hectares of land that could potentially meet the housing objectives of the strategy. Appendix 2 provides a schedule of these sites whilst Appendix 3 provides an indication of the likely spatial distribution of potential development sites to meet the preferred strategy and indicates those sites from the Adopted LDP that will be retained in the LDP. As part of the consultation on the strategy, further assessment work will be undertaken on the acceptability, or otherwise, of all of the sites listed in terms of both their individual impact and the potential cumulative impact of a different combination of sites, on the environment and on the existing and proposed infrastructure of the area.

Economic Development

5.55 The economic needs of residents and business are recognised in the strategy, which seeks the development of a strong and diverse economy; that generates quality, well-paid jobs, and addresses problems of economic inactivity and social deprivation.

5.56 A review of socio-economic data² has raised some areas of concern that the strategy needs to address. Specifically that Caerphilly county borough has:

- Several areas of intense local deprivation, notably in eastern Caerphilly Town, Bargoed and within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area;
- A low proportion of local residents qualified to degree level and a comparatively high proportion of people with no qualifications;
- Low proportions of people who work in professional and associate professional occupations;
- A strong dependence on public sector employment (30% of the workforce); and
- A high commuting rate with 46% of working residents commuting out of Caerphilly county borough for work, compared to the Wales average of 30%.

5.57 Of note however is that, notwithstanding the general decline in manufacturing the county borough retains a strong local manufacturing sector and retail sector, with 22.9 % of the working population employed in manufacturing and 14.9% in retail.

5.58 The county borough also has a high proportion of small and medium sized VAT registered businesses operating in the area, with some 4,195 businesses in 2013. Most of those businesses employ less than ten employees (79.3 percent). A large proportion of local businesses are in the construction and manufacturing sectors.

5.59 The strategy recognises that the employment market is a dynamic and changing sector and that modern businesses and developers want easily developable, accessible and usually prominent sites for their premises. A healthy property market needs to provide a mix of options including land for speculative developments; design and build schemes, and freehold plots for owner-occupiers to self-build. The LDP will therefore identify an appropriate range and choice of sites

² Employment Sites Supply and Market Appraisal Caerphilly County Borough Council , June 2014

for new build and protect existing employment areas throughout the county borough (as appropriate) to encourage innovation and diversity in the employment sector.

5.60 The county borough has a significant oversupply of employment land and premises, however a number of estates /sites are no longer appropriate to meet modern needs by virtue of their poor quality, size or poor location. Further a number of estates/sites are not served sufficiently by the modern infrastructure that is demanded by modern business, such as excellent connectivity to the road and rail network or access to superfast broadband. As an integral part of the review process therefore all existing estates and allocated sites for employment use have been reassessed to ensure that they are suitable for their proposed use. Where they remain suitable, the strategy will protect them to ensure their continued important contribution to providing accessible sources of employment throughout the county borough.

5.61 The Principal Towns and Local Centres also make an important and significant contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the area. They account for significant employment opportunities for local residents, provide accessible local services and are a focus of community activity. Thriving and vibrant town centres are essential if the county borough is to achieve its ambition of building a strong and sustainable local economy. Retail, commercial, office and tourism development opportunities are therefore identified in order to broaden the range of uses and thus increase footfall.

Natural Heritage

5.62 The natural heritage covers the geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value of the environment. It is a valuable natural resource providing many of our basic needs, such as clean air, water, food, raw materials, recreation and economic activity. Whilst the natural heritage is extremely vulnerable it is also under significant pressure from development. The plan recognises this and designates special landscape areas to protect those areas that are considered to be of local landscape value and that are therefore worthy of protection, and sites of importance for nature conservation that are sites of substantive nature conservation value.

5.63 However the strategy is required to strike an appropriate balance between the need to protect the environment with the need to provide for sufficient land for social needs (i.e. housing, community and leisure facilities) and economic needs (i.e. provision of jobs through economic development) over the plan period. In identifying appropriate urban expansion sites in the MVC and SCC the level of potential harm to the natural heritage will be assessed, taking into account mitigation, compensatory and restoration measures.

5.64 Minerals underlie the majority of the county borough, and the Council aims to balance the need to conserve the distinctive features and characteristics of the natural heritage with the need to safeguard nationally important mineral resources. Proposals for mineral working will be subject to national policy tests as set out in Minerals Planning Policy Wales and Minerals Technical Advice Notes.

Valleys Regional Park

5.65 The strategy recognises that in addition to the intrinsic value of the natural environment, there is an opportunity to exploit the potential of these assets to improve the economic prosperity and health inequalities throughout the area. The County Borough has a significant network of country parks and countryside recreation facilities and there is an increasing recognition and momentum building to develop the valleys as a tourist destination as an integral part of the Cardiff Capital

Region. The Strategy will therefore protect and safeguard those sites that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park and will identify sites that can be developed to provide complementary facilities that increase the attractiveness of the area to visitors further.

Energy

5.66 The strategy recognises that coal resources remain particularly in the HOVRA that are capable of future extraction. In order to ensure that coal resources capable of extraction by surface mining methods are not sterilised by new development, they will be safeguarded in the LDP. It is important to note that this does not indicate an acceptance of working in the future.

5.67 The strategy seeks to encourage renewable energy schemes but recognises the inherent conflict between permitting such schemes, in particular wind turbines and the desire to protect areas of recognised environmental, cultural or landscape importance. It therefore identifies Local Areas of Search for the provision of renewable energy wind schemes to indicate where there would be a general presumption in their favour subject to usual planning considerations.

6 STRATEGY POLICIES

6.1 The Strategy Policies are the vehicle for delivering the overarching development strategy over the plan period. They indicate the general provision to be made for housing, employment, retail and transport; define the settlement strategy and the road hierarchy and indicate where policies for restraint will be appropriate to meet the aims and objectives of the plan up to 2031.

Development Strategy - Development in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

SP1 Proposals in the Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area will be required to:

A Promote the north of the County Borough as a good quality residential, employment and tourist area at the heart of the Valleys Regional Park;

B Focus development on both brownfield and greenfield sites to enhance the social and economic functions of the area;

C Provide appropriate forms of growth in response to the specific role and function of individual settlements;

D Ensure that there is safe, effective and efficient access to the Cardiff Capital Region by all modes of transport;

E Capitalise on the economic opportunities offered by new technologies and the ongoing regeneration of the Principal Town of Bargoed;

F Serve to address existing problems of deprivation in order to sustain and develop communities in a manner that is consistent with the underlying principles of sustainable development.

Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connections Corridor

SP2 Proposals in the Northern Connections Corridor will be required to:

A Focus development on both brownfield and greenfield sites to enhance the social and economic functions of the area;

B Deliver the proposed level of managed growth for the area whilst having regard for, and positively impacting on, the existing communities within the area;

C Make the most efficient and effective use of the existing infrastructure and make adequate provision for new infrastructure as necessary to facilitate development;

D Reduce car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel and links to the Cardiff Capital Region Metro;

F Capitalise on the economic opportunities offered by Oakdale / Penyfan Plateau and the Principal Towns of Ystrad Mynach and Blackwood.

Development Strategy - Development in the Southern Connections Corridor

SP3 Development proposals in the Southern Connections Corridor will:

A Capitalise on the excellent public transport links to and within the Cardiff Capital Region in order to reduce the need to travel by car and promote more sustainable modes of transport;

B Deliver the proposed level of managed growth for the area whilst having regard for, and positively impacting on, the existing communities within the area;

D Make the most efficient and effective use of the existing infrastructure and make adequate provision for new infrastructure as necessary to facilitate development;

E Capitalise on the economic opportunities offered by the Principal Towns of Caerphilly and Risca and its strategic location within the Cardiff Capital Region;

F Capitalise on the tourism and economic opportunities afforded by Caerphilly Castle and Cwmcarn Forest Drive;

G Protect the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development.

Settlement Boundaries

SP4 The Plan defines settlement boundaries in order to:

A Define the area within which development would normally be allowed, taking into account material planning considerations;

B Promote the full and effective use of urban land and thus concentrate development within settlements;

C Prevent the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development and fragmented development;

D Prevent inappropriate development in the countryside.

Local Identity

SP5 The Plan identifies Green Wedges between settlements where the open nature of the area serves to maintain the integrity and identity of individual villages and where development would otherwise result in their coalescence.

Settlement Strategy

SP6 The Council will support existing settlements, which will be enhanced based on their role and function in the settlement strategy:

Sub Regional Principal Towns:

- Bargoed (HOVRA)
- Blackwood (NCC)

Principal Towns:

- Ystrad Mynach (NCC)
- Caerphilly (SCC)
- Risca / Pontymister (SCC)

Local Centres:

- Rhymney (HOVRA)
- Nelson (NCC)
- Newbridge (NCC)
- Bedwas (SCC)

Residential Settlements:

- All other villages within defined settlement boundaries

Rural Villages:

- Villages and Hamlets within the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries

Areas of Significant Change: Strategic sites to deliver planned growth

SP7 The Council will support the planned growth of Caerphilly Town in the Southern Connections Corridor and Maesycwmmmer in the Northern Connections Corridor through the development of the following strategic sites:

NCC1 Gwernau Ganol and Gwerna Fawr Farm, Maesycwmmmer - a housing based scheme of approximately 1700 homes with associated community and leisure uses (including a primary school) focused on an upgraded A472 transport corridor;

SCC1 Former Ness Tar Plant and Adjoining Land – a mixed-use town centre scheme of approximately 450 homes, 3 hectares of employment land with associated community and leisure provision, accessed by a new link road, focused on the Caerphilly Transport Interchange.

Strategic Sites will be required to be of a high quality and sustainable design and will need to be integrated and make a positive contribution to its host settlement. Full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features is required to be demonstrated and implemented through a masterplanning exercise. New infrastructure needed to support the development is to be provided as an integral part of the development and will be critical to ensure the successful integration of the site into the wider area.

Retail Hierarchy

SP8 The Council will support development proposals that reinforce the importance of the Retail Hierarchy as follows:

Towns

- **Sub Regional Town Centre**
 - **Retail Warehouse Parks**
- **Principal Town**
- **Local Centre**

Proposals for retail and commercial development within the defined Town Centres will be required to demonstrate that they:

- A. Contribute to its unique sense of identity;
- B. Complement the specific role and function of the Centre in question;
- C. Improve the attractiveness of the Centre.

Outside of these Town Centres, proposals for new retail development (including on Retail Warehouse Parks) will be subject to an assessment of need and to an application of the sequential test.

Place Making

SP9 Development proposals should contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features through:

- A An appropriate mix of uses that reflect the role and function of settlements;
- B A high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness;
- C Design in accordance with best practice in terms of designing out crime;
- D A location and layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles and provides full, easy and safe access for all;
- E The incorporation of resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation, and where appropriate the use of sustainable drainage systems;
- F The efficient use of land, including higher densities where development is close to key transport nodes;
- G The incorporation and enhancement of existing natural heritage features;
- H The incorporation of mitigation measures that improve and maintain air quality.

SP10 Built Heritage

The rich heritage and identity of Caerphilly County Borough will be preserved and enhanced by the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they will not cause harm or have a detrimental impact on the following :

- A Listed Buildings and their setting;
- B Conservation Areas and their setting;
- C Local distinctiveness of settlements;
- D Townscape character;
- F Historic and cultural features of acknowledged importance.

Planning Obligations

SP11 The Council will seek to secure Planning Obligations (S106 Agreements) where they are necessary to remove obstacles to planned development and are critical to the delivery of the site, meet local needs and make development more sustainable. Such obligations will include:

- A Infrastructure for walking, cycling, public transport, parking to link development schemes to the strategic transport network;
- B Strategic highway improvements necessary to make the development acceptable in highway and planning terms;
- C On site school and ancillary facilities generated by the development proposal;
- D Flood defence measures required to mitigate the risk of flooding;
- F On site formal and informal open and leisure space;
- G Affordable housing.

Community Infrastructure Levy

SP12 Development proposals throughout the county borough will be required to contribute toward the provision of strategic infrastructure to support the development of the county borough as a whole, in line with the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

Renewable Energy: Local Areas of Search

SP13 Local Areas of Search are identified for the provision of renewable energy wind schemes. Within these Local Areas for Search there will be a general presumption in favour of development provided there is no adverse impact on areas of recognised environmental, cultural or landscape importance. Development proposals outside of the Local Areas of Search will not be permitted.

Minerals Safeguarding

SP14 The Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of minerals by:

- A Safeguarding known resources of coal, sand and gravel and hard rock
- B Maintaining a minimum 10-year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national guidance

Waste Management

SP15 The Council will implement a sustainable, integrated approach to waste management, which minimises the production of waste and its impact on the environment, and maximises the use of unavoidable waste as a resource. To assist in this all allocated and protected class B2 industrial sites are designated as potentially suitable locations for new in-building waste management facilities.

Conservation of Natural Heritage

SP16 The Council will protect, conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage of the County Borough in the consideration of all development proposals within both the rural and built environment.

