Local Development Plan

Issues & Vision Workshop
Draft Report of Consultation

August 2007

Contents

Summary

This Consultation Report outlines the views expressed at a stakeholder 'Issues and Vision' workshop, which was held to build consensus on where we were (issues) and where we wanted to be (vision). The workshop was held on Friday 27th July 2007, at the VITCC, in Tredegar and involved 27 attendees representing the LDP Steering Group Sub-group members and LDP Forum members (see Appendix A).

Issues Workshops

The first workshop task involved attendees discussing different topic areas, to agree and then priorities issues. The two most significant issues for each of the topic areas is as follows:

Housing
· Create a more balanced population stemming out migration
· Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet aspirations including the need for affordable housing.

Town Centres
· To find a role/ function for town centres
· Encourage multiple retailers and a mix of uses within the town centres – specialist shops, coffee shops and offices – creating a niche market.

Recreation, Leisure and Tourism
· To foster sustainable tourism and leisure in order to boost the local economy
· To foster sustainable tourism, re-engaging local communities with the national and built historic environment

Transport
· To improve access to services facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling

Joint second were
· To provide a transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, is safer and supports local communities
· To improve the transport system to assist in the regeneration of the area

Employment
· The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries
· Changing dependence on particular industries and diversifying the economy

Environment
· To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
· Maximise the natural environment for health and well being

This was followed by a further task where attendees were required to prioritise the most significant issues for Blaenau Gwent. The two most significant issues were:
· The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries; and

1. Introduction

1.1. In November 2006 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council made the decision to discontinue work on their Unitary Development Plan and start work on a Local Development Plan. The timetable for the various statutory stages of production of the Local Development Plan is set out in the Delivery Agreement (May 2007).

1.2. The first step in the process of preparing the Plan was to draft and formally consult on the 'Issues Paper' and alongside this an 'Issues and Visioning Workshop' was held. The workshop took place on the 27th July 2007 with LDP Steering Group Sub-Group members and the LDP Forum members. A full list of attendees is provided at appendix A, a copy of the agenda at appendix B and a copy of the introductory presentation at appendix C.

1.3. The purpose of this report is to record and analyse the information gathered and to provide the Council with a clear indication of the views and wishes of those attending the s anJ 0 -13 td

	Development	
Richard Price Home Builders Federation	Ged McHugh BGCBC – Environment	Will Beer Health Board
Joanna Rhead BGCBC – Resources	Alan Reed BGCBC – Environment	Wayne Thomas RISE
Dave Thompson BGCBC – Private Sector Housing	Jayne Layzell Local Health Board	Kate Rodgers CCW
Gemma White Health Board	John Morgan Tredegar Town Council	
	Bethan Cartwright Town Centre Manager	

Workshop 2

Transport	Environment	Employment
Mark Hopkins BGCBC – Transport	Chris Engel BGCBC - Environment	Bethan Cartwright Town Centre Manager
Alun Evans BGCBC – Transport	Lyn Evans BGCBC – Leisure	Angela Chard BGCBC- Resources
Louise Horner BGCBC - Estates	Alyson Tippings BGCBC – Tourism	Leanne Connor BGCBC – Economic Development
John Howells BGCBC - Education	Jenny Turner BGCBC - Waste	Bernadette Elias BGCBC – Governance
Allwyn Hughes BGCBC – Economic Development	Kate Rodgers CCW	Eirlys Hallett BGCBC – Planning Control
Richard Price Home Builders Federation	Will Beer Health Board	Ged McHugh BGCBC - Environment
Dave Thompson BGCBC – Private Sector Housing	Jim Parry GGAT	Andrew Parker BGCBC – Governance
Alan Reed BGCBC - Environment	John Morgan Tredegar Town Council	Joanna Rhead BGCBC – Resources
Gemma White Health Board		Jayne Layzell Local Health Board
		Wayne Thomas RISE

2.3. The facilitator set the context for the workshop by summarising the National and County Borough Picture for the particular topic area, as set out in the Issues Paper (distributed to the invitees beforehand). The facilitator then set the following tasks:

Task 1 – The group was asked to delete/amend/add to the Issues identified in order to build consensus on the issues in that topic area.

Task 2 – The group were then asked to prioritise the issues to identify the most significant issues. Each person was provided with 2 stickers to identify what they see as the most significant issues.

For detailed results of this task see Appendix D.

Group 3 used the visions provided as the basis for the new vision for Blaenau Gwent by choosing key words and incorporating them to create the following visions.

Blaenau Gwent, vibrant valley communities, where people feel proud, happy, valued and included.

Blaenau Gwent, rich past, dynamic future.

Blaenau Gwent, communities for the future.