Countryside Recreation

SP17 Access to opportunities for enjoyment of the County Borough will be promoted and encouraged where the proposals are sustainable in terms of its impact on the natural heritage, the local community and the rural environment within which they are located.

Development of the Valleys Regional Park

SP18 Development proposals that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park will be permitted provided that there is no adverse impact on areas of recognised environmental or landscape importance.

Protection of Strategic Leisure Network

SP19 The Council will protect important networks of public open space, natural green space and recreational facilities from inappropriate development.

Health and Well Being

SP20 The Council will safeguard suitable land for the development of community, leisure and education facilities in order to ensure that an adequate network of provision can be made at accessible locations across the County Borough to contribute to the health, educational attainment, social care and well being of residents over the Plan period

Total Housing Requirements

SP21 The Council has made provision for the development of up to 13,200 new dwellings in the County Borough between 2006 and 2021 in order to deliver the 12,000 new dwellings required to meet the moderate growth strategy. This over provision allows for flexibility and choice.

Affordable Housing Target

SP22 The Council will seek to deliver through the planning system at least 1200 affordable dwellings between 2011 and 2031 in order to contribute to balanced and sustainable communities

Managing Employment Growth

SP23 The Council has made provision for the development of 55 ha of employment land in the County Borough up to 2031 to meet the identified need for 29 ha. This over allocation is to allow for flexibility and choice. This requirement will be met principally through the development of a diverse range of employment sites located on identified Business Parks and Industrial Estates.

Managing Tourism Growth

SP24 The Council will seek to enhance the tourism potential of the county borough through:

- A The designation of appropriate land for tourism related development;
- B The appropriate protection of the natural and built heritage assets that provide the county borough's sense of identity and unique qualities; and
- C Improvements to the transport network as a whole to improve the connectivity of the area to the Cardiff Capital region and beyond.

Transport Infrastructure Improvement

SP25 The Council will seek to implement improvements to the existing transport infrastructure that:

- A Address social exclusion by increasing accessibility to employment, services and facilities throughout the County Borough and/or;
- B Assist in regenerating the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area through creating and improving transport links to the settlements in the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors, and/or
- C Reinforce the role and function of settlements, and/or
- D Reduce the level of traffic movements and/or congestion, within any identified air quality management area, and/or
- E Improves the connectivity of the county borough to the Cardiff Capital Region; and/or
- F Promote the most efficient use of the transport network as a whole.

Safeguarding Former Rail lines

SP28 The routes of former railwaylines that have the potential for transport related development will be safeguarded, particularly those that facilitate walking, cycling, rail freight or passenger movements.

Road Hierarchy

SP29 A road hierarchy is defined as follows:

- A The Strategic Highway Network
- B County Routes
- C Distributor Roads
- D Access Roads

SPATIAL OPTION 5: TARGETING GROWTH TO THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CONNECTION CORRIDORS

KEY DIAGRAM

KEY

- Administrative Boundary
- HOVRA
- NCC
- SCC
- Settlement Areas
- Valleys Regional Park
- Rail Stations (Existing)
- Rail Station (Proposed)
- Railway Line
- Existing Mineral Line
- Former Mineral Line
- Strategic Highway Network
- New Road/By Pass
- Principal Town
- Local Centre
- Employment
- Small Housing Expansion
- Significant Housing Expansion
- Strategic Housing Site



7.0 STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA)

7.1 The Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area (HOVRA) is characterised by the highest levels of unemployment and social deprivation in the County Borough and historically suffered from long-term population decline. One of the main aims of the adopted strategy for the HOVRA was therefore to reverse this long-term trend and to provide sufficient land to meet the housing and employment needs of residents within the area.

7.2 The 2011 Census indicates that the population within the area has increased slightly from 30,626 in 2001 to 31,087 in 2011, which would indicate that the long-term trend of population decline has indeed been halted. The Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy will need to build on this progress to ensure that this trend continues.

7.3 In recent years the HOVRA has experienced unprecedented levels of investment in its infrastructure, in particular in the transportation network and in the regeneration of the Principal Town that serves the HOVRA, namely Bargoed.

7.4 Bargoed provides a wide range of functions and services for the surrounding settlements that are not available elsewhere in the north of the County Borough. This Strategy will continue to seek to elevate the status of Bargoed within the Heads of the Valley Region and make it an attractive town for visitors from across the region to visit.

7.5 A number of initiatives have now been completed in the town centre which contribute towards this aim, including the conversion of the Hanbury Baptist Chapel into a multi purpose community asset comprising a worship space, library and resource centre; and the construction of the new development plateau within the town centre to accommodate the major town centre regeneration scheme.

7.6 The development plateau is divided into two distinct phases and its regeneration is currently transforming Bargoed. Phase 1 comprises a new Morrison food store and 6 modern retail units with an integral decked car park. This phase commenced work in 2011 and was opened on schedule in December 2013.

7.7 Phase 2 will see the delivery of a commercially viable state of the art multiplex cinema consistent with the needs of the Greater Bargoed Community and for the residents of the Upper Rhymney Valley as a whole. This Phase also incorporates a site ideally suited to A3 development that would complement the cinema. The cinema development will see the return of commercial cinema to the town after more than 30 years following the closure of the Cameo Cinema (formally the Palace Cinema) in the late 1970's. It is anticipated that this development will serve to elevate the status of Bargoed within the Heads of the Valleys Region, however further development opportunities will be identified within the town to continue the ambitious modernisation agenda into the next decade.

7.8 The Strategy will exploit and build on this significant investment and identify suitable sites for modern housing, employment and community facilities, to not only meet the role and function of individual settlements but also to continue to positively regenerate the HOVRA over the plan period.

7.9 The choice of housing in this area is particularly limited, and in some villages up to 90% of housing is pre-1914 terraced housing and generally where this figure is lower, most of the remainder is public sector housing. It is likely that the lack of choice of modern housing continues to be a major factor in the continued out-migration of younger and more affluent families from this area. In order to address this issue there is a strategic desire to allow for development opportunities that will diversify the housing stock and help to retain and attract people to the north of the County Borough. However low land values and issues of viability continue to be a significant issue for residential development schemes within the HOVRA. Therefore in order to address this issue and to encourage developers to locate in the HOVRA, there is a continued need to identify both brownfield and greenfield land for new housing within this strategy area.

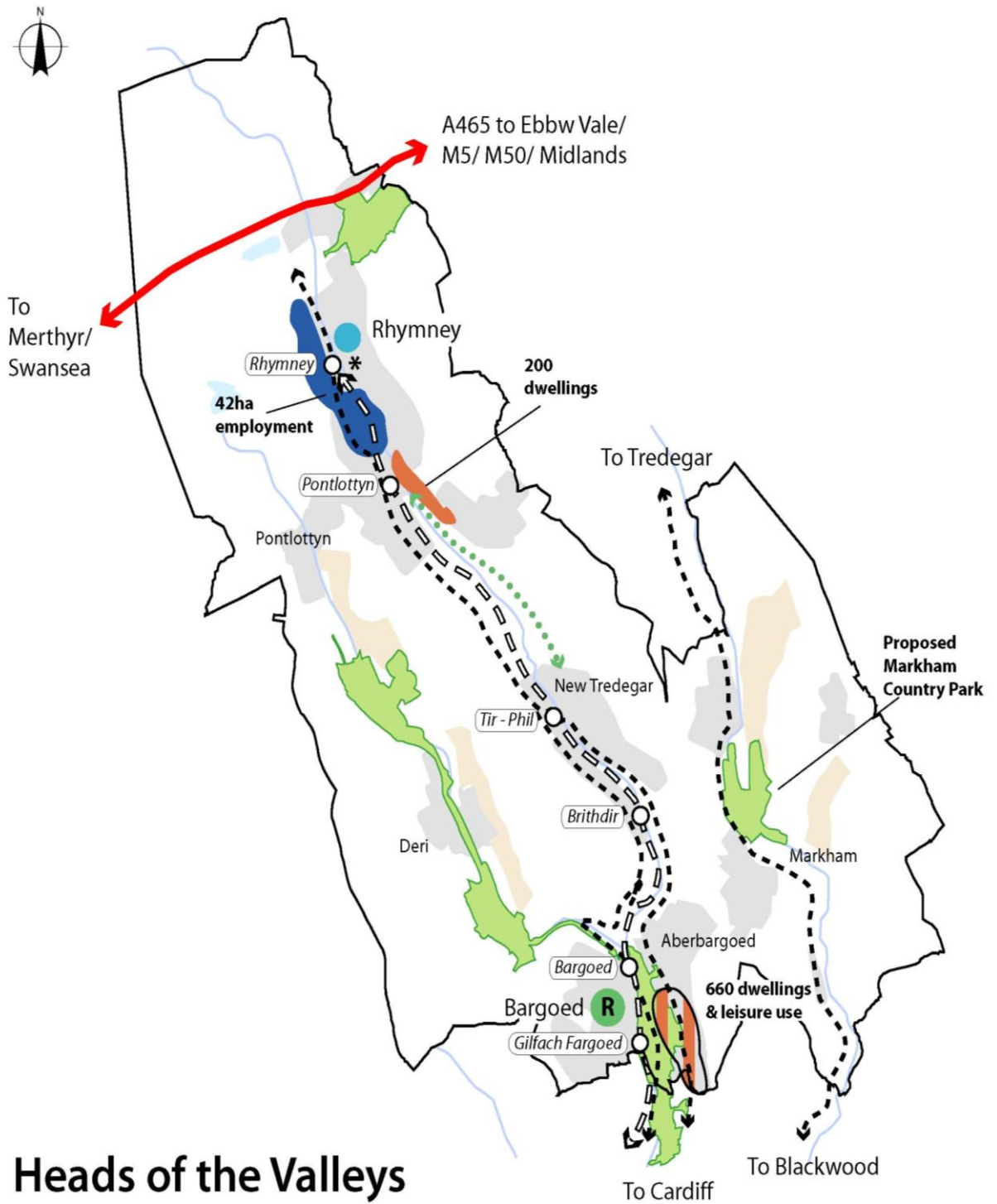
7.10 Whilst there is a significant amount of employment land within the HOVRA. There is also an identified need for the provision of small and medium sized business units to facilitate new business start ups and to accommodate the expansion needs of indigenous businesses within the area. Suitable land will be identified therefore to meet this need. The emphasis for employment sites will be on the identification of brownfield land within existing settlement limits.

7.11 Improvement to the existing transport infrastructure in the HOVRA continues apace including the provision of the new park & ride facilities and a new bus / rail interchange at Bargoed. The Rhymney Park and Ride is progressing, whilst the final stages of the Rhymney Valley Line frequency enhancements are underway with the development of a passing loop at Tirphil. Together these improvements represent a significant step forward in encouraging residents of the HOVRA to shift their mode of transport from the private car to the train. Equally important, this investment in the transportation network provides improved access to job opportunities for residents living in the HOVRA.

7.12 Whilst the transportation strategy for the County Borough is very much focused on measures to encourage the greater use of the public transport system, there remains parts of the county borough that also require investment in the highway infrastructure, and this is particularly the case in the HOVRA. Specifically, there is a pressing need to increase the resilience of the HOVRA to the impact of disruption caused by the closure of sections of the A469. The strategy identifies the need to implement the final section of the strategic highway network in the HOVRA between New Tredegar and Pontlottyn, in order to realise a long-term ambition to provide a modern road network that meets the needs of business, residents and visitors and which would complete the high quality route between the Caerphilly Northern Bypass and the Heads of the Valleys Road

7.13 As part of its ambitious school rationalisation programme the Council has plans to build a new 3-19 school with shared leisure facilities to meet the needs of school children and the residents living in the HOVRA. Appropriate land will be identified to accommodate this programme and in this regard consideration should be given to the identification of Aberbargoed Plateau.

7.14 The HOVRA's potential contribution to the Valleys Regional Park is immense. The Strategy will therefore build on the opportunities afforded by the Valleys Regional Park and identify sites that are suitable for tourism opportunities to increase the tourism offer within the HOVRA and the county borough as a whole.



Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| | Principal Town | | Existing Rail | | Existing Employment |
| | Local Centre | | Existing Station | | Country Park (VRP) |
| | Proposed Mixed Use | | Existing Park and Ride | | Settlement |
| | Proposed Housing | | A469 Resilience Programme | | Woodland |

R Bargoed Town Centre Regeneration Scheme

7.15 A large part of the area has been shown to have intrinsic landscape value and is also sensitive environmentally. As a consequence, a considerable proportion of the surrounding countryside is likely to be subject to environmental protection.

7.16 The Upper Rhymney Valley however offers the most significant potential in terms of energy production within the county borough due to the presence of coal resources at Nant Llesg and the potential of the area in terms of renewable energy generation. There is an inherent conflict therefore in terms of exploiting these resources and protecting the countryside from potentially damaging activities. The Strategy recognises this issue and the LDP will provide a robust framework to control the future exploitation of these resources in the future.

7.17 The Upper Rhymney Valley is also a principal gateway to the northern end of the county borough and is particularly prominent when viewed from the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road. The Plan will need to seek to balance the merits of exploiting energy schemes with the safeguarding of the landscape from further degradation. Due to its prominence, any proposals for development associated with energy generation will need to recognise that development must be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner.

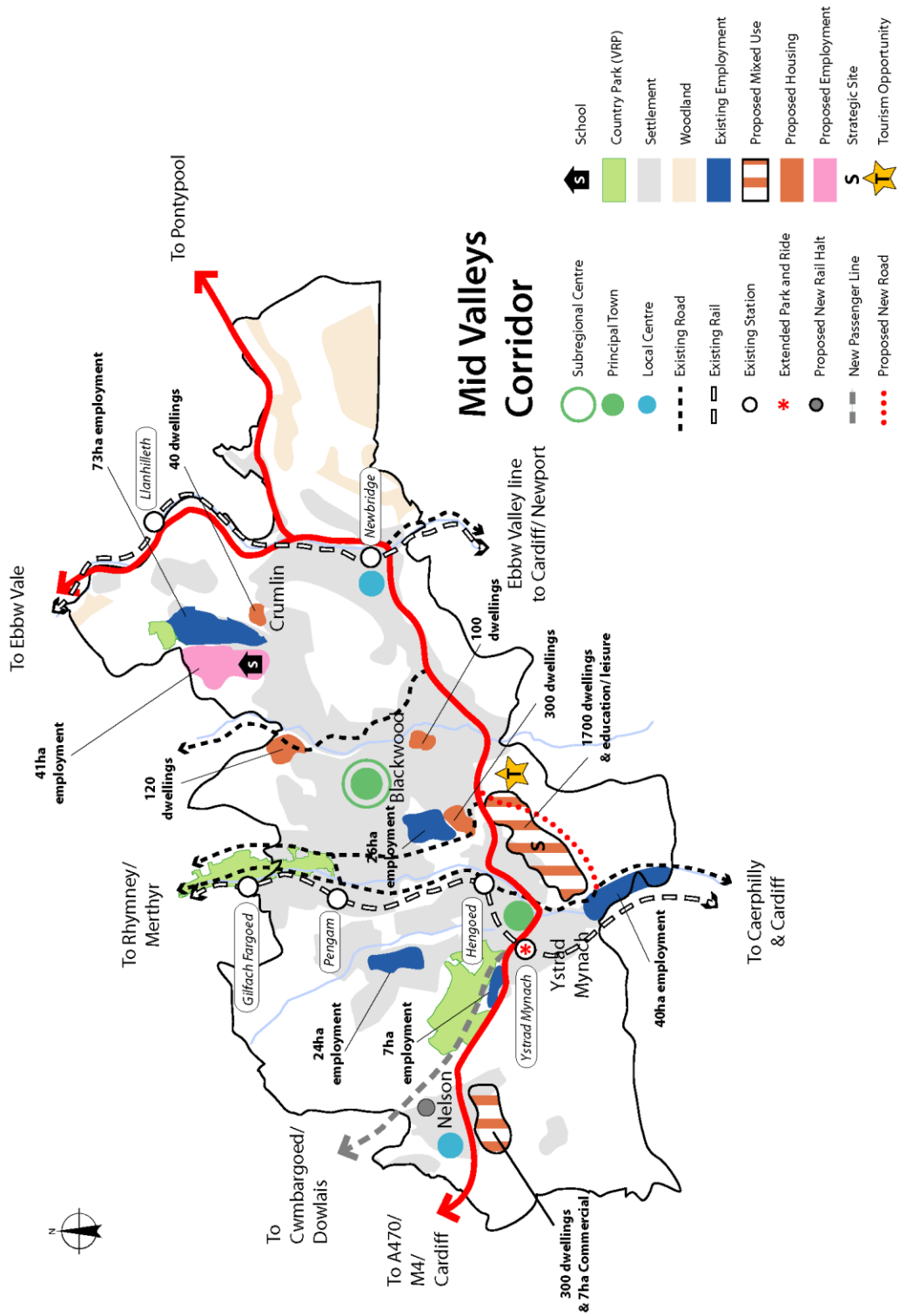
The Mid Valleys Corridor (MVC)

7.18 The Mid Valleys Corridor (MVC) comprises a contiguous area of urban development spanning the mid valleys area along the A472 corridor. The settlement pattern in this area is more like a conventional urban conurbation rather than the traditional linear settlements typical of the Valleys.

7.19 In the MVC the Strategy seeks to capitalise on the development opportunities in the Principal Towns of Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach and the economic opportunities offered by Oakdale Business Park. New development opportunities are focussed on both brownfield and greenfield sites that have good public transport links to encourage travel by sustainable modes and which make the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure.

7.20 The role of the MVC has increased in importance over the past decade as the Principal Town of Ystrad Mynach has become the location for a number of vital public services including the Council Headquarters, the Local General Hospital, The College and Ystrad Mynach Police Station and Custody Unit. The presence of all these major services means that Ystrad Mynach is a significant employment and learning centre and increasingly is becoming a strategic location for investment and growth.

7.21 The Centre for Sporting Excellence in Ystrad Mynach is the most recent high profile development in this increasingly important Principal Town. The Centre includes two 3rd Generation (3G) artificial playing surfaces to support both football & rugby, supported by an exceptional level of infrastructure. The pitches / lighting / stands / terracing and car parking are constructed to the highest standards and meet the exacting requirements of the sport's governing bodies. The centre provides many of the training requirements of elite sportsmen and women in one single venue and will serve to attract visitors to the area from all over the region. The opportunities afforded by the presence of the Centre should be seized upon and land will be identified within the town for the development of modern visitor accommodation and complementary leisure facilities.



7.22 The LDP will ensure that Ystrad Mynach continues to attract inward investment and that it exploits fully the opportunities available within the Principal Town. In this respect the LDP will identify sites that fully exploit the existing transport infrastructure and in particular the rail network and will identify land for additional park & ride facilities at Ystrad Mynach and Hengoed to maximise the potential offered by the Valleys Line Electrification.

7.23 The Cwmbargoed line, whilst operating as a freight line for the Ffos-y-Fran mineral extraction works, remains as the last significant rail line within the county borough that does not have passenger services. The Cwmbargoed line links the Local Centre of Nelson to the Principal Town of Ystrad Mynach and the services on the Rhymney Valley Line. The reinstatement of this line for passenger services would facilitate movements to and from Nelson, and would make the proposed mixed use development site at Ty Du more accessible and attractive to potential inward investors.

7.24 Blackwood is the Sub Regional Principal Town in the Mid Valleys East and continues to perform relatively well. The town contains more retail floorspace than any other town centre in the county borough, including Caerphilly. The emphasis in Blackwood will be to build on its existing strengths as an excellent sub-regional shopping centre and continue to improve the retail offer of the town. Scope exists to provide modern retail units in the heart of the town to attract good quality middle market retailers and this would enhance the appeal of the town within the region. There is also potential to develop a new role for the town as an employment centre, particularly for office development, this would increase footfall in the town centre and add to the vibrancy of the area.

7.25 The introduction of a new cinema in the southern part of town through the conversion of the former bingo hall is likely to make the town more attractive to visitors and the LDP will make provision through its policies to harness opportunities presented by this development that serve to increase the footfall in the town.

7.26 Blackwood has experienced significant levels of investment in its transport infrastructure with the development of the new bus station in the centre of town. There is a continuing need however to ensure that the strategic road network is upgraded at key locations in order to ensure ease of movement between Blackwood/Ystrad Mynach and Newbridge to afford greater and easier access to the rail network.

7.27 The provision of a first class road and public transport network is key to the economic success of the MVC. The A472 forms the main east-west highway along the southern edge of the MVC. From Newbridge to Blackwood the road is dual carriageway, as is the A469 between Ystrad Mynach and Caerphilly. However the single carriageway through Maseycwmmmer continues to act as a constraint to the overall flow of traffic using the network. There is a continuing need to ensure that the strategic road network is upgraded to ensure ease of movement between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach and the strategic rail network, and thus to the wider Cardiff Capital region. The strategy therefore identifies the need to address the traffic pinch point along the A472 at Maseycwmmmer through the provision of either on line improvements or through a new road.

7.28 It is appropriate that provision for economic growth be paralleled by provision for an appropriate level of house building in the MVC. However this must be tempered by the fact that the employment areas in the MVC provide employment opportunities for people from across the county borough, particularly residents of HOVRA.

7.29 One of two strategic sites is therefore proposed for Maesycwmmmer. Focused on the MVC along the A472 strategic highway corridor this site will be of a sufficient size to facilitate new and improved infrastructure provision to support the proposed level of growth planned. By targeting development to a limited number of growth corridors this will prevent the proliferation of larger developments in the open countryside throughout the county borough and limit pressure on other environmentally sensitive areas.

7.30 The plan also makes provision for new housing to expand the extent of Greater Blackwood, to reflect the town's status as a Sub Regional Principal Town and to further diversify the housing stock and tenure of the area.

7.31 The plan will also need to set targets for the provision of affordable housing based on a robust assessment of viability, this was previously set at 10% of housing in the Newbridge area and 25% in the rest of the Mid Valleys Corridor area. However the current economic climate means that viability is an issue on some sites with significant abnormal costs within the MVC. There will therefore be a need to reconsider the level of affordable housing provision to be sought within this strategy area. However if further greenfield land is released the issue of viability will be alleviated to some extent.

7.32 The supply of land and properties for employment purposes within the MVC is of significance for the wider area, and in particular, in realising one of the main regional functions of the MVC of offering much needed employment opportunities to residents in the HOVRA. The LDP will continue to target new employment growth to the MVC. Significant land remains available within the MVC for employment at Ty Du, Nelson and Oakdale Business Park. Both of these sites are in public ownership and are actively being promoted. An enlarged Ty Du is to be promoted as a mixed-use site.

7.33 The success of Oakdale Business Park (one of the largest industrial plateaux in South Wales) is critical in terms of ensuring economic prosperity for residents for the County Borough. However there has been a disappointing take up of employment land at Oakdale Business Park to date. Permission has been granted for 2 wind turbines on Plateau 1 and General Dynamics have obtained permission for an extension of their premises to provide a Demonstration Track & Media Centre at Plateau 2 ensuring the future of the business and securing 800 jobs. Consideration will need to be given to the appropriateness of the continued allocation of Plateau 3 for employment given the significant over supply of employment land within the county borough and within the South East Wales area more generally. More generally, consideration should also be given to the release of surplus employment land for alternative uses throughout this strategy area.

7.34 The 21st Century Schools programme is critical to the Council's strategic approach to education provision, particularly with regard to the delivery of the necessary infrastructure on the ground. There is an urgent need to identify a suitable site within the MVC on which to locate a new English medium secondary school to facilitate the Council's Secondary Rationalisation Process. An opportunity exists to

consider the provision of shared leisure facilities as part of this provision to meet the needs of the students, school children and the residents living in the MVC. Oakdale Plateau 3 is the Council's preferred site.

The Southern Connections Corridor (SCC)

7.35 The Southern Connections Corridor comprises Caerphilly Basin in the west and Lower Islwyn in the east. Both areas experience significant development pressure given their proximity to Cardiff, Newport and the M4 corridor.

Caerphilly Basin

7.36 The connectivity of Caerphilly Town via the rail network to the Cardiff Capital Region is of huge significance. Caerphilly is only 17 minutes by train from the centre of Cardiff, which is an extremely important economic advantage that the strategy will seek to exploit.

7.37 Caerphilly Basin remains under extreme pressure for development arising from the growth in the M4 Corridor and has limited capacity for development without causing environmental harm. To date the consolidation of development within settlement limits in the SCC has been extremely successful and instrumental in securing the remediation of a number of significant areas of contaminated and/or brownfield sites for redevelopment. Most notable are the developments at Castlegate, the Gas Works Site and Caerphilly Miners Hospital for residential use.