4. What Next?

4.1. The workshop was useful for discussing and prioritising the issues and assisted in setting a vision for the Local Development Plan. These findings will be taken into account when the Council prepares draft Strategy Options for discussion at workshops in November 2007 and when it drafts the 'Preferred Strategy' for consultation in September 2008.
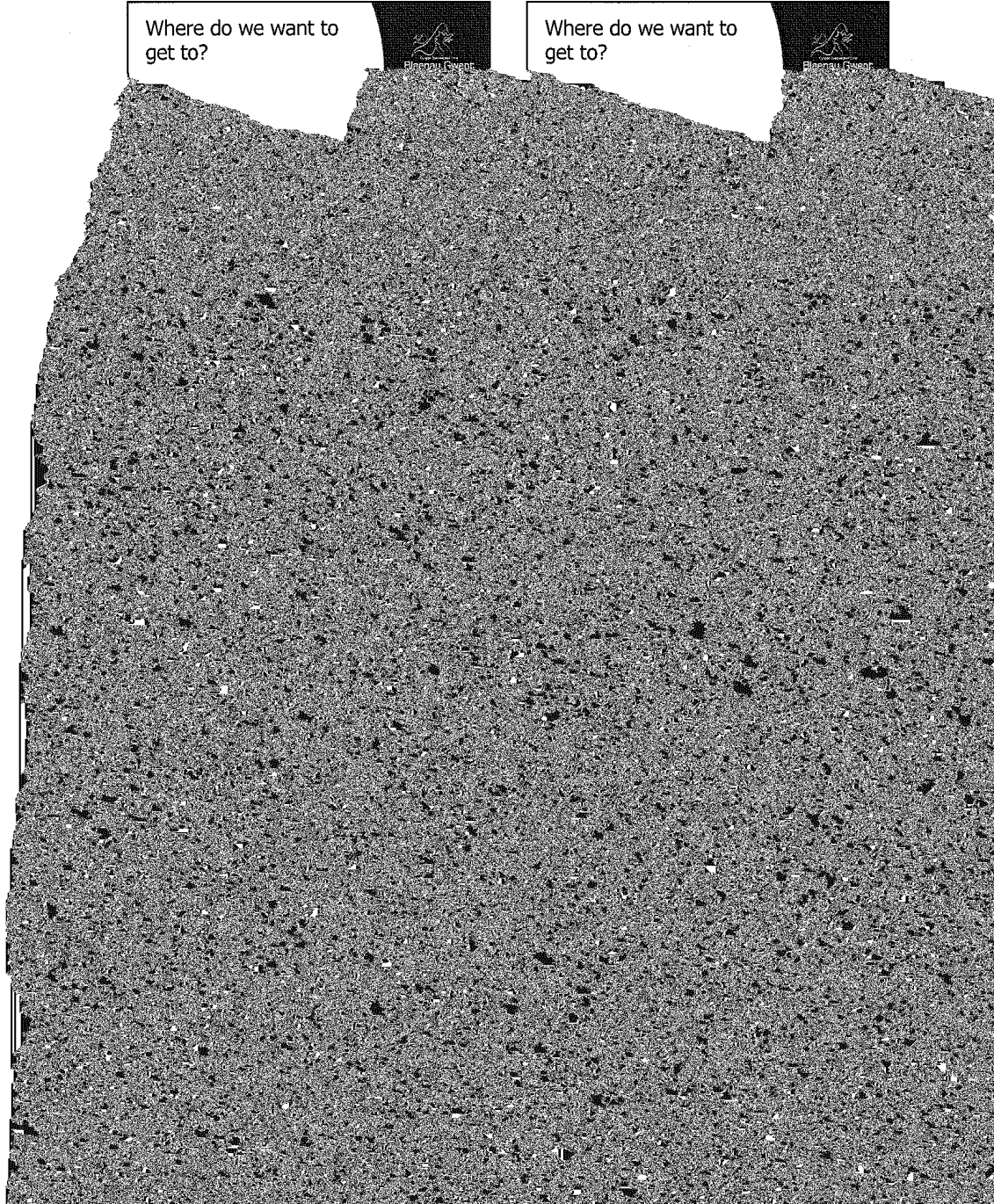
Appendix B: Workshop Agenda

Agenda

9.30 – 9.45   Registration and Coffee

9.45 – 9.50   Welcome and Introductions – Purpose of the session
                Ged McHugh

9.50 – 10.20 Local Development Plan and Introduction to Workshop 1 and 2
                Lynda Healy

10.20 – 10.40 Workshop 1 – Consideration of Housing, Town Centres, Recreation,
                Leisure & Tourism Issues

10.40 – 11.00 Workshop 2 – Consideration of Transport, Environment and
                Employment Issues