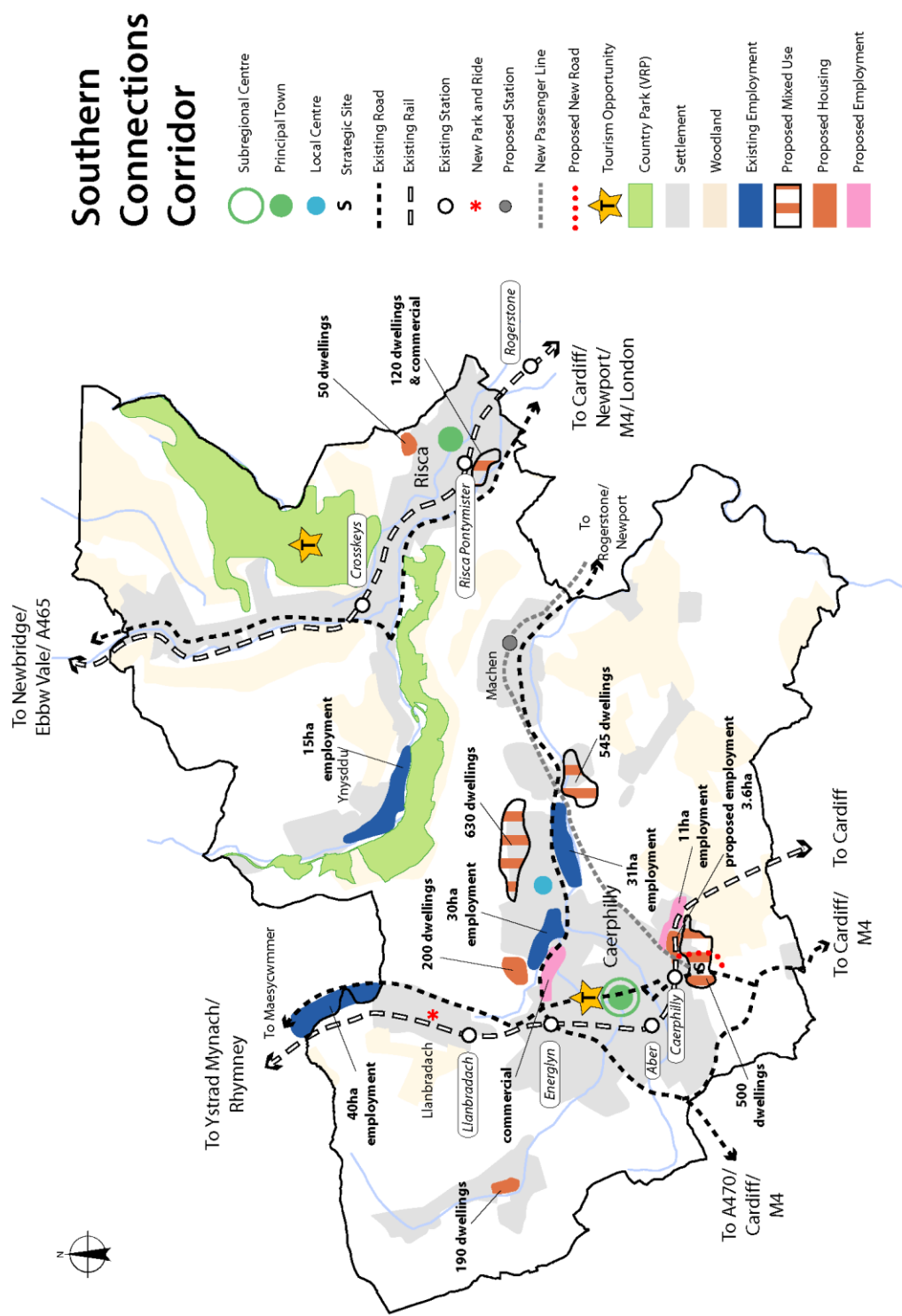
7.38 There are three significant brownfield sites remaining in the Caerphilly Basin that are available for redevelopment, namely: Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas (23ha); Ness Tar (12ha); and Waterloo Works (17ha). However the ongoing challenging economic climate means that even within the Caerphilly Basin viability is an issue in terms of bringing forward these difficult and expensive brownfield sites for development.

7.39 Within Caerphilly Basin the strategy will therefore facilitate the release of appropriate brownfield sites close to the town centre and the rail network for redevelopment. Specifically it will improve the deliverability of those sites by releasing appropriate greenfield land, where necessary, to unlock their development potential. Where the deliverability of the site cannot be guaranteed within the plan period, the site will not be allocated, or relied on for housing delivery.

7.40 In recognition of market realities and the very real need to release housing in an area of extreme housing pressure, one of two strategic sites is therefore proposed for Caerphilly Town. This will be focused on a large brownfield site, namely Ness Tar Plant together with adjacent greenfield land next to Caerphilly Train Station. The release of this site will result in the south-east expansion of Caerphilly Town. This site will be of a sufficient size to facilitate new and improved infrastructure provision, not least appropriate leisure provision and the provision of the first phase of a south-east bypass, to support the proposed level of growth planned. By targeting development to a limited number of strategic sites this will prevent the proliferation of larger developments in the open countryside throughout the county borough and limit pressure on other highly valued and sensitive sites in the Caerphilly Basin.

7.41 Caerphilly Basin does not provide sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of all sectors of society. The plan will need to set targets for the provision of affordable housing based on a robust assessment of viability, this was previously set at 40% in the Caerphilly Basin (excluding the Aber Valley) and 10% in the Aber

Valley and in the Lower Islwyn parts of the Southern Connections Corridor. However the current economic climate means that viability is an issue on some sites with significant abnormal costs within the SCC. There will therefore be a need to reconsider the level of affordable housing provision to be sought within this area.



7.42 Whilst there is a significant amount of employment land within the County Borough. There is also an identified need for the provision of small and medium sized business units to facilitate new business start ups and to accommodate the expansion needs of indigenous businesses within the Caerphilly Basin. Suitable land will be identified therefore within the SCC to meet this need. The emphasis for employment sites will be on the identification of brownfield land within existing settlement limits in the first instance, however greenfield sites will be identified where they offer better connectivity to the rail network and are likely to secure inward investment.

7.43 Caerphilly is the Principal Town in the Caerphilly Basin and it plays an important subregional role in relation to shopping, employment, leisure and tourism. The new St David's 2 development in Cardiff, which opened in October 2009, has had a very strong impact on Caerphilly, significantly reducing its catchment as consumers are being attracted to the new Cardiff development at the expense of Caerphilly Town. Caerphilly needs to counteract the falling comparison goods market potential by encouraging more premium retailers into the town and improve the attractiveness of the centre. Commercial development opportunities to provide modern retail units/offices within Caerphilly Town Centre will therefore be identified in order to reinforce the town centre, increase the footfall within the town and importantly enhance its importance as a retail and employment hub. There is also increasing pressure to reconsider the designation of Gallagher Retail Park to the north of the town as a Retail Warehouse Park, and the future designation of this area will be reconsidered through the review process.

7.44 Caerphilly Town is home to the impressive Caerphilly Castle, which means that the area has significant potential for tourism. The Castle was built towards the end of the 13th century and it survives today as a national landmark. It is second in size in Britain only to Windsor Castle and is frequently used in television series such as Merlin and Dr Who. The additional expenditure that tourist visitors bring to Caerphilly creates positive benefits for the town's retailers and catering operators. Given the significant tourism potential of the town, there is scope to further exploit opportunities that enhance the tourism offer of the town and which would increase the attractiveness of Caerphilly Town as a destination in its own right. Opportunities for new commercial leisure provision will therefore be identified, and in particular proposals that increase the amount of dwell time within the town will be explored.

7.45 Given the proximity of the area to Cardiff, Caerphilly Town is an attractive base for people visiting the capital city. The town has a number of budget hotels and local guest houses, however there is the potential for additional visitor accommodation to be provided within the heart of the town, where there is good connectivity to the rail network and thus to Cardiff and the wider region. There is an opportunity to use the impressive castle and its environs as a unique selling point for the locality and the strategy will therefore promote the redevelopment of parts of the town for new visitor accommodation.

7.46 Whilst the transportation strategy for the County Borough is very much focused on measures to encourage the greater use of the public transport system, there remains parts of the county borough that also require investment in the highway infrastructure, and this is particularly the case in Caerphilly Basin where

there is a pressing need to make specific improvements to the strategic network, to increase capacity, ease congestion and alleviate air pollution.

7.47 Road and rail links to Cardiff are particularly important as they serve not only local movements but also the massive commuter flows from further north in the Rhymney Valley. The need to facilitate travel patterns within Caerphilly Town Centre must be tempered by environmental considerations, particularly in respect of the impact of commuting patterns on congestion in the town and on air quality standards. A sustainable transport system for Caerphilly must ensure that travel patterns are accommodated whilst air quality within the built up area is improved. The Council have prepared a Draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) that considers options to improve air quality within the town. As part of the AQAP, various options are considered, one of which is the potential impact of a bypass. Initial feasibility work to determine the potential alignment for a future south-east bypass for Caerphilly has been undertaken and there is now a need to facilitate its provision through the development of the strategic site at the former Ness Tar Plant.

7.48 The route of the disused railway line between Caerphilly, Machen and Newport is largely in tact and an opportunity exists to explore the potential for the reintroduction of a passenger line along this route. The reinstatement of this line would offer the potential in the long term to locate new development alongside a new transport corridor and increase connectivity to the wider Cardiff Capital Region, however this is likely to be beyond the current plan period. The strategy will also identify land for additional park & ride facilities at Llanbradach to maximise the potential offered by the Valleys Line Electrification and explore the opportunity for the relocation of the railway halt to maximise its accessibility.

7.49 As part of its ambitious School Rationalisation Plan, the Council is developing the former St Ilan Comprehensive site in Caerphilly as an exciting new Welsh medium school. This will form part of an overall strategy to develop a 3-16 campus with many shared facilities on the site, with the opportunity to offer some post-16 provision as well. An opportunity also exists to improve the leisure offer in the SCC through the development of leisure facilities to meet the needs of students, school children and the residents living in the Caerphilly Basin.

7.50 A large part of the Basin has intrinsic landscape value and is also sensitive environmentally. As a consequence, a considerable proportion of the surrounding countryside is likely to be subject to environmental protection.

Risca Town

7.51 Risca/Pontymister, hereafter referred to as Risca is the main centre for services in the Lower Islwyn Area and is therefore designated as the Principal Town for this part of the SCC. Risca is only 25 minutes by train from the centre of Cardiff and 30 minutes by bus from the centre of Newport affording excellent access to the M4 corridor and the national rail network. This is an extremely important economic advantage that the plan will exploit.

7.52 The commercial function of the area has the potential to be overshadowed by its close proximity to Newport and to some extent Blackwood. Improvements to the retail provision in the shopping centre are therefore needed to ensure that the town continues to cater for the needs of its resident population over the plan period. This has been achieved, in part, with the redevelopment of the former Foundry Site as a superstore and through the conversion of the Palace Cinema in the heart of town,

which now contains a retail use as well as the town's library and Customer First centre. There is scope to modernise the town further and increase the footfall in the town through the redevelopment of town centre sites for office, retail and leisure use, encouraging greater use of the town by workers and visitors in the area. This will serve to elevate the status of Risca within the SCC.

7.53 The consolidation of development within settlement limits in the SCC has been instrumental in securing the remediation of a number of significant areas of contaminated and/or brownfield sites for redevelopment. Most notable in the Lower Islwyn Area is the land west of the A467 and Afon Ebbw (former South Celynen Colliery site) for residential use and the new retail stores in the form of a large Tesco extra on the former Foundry Site and a small food store as part of the Palace Cinema redevelopment scheme in the Town Centre.

7.54 Within Lower Islwyn there are a number of significant brownfield opportunities remaining, which are fundamental to the regeneration of the Principal Town, in particular the Suflux, Rowecord and the Birds Sites. National Resource Wales are undertaking a flood consequence assessment for the River Ebbw with a view to implementing a flood alleviation scheme, which it is anticipated will serve to unlock the development potential of a number of important brownfield sites in this town. There will be a need however to reassess all available brownfield sites in order to ensure that they are deliverable over the plan period. Where the deliverability of the site cannot be guaranteed within the plan period, it will not be allocated in the revised plan.

7.55 The natural setting of the town and the nearby riverside, offers the potential for Risca to become one of the most attractive towns in the county borough. By taking advantage of redevelopment opportunities, particularly along the river frontage, the town could also develop an enhanced employment role as a rail-oriented location for small and medium sized office-based businesses. The identification of sites for new residential development will also seek to diversify and enhance the range of housing available in the area and make the area a more popular residential location.

7.56 The opening of the Ebbw Valley passenger line has improved the connectivity of the area to the Cardiff Capital Region. There is an opportunity to increase the connectivity of the area further through the provision of a passenger service to Newport on the Ebbw Valley Line. This improved connectivity, coupled with the existing tourism attractions in the locality at Cwmcarn Forest Drive, Sirhowy Country Park and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, offers significant potential to attract visitors into the area. There is the potential for new visitor accommodation to be provided within the heart of the town, where there is good connectivity to the rail network and thus to Cardiff and the wider region and where there is an opportunity to exploit the proximity of the town to Cwmcarn Forest Drive as a unique selling point for the locality.

7.57 A large part of Lower Islwyn has intrinsic landscape value and is also sensitive environmentally. As a consequence, a considerable proportion of the surrounding countryside is likely to be subject to environmental protection.

8 CROSS BOUNDARY ISSUES

8.1 In December 2011, South East Wales Regional Partnership Board comprising the Leaders of the ten local authorities in SE Wales asked the Directors of Environment and Regeneration to establish a task and finish group to research, critically evaluate and advise on the essential requirements to establish its vision for ***South East Wales: a thriving region, visible internationally and distinctively Welsh.***

8.2 As an integral part of this work the South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration Group (SEWDERG) have sought to co-ordinate and build upon existing work in order to ensure that the best use is made of finite resources. In many ways, South East Wales is already operating as a city region, albeit not formally constituted as such. There is a high degree of interdependence and cooperation between the local authorities and a proven track record of working closely together through regional working groups such as South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta), South East Wales Regional Housing Forum (Sewrhf), South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (Sewspg) and South East Wales Economic Forum (Sewef).

8.3 The publication of the SE Wales Regional Strategic Framework entitled *Delivering a Future with Prosperity*, represents a critical stage in regional working, and as well as taking forward the collaborative agenda of the local authorities, it sets out priorities to complement and support key Welsh Government policies and initiatives, for example in relation to tackling poverty, implementing regeneration initiatives, securing economic development, effective planning, affordable housing, efficient and accessible transport and excellent connectivity in its widest sense.

8.4 There already exists a significant body of evidence for strategic planning within SE Wales, as considerable work has already been undertaken to inform existing and emerging Local Development Plans. In 2013/14, Sewspg with the support of Welsh Government Planning Improvement Fund gathered into one report the existing key evidence for the region to:

- Aid a common understanding of the evidence base;
- Highlight existing gaps and/or deficiencies in the evidence base in order to inform the future development of a regional planning framework; and
- Facilitate a professional dialogue regarding the most appropriate methodologies to be used in plan preparation in the future.

The report outlined:

Section A: The Development Strategies underpinning existing LDPs and thus those areas targeted for growth or consolidation;

Section B: Population & Housing

Population and Household Projections;

Housing Land Supply;

Gypsy and Traveller needs and provision;

Section C: Employment Land Supply; and

Section D: Retail Hierarchy

8.5 The report did not consider transport issues as it was considered that the regional transport issues had been adequately addressed by Sewta through the regional transport work.

8.6 Usefully a single plan for the region was also prepared, which collates all of the authorities Local Development Plans Proposals Maps for the region into one and which highlights clearly the extent of the successful collaborative work undertaken on local development plans within the region to date.

8.7 The Sewspg report highlights the key strategic planning issues that have clear cross-boundary implications.

8.8 For the purposes of the review of the LDP the following strategic matters have been identified as key cross boundary issues: levels of population and household growth, transportation strategy, economic development strategy (including retail); waste; flood risk and the delivery of strategic infrastructure are matters that need to be considered by neighbouring local authorities. Furthermore there is a need to ensure that environmental protection policies are consistent with neighbouring areas.

8.9 The Council has undertaken extensive dialogue with local planning authorities in the wider region to progress its LDP. This work is necessary to ensure that the development strategy that underpins the revised LDP:

- can be delivered having regard to other strategies within the region;
- does not undermine neighbouring local planning authority strategies but complements them;
- makes the most efficient use of finite resources, in particular land and infrastructure; and
- protects those parts of the natural and built environment that are valued for their intrinsic value, not just within the county borough but within the wider regional context.

8.10 Importantly this work will also demonstrate at the Examination that the local planning authority has sought to effectively work with its neighbouring authorities to meet the relevant tests of soundness regarding cross-boundary matters.

8.11 Whilst there is a pressing need to carry out this work for the Draft Preferred Strategy, further collaborative working at a regional level will be necessary in the future to inform the revised Deposit LDP. This work is likely to be ongoing throughout the subsequent stages of plan review.

8.12 Appendix 4 provides a short summary of the development strategies that underpin the local development plans of neighbouring local authorities.

POTENTIAL ISSUES ARISING FOR NEIGHBOURING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES FROM THE PREFERRED STRATEGY

8.13 There appears to be general agreement that the proposed level of population and household growth for Caerphilly up to 2031 appears reasonable as a basis for consultation.

8.14 The most significant cross boundary issue highlighted by neighbouring local planning authorities was transport. Specifically the need to ensure that any new proposals can maximise sustainable transport options for commuting trips.

8.15 The proposed strategic sites are well related to rail stations. Ness Tar is adjacent to Caerphilly rail station and is also at the Caerphilly end of the Caerphilly-Machen-Newport line, which the council is seeking to use for passenger services. Newport indicated that the freight line is safeguarded within their development plan but the re-introduction of a passenger line has yet to be identified.

8.16 The Maesycwmmer site is within easy walking distance of Hengoed station and is less than a mile from Ystrad Mynach park and Ride and the proposed Llanbradach Park & Ride, there is a desire to ensure that people living in this area are encouraged as an integral part of the design and layout of this site to use public transport.

8.17 It was recognised by all local planning authorities that people have a choice in terms of where they live and work and that there will inevitably be a need for people to commute to work. The population is highly mobile and Caerphilly County Borough has the second highest rate of out-commuting in Wales, after Vale of Glamorgan. Caerphilly is a large net exporter of labour to Cardiff and Newport as well as to the adjacent local authority areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and Merthyr Tydfil.

8.18 In seeking to address the issue of commuting, key interventions will be the provision of additional rail stations and the increased provision of Park & Ride at existing stations.

8.19 To stem growing levels of traffic into Cardiff the City Council intend to operate gateways on the main routes into the city to slow the influx of traffic into Cardiff resulting in waiting and queuing at junctions. This will have significant implications for people travelling into Cardiff from Caerphilly on the A470. The Deposit LDP will consider allocating Park and Ride solutions on the border with Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff to manage this issue sustainably.

8.20 The rail network and access to it for passengers is a key cross boundary issue in respect of Newport and Merthyr. Specifically the reintroduction of the Caerphilly-Machen-Newport line to passengers and the Ystrad Mynach to Dowlais Top freight line to passengers. The Caerphilly LDP safeguards both routes for future use. The introduction of new stations in Crumlin and Pye Corner (in Newport) with the provision of a direct rail link from Lower Islwyn to Newport is also a key cross boundary issue.

8.21 There was recognition that Caerphilly and the wider region has a significant over-supply of employment land and there is a need to rationalise this. The strategy therefore seeks to reduce the over allocation and proposes the reallocation of some of the employment land in Caerphilly county borough for alternative uses.

8.22 All authorities identified gypsy and traveller accommodation as an issue that needs to be considered at a regional level, specifically in respect of transit sites. Further work needs to be undertaken with neighbouring authorities as an integral part of the gypsy and traveller assessment that needs to be undertaken as part of the local housing market assessment.

8.23 Strategic flood risk matters are of key concern to Newport. Specifically the need to ensure that any flood alleviation schemes and mitigation measures to unlock development sites within Lower Islwyn, and specifically Risca / Pontymister do not result in detriment downstream in Newport. The council is therefore working closely with both Newport City Council and Natural Resource Wales to address this issue.

8.24 Project Gwyrdd is a partnership between Caerphilly, Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan. The combined municipal waste of the five authorities makes up 40% of the total municipal waste for Wales. Project Gwyrdd is committed to looking for the best environmental, cost effective and practical solution for waste after recycling and composting has been maximised in each area. The five authorities have been working closely together for a number of years and a new state of the art facility has been constructed in Cardiff to meet the identified needs within the area.

8.25 A similar consortium approach is being used to identify a site within the Heads of the Valleys to deal with food and garden waste under the Heads of the Valleys Organics Project to serve the needs of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen. A new site will need to be identified within the HOV for the plan period.

8.26 There are a number of cross boundary issues in respect of the natural environment that will be addressed through the plan. Specifically the need to ensure that environmental protection areas are consistent such as Special Landscape Area Designations, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation etc.

8.27 The need or otherwise for a Green Belt between Cardiff and Caerphilly is also a matter that will be considered through the preparation of the Deposit Plan. At present it is not considered appropriate to designate a Green Belt within Caerphilly. The Green Belt in Cardiff is to be considered at the Cardiff LDP Examination.

8.28 Finally the implications of renewable energy schemes on the landscape and in particular the cumulative impact of schemes is a matter of concern to a number of local planning authorities in the area. In order to address this a landscape sensitivity analysis has been undertaken on behalf of the Heads of the Valleys authorities to identify those areas that should be protected from future development. Further work is required to ascertain how this information can be used to inform local planning policies in future plans.

9.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY OPTIONS

Introduction and Process

9.1 European Directive (2001/42/EC), commonly called the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, requires that development plans be the subject of continual assessment throughout the plan production process to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into the decision making process of the plan. In addition to this, legislation also requires that all development plans are subject to an appraisal against sustainability considerations (i.e. economic, social and environmental factors). In line with current guidance and good practice, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is undertaken in a combined approach, producing one SEA/SA for the revised LDP.

9.2 The SEA/SA is divided into two distinct parts, Part 1 which encompasses the SEA/SA process up until the publication of the Preferred and Alternative Strategies (this stage), and Part 2 which encompasses the SEA/SA process from Pre-Deposit Consultation to the production of the Detailed Deposit Plan and through to Submission to the Welsh Government.

9.3 Part 1 of the SEA/SA is comprises three documents, namely:

I. Document 1: The Scoping Report (2014)

9.4 The process of producing the SEA/SA begins with a review of the current state of the environment for the area of the plan. This review incorporates environmental, social and economic factors in its assessment identifying, where relevant, important issues. Then the examination is rolled forward to the end of the updated plan period i.e 2031, to provide the control scenario against which the effects of the LDP and its policies can be considered later in the process. Finally Sustainability Objectives are identified from the issues raised through the examination of the environment. Sustainability Objectives are the basis for the assessments of the effects of the LDP throughout the plan process and also form the basis for monitoring the SEA/SA.

II. Document 2: The Review of Relevant Plans, Programmes and Policies (2014)

9.5 The SEA Directive requires that a review of all plans, programmes and policies at all levels (from European level to local level), which may have implications for the revised LDP, be undertaken to identify implications for the LDP and SEA/SA processes.

III. Document 3: The Assessment of the Preferred and Alternative LDP Strategies (2014)

9.6 The final document comprising Part 1 of the SEA/SA is the review of the preferred strategy for the LDP, along with "reasonable" alternatives. The assessments are undertaken against Assessment Tests (questions) that are based upon the Sustainability Objectives identified in the Scoping Report. Each of the strategies has been assessed against the tests and their likely effects have been recorded. In addition the strategies have been compared and ranked by order of their level of sustainability.

The Results of the Assessment of the Strategies

9.7 Assessments were undertaken for the Preferred Strategy and the Alternative Spatial and Growth Strategies. The detail of these assessments is included in the **SEA/SA Part 1 - Document 3: The Assessment of the Preferred and Alternative LDP Strategies** document and it is not proposed to include the details here.

9.8 In summary however of the five strategy options tested, three realised a positive result in terms of sustainability when the cumulative results of each projection were taken into account. However it is important to note that different growth projections scored differently, even for the same strategy option.

Option 1: Continuation of the LDP Preferred Strategy

9.9 All strategy options are seeking growth and, as a result, there will always be tension between economic growth factors and environmental protection factors. However, the fact that this strategy option focuses on the five principal towns as the main poles of growth, and ensures that development is in accordance with the role and function of settlements, has the potential to deliver social and economic benefits across the County Borough as a whole. Inevitably, however, the higher levels of growth, as determined by the latter projections, will have more of an adverse impact in environmental terms. Overall however, this strategy option is positive in sustainability terms, although the number of double negatives outweighs the number of double positives, due to the latter three projections.

Option 2: Targeting Growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

9.10 All strategy options are seeking growth and, as a result, there will always be tension between economic growth factors and environmental protection factors. In such cases it is the social factors that often determine a strategy's overall performance. Targeting development to the Heads of the Valleys area promotes development in the most deprived strategy area and as such has potential to realise significant benefits. This is the case with this strategy scenario, the options realising strong positives effects from material assets and from improved demographic structures, whilst economic factors, such as housing and employment provision provide positives and environmental factors such as flooding and climate change, realise negatives.

9.11 There is however a question over whether it is practically feasible to realise the higher level population and housing scenarios due to the fact that the HoV's isolated location means that higher levels of growth would be more likely to require the equivalent of a new settlement rather than sustainable extensions to the existing settlements to support and reinforce their role and function. Overall, this is a marginally positive strategy option in sustainability terms.

Option 3: Targeting Growth to the Northern Connections Corridor

9.12 Option 3 has advantages in that it will directly benefit the Mid Valleys settlements that lie within it. Development here would be more viable and deliverable than in the HOVRA, and it is hoped that the north of the County Borough would experience the positive knock-on effects of any such strategy, given its proximity. At the same time, large-scale greenfield expansion in the Southern Connections Corridor would be resisted, although market conditions would inevitably lead to some development around Caerphilly Basin, where the market is more buoyant.

9.13 Social and economic advantages can therefore be expected with this strategy option as well as a minimisation of detrimental environmental effects. However, these effects will be exacerbated by an increase in development as a result of a

reduction in average household size. This projection aside however, this strategy option appears acceptable in sustainability and environmental terms.