11.00 – 11.20 Coffee Break

11.20 – 11.30 Introduction to Workshop 3 - Visioning
                Lynda Healy

11.30 – 12.00 Workshop 3 - Visioning

12.00 – 12.10 What Happens Next?
                Lynda Healy

12.10 – 12.15 Close and Evaluation
                Ged McHugh

12.15   Lunch

Appendix C: Workshop Presentation

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Appendix D: Issues Workshop Report

HOUSING

Task 1

The Issues Identified for the task were:
- The need to stem out migration
- To create a more balanced population base
- The need to understand International migration patterns
- Need to take into consideration the implications of WHQS on Council stock
- Need to Ensure a range of house types are built to meet aspirations and retain residents
- Need to tackle problems of vacant buildings and make most use of voids in town centres
- The need to improve unfitness levels in private sector housing
- The need to deliver affordable housing solutions

The group chose to merge these issues to create three major issues.

- Improving the quality of our built environment and maximising opportunities
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TOWN CENTRES

Task 1

The Issues identified as a starting point were:

- · To arrest decline in the town centres
- · To find a role/ function for town centres
- · Decrease vacancy rates in theTas centres

The two most significant issues for Town Centres were:
- To find a role/ function for town centres
- Encourage multiple retailers and a mix of uses within the town centres – specialist shops, coffee shops and offices – creating a niche market

RECREATION, LEISURE & TOURISM

Task 1

The Issues identified as a starting point were:

- To foster tourism and leisure in order to boost the local economy
- To promote healthy living by promoting leisure and recreational facilities
- Ensuring the requirements of participants in 'newer' leisure activities (off-road biking) are taken into account

The group amended Issue 1 and 3 and added a further issue. As a result the Issues identified following task 1 were:

- To foster sustainable tourism and leisure in order to boost the local economy
- To improve health and well being by promoting leisure and recreational facilities
- Ensuring the requirements of participants in all leisure activities are taken into account
- To foster sustainable tourism, re-engaging local communities with the national and built historic environment

Task 2

This task required the group to vote for the 2 most significant issues in terms of Recreation, Leisure & Tourism. The following table shows the number of votes received:

- To foster sustainable tourism and leisure in order to boost the local economy
- To foster sustainable tourism, re-engaging local communities with the national and built historic environment

TRANSPORT

Task 1

The Issues identified as a starting point were:

- To improve access to services, facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling
- To provide a transport system that increases the use of sustainable modes of travel
- To reduce the demand for travel
- To provide a transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, is safer and supports local communities
- To make better use of the existing transport system
- To improve the transport system to assist in the regeneration of the area
- To reduce emission of greenhouse gases and air pollution from transport

Following task 1 the Issues remained unchanged though some members of the group considered that some issues could have been merged.

Task 2

This task required the group to vote for the 2 most significant issues in terms of the Transport. The following table shows the number of votes received:

The most significant issue for transport was:
- To improve access to services, facilities and employment, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling

Joint second were:
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	The need to improve the employment rate
	The need to decrease the economic inactivity rate
	Encourage a higher number of people in Blaenau Gwent to gain qualifications and develop skills
4	Implications of sustainable tourism and employment
6	Changing dependence on particular industries and diversifying the economy
	Access to employment sites – active travel
1	Location of employment sites
	Loss of employment sites
1	Allocate additional employment land
1	Wider range of uses on employment land

The two most significant issues for employment were:
- The implications of the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift in favour of the service sector and technological industries
- Changing dependence on particular industries and diversifying the economy

ENVIRONMENT

Task 1

The Issues identified as a starting point were:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity
- To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
- To retain green wedges to protect against coalescence of communities
- Protection of sand and gravel resources
- Harnessing renewable energy without causing harm to the quality of the environment

The Issues identified following task 1 were:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
- To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
- To retain green wedges to protect against coalescence of communities
- Protection of sand and gravel resources
- Harnessing renewable energy without causing harm to the quality of the environment
- Minimise the impacts of new developments on the environment
- Ensure access to natural green spaces within urban areas in line with the green spaces toolkit
- Create and protect green spaces within urban areas
- Protect and enhance the historic and built environment
- Maximise the natural environment for health and well being

The group amended Issue 1 and added 5 additional issues.

Task 2

This task required the group to vote for the 2 most significant issues in terms of the Environment. The following table shows the number of votes received:

Number of votes	Issue
2	To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
5	To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
	To retain green wedges to protect against coalescence of communities
	Protection of sand and gravel resources
	Harnessing renewable energy without causing harm to the quality of the environment
1	Minimise the impacts of new developments on the environment
1	Ensure access to natural green spaces within urban areas in line with the green spaces toolkit
1	Create and protect green spaces within urban areas
2	Protect and enhance the historic and built environment
4	Maximise the natural environment for health and well being

The two most significant issues in the environment were:
- To protect and enhance local landscape in the face of competing development uses
- Maximise the natural environment for health and well being