Option 4: Targeting Growth to the Southern Connections Corridor

9.14 The approach of targeting development to the Southern Connections Corridor has the benefit of being attractive to the market. Sites allocated in line with this strategy will be viable, deliverable and will contribute to the achievement of a five-year housing land supply and to the delivery of affordable housing. However, this approach will not offer any benefit to settlements in the Northern Connections Corridor or, especially, the Heads of the Valleys. Consequently, socio-economic conditions in the north of the County Borough will not improve and the vitality of settlements here will decline. Also, whilst Caerphilly town in particular will increase in size as new housing is developed, this approach has the potential to alter the character of the town in terms of its cultural identity. Finally, the negative implications of large-scale greenfield land release in environmental terms are a vital consideration in terms of assessing this strategy.

9.15 Consequently, it does not appear that this strategy option would offer social or economic benefits to the County Borough as a whole. Conversely it has the potential to bring about potentially significant environmental disbenefits and is therefore not acceptable in sustainability terms.

Option 5: Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors

9.16 The potential benefits of this approach are the realistic prospect of a five-year housing land supply being maintained, but in such a way as to foster the vitality and viability of a majority of settlements within the County Borough. Although the level and rate of development in the Heads of the Valleys will be less pronounced, housing growth in those settlements in nearby settlements within the NCC may have a positive effect and may act as a potential catchment for those services and facilities in the principal town of Bargoed. Additionally, such housing development may act as a catalyst for employment growth in the NCC, something which HOVRA residents would be able to take advantage of. Certainly this position is borne out by the assessments for the lower level projections, which acknowledge the environmental impact of development across two thirds of the County Borough but realise positive overall outcomes.

Ranking of Options

9.17 The ranking of strategy options in sustainability terms, based on the cumulative number of positive and negative scores obtained during the assessment of each projection, is as follows (from most sustainable to least):

Option 3 – Targeting Growth to the Northern Connections Corridor (67 positives, 29 negatives);

Option 1 – Continuation of the LDP Preferred Strategy (65 positives, 44 negatives);

Option 2 – Targeting Growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (49 positives, 42 negatives);

Option 5 – Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors (55 positives, 56 negatives);

Option 4 – Targeting Growth to the Southern Connections Corridor (32 positives, 74 negatives).

9.18 Critical part of the whole process is how the results of this assessment influence and change the LDP, making it more sustainable. It should be noted that it is not the role of the SEA/SA to produce a truly sustainable plan; rather it is incorporated in decision making with the result of making the LDP more sustainable. Consequently, whichever of the Strategy Options is used as the basis for the LDP, all of them would require changes to seek to change the negative and neutral results to positive ones.

9.19 These changes usually take one of two forms:

- I. Changes to the text of the document. Commonly used to clarify how the strategy is applied or to address issues that have not been addressed.
- II. Mitigation, i.e. the provision of some form of gain that will compensate for a negative impact that cannot be changed.

The Preferred Strategy for the LDP

9.20 Following consideration of the results of the assessments, Strategy Options 4 was not considered appropriate for use as the LDP Strategy for the reasons outlined. The other four strategies were relatively close in terms of their assessment outcomes, although Strategy Option 3 was considered to be the most sustainable due to its perceived likely social and economic impact on an area of severe deprivation.

9.21 However, Strategy Option 5 was preferred over Option 1, 2 and 3 for the following reasons. It will:

- i. attract net in migration, which is needed to sustain balanced communities.
- ii. balance the need for development across the whole of the county borough with environmental capacity;
- iii. target significant development to the Northern Connections Corridor and thus provide social and economic benefits to the deprived Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area;
- iv. provide development in areas of acute housing pressure, particularly in the Southern Connections Corridor;
- v. facilitate the release of attractive sites for employment in the southern connections corridor to attract inward investment in an area of identified demand;
- vi. partially address the air quality issues in Caerphilly Town;
- vii. maximise the potential to locate significant new development close to public transport nodes and in particular rail stations;
- viii. provide the necessary physical and social infrastructure to support the planned level of growth over the plan period;
- ix. provide the most deliverable and viable development schemes for the county borough;
- x. maximise the social, economic and environmental opportunities that are likely to arise throughout the plan period.

9.22 In accordance with the overall aim of the SEA/SA Assessment process, Option 5 represents the better option for meeting the corporate objectives of the authority throughout the plan period in the most sustainable manner

The Next Steps

9.23 The whole of the SEA/SA Part 1 (Documents 1, 2 & 3) will be the subject of consultation as part of the consultation on the LDP Strategy. Comments in respect of both the SEA/SA and the LDP Strategy are welcomed during this period. Any comments on the SEA/SA will be considered in due course and changes to the SEA/SA will undoubtedly be made as a result. Changes to the LDP Strategy will be re-assessed against the Assessment Test once they are completed. Any changes or mitigation identified as part of that reassessment process will be incorporated into the strategy.

9.24 Once the strategy has been amended, work will commence on drafting the detailed plan that will be the basis for the Deposit Consultation period. The SEA/SA will devise Assessment Tests relevant for the detailed plan and the detailed plan will be the subject of assessment throughout its production.

MONITORING OF STRATEGY POLICIES

Policy		Aim	Indicator
SP1	Development Strategy - Development in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area	To promote economic development	The take up of Employment land in the HoV Strategy Area
SP2	Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connections Corridor	To reduce the length of trips	Out-Commuting as a percentage of total commuting in and out of the county borough.
		To promote economic development at Oakdale/Penyfan	The take-up of employment land at Oakdale/Penyfan (Ha)
SP3	Development Strategy - Development in the Southern Connections Corridor	To increase modal shift to sustainable modes	The number of out-commuting trips
		To increase tourism at major locations	The number of tourist visits to major attractions.
SP4	Settlement Boundaries	To promote efficient use of urban land	The percentage of permitted developments within settlement boundaries
SP5	Local Identity	To protect important spaces between settlements	The amount of land lost to urban forms of development within designated green wedges
SP6	Settlement Strategy	To enhance the role & function of Principal Towns & Local Centres	The percentage increase in footfall in retail centres
SP7	Areas of Significant Change: Strategic sites to deliver planned growth	To develop identified housing levels during the plan period	The percentage of dwellings developed on strategic sites (cumulative)
		To develop identified employment uses during the plan period	The area of land developed for employment uses as a percentage of total allocated employment land on strategic sites (Ha) (cumulative).

		To provide community facilities and infrastructure improvements	The number of identified community facilities and infrastructure improvements provided as a percentage of those identified as being required for the development of the strategic sites.
SP8	Retail Hierarchy	To focus retail development into the existing town centres	The area of retail development permitted outside designated town and local centres and retail warehouse parks
SP9	Place Making	To promote high quality development throughout the county borough	The number of applications refused on design grounds
SP10	Built Heritage	To conserve and enhance the built heritage of the county borough	The number of application refused on heritage grounds
SP11	Planning Obligations	To secure contributions from developers towards required infrastructure	The total value of planning obligations negotiated with developers
SP12	Community Infrastructure Levy	To secure the provision of strategic infrastructure through the implementation of the councils Community Infrastructure levy.	The number of developments realising a CIL charge
			The number of infrastructure projects realised through CIL funding.
SP13	Renewable Energy: Local Areas of Search	To encourage the development of renewable energy generating schemes.	Number of applications for renewable energy generation permitted in search areas.
SP14	Minerals	To contribute to the regional demand for minerals in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement.	The level of permitted aggregate reserves (in years).
SP15	Waste Management	To promote sustainable waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy	The amount of waste recycled
			The total amount of waste taken to landfill
SP16	Conservation of Natural Heritage	To conserve the natural heritage of the County Borough	The area of land of natural heritage value lost to development (Ha)
SP17	Countryside Recreation	To promote sustainable increase in use of countryside recreation facilities	The numbers of visitors to countryside recreation facilities
SP18	Development of the Valleys Regional Park	To promote development that contributes positively to the Valleys Regional Park	The number of permitted developments that contribute positively to the Valleys Regional Park

SP19	Protection of Strategic Leisure Network	To maintain and enhance accessibility to public open space, natural green space, and recreational facilities.	The area of public open space, natural green space, and recreational facilities lost to permitted development (Ha).
SP20	Health and Well Being	To improve access to community, leisure, education and health facilities for the residents of the county borough	The number of permitted developments providing facilities identified in the plan
SP21	Total Housing Requirements	To secure the construction of 12,000 new dwellings through the plan period	The number of residential units permitted.
SP22	Affordable Housing Target	Secure construction of 1200 affordable dwellings through the planning system	The number of affordable housing units permitted.
SP23	Managing Employment Growth	To provide sufficient land for all employment land needs	Annual rate of employment land take up
SP24	Managing Tourism Growth	To promote sustainable tourism growth	The number of tourism related developments in locations accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes
SP25	Transport Infrastructure Improvement	To improve air quality within designated AQMAs	The reduction of transport related emissions in AQMA
		To reduce the length of trips and increase modal shift to sustainable forms of transport	The number out-commuting trips from the county borough as a percentage of total travel to work trips
SP26	Transport Safeguarding Route	To protect former transport routes for future transport use	The length of former transport route brought back to beneficial transport use (m)
SP27	Road Hierarchy	Ensure the efficient use of the highways network	The number of monitored links that are at congestion level or higher

APPENDIX 2

Schedule of Candidate Sites for consideration for inclusion in the Deposit LDP

- Sites indicated in **bold do not** meet the Sustainable Network Growth Strategy.
- Sites preceded by an * will be dealt with through the Settlement Boundary Review.
- Remaining sites meet the Sustainable Network Growth Strategy subject to further detailed assessment.

Aber Valley

- ABV001 Senghenydd Minerals Site, Senghenydd
* ABV002 Land south of Cefn Ilan, Abertridwr
ABV003 Land at Former Windsor Colliery, Abertridwr
ABV004 Land to the East of Caerphilly Road, Senghenydd
ABV005 Land west of Coronation Terrace, Senghenydd
* ABV006 Land west of 4 Terraces, Senghenydd
* ABV007 Land east of Coedcae Road, Abertridwr

Aberbargoed

- * ABB001 Land at Commin Road, Aberbargoed
ABB002 Bedwellty Comprehensive School, Aberbargoed
ABB003 Aberbargoed Plateau, Aberbargoed
ABB004 Land at Coed y Brain House, Aberbargoed
ABB005 Land at Bedwellty Road, Bedwellty
ABB006 Land adj to Coed y Brain Quarry, Bedwellty
* ABB007 Land Southwest of Cwmsyfiog Road, Aberbargoed
* ABB008 Land East of Church Street, Aberbargoed

Abercarn

- * ABC001 Land at 66 Llanfach Road, Abercarn
ABC002 Land south of Railway Terrace, Abercarn
* ABC003 Land east of Celyn Road, Abercarn

Argoed

- ARG001 Land opposite Highcrest garage, Markham
ARG002 Land off Abernant Road, Markham
ARG003 Land to the West of new Inn Public House, Bedwellty
* ARG004 Land south of Springfield Terrace, Hollybush
ARG005 Old Cwrtybella School Site, Colliers Row, Argoed
ARG006 Land at The Rock, Blackwood
ARG007 Land at Argoed Fawr Farm, Argoed
* ARG008 Land Northeast of Llwynbach Terrace, Hollybush
* ARG009 Land East of John Street, Markham

Bargoed

- BAR001 Land at Gilfach Fargoed Estate, Bargoed

Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen

BTM001 Land at Coed-Y-Fedw, Machen
BTM002 Field adjacent to Bedwas House Industrial Estate
BTM003 Land Southwest of Gelli Wastad Farm, Machen
BTM004 Land East of Clos Trefeddyg, Machen
BTM005 Land North of Brynhuelog Terrace, Machen
BTM006 Land North of The Old School House, Bedwas
BTM007 Land South of Sunny Bank Terrace, Machen
BTM008 Land West of Chestnut Close, Machen
BTM009 Land off Pandy Road (Site 1), Bedwas
BTM010 Land off Pandy Road (Site 2), Bedwas
BTM011 Bedwas Colliery (Site 1), Bedwas
BTM012 Bedwas Colliery (Site 2), Bedwas
BTM012 Bedwas Colliery (Site 2), Bedwas

Blackwood

BLA001 Land at Penycoed Fawr Farm, Bedwellty
BLA002 Land at Woodview, High Street, Blackwood
BLA003 Land at Cwmgelli Farm, Blackwood
BLA004 Land at 4 Berllangron Cottages, Cwmgelli

Cefn Fforest

CEF001 Land west of Pencoed Avenue, Cefn Fforest
CEF002 Land Adjacent to Fairview Allotment Gardens, Pengam

Crosskeys – There are no candidate sites submitted in this ward

Crumlin

CRU001 Land to rear of Pendarren Road, Aberbeeg
CRU002 Land at Cly-Gro Green Bungalow, Trinant
CRU003 Land at Trinant S.S.C
* CRU004 Land off Pleasant View, Kendon Hill, Croespenmaen
* CRU005 Station Road Garage, Crumlin
CRU006 Land west of Pentrapeod Road, Pentrapeod
CRU007 Land west of Brierly House, Pentrapoed
CRU008 Land at Lower Ton-y-Felin Farm, Croespenmaen
* CRU009 Land off Pentwyn Road, North of Ton Ty'r Bel
CRU010 Land West of Ty-Mawr Farm Lane, Croespenmaen
* CRU011 Land north west of Lower Viaduct Terrace, Crumlin
CRU012 Croespenmaen Industrial Estate

Darran Valley

* DAR001 Land at Llwyn Iago Farm, Glyn Terrace, Fochriw
* DAR002 Plot of land at Bailey Street, Deri

Gilfach

GIL001 Land adjacent to the south of Hillside Park, Gilfach

Hengoed

HEN001 Land off Penallta Road, Hengoed
HEN002 Land North of Cae Ysgubor, Hengoed
* HEN003 Land east of Valley View, Cefn Hengoed

HEN004 Land North of Cwm Calon, Penallta

Llanbradach

LLA001 Land East of 'The Rise', Llanbradach

LLA002 Land East Of Wingfield Crescent Llanbradach

Maesycwmmmer

MAE001 Land at Gwernau Ganol & Gernau Fawr, Maesycwmmmer

MAE002 Land adjacent to Tredomen Athletic Football Club, Maesycwmmmer

MAE003 Land at Hawtin Park Industrial Estate, Gellihaf

MAE004 Land at Bryn Meadows Golf Club, Maesycwmmmer

Morgan Jones

MOJ001 Gallagher Retail Park, Caerphilly

MOJ002 Catnic Site, Pontypandy Industrial Estate

MOJ003 Land at Virginia Park and Golf Course, Caerphilly

Moriah

MRH001 Land west of Carn Y Tyla Terrace, Abertysswg

MRH002 Land North of Benjamin Court, Rhymney

MRH003 Land at Pontlottyn Football Club, Pontlottyn

MRH004 Land south of Maerdy House, Rhymney

Nelson

NEL001 East of the Handball Court, Nelson

NEL002 Nelson Boys and Girls Club, Nelson

NEL003 Land East of the Handball Court, Nelson

NEL004 Land at Maesmafon Farm, Nelson

NEL005 Land north west of Ty Du Farm, Nelson

* NEL006 Land North of Brooklands, Nelson

New Tredegar

* NWT001 Land at end of Jubilee Road, Cwmsyfiog, New Tredegar

* NWT002 Land at Station Terrace, Brithdir

* NWT003 Land fronting South View Terrace, New Tredegar

* NWT004 Land adjacent to Ty Rhosyn, Bedwellty Road, New Tredegar

Newbridge

NWB001 North of Pentwynmawr Recreation Ground, Newbridge

NWB002 Land North of Aiwa Technology Park, Newbridge

NWB003 Land north of Celynen Colliery, Newbridge

NWB004 Land North of Gilboa Road, Newbridge

NWB005 Land North of A472, Newbridge

NWB006 Newbridge School and Leisure Centre, Newbridge

Pengam

PEG001 Allotment Gardens off Summerfield Terrace, Fleur-de-Lys

PEG002 Land at Springfield Bungalow, Pengam

PEG003 Land to the rear of 40 Victoria Road, Fleur-De-Lys

PEG004 Land North of Knoll House, Gellihaf

PEG005 Land West of Knoll House, Gellihaf

PEG006 Southern area of Trelyn scrap yard, Gellihaf

Penmaen

PEM001 Land at Coed Cariad Farm, Woodfieldside
PEM002 Land Southeast of Llwyn Onn Crescent, Oakdale
PEM003 Land North of Woodfield Park Lane, Penmaen
PEM004 Land at Oakdale Golf Club, Oakdale
PEM005 Tir Filkins Colliery Site, Woodfieldside
PEM006 Land at the Gwrhay, Argoed
PEM007 Oakdale Comprehensive School, Oakdale

Penyrheol

PEY001 Land at Cwm Ifor Primary School, Penyrheol
PEY002 Land south of Groeswen Road, Groeswen
PEY003 Land at Ty Fry, Nantgarw
PEY004 Land adjoining the Chapel, Groeswen Road, Groeswen
PEY005 Land Opposite Ty Llywd, Groeswen Road, Groeswen
PEY006 Land East of Eglwysilan Road, Groeswen
PEY007 Land at Ty Llwyd, Groeswen Road, Groeswen
PEY008 Land surrounding Gwaun Gledyr Isaf Farm, Groeswen
PEY009 Land at Former Railway Sidings, Trecenydd
PEY010 Land at Trecenydd Industrial Estate, Penyrheol
PEY011 Land at former Zonner premises, Hendredenny
PEY012 Land north of Hendredenny Drive, Hendredenny
* PEY013 Land at Abertridwr Road, Penyrheol

Pontllanfraith

PLF001 Land at Cwm-Nant-Yr-Odin, Springfield
PLF002 Plot One, Land opposite Gwarren Fach Bungalow, Springfield
PLF003 Land at Twyn Filkins Farm, Woodfieldside
PLF004 Land at Glynbrynar Farm, Pontllanfraith
PLF005 Land at Heolddu, Pontllanfraith
PLF006 Pontllanfraith House, Pontllanfraith
PLF007 Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School, Pontllanfraith

Pontlloftyn

* PLT001 Land Southeast of Sunnyview, Pontlloftyn
PLT002 Former Depot South of Pontlloftyn Link Road, Pontlloftyn

Risca East

RSE001 Land off Snowdon Close, Risca

Risca West

* RSW001 Danygraig Works, Risca
RSW002 Units 1-4 Pontymister Industrial Estate, Pontymister
RSW003 Rowecord Engineering Site, Pontymister
RSW004 Eastern Part of Land adjacent to River Ebbw, Pontymister
RSW005 Land at 106 Commercial Street, Risca

St. Cattwg

STC001 Fields at Tir y Berth Farm
STC002 Greenhill Primary School, Gelligaer

STC003 Land adjoining Bron Las Estate, Penpedairheol
STC004 Land west of Cefn Llwynfa Farm, Penallta
STC005 Land at Heol Adam Farm, Gelligaer
STC006 Land adjacent to Green Hill Primary School, Gelligaer
STC007 Land adjacent to Caerau House, Pengam Road,
STC008 Land at Rhos Farm, Penpedairheol
STC009 Land South of Glyngaer Road, Cefn Hengoed
STC010 Land at Gelligaer Court, Penpedairheol
STC011 Land west of Penybryn Football Ground, Penybryn
STC012 Land adjacent to Gwaun-Fro Road, Gelligaer
STC013 Land at Bryn Quarry, Gelligaer
STC014 Land at Bryn Quarry, Gelligaer
STC015 Land adjacent to Yew Cottages, Gelligaer

St. James

* STJ001 Land at Bryngolau, Rudry
* STJ002 Land at Porset Row, Caerphilly

STJ003 Land at The Oaks, Rudry

STJ004 Land West of Pentwynngwyn Road, Rudry

STJ005 Land north of Waterloo Place, Machen
STJ006 Land Northwest of Waterloo Place, Machen
* STJ007 Land at Glendale, Van Road, Caerphilly
STJ008 Land at the Former Tin Works, Machen
STJ009 Land at Gwern y Domen Farm, Caerphilly
STJ010 Land at Plant Repair, Garth Place, Rudry
* STJ011 Unit 2, Van Industrial Park, Caerphilly

St. Martins

STM001 Land at Watford Road, Caerphilly
STM002 Land at Caerphilly Golf Course
STM003 Land south of Westhaven, Watford Road, Caerphilly
STM004 Land north of Westhaven, Watford Road, Caerphilly
STM005 Former Ness Tar Plant and Adjoining Land

Twyn Carno - There are no candidate sites submitted in this ward

Ynysddu

YNY001 Land south of The Glade, Wyllie
YNY002 Land West of Tylu du House, Mynyddislwyn
YNY003 Land West of Pontgam Terrace, Ynysddu
YNY004 Land East of Pontgam Terrace, Ynysddu
YNY005 Land east of Glanhwy Road, Wyllie
YNY006 Land Northwest of Pen-Y-Cwarel Road, Wyllie
YNY007 Land adjacent to Pen-Y-Cwarel Road, Wyllie
YNY008 Twyn Gwyn House, Twyn Gwyn Road, Ynysddu

Ystrad Mynach

YST001 Land east of Cefn Llwynfa Farm, Penallta
* YST002 Land adjacent to White Rose Cottage, Ystrad Mynach
YST003 Land east of Penallta Colliery

YST004 Land at New Road, Ystrad Mynach

YST005 Land west of Penallta Road, Ystrad Mynach

YST006 Land adjacent to Cefn Llwynau Bungalow, Penallta Road

YST007 Units 1-4, Caerphilly Road, Ystrad

APPENDIX 3

Schedule of sites that potentially meet the Sustainable Urban Network Growth Strategy - subject to further assessment

Sites indicated in bold are proposed to be retained from the Adopted Local Development Plan

Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area			
Carn y Tyla	Abertysswg	7.08	Housing
Bedwellty Road	Aberbargoed	7.3ha	Housing
Aberbargoed Plateau	Aberbargoed	12 ha	Mixed use
Bedwellty Comprehensive School	Aberbargoed	1.8 ha	Housing
Maerdy House	Rhymney	0.8 ha	Housing
Maerdy Crossing	Rhymney	2.4 ha	Housing
Land at Heads of the Valleys	Rhymney	5.2 ha	Employment
		36.58 ha	
Northern Connections Corridor			
Gwernau Ganol and Gwerna Fawr Farm	Maescymmer	80 ha	Strategic Mixed use site
Land at Hawtin Park (south)	Pontllanfraith	14.3 ha	Housing
Land at Hawtin Park (north)	Pontllanfraith	4.5 ha	Employment
Cwm Gelli Farm	Blackwood	6.58 ha	Housing
Penallta Yard	Ystrad Mynach	0.29 ha	Housing
Land at New Road	Ystrad Mynach	0.54 ha	Housing
Greenhill Primary School	Gelligaer	2.8 ha	Housing
Ty Du	Nelson	18.8 ha	Mixed use
North west of Ty Du	Nelson	5.08 ha	Housing
North of Woodfield Park	Penmaen	1.8 ha	Housing
Land at Ton-y felin farm	Oakdale	2.2 ha	Housing
West of Ty Mawr Farm	Croespenmaen	2.3 ha	Housing
Plateau 1, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	30.2 ha	Employment
Plateau 2, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	7.0 ha	Employment
Plateau 3, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	3.4 ha	Education
Plateau 4, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	4.3 ha	Employment
Dyffryn Business Park (north)	Ystrad Mynach	4.9 ha	Employment
Dyffryn Business Park (south)	Ystrad Mynach	6.3 ha	Employment
		195.29	

		ha	
Southern Connections Corridor			
Former Ness Tar Plant and Adjoining Land	Caerphilly	30 ha	Strategic Mixed use site
Land adjacent to Pen- y-Cwarel Road	Wyllie	1.6 ha	Housing
Land at Station Road	Risca	0.51 ha	Housing
Suflex Factory	Pontymister	2.1 ha	Housing
Waterloo Works	Waterloo	17.0 ha	Housing
Windsor Colliery	Abertridwr	5.51 ha	Housing
Land off Pandy Road	Bedwas	6.43 ha	Housing
Bedwas Colliery	Bedwas	36.22 ha	Housing
Catnic Site	Caerphilly	4.76 ha	Housing
Land at Glendale	Caerphilly	1.09 ha	Housing
Land at Watford Road	Caerphilly	1.10 ha	Housing
Land at Westhaven	Caerphilly	3.36 ha	Housing
Caerphilly Business Park	Caerphilly	3.6 ha	Employment
Land at Trecenydd	Caerphilly	2.2 ha	Employment
		115.48 ha	

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR NEIGHBOURING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan: Spatial Strategy

Context: Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second largest Local Authority in Wales, it covers an area of 424 square metres with a population of 231,946 (2001). Strategic transportation links with the wider region are provided by the M4, A470 and A465.

Core Strategy: The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP strategy is a hybrid strategy which provides development in locations that meet local needs whilst promoting sustainable growth. The core strategy advocates a different approach for development in the north and in the south of the County Borough. The strategy for northern Rhondda Cynon Taf places an emphasis on the need to build sustainable communities and halt the process of depopulation and decline. Development proposals in the Northern Strategy Area will provide appropriate growth to address the problems of deprivation and high levels of social and economic need.

In the south of the County Borough the emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole. Development proposals in the Southern Strategy Area will promote sustainable development by providing a managed form of growth which will consolidate existing settlement patterns; have regard to the social and economic function and identity of settlements and the surrounding countryside; address existing or potential capacity needs to provide necessary infrastructure and reduce the need to travel.

Within these two strategy areas the LDP strategy will recognise the important role settlements play in providing homes and services of both local and county importance. In order to support and reinforce the important role these centres play as places for social and economic activity new development opportunities will be focused in the principal towns of Pontypridd, Llantrisant / Talbot Green and Aberdare and in the 8 key settlements of the County Borough.

A range of sites are allocated for the development of new housing, employment and retail facilities throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. Large-scale Strategic Sites, which are capable of accommodating significant development, have been identified in locations that maximise the opportunities for sustainable regeneration and ensure a step change in the economy of the County Borough. Smaller non-strategic sites intended to meet local needs have been allocated in sustainable locations that reinforce the role of Principal Towns and Key Settlements.

Key Policy: Policy areas central to the delivery of the core strategy include;

- The provision of 14,385 new dwellings, which includes 1770 affordable homes;
- The development of 51 hectares of land for B1, B2 and B8 use to meet strategic employment needs and 47 hectares of land for B1, B2 and B8 local employment needs;
- The development of between 34,400 and 36,400 m² (net) of new retail floorspace, and

- Improvements to the strategic highway network which require the implementation of 4 new highway schemes.

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan: Spatial Strategy

The Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan is based on an enhanced growth strategy which aims to reduce current levels of out migration from the County Borough so that the population stabilises by 2011 and then grows significantly over the remaining 10 year period.

The strategy distributes growth over three areas: the Primary Growth Area comprising of the northern sector communities of Pant, Dowlais, Penydarren, Golan Uchaf, Gurnos, Swansea Road, Heolgerrig, Cefn Coed, Twynrodyn, Town Centre, Georgetown, Abercanaid and Pentrebach; the Secondary Growth Area comprising of the southern sector communities of Edwardsville, Treharris, Trelewis and Quakers Yard; and the Other Growth Areas comprising of the mid valley communities of Troedryhiw, Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Bedlinog.

The Primary Growth Area reflects the fact that the main Merthyr Tydfil settlement has the best prospects for sustainable growth and the majority of development is focussed in and around this area. This will allow the area to expand its role as a hub settlement so that it acts as a key driver for regeneration within the Heads of the Valleys sub-region. The majority of housing and employment sites, as well as higher order retail and social facilities, are located within this area.

The Secondary Growth Area allows for limited further growth within extended settlement boundaries and the Other Growth Areas are limited to developments which sustain the integrity and vitality of existing settlements. Proposed development within these areas primarily consists of housing and lower order facilities which serve local needs.

Newport Local Development Plan: Development Strategy

The strategy is essentially a brownfield strategy, but that does not mean that it relies heavily on the development of flats and apartments. By way of illustration, the largest site, Glan Llyn (the Llanwern Regeneration Site) is one of the largest regeneration sites in Wales, and is intended primarily for family housing - about 4,000 dwellings in total. House building on the site has recently commenced.

The Preferred Strategy followed the Welsh Government 2006 based projections, which resulted in a build rate of 640 dwellings per year. The Deposit Plan has not yet gone to Council, but will do so shortly, and is likely to take the more recent and lower figure from the 2008 based projections for the first 5 years of the plan (2011-16), but reverting to the higher assumptions of the 2006 based projections thereafter (2016-26). This applies an element of market realism to the strategy, reflecting the lower level of activity in the house building sector in the current difficult trading conditions, but assumes that conditions will improve over time.

Newport has a good overall housing land supply. The adopted UDP includes a Growth Strategy, with the main element being the Eastern Expansion Area, including the Llanwern Regeneration Site, and which amounts to over 5,000 dwellings in total. There are also extensive regeneration sites within the urban area, many of which

have planning permission, and some of which are partly complete. This gives Newport the ability to accommodate growth, matched to a generous supply of employment land. This is further seen as supporting the major retail redevelopment scheme proposed for the city centre, for which a developer has been appointed. Pressure for growth due to constraint in adjoining areas would not therefore be an immediate cause for concern to Newport.

The need to maintain the separate identity of settlements is seen as significant, and the Preferred Strategy retains, and slightly extends, the existing Green Belt west of Marshfield and Castleton, which was designated in the adopted UDP.

Cardiff City Local Development Plan: Strategy

1. Making provision for new homes and jobs

- Cardiff has a significant need for new homes including family homes, affordable homes together with catering for the whole range of needs
- Cardiff also plays a key role as economic driver of the wider city-region
- The Plan aims to respond to these evidenced social and economic needs in a balanced way - respecting environmental qualities, providing a framework to manage delivery and provide new infrastructure together with carefully managing impacts
- The overall level of growth is considered to represent the most robust, balanced and appropriate approach taking into account all relevant factors and the advice of independent population forecasting experts
- The Plan sets out a Strategy to deliver 41,100 new dwellings and 40,000 new jobs over the Plan period including ways to provide flexibility should build rates be higher than anticipated
- This level of growth is considered appropriate to deliver Wales Spatial Plan objectives, the Council's overall vision and the LDP objectives
- Overall, for the whole Plan period, approximately 65% of all new homes being provided on brownfield sites and 35% provided on greenfield sites
- The provision of a genuine range and choice of new sites is crucial in effectively delivering the required level of growth, delivering LDP objectives, providing flexibility and the ability to meet a wide range of evidenced need for new homes and jobs
- Key strategic sites to deliver this need are proposed at:
 - Cardiff Central Enterprise Zone
 - Former Gas Works, Ferry Road
 - North West Cardiff
 - North of Junction 33
 - South of Creigiau
 - North East Cardiff (West of Pontprennau)
 - East of Pontprennau Link Road
 - South of St Mellons Business Park

2. Putting in place a framework to manage future growth and encourage high quality, sustainable design

- Policies and mechanisms have been put in place to provide a framework to effectively manage future growth
- Areas to be kept free from development are made explicit avoiding the current climate of uncertainty created by not having an adopted Plan in place

- Protected areas include the designation of Green Belt North of the M4 Motorway together with tight settlement boundaries policy county-wide and protection of river valleys and open spaces
- Collectively, these policies protect vast tracts of Cardiff's valued countryside, river valleys and open spaces
- The masterplanning approach provides an over-arching framework for the development of new areas setting out key requirements relating to land use, densities, facilities, transportation, open spaces and phasing

3. Bringing forward new infrastructure

- The Plan sets out an approach which requires the timely provision of new infrastructure including community facilities, transportation and other services
- Whilst it is recognised that some significant elements of infrastructure may take many years to complete, the Strategy seeks to ensure that each phase of new development is tied to the provision of necessary infrastructure with each stage of development being able to demonstrate an acceptable level of supporting facilities.
- An Infrastructure Plan is contained as a Supporting Document setting out future requirements.
- Further dialogue and consultation findings will help further develop a detailed list of required infrastructure along with funding opportunities including the roles of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions for strategic projects to Section 106 Agreement contributions for local priorities together with other potential funding streams from the public and private sectors

4. Delivering sustainable transportation solutions

- The overall approach seeks to minimise travel demand and provide a range of measures and opportunities which reduce reliance on the car
- New development in Cardiff must be integrated with the provision of new transport infrastructure which can help contribute to this objective by putting in place sustainable transport solutions which also provide improved travel choices for the wider community
- This approach is fully consistent with on-going work at a city-region scale which seeks to develop a more effective public transport network across the region as a whole, helping people travel from where they live to work and thereby helping to spread prosperity around the entire city-region

5. Responding to evidenced economic needs

- The key economic role performed by Cardiff must be maintained and enhanced for benefits to Cardiff, the city-region and Wales
- Evidence demonstrates that Cardiff has consistently delivered a high proportion of jobs in the city-region
- The Strategy responds to this by ensuring a full range and choice of economic opportunities across all relevant sectors
- The Cardiff Central Enterprise Zone will be a key element of the approach but there is also a need to maintain the roles of the City Centre, Cardiff Bay, existing employment sites together with providing a range and choice of sites to cater for demand across sectors.

6. Responding to evidenced social needs

- Cardiff experiences some significant social needs, with particularly high housing demand projected to continue over the Plan period

- The Strategy aims to positively respond to these needs by providing a wide range and choice of sites to respond to the full diversity of needs, including those from the Gypsy and Traveller community as required in national policy and guidance
- Overall, the Plan promotes more sustainable communities where emphasis is placed on supporting District & Local Centres, encouraging the full range of accessible social, health and educational facilities, together with supporting regeneration initiatives and utilising the potential positive benefits which new developments can bring to adjoining areas

7. Respecting Cardiff's environment and responding to climate change

- Cardiff possesses a unique and particularly distinctive natural and built Heritage
- The Plan delivers sustainable development by meeting social and economic needs, but in a managed way which retains, manages and enhance important features of natural and built heritage. Central to this approach is the designation of a Green Belt to the North of the M4 Motorway, strict settlement boundaries policy together with protection to the river valleys and open spaces.

Torfaen Local Development Plan: Spatial Strategy

Context: Torfaen covers an area of 117 square kilometres with a population of 91,372 (2011 Census) and is located within the eastern most South Wales Valley, just north of Newport City and the M4 Motorway. Strategic transportation links with the wider region are provided by the Marches Railway-line from Newport (South Wales Mainline) to Shrewsbury and the A4042 Trunk Road also from Newport (M4) to Shrewsbury and the A472 Mid Valleys Road; with County routes northwards from Pontypool to Blaenavon (A4043) and onto Brynmawr (B4248) and from Cwmbran to Caerleon (B4236) in the south-east; with Cwmbran being served by the A4051 (Malpas Road / Cwmbran Drive).

Core Strategy: The Torfaen LDP 'Network of Integrated Communities Strategy' aims to ensure a network of integrated communities, focusing particularly on the two key settlements of Cwmbran and Pontypool to ensure that they are successful and function as service hubs for the surrounding settlements. Growth is focused in locations where wider benefits are likely to occur, for example the realisation of the regeneration potential of the British Strategic Action Area, Cwmbran Town Centre and adjacent Strategic Action Areas. Effective transport links will be forged to and from jobs and services, which are not available locally. Development is emphasised along key transport routes and will reflect the role, scale and function of individual settlements, with each settlement building upon its particular opportunities for the benefit of the County Borough as a whole.

Key Policy: Policy areas central to the delivery of the Core Strategy include:-

- The provision of 4,700 new dwellings (550 in North Torfaen, 1,875 in Pontypool and 2,275 in Cwmbran) mainly on brownfield sites, which includes 1,132 affordable homes;
- The development of 7 mixed use / or large Strategic Action Areas, including the provision of a new 450 bed Hospital at Llanfrechfa Grange in Cwmbran;

- The protection of existing employment land / premises and the development of 40.3 hectares of local employment land for B1, B2 and B8 uses and 35 hectares of regional employment land for B1, B2 and B8 uses;
- Maintenance of a retail hierarchy and protection of Town Centres;
- Implementation of 4 key transport improvements, including the North Torfaen Highways and Public Transport Corridor (A4043 and B4246) and the Pontypool & New Inn Train Station Park and Ride / Share Facility; and
- Protection of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site and the 'Green Wedge' preventing the coalescence of Cwmbran and Newport.

Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan: Spatial Strategy

Context: Blaenau Gwent covers an area of approximately 10,900 hectares and has an estimated population of 69,300 (2006). Strategic transportation links with the wider region are provided by the A465.

Core Strategy: The Blaenau Gwent LDP Strategy is based on regenerating the area through building a network of district hubs around the principal hub of Ebbw Vale, whilst recognising that there is a north south divide in terms of opportunities for growth. The creation of an integrated network of modern and revitalised hubs provides an opportunity to transform the area. It creates a mechanism to co-ordinate investment and ensures the benefits of growth and regeneration are shared widely. Vital to delivering this is ensuring good connectivity between the principal hub of Ebbw Vale and the district hubs of Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery, in turn ensuring that each hub is accessible to the areas they serve.

The northern strategy area includes the three hub areas of Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Upper Ebbw Fach. The emphasis is on sustainable growth and regeneration with most of the growth concentrated in the principal hub area of Ebbw Vale.

The Southern Strategy Area covers the Lower Ebbw Fach valley. The focus is on regenerating the area and maximising the potential offered by the area's unique setting and cultural qualities. The southern area differs from the north due to the topography of the area. In this area the valley narrows and the valley sides become steeper.

A range of sites are allocated for the development of new housing, employment and retail facilities throughout Blaenau Gwent. The strategy also recognises the potential of two key brownfield sites located in the principal hub of Ebbw Vale which are capable of accommodating significant development to accommodate growth and regenerate the area.

Key Policy: Policy areas central to the delivery of the strategy include:

- The provision of 3,907 new dwellings which includes 1,000 affordable homes;
- The development of 50 hectares of land for employment and business purposes;
- The development of 10,200 sq m of comparison and 2,445 sq m of convenience (net) of new retail floorspace;

- Improvements to the strategic highway network which require the implementation of 1 new highway schemes; and
- Improvements in connectivity between Ebbw Vale and the district hubs of Tredegar, Brynmawr and Abertillery through rail network and station improvements and 5 new roads to facilitate development.